

**“It Gives me Thunder”:
Reflections on “Becoming Fur”
by**

Chris Seabrook

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

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In

Anthropology

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Abstract

“It Gives Me Thunder”: Observations on “Becoming Fur”
by **Chris Seabrook**

This study is an ethnography of the “Furry” sub-culture using a conceptual framework based on Deleuze and Guattari (1987), with extensive commentary on the ethnographic enterprise as applied to cyber-cultures.

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Preface

This thesis is an ethnographic study of the Furry Fandom, a large and loosely-bounded sub-culture with both an extensive real-life and an on-line presence. In the study I argue that the project is best undertaken by attempting to use a number of concepts associated with post-modern thought- principally a “mapping” technique (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), the presence of multi-voiced narrative both within the Fandom and within anthropological discourse surrounding the topics discussed (Dentith 1995), a view of cyberspace as a new and significantly different arena of communication (Nunes 2006), a concept of identity as multiple and performed (Goffman 1959, Butler 1993), and an emphasis on the role of discourses of power in cultural formations (Foucault 1980[1972]). The completed thesis is a book-length study including extensive discussion of various theoretical approaches and a large body of supporting evidence drawn from the Furry sub-culture. In this document I have summarized the principal ideas developed; a copy of the extended book-length text is also available to provide further discussion and support. I have included, in this paper, as many of the elements of the book-length discussion as possible.

The thesis is divided into three sections. The first section deals with the conceptual framework of the study, the methodology used during field interviews, profiles of the sub-culture as presented in existing studies, and conceptualization of a real-life sub-culture in the process of transformation to a culture in cyber-space with particular reference to Hine’s principles of virtual ethnography (Hine 2000). The final chapter of this section summarizes my field work among Furrries in real-life/real-time situations. The second section of the study focuses on major aspects of the Furry Fandom as a culture. It presents the history of the Fandom as recounted by Furry observers, the languages of the Fandom, Furry visual representation, the Fandom as theatrical performance with a discussion of masks, costuming, performance, and puppeteering, the interaction of Furrries with the mass media, including Furry radio, television, and Internet gaming, Furry literature – novels, graphic novels, and comic books- and Furry music with a discussion of electronic music and the impact of the transition of musical composition to computer-mediated formats. The third section considers Furrries in social relations and deals first with how identity and the self, embodiment, and transformation may best be construed in cyber-cultures. It then examines the complex issue of sexuality in the Fandom, the nature of Furry spirituality in a sub-section of the community, and concludes by considering Furry relationships to structures of power, the economics of the Fandom, and Furrries in community and in fictive kinship relations. This section also identifies three influential media discourses within the narrative of

modernity and, in the concluding observations, I have commented on the possible impact of these discourses in the development of the Furry Fandom .

I must emphasize that the methodology used in this paper is experimental and attempts to articulate with this sub-culture in a way that respects the loosely-bounded and deterritorialized nature of a largely virtual sub-culture. It does not begin with an hypothesis, nor does it attempt to demonstrate a single theory. It is an attempt to “map” the large and growing sub-culture of the “Furry Fandom”, a sub-culture that began to define itself as a discrete entity in the 1980s (Patton n.d.) and, today, enjoys a strong presence as a fandom, a community, and a lifestyle in real time, and as a as a fandom, a community, and a lifestyle in cyber-space. In this paper I attempt to apply some of the principles and techniques described by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987) in order to achieve an ethnographic “mapping”, rather than a “tracing”. “Mapping” is used in the Deleuzian sense as “experimentation in contact with the real” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:12) or, in the case of the Furry cyber-culture, “to capture the impact of deterritorialization on the imaginative resources of lived, local experiences,” as Appadurai suggests (Appadurai 1991:196).

In the Furry phenomenon, I see a very complex aggregation of discourse that challenges conventional ethnographic methodology and suggests multiplicity, multi-voiced transactions, and “carnival” in the Bakhtinian sense as “a very material and bodily becoming....an attitude in which all the official certainties are relativized, inverted or parodied.” (Dentith 1995: 68) A Deleuzian “mapping” strategy may capture something of the chaotic and ephemeral nature of the Furry sub-culture, particularly in its cyber manifestation, presenting it as a shifting and changing rhizomatic aggregation rather than as a structured entity with clearly defined borders: “What distinguishes a map from a tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real....It fosters connections between fields, the removal of blockages on bodies without organs, the maximum opening of bodies without organs onto a plane of consistency....A map has multiple entryways, as opposed to the tracing, which always comes back ‘to the same’.” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 12)

The study will begin with a discussion of the conceptual framework and methodology used during the completion of the project. The second section of the paper contains descriptions of and commentaries on aspects of the Furry sub-culture, such as visual representation, theatre and costume, media productions, literature and music, from my field work, interviews, conversations and communications with informants, and Internet research. The third section focuses on Furry social interaction- social structures, kinship relations, identity construction, sexuality, spirituality, and power relations. The conclusions, in keeping with the Deleuzian framework of this study, offer multiple ways of interpreting and thinking about the Furry sub-culture.

This study owes much to my advisers, professors, and fellow students in the Sociology and Anthropology Department of Carleton University, particularly Professors Given and Gose, my main advisers, Professor Thibaudeau, an adviser on the study of material culture, Professor Tyrrell, who assisted me with web-based research, and the members of the University Ethics Committee who helped me to understand the ethical and practical dilemmas that face anthropologists today. I thank all of you for encouraging me, suggesting new avenues of exploration, exercising great patience with my struggles to complete this project, and viewing with tolerance and even, at times, enthusiasm, my efforts to meld conventional ethnographic methodology with post-modern thought in attempting an ethnography of a post-modern sub-culture that exists, to a large extent, in cyber-space. The study also owes a great deal to the Furry community. Although Furies are rather sensitive about becoming potential objects of the anthropological “Gaze”, as one might expect, I found that my presence at Furry gatherings was well accepted, and my informants were unfailingly helpful in educating me about their community and in correcting errors in my perception of the Fandom.

Perhaps a word of explanation about the title of this study is in order. “It gives me thunder” is a quotation from Fox Wolfie Galen, a “Plushie” in one sub-set of the Furry Fandom. Galen was interviewed extensively by George Gurley, author of “Pleasures of the Fur” (Gurley 2001), an article that appeared in the March 2001 issue of *Vanity Fair*. This article is discussed in some detail in the section of the chapter

on Furry a visual art that deals with visual misrepresentation. In 2001 very little had been written about Furies, particularly in the popular press. At the time it was fortuitous that I found it, but I failed to realize that, for very good reasons, it was a “red flag” to the entire Furry community. Gurley’s article is still cited by Furies today as an example of what will happen if the popular press is allowed to interview Furies at conventions. Needless to say, as soon as I posted the introductory remarks for this study, using Gurley’s definition of Furies and several quotations from Galen, the Furry community rapidly assisted me in seeing the error of my ways. “Higgs Raccoon” posted a reply: “Oh, and I love the way the *Vanity Fair* article is given a pseudo-respectability by being cited as “Gurley 2001”. (Higgs Raccoon 2007. http://furry.wikia.com/wiki/It_Gives_Me_Thunder. Accessed 14/02/07). Douglas Muth added that “I sent a note to the author about that, and pointed out that by citing that article as some sort of objective commentary about furry fandom, he is doing the entire fandom a disservice.” I apologize once again to the entire Fandom if using any part of this article lends it credibility, and I hope that my “deconstruction” of Gurley’s article in the section on visual representation will correct any wrong impressions, but I have decided to retain “It gives me thunder” in the title of this study. The human-animal interface is cloaked in myth and mystery, from the earliest cave paintings to the transformative mythology of Greece and Rome. Anthropomorphic creatures appear in mythology and folk tales around the world. Why? They give us “thunder”. The mythology of anthropomorphic animals and border dwellers such as Donna Haraway’s cyborgs expresses, in a way that cannot be disputed, our links to perceived sources of intensity and power. As Mosco points out in *The Digital Sublime: Myth, Power, and Cyberspace* (Mosco 2004: 30) “Myth provides a “euphoric clarity” by eliminating complexities and contradictions....By denying the fullness of the political, myth naturalizes its narrative and raises it to the level of a near impregnable fortress, unassailable by ordinary mortals. Myths are what is and there is not much that can be done about them.” Thomas Hine goes on to comment on the application of myth to lived experience: “[Myths are] an attempt to invest our lives with a meaning and a drama that transcend the inevitable decay and death of the individual. We want our stories to lead us somewhere and come to a satisfying conclusion, even though not all do so.” (Hine 1991:34) Leslie Fiedler observes that myths equip us with a way of seeing as

“projections of certain unconscious impulses otherwise confessed only in our dreams, but which once raised to the level of full consciousness serve as grids of perception through which we screen so-called reality.” (Fiedler 1996:34) Whether one subscribes to Fiedler’s rather Jungian remarks or not, it is my belief that the Furry community’s investment in anthropomorphic animals, accompanied by their mythological “baggage”, has a great deal to do with relations of power within and outside the Fandom.

Chris Seabrook, Ottawa, 2010.

INTRODUCTION

*Blood from a stone
Water from wine.
Born under earplay design.
A stroke of bad luck,
Wrong place, wrong time.
Let's fly up out of the lime.*

*The story is a sad one, told many times.
The story of my life in trying times....*

(REM 1996 How the West Was Won and Where It Got Us.
*From New Adventures in Hi-Fi. REM Athens Ltd.
Distributed by Warner Music Canada Ltd.)*

As I reflect upon the experience of an anthropology student submitting term papers during the past decade, I realize that those of us still committed to the embattled discipline of anthropology are, indeed, living in “trying times.” I entered the field of anthropology at the end of the heyday of Julian Steward’s “cultural ecology”. Although a critique of cultural ecology was already established (Friedman 1974, Sahlins 1976), Lee and DeVore’s Harvard Kalahari Research Project (1976) still sought to convince us with “scientific analysis” that the San of the Kalahari, living in “relative affluence”, had adapted successfully to their harsh environment, thus providing us with a fascinating “window on the Paleolithic”. Within two years, this approach was thoroughly discredited as Gordon (2000), Wilmsen (1999) and John Marshall (2000) pointed out that anthropological stereotyping of the San both ignored their socio-economic position and created a destructive mythology. Anthropology became advocacy. Feminist theorists and post-modern thinkers such as Foucault convinced us that knowledge claims based on bending the patriarchal, Western rationalist Eye of the beholder upon an objectified “exotic Other” were partial at best. What, then, can anthropologists do if they cannot do field research and make knowledge claims about “exotic” Trobrianders or nomadic foraging Bushmen? As I have pursued my studies at Carleton, I have become increasingly interested in the problematic interface between post-modern theory, research practice, and the production of ethnographic studies.

In my first year of anthropological study, the thesis-driven paper with its accompanying paraphernalia – a clear statement of purpose, identification of the area of study, a thesis defended by appropriately chosen supporting evidence re-iterated in a conclusion which suggested further research possibilities or applications of the central generalized concept- was the dominant genre. Thus, knowledge “grew”, rooted in single unifying concepts (often about the nature of knowledge itself), and reproduced as the concept was re-applied in yet another paper. By the early new millennium, however, the tree began to shake – or, to borrow Deleuze’s metaphor, (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:5), the “root-book”, the image of the Wacah Chan, or Yggdrasil world-tree of western knowledge, became a troubling paradigm. As Deleuze points out, “the book as a natural reality is a tap-root with its pivotal spine and surrounding leaves...Binary logic is the spiritual reality of the root-tree...this system of thought has never reached an understanding of multiplicity....it must assume a strong principal unity....That doesn’t get us very far.” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:5) The Word, as described by Foucault, represented a series of power-knowledge statements generated from the observations of an all-seeing Eye. (Foucault 1980a, 1980c) Feminist commentators, questioning the supposed objectivity of “scholarly” research, suggested a closed circle, rather than a linear tap-root, as an appropriate analogy. In the post-modern trope, the hypothesis, surrounded by its particularly searched for, and gathered or manufactured, supporting evidence, becomes “fact” or “science-knowledge”, a construct generated and validated within a privileged community that already believes (or acts as if it does) in the suppositions that make certain conclusions inevitable. (Latour and Woolgar 1986)

By the mid new millennium, post-modern objections to “the classical book, as noble, signifying, and subjective organic interiority” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:5) had become significant enough that I and my fellow students were forced to acknowledge new ways of “writing culture”. Fortunately the feminist concepts of “situated knowledge” and “partial perspective” came to the rescue. (Duran 2001) Acceptable term papers should contain at least one paragraph of modest disclaimers, “siting” or locating the writer, acknowledging the barrier between subject and object, and demonstrating at least passing

acquaintance with Foucault and feminist theorists. Deleuze would describe the resultant study as a “fascicular root” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:5), where secondary roots have been grafted on to the primary tap-root, but “the root’s unity persists”. There persists, he contends, “an even more comprehensive secret unity”. The writer, with modest disclaimers, expresses doubt about his/her all-seeing Eye or ability to extract “factual” knowledge from an examination of the object. The focus thus shifts to the subject; within the closed circle of the reflexive writer’s acknowledged limited perception, the thesis, or Word, marches on, surrounded by a cadre of supporting evidence, and reaches its inevitable conclusion. Fox comments in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present* (Fox 1991) on this difficulty in encountering Geertz. He notes that the Malinowskian text derives its knowledge claims from the subject’s physical proximity to the Exotic Other. “The Geertzean text used a related convention: culture comprised a subtle code that only the canny anthropologist could decipher.” (Fox 1991:94) Emphasis has shifted to the subject, the reflexive author: “the Geertzean text bestowed an equal apotheosis on the ethnographer, who could speak, oracularly, of worlds otherwise unknown.” (Fox 1991:94) Watson believes that reflexive anthropology is “far from being radical...it is essential conservative; it shores up and reinvigorates the realist genre it allegedly supersedes....” (Watson 1991:81-82)

Unfortunately, Derrida and Bakhtin still awaited the essayist, posing new questions. What if we were actually to abandon the pre-formed hypothesis and its foregone conclusion? What if we truly embraced the notion of a complex and multi-voiced transactional dialogue? (Bakhtin 1981) What if Bakhtinian “carnival” and “knowledge-play” (Dentith 1995) became the dominant paradigm? Derrida warns us that, in accepting this “step from the world of science to the world of life” (Derrida 1978[1966]:13) we can expect, not a neatly pre-formed hypothesis structure, but a rather chaotic, partial, and experimental “monster”:

...We must first try to conceive of the common ground, and the difference of this irreducible difference.... Here there is a sort of question, call it historical, of which we are glimpsing today the conception, the formation, the gestation...the face of the as yet unnameable which is proclaiming itself and which can do so, as is necessary whenever a birth is in the offing, only

under the species of the non-species, in the formless, mute, infant, and terrifying form of monstrosity.” (Derrida 1996: 15)

‘Monstrosity’ to Derrida, is not a negative concept, but a necessary outcome of chaos and freeplay. This form of writing, or writing-thinking, Deleuze likens to a rhizome; a bulb or tuber, an aggregation characterized by principles of connection and heterogeneity, a collective assemblage, and a semiotic chain within which any point can be connected to anything other. (Deleuze 1987:7) Asignifying and asubjective, the rhizome may form, dissolve, reform, or break apart, with segments exploding in a line of flight, but the line of flight remains part of the rhizome. “Writing culture” becomes, not the demonstration of a fore-ordained thesis, but a process, a “becoming”, the accumulation or rhizomatic accretion of descriptions which may or may not form into a “plane of consistency” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:69) remarkably similar to the process or “becoming” which it hopes to describe. Writing culture as process or becoming Deleuze likens to a map, as opposed to a tracing. A tracing codifies, “explores an unconscious that is already there from the start”, arranges along an axis, refers to previously established “competence”. (Deleuze 1987:12) A map “is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real”....it does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious. It fosters connections between fields....It is itself a part of the rhizome.” (Deleuze 1987:12)

For most anthropologists working in the field today, these are not novel ideas; a major tendency in anthropology, going right back to Boas, has been the insistence that generalization must be viewed with suspicion, that each act, each artifact described by the ethnographer is a result of its particular historical context, its unique rhizome, rather than another cell in the linear tap-root of the Observer’s thesis. It is not, perhaps, the ethnographic enterprise which is in question here, but the imposition of linearity which removes ethnographic writing from process and becoming, and forms it into crystallized “product” with its insurmountable barriers between subject and object, focusing on ethnography as a verb (or even a verbal adjective) instead of as a noun. Thus, this paper is an experiment, a “map” rather than a “tracing”. It will describe, or map, points of interaction with the interesting emergent sub-culture of the Furry Fandom. It will suggest the possibility of “lines of flight”, ruptures, divisions and affinities. The

“rhizome” of the Furry Fandom may be described by accumulating “data” in the manner of traditional ethnographic field studies; however, such “data” must be regarded, not as immutable fact, but simply as points in the mapping enterprise which interconnect or suggest lines of flight. In this study, data has been gathered in four ways – through several sociological studies of the Fandom which are discussed and summarized, through participant-observation and interviews, through becoming acquainted with the cultural artifacts of this creative sub-culture, and through Internet research. To provide an example, “mapping” Furry spirituality, discussed later in this paper, involved summarizing survey results, interviewing Furies, looking at a variety of Internet sources including *WikiFur* (the Furry on-line encyclopedia), Furry essayists, exploring the discourses found in Furry art, literature, theatre, and music, and following many “lines of flight” suggested in the on-line sources. The surveys suggested that a rather small percentage of Furies were Christians, but a larger percentage indicated neo-Pagan, Wiccan, or various forms of New Age affinities which could be explored by following “lines of flight”. Although one might have speculated, originally, that there is a division between Christians and non-Christians in the Fandom, Furry essayists suggest that the rupture in the sub-culture is described by Furies as a division between “Lifestylers” and “Fans”, an entirely different division indicating a rupture between those who find a spiritual dimension in the Fandom and those who do not. Following “lines of flight” suggested to this researcher that the “Lifestyler” element within the Fandom frequently overlaps and intersects with other rhizomatic accretions such as Wicca. The cultural artifacts produced by Furies suggest, however, that there is a dominant motif cutting across ruptures and divisions within the sub-culture and forming a “plane of consistency” loosely organized around a pre-lapsarian Edenic vision which Furies recreate in cyber-space, often in game worlds. Following my own “line of flight”, I have suggested at the end of this paper that one way of describing this recurrent Edenic motif may be to interpret it as a response to an over-arching “meta-narrative” (Lyotard 1979) of modernity.

One other surprise lay in wait for the student of anthropology in these “trying times”. While we students were attempting to grapple with the concepts of the “post-modern turn”, the World Wide Web,

the Internet, Microsoft Network, and Google crept up upon us; our ally, the faithful computer upon which we were producing term papers, became Derrida's "monster" – formless, infant, and unmapped – although scarcely mute. I came face to face with the "cyber-turn" at the end of the 2006-7 academic year when I realized that my entire area of study, the Furry sub-culture had moved to a new address- and it was in cyber-space. For an entire year I wandered about in a cyber-desert trying to collect data from seemingly endless strings of links, trying to formulate at least some notion of central tendency in the transient and ephemeral world of the Internet, and, above all, trying to arrive at some idea of how one could possibly produce an ethnography from the turbulent data-streams of cyber-communication.

To my knowledge, no one has, as yet, produced an ethnography of a cyber-culture, although there are many excellent studies of more limited topics. Fortunately there are always prophets among us, and I was able to find one or two. Although it took almost as long to assimilate Mark Numes' *Cyberspaces of Everyday Life* (2006) as it did to compile a disc drive filled with links to Furry websites, archived internet content, forums, chats, BBSs, MUCKs, MUDs, etc..., I was, at least, able to conceptualize some of the "spaces" that my study would have to explore. Christine Hine's *Virtual Ethnography* (2000) provided some much-needed advice on how to cope with the data-stream and was particularly reassuring in her observations on the impossibility of achieving a static "snapshot" of a cyber-culture. (Hine 2000:65) The results of this year of research can be found in the section titled "Where the Cyber-Wild Things Are".

I have used the term "emergent sub-culture". The term implies a coalescence of material that is in continual flux, in the process of becoming "culture". The term "culture", itself, has always been an anthropological battleground, from Boas' historical particularism to feminist objections that the concept of culture, "shadowed by coherence, timelessness, and discreteness, is the prime anthropological tool for making "other" and "difference." (Abu-Lughod 1991) Not only is "the culture concept" under continual re-examination, to most post-modernists, the boundaries of selfhood are shattered and fragmentary at best. Indeed, Deleuze observes that individualized innovation scarcely exists: "There are no individual statements, there never are. Every statement is the product of a machinic assemblage, in other words of

collective agents [multiplicities] of enunciation.” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:37) Perhaps the concept of the rhizome is useful again – an aggregation of points which may or may not be connected, which may or may not diverge or return to or from the main body, but which form context, continually shaping and being shaped by the fragmented self. Here the Deleuzian re-introduction of “haeccity” and a “plane of consistency” containing “haeccities along intersecting lines” may be of help in conceptualizing the deterritorialized space of the Furry sub-culture. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:263) Cultural studies, as well as being conversations about society and the self, are also dialogues about “the relationship between the word and the world” as Arjun Appadurai points out. (Appadurai 1991:196)

To translate the tension between the word and the world into a productive ethnographic strategy requires a new understanding of the deterritorialized world that many persons inhabit....The terms of the negotiation between imagined lives and deterritorialized worlds are complex, and they surely cannot be captured by the localizing strategies of traditional ethnography alone. What a new style of ethnography can do is to capture the impact of deterritorialization on the imaginative resources of lived, local experiences. Put another way, the task of ethnography now becomes the unraveling of a conundrum: what is the nature of locality, as a lived experience, in a globalized deterritorialized world? (Appadurai 1991:196)

As I attempted to mold my research into some kind of ethnographic presentation, I found that it was extremely fortunate that I had chosen to learn about the Furry sub-culture for this project. The sub-culture is very large and varied providing an extensive field for research. Furry interest in anthropomorphism also suggests a depth of historical development, as well as an opportunity to explore recent rethinking of human-animal-machine relations particularly with respect to totemism (Bleakley 2000, Martin 2000, Plank 2005), cyborgian transformation and embodiment (Haraway 1985, 1991), virtual embodiments in cyberspace (Biocca 1997, Nunes 2006), and concepts of human and animal self and identity (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain 1998, Goffman 1959, Kohn 2005, Ingold 1994, Viveiros de Castro 1998). In Furryism, I see a very complex aggregation of discourse, which might be described as an emergent sub-culture. I hope to show that the tools of traditional ethnography are still valid entry-ways into the collectivity of the Furry phenomenon, and may be integrated into a Deleuzian approach. It is the purpose for which these tools are deployed that is at issue after all and not the tools themselves. I hope to present the Furry Fandom as a process interacting with us and forming lines of

connection with other phenomena that surround us. Although the study may seem to focus on an insignificant aspect of "pop culture", it seems (to me) to involve highly complex, multi-voiced transactions occurring within an elaborate framework of cultural convention. Some may contend that "mapping" Furrries lacks the "high seriousness" of purpose required in an anthropological enterprise. I must vigorously contest this perception. A Kwakiutl elder dons a stylized Raven mask and cloak to participate in a winter ceremonial. Boas finds a world of inspiration in this action. A 28-year old garage mechanic checks the Internet for details, dons an elaborate headdress, complete with the exaggerated eyes and ears of a Disney stuffed animal, straps on a raccoon-like tail, and interacts with a group sharing the experience of "becoming fur". Why is the first event construed as a cultural occurrence of "high seriousness" while the second lacks interest for the anthropologist? Both involve an act of transformation, that utilizes symbols from their culture that have important meaning to those involved in the becoming. Surely both events raise the same interesting questions. What account will the actor-participant share to describe the experience of "becoming fur" or feathers? What links, what "lines of flight" are suggested by the stylized details of the costume? Does the actor-participant perceive himself as engaged in a power-knowledge dialogue? How will he/she express the emotional context of "becoming fur"? Both activities seem to me to be highly complex, multi-voiced transactions occurring within an elaborate framework of cultural conventions, and webs of meaning. Is the first event one of "high seriousness" only because it may be construed as exotic, Other, distanced in time and space, existent within the "Savage Slot"? (Troillet 1991) As Richard Fox points out, "fieldwork too often specifies a physical location- an inhabited jungle clearing, a village community, an urban barrio - instead of an intellectual position". "Fieldwork" is not just about space; it is also about stance.

The Significance of the Study:

In “Anthropology Beyond Crisis: Toward an Intellectual History of the Extended Present”, Matti Bunzl observes that the “turn” following the 1989 publication of Clifford and Marcus’ *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, in his opinion a “post-anthropological” work, could be described as the “transdisciplinary turn- a turn that reinvented the discipline through the deliberate erasure of what had come to be seen as its compromised history”. (Bunzl 2005:192) Bunzl suggests that we are now in a period of re-building, “anthropology’s post-postmodern redisciplinarization”. (Bunzl 2005: 193) Although it may seem excessively ambitious to attempt a full-scale ethnography of a largely Internet sub-culture in these “trying times”, I would like to suggest that the effort may be worthwhile, if somewhat chaotic. This study incorporates several innovative approaches that seem to be useful in approaching a large and loosely-bounded sub-culture with both a “real” and a virtual presence:

- Deleuze and Guattori’s (1987) distinction between “mapping” and “tracing” provides a reminder that reflexivity is essential in addressing the problem of the Euro-centered “Gaze” of the observer and is particularly applicable to Internet research,
- The paper insists on multiplicity in interpretation. Although there are, arguably, traits in this sub-culture that may be construed as “central tendency”, handling the study as a multi-voiced transaction aids the researcher in avoiding the selection of evidence, particularly from the Internet, that supports only a pre-ordained synthesis. As the study progressed, I found myself increasingly relying on Erving Goffman’s (1959[1956]) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* and its view of the self as a form of theatrical performance in order to disassociate multiple presentations of identity, such as those which occur in role-playing games when the self is represented by several avatars, from problematic concepts of mental “disorder”,
- Combining “mapping” methodology and an insistence on multiplicity of interpretation with conventional techniques such as “triangulation” in collecting data, strongly recommended by Hine (2000) in the case of cyber-studies, suggests that there is most certainly a place for

traditional ethnographic methodology in attempting to deal with the Internet data-stream in a valid and credible manner.

- In attempting to describe a culture in cyber-space, Deleuzian concepts of rhizomatic accretion, hydraulic flow, “haeccity”, and multiplicity with respect to identity provide the researcher with a flexible and adaptive vocabulary. In addition, I have suggested that both the discourse of Furies and the discourse of post-modern anthropology may be construed as multi-voiced narrative. This approach may be particularly useful in mapping a sub-culture bounded only by a single shared area of interest.
- An insistence on multiplicity in interpretation allows the researcher to apply a number of theoretical approaches in interpreting observations. For example, the application of Marxist theory, Durkheimian concepts, “uniform theory”, feminist concepts of sexuality as performative art, framing theory and cyborg theory, were all helpful to me in discussing the complexity of a large and diversified cyber-culture.
- The paper re-examines concepts of spacial boundaries of a study area, the idea of the unified subject, post-modern identity theory, and the question of the authenticity, creativity, and originality of the artist or author’s voice in the light of emergent Internet cultures.
- The paper re-examines concepts of totemism, animal transformation, and embodiment, a topic that may be of increasing interest in view of the popularity of “New Age” shamanism and neo-Romanticism. In addition, sociologists may find the comments on the increasing socialization of children through anthropomorphic animal or machine models of some interest.
- The paper suggests that the Furry sub-culture interacts along contested boundaries in interesting ways. For example, in the area of gender identity and essentialist interpretations of heterosexuality and homosexuality, a positioning of anthropomorphic avatars or Fursonas in a pre-lapsarian Edenic setting, in a virtual game-world, places the gamer in a virtual time and place

prior to construction of gender or species identity, thus creating a safe and secure enclave where concepts of pornography are irrelevant. Despite the perception that studies of popular cultural phenomena are trivial or “light-weight”, researchers may find that cyber-cultures focusing on alternative identity creation, particularly in the area of computer-mediated gaming, will provide an interesting and productive area of study.

MEET THE FURRIES

The Furry community, both in real life and in cyber-space, may be defined as a loosely-bounded sub-culture of people interested in anthropomorphic animals. Furry essayist, Simo, in a recent and very useful publication, *An Informal History of Furry Fandom* (http://www.furrydolphin.net/2009_files/furry-history.html. Accessed 25/10/09), offers a more complete classification:

The term “furry” is used in several senses. A Furry is a fantasy being that is an anthropomorphic animal, a zoomorphic human, or which [*sic*] is an amalgamation of human and animal features. Anthropomorphic animal characters would include intelligent rats and mice from *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*... all of which look like animals, and yet think and communicate like humans. Also included would be cartoon characters such as Bugs Bunny, Yogi the Bear.... These characters are normally bipedal, often dress in human clothing, and resemble their real life counterparts in more or less detail. Zoomorphic characters would include such characters as “Josie and the Pussycats” (wear cat ears and tails), Spiderman (superhero whose super powers derive from those of an animal), or Batman (name, costume, and symbolism derive from bats). (Simo 2009. http://www.furrydolphin.net/2009_files/furry-history.html. Accessed 25/10/09.)

Mythic beings and fantasy creatures are also included in the community; thus, the term “Furry” refers both to an anthropomorphic creature, possibly an avatar, and to a person who is self-ascribed within the Furry sub-culture. This definition is so broad and general that it suggests one of the problems in writing the ethnography of this group. As Simo points out, the Furry community is not, strictly, a “Fandom”. Typically Fandoms center on one specific original – a television program in the case of *Star Trek*, movies in the case of *Star Wars*, or one specific literary genre, as in the case of science-fiction Fandoms. Simo suggests that the Furry Fandom may be better described as a “meta-genre”: “It would be more accurate to describe Furry as a meta-genre. Furry characters can appear in genres as diverse as cartoons, comic strips and comic books, science fiction, sword n’sorcery fantasy, fairy tale, sociopolitical allegory, horror, or even a mystery....there is considerable overlap between genres and fandoms, which has led to misunderstandings, inter-fandom rivalries, and flame wars.” (Simo 2009.

http://www.furrydolphin.net/2009_files/furry-history.html.) His observations are significant in this study because Simo’s insistence on self-identification as a member of a cultural grouping articulates well with Fredrick Barth’s work on cultural identity, boundary formation, and emergent sub-cultures. Barth suggests that human history “is a story of the development of emergent forms, both of cultures and

societies”. (Barth 1969:37) All extant cultures and sub-cultures are, in a sense, “emergent”, as they are continually in flux particularly along contested cultural boundaries. Although the sub-culture is “emergent” and mutable, it would be incorrect, in my opinion, to describe Furrydom as transient or ephemeral – a sub-culture that appears and disappears in cyberspace. Some Internet community groups form around specific issues or events and may dissipate when the issue is resolved or the event passes. Furrydom, however, is not an issues-based community, but a community of interest. The single defining characteristic of this sub-culture is its interest in anthropomorphic animals; there is no other widely accepted or unifying tendency in the Fandom. (Simo 2009, “Furry Fandom” http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Furry_Fandom). Some Furry historians, such as “Perri Rhoades” (Rhoades n.d. <http://www.perrirhoades.furtopia.org/Furry.html>), point out that interest in anthropomorphic animals goes back to the dawn of human history, while others, particularly the pre-eminent Furry historian, Fred Patten, (<http://yarf.furry.com/chronology.html>) date the Furry community from the late 1980s. In either case, the Furry sub-culture is large and well-established with a very strong Internet presence as a result of its position as one of the earliest and largest Internet interest communities. Wellman and Gulia suggest that Internet communities are quite similar to real-life communities, particularly to suburban communities where the residents may be unknown to each other:

Pundits worry that virtual community may not truly be community. These writers are confusing the pastoralist myth of community for the reality. Community ties are already geographically dispersed, sparsely knit, connected heavily by telecommunications...and specialized in content. There is so little community life in most neighbourhoods in western cities that it is more useful to think of each person as having a personal community: an individual’s social network of informal interpersonal ties, ranging from a half-dozen intimates to hundreds of weaker ties. (Wellman and Gulia 1999: 187)

Various groups have coalesced within the sub-culture such as Plushies, Scaleys, Therians, Werens, Otherkin. They may be grouped according to sexual interests, types of avatars, degree of commitment to a perceived Furry lifestyle, or other rhizomatic connections. One important distinction is between “fans” and “lifestylers”, those who are interested in viewing, admiring or purchasing cultural artifacts and those who take a creative role in shaping the sub-culture – Fursuiters, artists, writers, Furries with a spiritual

bent. Photographs from my fieldwork showing Fursuiters, Lifestylers, Furry accessories, a Dealer's Table, Artists' Alley and informal groups may be seen in Appendix 1.

For a number of reasons, the Furry phenomenon may help ethnographers to conceptualize the development of on-line sub-cultures in conditions of late capitalism. First, the community is very large, is linked to many other on-line communities, and has established some strong cultural markers, such as the on-line Furry encyclopaedia, WikiFur, many bulletin boards and forums, and a myriad of sites where Furry artists, writers, musicians, historians, linguists, and essayists create cultural artifacts. The boundaries of the Fandom are permeable and intersect and meld with other sub-cultures; at times, these shifting and leaky boundaries cause serious rifts in the Furry community, as seen in the First and Second Furry Internet Flame Wars discussed in the history section of this paper. The areas of conflict are, in themselves, of interest as they tend to coalesce around issues of gender identity and alternative expressions of sexuality, a hotly contested aspect of the Internet.

Secondly this sub-culture offers an opportunity to explore a number of significant themes. Transformation and shape-shifting between animals and humans is clearly a major motif in the Furry sub-culture, but it would be remiss to omit the interest that many Furrries have in challenging the boundaries between humans and machines as well. Some Furry costumes include complex robotic assemblages, and cyborgian figures are popular as avatars and in Furry cultural representations. For ethnographers, this area of interest opens up the possibility of exploring how participants use the datastream of the Internet to create aspects of material culture, how participants construct and perform identities, and how participants in large Internet gaming forums, such as Second Life and FurryMUCK, construct virtual web communities and cyborgian selves.

In the third place, exploration of the Furry sub-culture allows ethnographers to move away from studies of orientalised Others trapped in an ethnographic present, and demands a reconsideration of the development of cultural phenomena as process and as intersecting rhizomatic accretions that compel our attention through multiple, and often conflicting, narratives.

Although Furrries continue to attend real life events in large numbers and still enjoy the Artists' Alleys, Dealers' Dens, panel discussions, and the latest fashions in fursuiting that are prominent features of Furry gatherings, the virtual community of Cyber-Furrries has expanded enormously with growing access to the Internet. The origin of the Fandom in the Unix programmers, the growth of FurryMUCK as one of the first and largest Internet role-playing games, and the rapid expansion of the Furry cyber-community suggests that Furrries have found their true home in cyberspace and are able to use the technology of the Internet skillfully, a development that places the means of cultural production in the hands of individual Furrries and allows members of the sub-culture wide latitude in the construction of an on-line habitus.

The Furry community has been the subject of several sociological surveys. Each of these surveys and their results are discussed in a section entitled "Where the Wild Things Are" (pg 26). The short survey conducted by a research team from the Davis Campus of the University of California provides a quick look at the demographics of the Fandom and is included in Appendix 1. As a result of surveying activity, researchers have compiled sufficient statistical evidence to apply triangulation methodology in creating a demographic profile of the Furry community.

It is not surprising that Furrries have received marked attention from the mainstream media or that opposition both within and outside the Fandom has erupted in the form of "Flame Wars": two tables, one of anti-Furry groups and one of parody and satirical groups, are included in Appendix 1. The issue of perceived obscenity in Furry visual representation and writing is, perhaps, the most contentious and divisive one in the sub-culture. (Simo 2009. http://www.furrydolphin.net/2009_files/furry-history.html) In the section on Furry visual arts I have suggested that the operation of power formations and evidence of class struggle may be seen in the contested area of Furry art for "mature" audiences.

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Throughout this study I have made use of some ways of seeing and vocabulary which seem to express ideas about the Fandom more accurately than conventional anthropological usage. In this section I will first describe some expressions drawn from the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987) which seem to me to be particularly effective in capturing the sprawling datastream of a large and loosely-bounded culture, much of which exists in the virtual space of the Internet. Appendix 3 contains a number of diagrams which may be useful in explaining Deleuzian terminology.

1. The Hydraulic Model vs. the Arborescent Root-Tree:

Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the Western tradition of Aristotelian thought privileges hierarchical structures, suggests the imposition of hierarchy, and presupposes an hierarchical structure of knowledge acquisition which they describe as “Royal” or State Science. Their thinking articulates with Foucault’s commentary on the power-knowledge axis and the “Gaze” of the observer (Foucault 1980), and with the Neo-Boasian emphasis on temporal rather than spatial difference. (Bunzl 2004:437) In contrast, Deleuze and Guattari propose an “hydraulic model” of “nomad science” based on pre-Platonic philosophy. In my opinion, the terminology used in this model is particularly effective in describing the development of cultures in cyberspace. The terminology may describe the virtual expansion of the Fandom as a continual process of becoming, forming and reforming within the datastream, shifting and dissolving boundaries and the creation of eddies and nodes which may reform and connect to other structures. It may also be applied to Furry lived practice which appears to be consistently opposed to hierarchical structure in a social context; it is also used in this paper to describe how Furies create artifacts, particularly music, within the datastream. The first two diagrams in Appendix 2 illustrate the Deleuzian hydraulic and rhizomatic models as well as the arborescent model.

2. A Vocabulary of Relationships- Rhizomes and Haeccities, Molar and Molecular Lines, Lines of Flight and the War Machine, Striated, Smooth, and Holey Space:

Deleuze and Guattari use the term “haeccity” or the “thisness of things” to express their ontological view of things coming into being through their interconnectedness. Collections of “haeccities”

may form rhizomatic structures. In root systems, the rhizome is simply a thickened node in a spreading complex of root-hairs, but the node has the potential to send out new roots and develop into new plants. Similarly, relationships may aggregate into nodes or rhizomes which intersect or connect with other rhizomes. Culture, within this framework, is construed as “the plane of consistency containing only haecceities, along intersecting lines”. These haecceities, or relationships, intersected by a plane of consistency, may accumulate in rhizomatic accretions to form cultural phenomena. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:263) Cultures, and even entire civilizations may be construed as rhizomatic structures containing multiple smaller and interconnected rhizomes. The concept of a “plane of consistency” indicates that these rhizomes may share some characteristics that show enough unity to indicate a cultural accretion. In the Fandom this metaphorical description of the formation of cultural sub-groups seems particularly apt because it avoids the suggestion of hierarchy and proposes shifting and mutable boundaries . For example, in considering Furry sexuality, one might notice both at “real life” conventions and in cyberspace a number of Furies who are interested in and practice various forms of infantilism. At meet-ups and in cyber-meeting places they may aggregate in nursery-like settings and form small sub-cultural groups intersecting and crossing or sharing boundaries with other groups outside the Fandom. Along one “plane of consistency” their lived practice in imitating anthropomorphic baby animals intersects with the larger Fandom, while simultaneously they also participate in another plane of consistency which expresses their relationship to other groups outside the Fandom practicing infantilism.

Deleuze and Guattari use the expressions “molar” and “molecular” lines, as well as “lines of flight” to describe types of relationships, and I have made extensive use of these terms in the paper, partially because they suggest relationships of power and agency, and because they avoid “kinship terminology” which is not, in general, applicable to a sub-culture unified by a shared interest rather than by kinship relations. The third diagram in Appendix 3 presents an explanation of these terms. “Molar” lines describe relations of power, usually with hierarchical structures within the State; “molecular” lines describe community and personal relationships both within and outside the Fandom, and “lines of flight”

describe connections that may occur at any time inside and outside the Fandom providing continual opportunities for change, innovation, and rebellion (a Deleuzian tactic for insisting on the potential for agency). One might consider a Furry within the “striated” or grid-like space of the workplace linked by molar lines to sources of power, or within the “smooth” space or rhizomatic flux of the Fandom linked by molecular lines of common interest, and involved in a continual process of change and becoming through “lines of flight”.

Taking the “hydraulic model” proposed by pre-Platonic philosophers, Deleuze and Guattari create a model including a turbulent flow of lived practice aggregating in rhizomes, interconnected by “lines of flight”, continually generating counter-turbulence and “the war machine”, and intersected by planes of consistency that constitute cultures. This model, in Deleuzian terminology, is, at times, penetrated by “holes in space”, the innovations that bring about massive change, such as the rise of metal-working or agricultural innovation. The concept of “holey space” articulates well with other literature within the field of cyber-cultural studies (Nunes 2006, Poster 2001, Levy 2001, Hine 2000, Turkle 1995, Lefebvre 1994) and suggests that the development of Internet sub-cultures opens a new space of communication which is different in kind from media such as radio and television, allowing the creation of cultural artifacts, multiple identities perhaps selected from the “global supermarket” (Matthews 2000), and “figured” or constructed worlds (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain 1998).

3. A Vocabulary of “Becomings” and Multiplicities:

The Deleuzian vocabulary describing the construction and performance of self and identity articulates to some extent with other writers exploring the construction of alternative selves and the possibility of trans-species engagement. In Appendix 2, I have included a diagram contrasting Viveiros de Castro’s interpretation of Amerindian perspectivism (1998) with the constructed avatars and Fursonas of the Fandom as interpreting using Deleuzian terminology. The Deleuzian version of the constructed and performed self (Goffman 1959) may be seen in the fifth illustration in Appendix 2, a diagrammatic representation of the body as a machinic assemblage and the face as iconic, culturally constructed and performed – a Euro-face. In the extended version, I have used Hayles’ (1999) commentary on the

posthuman subject and Haraway's body of work on cyborgian transformation and boundary crossings (Haraway 1991) to extend this vocabulary of multiplicity and "becomings" into the new space of Furry cyber-culture where transformative identities and trans-species engagement mark participants in this field of study.

4. Totemism, Transformation, and Re-Embodiment:

The Deleuzian approach to transformation and re-embodiment which breaches conventional species boundaries suggests a way of describing Furies' relationships with their "totems" or Fursonas that avoids linear and hierarchical classifications –human-nonhuman, male-female, animate-inanimate- by viewing these relationships as progressive or as "becomings" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:18) In the extended version, the Cartesian binary division of man and nature, the linear paradigm or "species" trope, Levi-Strauss' species-series-structure construct, Durkheim's functionalist interpretation, John Martin's analysis of Durkheimian totemism in Richard Scary's children's literature (Martin 2000), and totemism as a marker of a "primitive" state in neo-Romantic cultural ecology are discussed in detail. Bleakley's (2000:26-7) observations on Biblical creation stories are of particular interest as the author points out the disparity between the Genesis A and B versions of the story of creation. The Genesis A version of Eden as culturally unconstructed and pre-lapsarian is a central concept in Furry thought, in my opinion, and may be expressed in terms of Deleuze's rhizomatic model: "...the rhizome is an acentered, nonhierarchical, nonsignifying system without a General and without an organizing memory or central automaton, defined solely by a circulation of states. What is at question in the rhizome is a relation to sexuality – but also to the animal, the vegetal, the world, politics, the book, things natural and artificial – that is totally different from the arborescent relation: all manner of "becomings". (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 21) Bleakley observes that: "These biblical creation myths, separated possibly by 500 years, offer then lasting models of human-animal relations. The Eden myth is inclusive, describing human participation in animal life, or continuity amongst species, and an immanent Creator; the seven-day myth is exclusive, separating humans from animal life...." (Bleakely 2000: 27) This dominant linear rationalist paradigm can be traced through Aristotle to Descartes, and on to humanism and modernity, while the

underlying “rhizomatic” model persists and forms a basis for much postmodern analysis. In the final sections of this paper, I contend that Eden, as presented in Genesis A, is the model which Furies refer to in their frequent discourse of “a place where I feel comfortable and safe”, both in the real-life interviews which I conducted during fieldwork and in the constructs which they create in cyberspace.

5. Multi-voiced Narrative:

Both Genesis narratives described above are, at times, simultaneously present in Furry discussion of the topic, and provide an example of multi-voiced narrative which is characteristic both of Furies and of anthropological discussions of totemism and animal transformation. In Appendix 2, the last two diagrams illustrate how the basic story suggests Deleuzian “lines of flight” and how the narrative can be described as a rhizomatic accretion interpreted in a number of ways using various anthropological discourses on totemism. This “shapeshifting” story illustrates the importance of approaching both anthropological discourse and Furry discourse as multi-voiced, and even contradictory, narrative. In the study I have frequently pointed out multi-voiced narrative and Bakhtinian areas of “carnival” and “freeplay” (Dentith 1995) in the lived practice of the Furry sub-culture. I have also applied, particularly in the section on Furry visual arts, more than one anthropological discourse in the discussion of Furry cultural artifacts in order to emphasize the possibility of multiple interpretations in cultural “mappings”.

This study, then, makes frequent use of Deleuzian terminology, describing cultures and sub-cultures as rhizomatic accretions formed along a plane of consistency but intersecting through permeable boundaries. It conceptualizes identity and the self as multiple, constructed, and performed, and suggests that the boundaries of gender and species and kind may be viewed as part of a process or “becoming” rather than as essential divisions, drawing on a number of sources cited in the text. The Deleuzian insistence on “lines of flight” and the possibility of agency is particularly stressed in the sections describing Furry cultural artifacts, and, throughout the paper, I have provided numerous examples of multi-voiced narrative both within the sub-culture and within the anthropological community.

FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in conducting field research within the Furry community was quite conventional but required slight alteration in order to articulate with the Deleuzian theoretical framework of this study. As an entry-level study of an emergent sub-culture, this project was well-suited to participant-observation methodology, a staple procedure in ethnographic research, and one that is specifically discussed in Deleuze and Guattari's observations on the Body without Organs (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:160). I was able to combine participant observation at a number of Furry events with extensive Internet research because of the strong presence of this sub-culture in cyber-space.

Several "confounds" that may threaten the validity of research – history, maturation, changes in testing and instrumentation, regression to the mean, selection bias, mortality, and failure to apply triangulation were considered in approaching this research. Among these factors, I certainly found that maturation was a significant problem, because I discovered that the Furry sub-culture existed as much online, as it did offline, during the period of my research, a move that required considerable reconsideration of the nature of culture and identity and the authenticity of artistic production within a virtual environment. Selection bias was not as great a problem, but, as will be seen in the next chapter, the disproportion between male and female respondents has posed a number of questions for researchers using statistical analysis. Of the utmost importance, in my opinion, is the application of at least some form of triangulation in approaching virtual communities. In *Virtual Ethnography* (2000:10), Hine remarks that Internet studies are: "An experientially based way of knowing that need not aspire to produce a holistic study of a bounded culture." Notwithstanding the inability of Internet study to produce data in the conventional sense, it is still important that such research does not produce misinformation and false impressions. In my experience during this study, there are a few strategies that were helpful to me in attempting to map this large, diverse, and rhizomatic community:

1. WikiFur, the Furry encyclopedia (<http://en.wikifur.com>), part of the Wikipedia empire, was invaluable as a starting point in attempting to determine the parameters of a particular field in this study. This large

on-line encyclopedia of Things Furry is edited by “Green Reaper” and is most useful in indicating the outlines of a particular field, providing helpful links to other sites, hosting current information, and frequently updating, editing, and augmenting articles and links. WikiFur seems to have a high degree of credibility among Furies and the editor is frequently in touch with contributors to ensure a high quality of contribution to the project.

2. I found that it was important to compare documents, accounts, and other publications on the websites in which they are embedded in order to arrive at a reasonably accurate description that would be accepted within the Furry sub-culture. For example, in compiling the section on Furry history, I found that Fred Patten’s account (Patten n.d.) was very widely accepted as a valid rendition of the beginning of the Fandom. “Perri Rhoades,” history (Rhoades n.d.) is somewhat more controversial as it proposes that the Fandom has roots in the earliest anthropomorphic art and literature in human history. This position is attacked by “Simo” (“Simo” 2009), an interesting and thoughtful Furry essayist, whose history of the Fandom is the third source that I used in compiling this section. In attempting to discuss these three versions of Furry history, I have suggested that the Rhoades version places the Fandom within the very large field of historical anthropomorphic representation- a position that may be supported, in my opinion, when one examines the use of myth and the appropriation and rearticulation of artifacts from ancient cultures, particularly in Furry visual representation. Patten’s and “Simo’s” accounts re-position the Fandom within the “funny animal” sub-culture that flourished in underground comics in the 1980s. Again this is a valid position because satire and parody drawn from “funny animal” comics and cartoons are very strong traits in Furry literature and visual representation. Exploration of other essays on Simo’s interesting “Furry Dolphin” domain led me to believe that this Furry historian was much more likely than Rhoades or Patten to discuss issues of power and contested areas within the Fandom. The three histories of the Fandom certainly help the researcher to appreciate the development of this sub-culture and coincide to some degree, but it is important to note that each history also has its own “agenda” and location.

3. The life expectancy of Internet postings can be brief, to say the least. During my research, I compiled a very extensive “key” or external drive filled with links to all the areas of enquiry in this mapping. As I wrote this account, the links disappeared and the websites vanished. This is, perhaps, one of the most frustrating and time-consuming aspects of Internet research. I found that it was necessary to print hard copy immediately and to organize binders of material as soon as Internet contacts are made because within two or three months the entire site under investigation may alter or vanish. Some archived material is available, often through websites where past issues of on-line publications are saved, but I found that I could not depend on Internet archives to retrieve information.

The best way to avoid misrepresentation is to ensure that there is always more than one source for significant conclusions drawn by the researcher. Because there are several major statistical studies of Furrries, and because there are several Furry essayists and a wealth of Internet commentary, comparison and verification of information within the Furry sub-culture is quite possible where the available studies ask similar questions. I found that the issue of misrepresentation and the creation of a “Furry myth” was a major concern in the Fandom. At least three of the surveys discussed in the section entitled “Where the Wild Things Are” specifically address perceived media creation of a damaging Furry myth. In the extended version of this paper, I included in the section on Furry art an extensive discussion of visual misrepresentation and its devastating impact on anthropological “subjects” such as the San people of the central Kalahari in past anthropological work. Although I have omitted the discussion in this paper, I have commented on media misrepresentation, the Furry myth, visual representation, and the possible pathologization of Furrries in “Where the Wild Things Are” and in Appendix 5.

In adjusting methodology to meet the needs of a Deleuzian approach, I have used a “mapping” technique throughout the study, describing “rhizomatic accretions” and planes of consistency, drawing “lines of flight” to suggest connections or possible parallels, and mapping aspects of the Furry sub-culture. At times, I have suggested possible interpretations of data, but I have attempted to leave the majority of interpretation until the final chapter of the study so that I can suggest a multiplicity of

interpretations from various perspectives. Some aspects of conventional ethnography, particularly language study and kinship studies, have required considerable reframing in view of the nature of the Furry sub-culture as an intentional community with elaborate, virtual/ fictive kinship webs, and the development of fictive languages.

The extended version of this paper outlines my use of informants, some questions of representation with reference to the under-representation of women, the development of a questionnaire, unobtrusive observation on the Internet, and the problem of “IRB Mission Creep” (Lederman 2006, Katz 2004). The procedures and methodology for the administration of this survey are detailed in this version. A complete version of the survey that I administered is included in Appendix 3.

WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

Furries locate and define themselves as a community interested in anthropomorphic animals (Anon. n.d.: http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/History_of_the_Fandom), but admit that “*what* a furry is becomes a question of incredible ambiguity” (Osaki 2008:6). One might say that the Fandom is an amorphous entity coalescing around an interest in anthropomorphism and “funny animals” with a membership that, typically, overlaps into other communities of interest, such as New Age spiritualism, cartooning, computer graphics, etc. Its “leaky boundaries” (Haraway 1985) and lack of strong central focus suggests Deleuzian rhizomatic accretion within the complex matrix of popular culture, with a membership that moves in and out of various rhizomatic accretions through permeable cultural boundaries. A partial taxonomy of related accretions is proposed, in diagram form, in the following illustration taken from the extended version, showing rhizomatic connections between the Fandom and other related communities of interest:

Unlike most of the other fandoms, such as Trekkies, X-Philes, the *Lord of the Rings* fandom, which are centered on a specific TV show, movie, or literary piece, or a more generalized fandom, such as the science fiction fandom, Furry is more inclusive than that. It would be more accurate to describe Furry as a meta-genre. Furry characters can appear in genres as diverse as cartoons, comic strips and comic books, science fiction, sword 'n' sorcerer fantasy, fairy tale, sociopolitical allegory, horror, or even a mystery....” (Simo 2009)

This distinction between the Furry Fandom and more conventional and limited fandoms is of considerable importance, as Simo also observes. First, because Furrries are not official “members” of any fan club or organization, they are more accurately describes as “affiliates” than as “members” of the Fandom. (Simo 2009) Secondly, fandoms, in the more conventional sense, may be subject to considerable control from the parent company that is the source of their inspiration. Until recently, for example, Trekkies were actively discouraged from writing literature in the *Star Trek* mode. Because the Furry Fandom is based on the general concept of anthropomorphism, rather than on a single source, its affiliates have much more latitude in creative expression, whether in works of art and literature, or in the expression of their affiliation through lifestyle choices; thus, although the lack of central focus in the Furry Fandom may lead to some difficulty in definition, the amorphous and rhizomatic nature of the Fandom has encouraged creative participation on the part of its membership.

Furrries exercise their creativity in creating human-animal-machine morphs and shape-shifters, and equally enjoy creating new categories and taxonomies. Mythological forms, such as the Japanese kitsumi, are popular, as well as cyborgian amalgams, various were-creatures, and avatars incorporating popular comic book and video gaming characters. There is some controversy over what is, and what is not, a Furry, but the Fandom may be characterized, generally, as encouraging inclusivity. Furrries may also classify themselves according to etic categories, such as political affiliation (ie. “ConFurvatives”), emically according to affiliation with sub-groups within the Fandom (ie. “Burned Furs”), and, perhaps, according to spectrums of community involvement (fans to lifestylers), Fursona type, or sexual preference. Furry essayist, Simo, (Simo 2006b) argues that the Fandom is a “microcosm of the public-at-large”, and, therefore, includes the broad spectrum of preferences and behaviors that one finds in the general public.

The Fandom, as a large and persistent sub-culture has been the object of at least six surveys. I have included two tables which compare the findings of the six major surveys. The first survey of the Fandom, conducted by David Rust from 2000-2002, is still considered a landmark study and captures the Fandom at an important stage as it made the transition from a “real-life” Fandom of convention-goers to a massive Internet sub-culture. Rust’s comments on the under-representation of women and racial minorities in the Fandom continue to be of interest. The second major survey was an on-line survey of over 600 Furrries conducted from 2005-2007 by a team from the University of California, Davis Campus. This brief questionnaire contrasted with Rust’s findings, particularly with regard to sexual orientation. The third survey studied was the Rocky Mountain FurCon 2008 Survey conducted by Amanda Krut, surveying 171 attendees at FurCon 2008. One interesting variant in the Krut survey was the increased number of female respondents. Her questions on transformation and embodiment, reasons for participating in the Fandom, education and computer literacy provide some useful insight into why the Fandom has flourished as a virtual sub-culture. The fourth survey, the Osaki-Furry Research Center Survey, *State of the Fandom 2008*, is a massive survey including over 7000 respondents. Osaki concludes that the “prototypical furry” is “a guy...young...college-educated....moderately liberal...enjoys computers...probably does something creative....likes animals, but ...doesn’t think he is one...thinks sex is ok, but it doesn’t rule his life.” (Osaki 2008:30) This survey is discussed in detail in the extended version. The fifth survey is The Ultimate Furry Survey/Ultimate Furry Survey 2 by “Supuhstar”, a very recent survey still in development, but particularly interesting in its production of a statistically supported portrait of “the average Fur” included in Appendix 4.

The final survey considered was of particular interest to me. The Niagara College Survey, conducted by a team led by Dr. Kathleen Gerbasi, is a very polished and professional instrument administered from 2006 to the present at Anthrocon, a very large Furry annual convention. In 2008, Gerbasi *et al.* published “Furrries from A to Z (Anthropomorphism to Zoomorphism), a compilation of survey results and discussion of “two key furry identity questions”. (Gerbasi *et al.* 2008) Gerbasi devises

a scaled response table similar to that used in identifying “Gender Identity Disorder” and postulates a “proposed construct of *Species Identity Disorder*.” (Gerbasi *et al.* 2008:1-2) I have included a rather lengthy discussion of this survey in the extended version, and I urge the reader to look at it, as it is a major purpose of this study to attempt to construct a framework for ethnographic research that does not place the researcher in the position of having to classify behaviors that challenge existing Cartesian concepts of binary division as “disorders”.

There is sufficient co-relation between these six surveys to provide researchers with a statistically supported basis for concluding that popular media portrayals of the Fandom are misleading. The surveys also report a higher than average educational level accompanied by a strong interest in Internet communication. As the comparative table seen in Figure`2 indicates, the survey data could corroborate some generalizations, such as the strong Furry interest in visual representation and in computer-mediated communication.

Tendency	Rust Survey *1999-2000	UC Davis Survey 2005-2007	Rocky Mountain FurCon Survey 2008	Osaki State of the Fandom Survey 2008	Ultimate Furry Survey 2009	Gerbasi <i>et al.</i> Survey, “Furries from A to Z” 2006-2009
The Furry population tends to be young.	Furries generally “fall in the young adult range.”(31% between 16-22)	Average age was 24.6 yrs. old.	42% in 20-24 yr. old range.	Average-23.7 yrs. Median-22 yrs.	73% between 11-20 yrs. 23% between 21-30.	Mean age of 26.1 years.
Respondents were predominantly male.	...”there are few women in the fandom.”	81% of respondents were male.	74.4% of respondents were male.	80.3% of respondents were male.	87% male.13% female, 1% other.	86% of the Furry sample was male.
Respondents were primarily Caucasian, non-Hispanics.	There is...” a relatively small percentage of racial minorities in the Furry Fandom.” (94% Caucasian-non-Hispanic)	89% of respondents were “White”.	n.d.	83.7% Caucasian-non Hispanic.	n.d.	n.d.
The sexual orientation of respondents showed significant variation.	48% of respondents were bisexual. [There is] “a higher tolerance for variety in sexual orientation and activity.”	37.3% were bisexual. 32.7% were heterosexual. 1. 25.5% were homosexual. 1. 8% were “other”.	n.d.	Hetero-sexual-32.1% Homo-sexual-23.9% Bisexual-36.0% Neither-2.7% Other-5.2%	34% herosexual. 20% homosexual. 16% heterosexual exploring bisexuality. 16% bisexual. 12%	Among male respondents: 28% heterosexual, 40.5% bisexual, 31.5% homosexual. Among female respondents:

					homosexual exploring bisexuality 2% other	58 3% heterosexual, 41 7% bisexual, 0% homosexual
The Furry population participates in and enjoys the arts	Furry activities are listed as collecting artwork, writing/reading stories, attending meets, chatting online, creating Furry art	c 120 of 600 respondents participate in art auctions	17 1% listed Arts, Design, and Entertainment as their occupation	48% of respondents said that they were graphic artists	54% enjoy drawing anthro animals 8% only draw anthro animals 45% consider themselves artists, 39% writers, and 25% musicians	Furries scored significantly higher than college students on aesthetic appreciation items related to appreciation of art and beauty, but little difference appeared in the music and literature categories
Visual arts are the most significant art form in the Fandom	n d	n d	20 1% indicated that art or creative expression was the most important part of belonging to the Fandom 50 9% reported creating anthro art 78 4% reported viewing anthro art	56 8% of respondents said that art is "extremely important in the Fan-dom, while 33 4% said that it was important	59% indicate they feel "extremely positive" about Furry artwork	75 6% of convention participants described a Furry as believing in the the importance of art vs 35 3% for college students
The Furry population uses the Internet extensively	"There is a high amount of literature, artwork, announcements and communities aimed at Furry Fandom on the Internet "	300 of 600 respondents reported that they meet with friends from the Internet in real live C 290 blog	13 8% indicated Computer Programming or Tech Support as their occupation 53 2% indicated posting on message boards 48 5% reported roleplaying activities	78 9% of respondents belong to Furry websites 59 3% say they are active online and 93 4% think online communities are important or very important	57% participate in online Furry communities at least several times a week 41% roleplay online with other Furies at least once a week 70% are members of DeviantArt 69% are members of Fur Affinity 61% say they are active in online communities	n d
Many Furies are students	Most Furies report their current occupation as "Student" (31%)	38% were students	21 7% of respondents were students	42 5% of respondents were students	n d	n d
Most Furies have completed	"Furry Fandom seems to be populate by	n d	50 6% completed high school 47% reported post-	16 8% had only high school	n d	n d

high school. Many are involved in or have completed post-secondary degrees or certificates.	college-educated individuals.”		secondary degrees or qualifications.	diplomas. 38.2% had some college education. 24% were college graduates. 4.2% had some post-graduate experience. 5.3% had advanced degrees.		
Furries tend to be apolitical or somewhat liberal.	n.d.	c. 24.5% reported they were not political. 24% indicated they were liberal.	n.d.	45.1% say they are liberal or very liberal. 30.2% say they are moderate. 15.0% indicate they are “Other”.	11% say they are “political activists”.	n.d.

Figure 2: Some Tendencies Evident in Sociological Surveys of the Fandom

* Dates refer to years when the survey was administered, not to dates of publication.

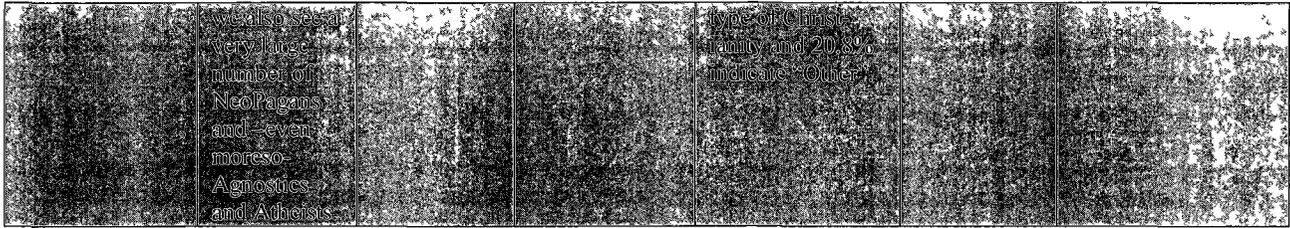
** n.d. No data is available. The question was not included in the survey.

+Quotations in lieu of statistics are used to represent the Rust findings. Raw data provided is encrypted. All quotations are from: Rust 2000-2002.

Element of the “Furry Myth”	Rust Survey *1999-2000	UC Davis Survey 2005-2007	Rocky Mountain FurCon Survey 2008	Osaki “State of the Fandom” Survey 2008	Ultimate Furry Survey 2009	Gerbasi <i>et al.</i> Survey, “Furries From A to Z” 2006-2009
The Fandom is pre-dominantly homosexual.	48% of respondents reported bisexuality.	25.5% of respondents indicated that they are homosexual.	n.d. 3% reported gender as “other”.	36% reported bisexuality, 32.1% reported hetero-sexuality, 23.9% reported homo-sexuality.	34% heterosexual, 20% homosexual, 16% heterosexual exploring bisexuality, 16% bisexual, 12% homosexual exploring bisexuality, 2% other.	Among male respondents: 28% heterosexual, 40.5% bisexual, 31.5% homosexual. Among female respondents: 58.3% heterosexual, 41.7% bisexual, 0% homosexual.
Furries are promiscuous and practice group sex.	...“there is a large percentage of Furries who engage in open and non-monogamous sex.”	c. 50% of respondents indicated that they were in a relationship. 76% of these were in a relationship.	n.d. 71.9% reported attending large events.	n.d. on monogamous or non-monogamous relationships. 51.4% of respondents indicate that sex plays a “small” or “extremely	73% think sexual intercourse is extremely unimportant to moderately important, 84% have	n.d.

	relationships (roughly 30%). Nearly 50% are monogamous.	with a Furry.		Small role in their Furry lives, but they perceive other Furies as much more sexual active than they are.	never attended any kind of FurMeet.	
Furries are zoophiles.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	17.1% of respondents say they are zoophiles. 7.2% gave a favorable opinion of zoophilia. 45.6% were negative or very negative.	9% say they are zoophiles.	n.d.
Furries are plushophiles.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	8.5% of respondents say they are plushophiles. 27.3% were negative about plushophilia. 17.4% were positive.	6% say they are plushophiles.	n.d.
Furries are unhappy social misfits.	n.d.	n.d.	90.1% indicated satisfaction with their lives.	n.d.	32% have never met another Furry in person. 21% have no Furry friends or acquaintance. 16% tell no one that they are Furry. 57% tell Furry friends or acquaintances.	29% report that their families are unaware of their involvement in the Fandom, but Furries show no significant difference for personality disorders and "social type behaviors" from an average population on standardized tests.
Furries are usually employed as shelf stockers or as burger flippers.	"Fully a third of the members interviewed reported incomes lower than the poverty level."	n.d. C. 58% reported incomes under \$20,000, perhaps indicating student status.	5.3% indicated no employment. 4.6% reported occupations in Food Service and Hospitality. 5.3% indicated occupations in Sales or Retail.	n.d. on income. 42.5% are students. 15.9% are in Tech/IT occupations, 3.0% are in administrative positions. 7.8% are professionals. 4.7% have no occupation. 6.5% are in service industries, 5.9% are in Sales/Support.	n.d.	n.d.
Furries wear animal costumes.	n.d.	82% did not own a fursuit. C. 110 of 600 respondents.	31% participate in fursuiting.	21.1% of respondents are fursuiters.	25% of respondents enjoy the practice of dressing up.	26.4% of respondents owned a fursuit, 30% had worn a fursuit.

		reported participating in fursuit dress.			in an anthropomorphic costume. 22% feel extremely positive about fursuiting.	
Furries think they are animals.	n.d.	n.d.	68.4% agreed that they are human. 71.3% have a fursona. 22.2% indicated "living as an animal or your fursona."	37% strongly agree that they are human. 44% agree.	44% think they are completely human. 29% think they are human with some animal traits. 6% do not think they are human.	On a measure of "connections to nonhuman species based on GID tests, researchers stated that 72% of respondents were "undistorted attained", 30% were "undistorted unattained", 43% were "distorted attained", 51% were "distorted unattained". The researchers proposed a "Species Identity Disorder" based on these findings.
Furries are poorly educated.	"The Furry Fandom seems to be populated by college-educated individuals ..."	n.d.	47% indicated post-secondary degrees or qualifications.	33.5% have college or post-graduate work or degrees. 38.2% are in college or have some college experience.	n.d.	n.d.
Furries are computer geeks.	"Chatting online in Internet Forums" is listed as a major activity.	n.d. 50% reported friends from the Internet. Slightly under 50% reported blogging.	13.8% list Computer Programming or Tech. Support as occupations.	"deliciously geeky" (Osaki 2008:10) 15.9% are in Tech/IT occupations. 59.3% are active online. 93.4% consider online communities important.	57% participate in online Furry communities at least several times a week. 41% roleplay online with other Furries at least once a week. 56% participate in non-Furry online communities at least several times a week.	75% of respondents were in non-computer or science related occupations.
Furries are pagans or atheists.	"we... see a large percentage of Christians.	n.d.	n.d.	8.1% say they are Pagan. 20.8% are Atheists. 24.8% Agnostics. 25.9% indicate some	n.d.	n.d.



**Figure 3: Six Sociological Surveys of the Fandom and Some Elements of the “Furry Myth”.
Representations of the Fandom:**

Furries show considerable concern about media misrepresentation of the Fandom; Furry essayist, Simo (2009) indicates that media interest in Furries may have peaked and cites several examples of favorable or neutral press coverage. WikiFur provides a timeline of press and television coverage presenting Furries as sexual deviants which is included in the extended version of this paper. Furries may be rightly concerned because the Furry sub-culture relies heavily on the visual arts as a semiotic system and lends itself to media sensationalism through its practice of “fursuiting”, making it particularly vulnerable to the creation of a damaging “mythology”, encouraged by misleading visual representation.

The table in Figure 3 titled “Six Sociological Surveys of the Fandom and Some Elements of the “Furry Myth” indicates that media reports of promiscuous sexual behavior, zoophilia, and plushophilia are exaggerated. I have suggested in Table 3 and in the longer discussion of the “Furry Myth” that appears in Appendix 5 that the Furry sub-culture may be correct in approaching the media and its visual representation of Furries with caution. In Appendix 4, I include a discussion, with accompanying illustrations, of Gurley’s (2001) article introducing Furries to the world in *Vanity Fair*, and illustrations from *Marie Claire* (Hohler 1997) showing Furries as odd and unattractive.

While surveys of the Fandom may indicate that they intend to dispel myths that surround Furries, their efforts may not be entirely successful, and, indeed, may be cause for concern. The original Gerbasi study and the 2009 report present a large-scale effort analyzed with statistical rigor and, in the case of the first Gerbasi study, presented in a peer-reviewed periodical. These studies took on the challenging task of addressing issues of Furry identity and embodiment. Although some areas of the studies may appear problematic, the researchers have certainly focused attention on the “Furry stereotype” as perceived in

media presentations and particularly in the work of George Gurley. (2001). With regard to the first study, “Furries from A to Z (Anthropomorphism to Zoomorphism)” (Gerbas *et al.* 2008) one might hope that the research team will have an opportunity to replicate its findings using a control group that bears increased similarity to the Furry respondents’ group. The group of college students who participated in the control survey consisted of 40 females and 28 males, a proportion that does not resemble the Furry population (Gerbas *et al.* 2008:10). In addition, there was a significant age differential between the test group (mean age of 26.1 years) and the control group (mean age of 22.2 years) (Gerbas *et al.* 2008:10). While in some types of study this age differential might not prove significant, in this population it could mean the difference between a college student at least one year away from graduation and a member of the work force who had been employed for several years. Income level and occupation are only two of the many variables that the disparity between the control group and the test group introduces, any of which could prove to be confounds to the validity of data presented in the analysis.

One might also ask why the research team would consider “species identification” as an issue that would merit labeling as a “disorder”. “Gender Identity Disorder”, upon which the proposed “Species Identity Disorder” is apparently modeled (Gerbas *et al.* 2008:26), is a rather hotly contested item at the present time (Wingerson 2009), as Zucker and Spitzer’s allegations, that GID was introduced as a “mental illness” as a “backdoor maneuver to replace homosexuality” when homosexuality was removed from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (American Psychiatric Association 2007), indicate. (Zucker and Spitzer 2005) In both France and Britain government policy specifically states that transsexual gender identity is not a mental illness. (U.K. Department for Constitutional Affairs 2003, Le Monde 2009) One must, therefore, speculate about the validity of “species identity” as a “disorder” or as a psychiatric condition. There is, perhaps, an unfortunate, although no doubt unintended, suggestion of religious fundamentalism in the human/non-human section of the Gerbas surveys. When we consider the items included in Table 9, “Agreement with Connections to Nonhuman Species Items and Rates of Agreement by Furry Type”, (Gerbas *et al.* 2008: 38), perhaps, we also need to consider how they could

possibly be answered. Item 1 states as a possible “connection” that “You were born with this connection to your non-human species”. Item 3 suggests that you may have “A feeling of sharing characteristics in common with your non-human species.” (Gerbasi *et al.* 2008: 38) If a Furry does not believe that humans are an act of “special creation” and distinct from all other species, how is he/she to respond to this item without turning up in the “distorted/unattained” category? Surely it is not symptomatic of a “disorder” to believe, along with the majority of biological scientists, that humans share connections or characteristics, such as a vertebrate structure, with other branches of the animal kingdom.

While the Gerbasi project addresses the “Furry Myth” in an interesting way, it must be admitted that it does not articulate well with the philosophical framework of this paper. The concepts of gender and species identity utilized in Gerbasi’s study suggest rather rigid boundaries, in particular male-female and human/non-human divisions, that appear to deny postmodern attention to “leaky boundaries”, the potential ambiguity of cultural constructs, and the lived practice of Furies.

WHERE THE CYBER-WILD THINGS ARE

In 2006 Kevin Kelm, of Kevin Kelm Anthropomorphics, went to a Furry gathering, ConFurance 8, with Sir Karl. Sir Karl was a cyborgian extension of Kelm – an animal-human-cyborg “progressive embodiment” (Biocca, 1997), in the form of a “fursuit” depicting a character from the Furry comic series, *Red Shetland* (<http://www.graphexpress.com/rs.htm>). A “progressive embodiment”, as Biocca points out, sends out sensory probes and, in return, is probed and transformed by computer intelligence. “Progressive embodiment is defined as the steadily advancing immersion of sensorimotor channels to computer interfaces through a tighter and more pervasive coupling of the body to interface sensors and displays.” (Biocca, 1997: 4) Sir Karl raises some questions about how we may conceptualize the virtual world of cyberspace, how it may be addressed ethnographically, and how Furies challenge conventional animal-human-machine boundaries. This “mindbody assemblage” (Hayles 2002) might be considered an embodiment of the “border war” between organism and machine (Haraway 1991), but it also raises interesting issues about the performance of identity. When Sir Karl appears at a Furry gathering, we are in the presence of a human hooked to a video camera, TV monitor and two computers, wearing an elaborate anthropomorphic theatrical costume and engaged in the performance of a virtual comic strip character. As Jakub Macek observes, “...*cyberculture* is an ambiguous, confusing, unclear term describing a set of issues.” (Macek 2005:1) Macek attempts to bring some order to a “culture of underdetermination” (Poster 2001:3) by describing four periods of development in the historical development of cyberculture. These periods are briefly described in chart form in Appendix 5 and are discussed in the extended version of this study. Furies entered the development of cyberculture at a very early stage, with the first Furry Internet game, FurryMUCK, developed by Unix programmers and hosted on the Carnegie-Mellon server.

Macek offers a rather dystopian view of cyberspace as a kind of Wild West, tamed and bounded by “the schematizing language of the cultural industry” (Macek 2005: 14). This is only one of several metaphoric descriptions of cyberspace, however; Turner (2006:146) points out that “the Whole Earth ethos, coupled with the lived countercultural experience of many WELL members” is still influential and

may be seen in the many manifestations of shareware, and open source, on the Internet. John Barlow, an influential essayist, observes that “In this pulsating new landscape, I’ve been reduced to a point of view. The whole subject of “me” yawns into a chasm of interesting questions. It’s like Disneyland for epistemologists.” (Barlow 1990a:37) During 2007-8, I watched the Furry sub-culture grow, diversify, and transform on a daily basis. In Appendix 5, I have included a diagram illustrating sample interactions between Furies and Disney Studios. In approaching the complex topic of how to “map” the rapid rhizomatic development of this cyberculture, I found that Lefebvre (1994), *The Production of Space*, and Nunes (2006), *Cyberspaces of Everyday Life*, were very helpful in encouraging the reconsideration of space, not as an Aristotelian-Cartesian-Kantian fixed and passive container, or as a Platonic conceptual structuring of signs and discourse, but as a social process. Material, conceptual, and experiential processes produce relations that occur in space, brought into being by process itself. “Space does not exist a priori to these relations, but rather is enacted in the dynamic relation of material and semiotic processes.” (Nunes 2006:16) Cyberspace, imagined as process involving performative acts of communication, is a concept that articulates well with Deleuzian “haecity”, with hermeneutics (Bourdieu 1977), and with Butler (1993). This way of conceptualizing cyberspace is illustrated in the second diagram, “Conceptualizing Cyberspace: Lefebvre’s (1994) Model of Space as Process” in Appendix 5.

Viewing cyberspace as process, or a set of relations – material, conceptual, and experiential – allows the mapping of conceptual structures, material forms and lived practice within Internet subcultures. For ethnographers, however, the dynamic, multiple, relational, and produced space of cybercultures, unfolding in a series of events that may occur simultaneously and in conflict with each other has two disconcerting effects. The first one is the lack of perceived central tendency when events, communications, affiliations, rhizomatic accretions, and boundaries appear and disappear in the hydraulic flow of “smooth space”. The second is the lack of fixed and unified identity (Turkle 1995) and the dissolution of the traditional subject position (Poster 2001), as participants create and perform multiple distributed identities. Nunes suggests “a mapping in the Deleuzian sense of calling forth the actual from

the virtuality of collective assemblages of bodies and enunciations” (Nunes 2006:47) The mapping of Ever Achen, an Ottawa Furry artist and matriarch who is profiled in the section of this paper on Furry visual representation, seen below shows the complexity and multiplicity of Furry lived practice:

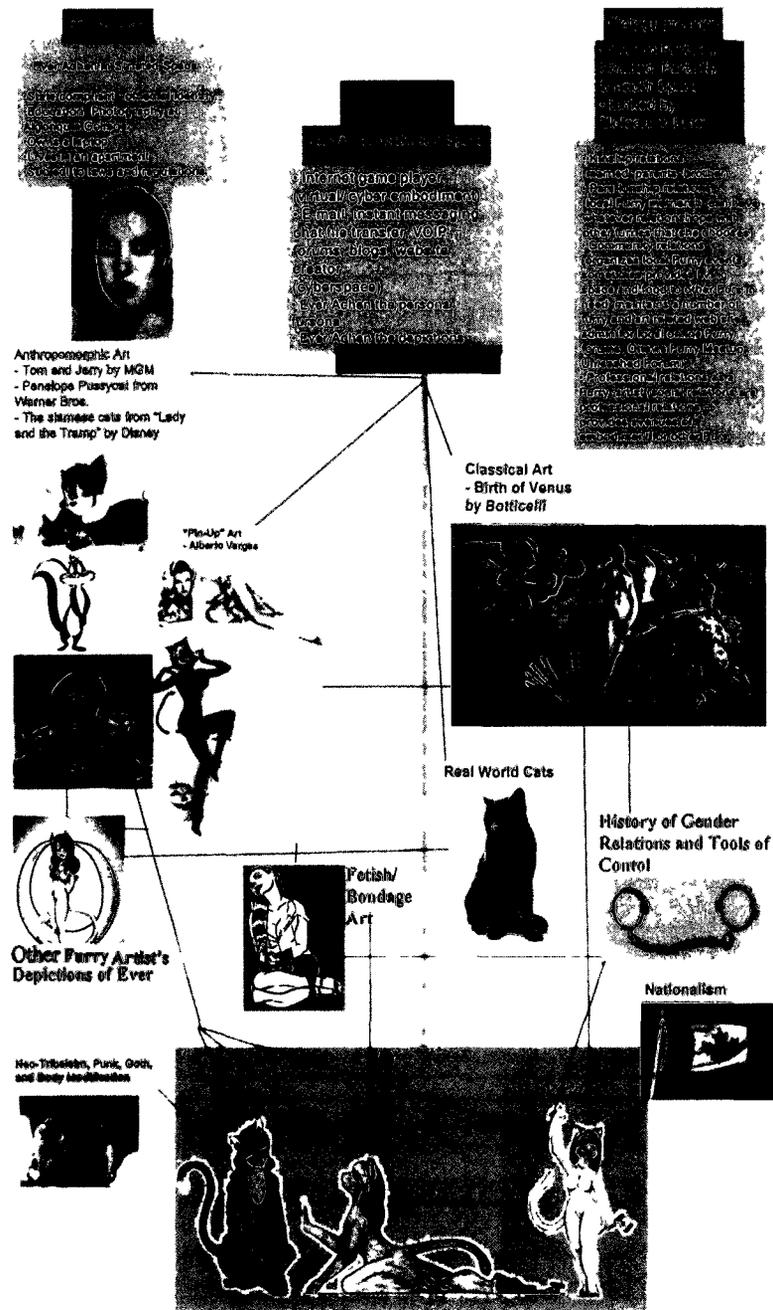


Figure 4: Ever Achen as Distributed Subject: ever - _ LetmeOut_as_a_rizome

The view of cyberspace as process rather than place, and of the Internet as a new space of communication (Levy 2001), different in kind from radio and television because it exists as a set of

relations among participants, is not, however, uncontested. Miller and Slater (2000) in *The Internet: An Ethnographic Approach*, undertake a study of Internet use in four economically divergent communities in Trinidad, attempting a statistical analysis. This study, which avoids issues of identity and embodiment, accepts conventional notions of time and space, and conceptualizes the Internet as a kind of clearinghouse for the exchange of written notes, concludes that the “Trini” national character is evinced in Trinidadians use of the Internet as market-place. In the extended version, I have included a description of some potentially problematic areas in this study. Christine Hine, in *Virtual Ethnography* (2000) presents a few guidelines. Her ten “principles for virtual ethnography” (Hine 2000: 63) are summarized in chart form in Appendix 5. Her approach strikes a balance between a complete and radical re-conceptualizing of time, space, and communication, and the problematic approach of ignoring the unique characteristics of Internet communication, pointing out specific areas of difficulty such as lack of central tendency, the problem of authenticity, the sheer volume of communications, and reminding ethnographers of the necessity for a reflexive and participatory approach. How her view of web communications as “more or less strictly bounded social spaces, formed and sustained through social relations” (Hine 2000:152) may be applied in practice is demonstrated , in the extended version, by applying it to the discourse on YouTube surrounding a French Orangina commercial featuring Furry dancers, and is accompanied by a mapping of the segment.

Sir Karl’s fursuit also raises the question of the cyborgian dimension and its appearance in the sub-culture of the Furry Fandom. The cyborg, often represented as a human/animal /machine is one of the most popular motifs in Furrydom, but illustrates the Furry challenge to accepted boundaries: “...The cyborg is a troubling, boundary figure, irreducible to either organism or machine, existing in between some of the most symbolic binaries in modern thought...” (Bell, Loader, Pleace, and Schuler 2004:54) The cyborg may serve as a powerful and symbolic representation of the fragmented self, a site of condensation and displacement (Gonzalez 2000:58), or, perhaps, a complex symbolic assemblage that comments on traditional categories. Both Bruno Latour (1993) and Donna Haraway (1992) argue that the

emphasis on “purification” or creating simplistic categories, such as human/animal/machine, and simplistic concepts, such as that of the unified and singular identity, which characterizes modernism, is continually contradicted by the proliferation of monstrous and hybrid forms. “Why should we not admit our hybrid identity and enjoy what Donna Haraway...called ‘the promise of monsters’.” (Lykke 2000:77)

Cyborgian representations abound in the Furry art world; I have attempted to illustrate and categorize these representations in the final illustrations in Appendix 5, “Cyborgs in Furry Visual Representation”.

Very briefly, cyborgian representation may be considered under six headings, each of which demonstrates a different set of formative influences. “Furry Transformers, Rangers, and X-Furs” includes representations of figures often found in children’s television, toys, or in much more sophisticated comic books involving shape-shifting and metamorphosis. “Monsters and Manga” includes two illustrations of cyborgs from the sword n’sorcery and Japanese manga fans. “From Cyborg to Furry: Multiple Shape-Shifting” illustrates the layers of complexity found in Furry cyborgian representation. For example, 15c shows a cyborgian imitation of a mouse with human sexual characteristics patiently stitching herself a mouse Fursuit so that she, a human-machine mutant, may become an animal-human-machine amalgam. “Sex and Technofurs” suggests that, while Furry cyborgian representations have challenged some major categories in Western thought, they have been less successful in challenging sexual stereotyping. “FrankenFurry – In the Lab” illustrates the deliberate construction of cyborgian identities. Of considerable interest is the final category, “The Wounded Cyborg”, with its echoes of the Wounded Fisher King in the Grail legend (Eliot 1961[1922]:142), perhaps functioning as a “condensation” or “dominant” symbol. (Turner 1967:44-45) In this grouping “Robococon_vent_destruction” is one of the most evocative images in the gallery of Furry cyborg art. As the dismembered cyborgian Furry reveals its pain in a stream of neon-blue tears and fluids, the wounded cyborg challenges not only the boundaries between animals, humans, and machines, but also the division between life and death. These six categories are discussed in detail in the extended version. Frank Gembeck’s “Furry Cheshire Cat” seen in the illustration below (Figure) illustrates some of the complex and multi-voiced narrative that Furry

artists, whose habitus is as much cyberspace as it is the “real world”, express through their use of the cyborgian figure.



Figure 5: Furry Cheshire Cat by Frank Gembeck
(http://www.furnation.com/Frank_Gembeck/gallery.htm)

The trickster Furry presumably shares the Cheshire Cat’s ability to disembodify, leaving only his smile behind, suggesting that the transformational experience is simply to be accepted as “sorcery”. He is a young man posed suggestively with his huge tail between his legs, he is a blue striped beast-being, or animal-human-machine amalgam, with claw-like hands, pointed ears, a muzzle, he is a child with big eyes and a devious smile- he lives anywhere on a disembodied tree limb. This metaphorical figure shows how Furry practice illustrates the complex experience of transformation, shape-shifting, and leaky boundaries that we encounter in cyberspace. As Clark observes in *Natural –Born Cyborgs* (2003):

In embracing our hybrid natures, we give up the idea of the mind and the self as a kind of wafer-thin inner essence, dramatically distinct from all its physical trappings. In place of this elusive essence, the human person emerges as a shifting matrix of biological and nonbiological parts. The self, the mind, and the person are no more to be extracted from that complex matrix than the smile from the Cheshire Cat. (Clark 2003: 198)

The Furry presentation of self, in the habitus and field of cyberspace, may appear complex and fragmented; however, viewing the virtual Fandom in the light of Haraway’s body of work on cyborgs as “a condensed image of both imagination and material reality” (1991 Haraway:150) and Hayles’ (1999) remarks on the posthuman subject are helpful in appreciating the Furry performance of self within the matrix of their virtual environment. As Downey and Dumit (1995) observe on “cyborg anthropology”:

“...human subjects and subjectivity are crucially as much a function of machines, machine relations, and information transfers as they are machine producers and operators. From this perspective, science and

technology affect society through the fashioning of selves rather than as external forces” (Downey and Dumit 1995:266)

A FAIR FIELD FULL OF FURRIES

During my field work I was able to attend three different types of real-life Furry meets – small-scale local meets, an annual meet held in Ottawa, Ontario, C-ACE (Canadian Anthro and Cartooning Exposition) attracting but not specifically targeted at Furrries, and AnthroFest 2007, a larger Furry convention held in Montreal, P.Q. and modeled on very large Furry conferences held in major U.S. cities. The extended version of this study includes the notes, journals, video records and transcripts of interviews conducted during my field work. Also included is information on conference venues, organization, activities, publicity, and world-wide Furry conventions, as well as summaries of my interviews with many conference attendees and transcripts of their observations on Furry culture, relationships, Fursonas, transformation, and embodiment. A transcript of only one interview is included in Appendix 6 of this document. This section concludes Part A on the theoretical framework, existing surveys of the sub-culture, and record and transcripts of fieldwork. Some reflections on the fieldwork are included below.

Some Observations and Reflections

Attendance at a number of Furry meet-ups and conventions allowed me an excellent opportunity to interview a broad range of Fandom members. As has been the case during all of my research period, I found that Furry commentary and opinion were diversified and reflected the broad spectrum of opinion and experience found in this sub-culture. It is always difficult to generalize about people's behavior, particularly in the context of large and crowded conventions, but there are a few remarks and reflections that may be of interest, and may comment on the more structured statistical surveys of the Fandom discussed in previous chapters.

1. There was general agreement on an inclusive definition of the sub-culture as a group of people interested in anthropomorphic animals. The Fandom was represented by my respondents as a rather amorphous and loosely-bound sub-culture encompassing a broad spectrum of interests and a range of intensity and involvement.

2. My research indicated that Furry art is a major factor in unifying the Fandom, a finding that is consistent with the results of the statistical surveys previously noted. Writing, in the form of longer works of fiction, comic books, graphic novels, and personal journals or poetry, also emerged as a strong interest, perhaps somewhat more important than other surveys indicate. Gaming and the creation of characters in role-playing games was a very strong unifying factor, and one that may be considered as a form of entry or initiation into the Fandom. Several respondents referred to their gaming experiences online, particularly in *Second Life*, as experiences that led them into the Fandom or introduced them to the world of the Furry sub-culture. Furry interest in computers, in cyborgian concepts and models, and in science-fiction was also strongly evident among some respondents.

3. Some respondents presented themselves as troubled, as having difficult or disturbed backgrounds, or as suffering from problems such as depression, shyness, or insecurity. It was neither possible, nor appropriate, to determine whether these statements were attention-gaining devices or were indicative of a pattern within the Fandom. In reflecting on this topic during the course of the conventions, it seemed to me that the incidence of self-presentation as troubled, insecure, socially inept, or mentally disturbed was no higher than one would find in any group of convention-goers (or, indeed, in any comparable group of non-conventioners). People are, after all, attending conventions for reasons, and one of the reasons must surely be a search for companionship and social interaction with others. One might suggest that some Furrries find the Fandom in convention mode attractive as a refuge from the social and economic realities of their lives- perhaps from social or job dissatisfaction, perhaps from economic or social marginalization, or perhaps from unhappiness with their own embodiment or relationships. Some Furrries may be in attendance as an expression of rebellion or denial of perceived social norms. Some may be in the process of re-imagining or re-inscribing the narrative of their lives, attributing qualities associated with their Fursona animals to themselves or re-imagining themselves in other roles, in other bodies, or in other situations. In this regard, the Fandom may serve as a venue for the creative building of alternative identities and for the very human activity of self-exploration through the construction of alternative

narratives, an activity that lies at the heart of story-telling and mythology. In any event, it appeared that the sub-culture was large and flexible enough to allow a number of reasons for membership without forcing adherents toward one particular pattern of behavior. Many respondents mentioned the tolerance and acceptance that they found within the Fandom, although this auto-pathologization suggests that that the Fandom is at least partially defined by a mainstream outsider gaze. (Gose 2010. Personal Communication) The one pattern of behavior that was quite noticeable was a very public expression of protectiveness toward fellow Furies, and toward children and minors. I would speculate that there is a fairly strong contingent within the Fandom that sees itself in a protective role – toward animals, toward the environment, toward children, and, perhaps, toward the disadvantaged and marginalized. Repeated reference to the Fandom as a place of security and acceptance are considered in respect to three powerful media narratives in the conclusion of this paper.

4. My respondents tended to validate the observations made by other students of the sub-culture, that Furies are not exceptionally sexually active, but may tend to see other Furies as more sexually active than they are. There was certainly a cautious attitude among respondents toward questions that could be construed as seeking information on sexual activities at conventions. A number of respondents made reference to media misrepresentation, and Gurley's *Vanity Fair* piece came in for its usual excoriation.

5. My experiences at these conventions and meet-ups led me to wonder about the role of women in the Fandom. The surveys strongly agree on one statistic- women are under-represented in the Furry Fandom. Although there may have been more men than women at these meetings, I did not find a disproportion that was as pronounced as that reported in the various surveys. Among fursuiters there seemed to a disproportion similar to the 70-80% male dominance reported, but there were a significant number of female conference-goers, and there certainly seemed to be a larger number of women involved in administrative responsibilities and in the production of various forms of arts and crafts than the surveys would suggest. Perhaps this may be a local phenomenon in the Ottawa and Montreal communities, or perhaps female Furies are more common in the Canadian Fandom. One might also speculate that it is

possible that women are not as willing to participate in written statistical surveys as men are. In my experience, female and male Furrries alike seemed quite willing to participate in interviews; indeed, at times it was difficult to end interviews and move on to another respondent. Perhaps researchers looking at the Furry community might wish to consider contacting their informants through several types of research instruments in order to determine whether the disproportionate representation of males is influenced by the data collection methodology.

6. Following the publication of the Gerbasi survey (Gerbasi *et al.* 2008), I went back to re-examine my research notes and tapes in the light of the hypothesis presented in that survey, that the Furry Fandom may present evidence of “Species Identity Disorder”. Although I certainly cannot produce anything that rivals the scope and magnitude of the Gerbasi survey, I would like to observe that the respondents involved in my interviews showed no evidence of a distorted or disordered perception of species identity. Indeed, the last group of respondents interviewed reminded me at several points in the interview that they were humans, perceived themselves as humans, and should not be referred to as people who perceived themselves in any other way. Many respondents observed that they believe that humans and animals share many characteristics because they are part of the same animal kingdom; more than one respondent observed that it is probably scientifically incorrect to bestow human attributes on animals, but that is part of the creative nature of anthropomorphic activity. The one respondent who indicated the closest relationship to an animal “spirit” or “totem” was “Talmak” whose interview is included in Appendix 7. He makes it very clear that he perceives his Fursona, “Owl”, as a spiritual companion and guide, and does not think of himself as an owl. Perhaps there is a cultural difference in the perception of Americans and Canadians with regard to human-animal relations. Margaret Atwood, in *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Atwood 1965) suggests that nature writing in Canada, a very well-defined genre, tends to place the reader in the position of the “hunted”. Although the hunter may destroy his prey in the end, the hunter and the hunted exchange a symbolic gaze at the end of the story indicating their symbiotic relationship. One might note Respondent One’s observation in the extended version indicating that he

identifies himself with the rabbit as a prey species, a tendency that Atwood would argue is common in Canadian animal stories. American animal stories, she argues, place the reader in the position of the hunter – the fisherman, the whale hunter, the bear hunter- rather than in the position of the animal that is pursued. Whether a strictly maintained boundary between species is, or is not, a cultural construct, it seems to me that species is a permeable boundary in science-fiction, in much nature writing, in role-playing games, and in the creation of Fursonas within the Fandom. I would also like to suggest that there is a strong element of performance at Furry conventions; perhaps, if one is prepared to accept identity as something other than the singular and unified “self”, the creative performance of alternative identities may appear as a rather common human activity.

A HISTORY OF FUR

Although there is no single definitive history of the Furry subculture, there are several very credible versions describing the initial phases of the Furry Fandom in the resources available, produced by Fandom members. Fortunately for researchers in this field the three major resources combine to cover the growth of the Fandom from its earliest beginnings to the present. In addition, Wikipedia and WikiFur (the Furry on-line encyclopedia (http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/History_of_the_fandom), both offer essays equipped with many links and suggestions for further research, with the result that researchers are easily able to find and consult a wide variety of sources. Both on-line encyclopedia sources suggest that the genre (anthropomorphic animals) can be traced to ancient civilizations, but was not specifically documented until the nineteenth century with the advent of collections of fairytales, and the appearance of novels, poetry and works of science fiction depicting “intelligent animals”. This version observes that fantasy animal characters have been well established as entertainment and as a major marketing tool since the early twentieth century, while the “funny animal” genre largely focused on children’s entertainment in the second half of the twentieth century. “Funny animal” fan groups, it argues, have existed since the 1940s, but the Furry Fandom, itself, can be traced to a splinter group at science fiction conventions in the 1980s interested in anthropomorphic animals.

Wikipedia, the popular on-line encyclopedia that is the “parent” of WikiFur, refers to historian Fred Patten’s contention, that the concept of a Furry Fandom “originated at a science fiction convention in 1980, when a drawing of a character from Steve Gallacci’s *Albedo Anthropomorphics* initiated a discussion of anthropomorphic characters in science fiction novels, which in turn initiated a discussion group that met at science fiction and comics conventions.” (“Furry Fandom” in Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Furry_fandom). Some Furry commentators, particularly “Perri Rhoades” (<http://www.perrirhoades.furtopia.org/Furry.html>), excerpts from whose work *A Historical and Cultural Explanation of Furry Fandom* (Rhoades n.d. <http://www.perrirhoades.furtopia.org/Furry.html>) appears in the extended version of this thesis, argue that, since the distinguishing characteristic of the Fandom is an

interest in anthropomorphic animals, one can trace the history of Furies back to the dawn of civilization. Other Furry historians dispute this inclusive view, agreeing that interest in anthropomorphic animals certainly existed long before the Furry community, but insisting that the Furry community itself, as a distinct sub-culture, began when science fiction fans interested in anthropomorphic animals formed their own fandom. This less inclusive view can be found in the work of Fred Patten and recent historian, Simo. Appendix 7 contains charts summarizing Furry history as it appears in the work of these writers. These three prominent Furry historians differ somewhat in their construction of history. If one might generalize about Rhoades' construction of Furry history, it may, perhaps, focus more clearly on children's literature and "cuddly animals" than the constructions of Patten and Simo. She has a strong interest in early children's anthropomorphic literature, and this is clearly seen in her historical construction. Rhoades' history of the Fandom provides us with a very inclusive picture that differs from that of Patten and Simo, in that she emphasizes the antecedents of the Fandom, and provides the reader with an excellent selection of material illustrating the flood of literature and film that eventually produced the Furry phenomenon.

Fred Patten's construction of the history of the Fandom is taken from his essay *Yarf! A Chronology of Furry Fandom*. (<http://yarf.furry.com/chronology.html>.) Patten, a founding member of the Fandom, is considered an authority on the history of the Fandom. He is also described as "one of the founders of anime fandom...and one of the country's leading experts on anime and manga." (http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Fred_Patten) Patten's publication, *Yarf! A Chronology of Furry Fandom* (<http://yarf.furry.com/chronology.html>), appears to be well accepted as a narrative describing the initiation and early influences on the formation of the Fandom. In keeping with its emphasis on visual representation, Patten points out, the Fandom begins with influential films, comic strips and pictures that prompted the formation of a group interested in anthropomorphic animals. Unfortunately, in 2006, Patten suffered a stroke and has not been able to update his work.

Patten constructs the history of Furry-dom around the formation of fandoms and the point at which the Furry Fandom moved away from the more inclusive Science Fiction Fandom. His emphasis is

on independent comics and anthologies, particularly those of the 1980s and 90s in which he was personally involved, and on the satirical treatment of cartoon animals, a trend in the Fandom which was to shape the production of erotic anthropomorphic art. We can see, from the charts of Patton's chronology, that I have made in Appendix 7, that a large number of Furry characters used in the Furry art world are derived from independent comics and fanzines. In addition to sources of visual representation, it may be reasonable to suggest that some of the major characteristics of the sub-culture might have its roots in independent comics and fanzines. For example, independent comics tend to satirize mainstream productions as we see in the entry on *Air Pirates Funnies* (Appendix 7). This element of parody, humor and challenges to conventional boundaries, can be seen very clearly in the many light-hearted Fursonas that have been discussed in the extended version. The Furry sub-culture seems to thrive on pushing boundaries perceived to exist in mainstream cultures, and this trait is obvious when we look at the treatment of sexuality in the independent comics and fanzines discussed above. *Omaha, the Cat Dancer* (Appendix 8) for example, is a feline prostitute who enjoys her work. The fanzines and comics discussed by Patten also support two other noticeable trends within the sub-culture. The first is the uneasy handling of pornography, seen in the publication of separate fanzines clearly indicated as adults-only, such as *Savage Funnies*, in contrast to fanzines such as *Rowrbrazzle*, which do not accept sexually explicit art. Secondly, we can see in Patten's chronology the issue of power and a dominant class of "professional artists" developing. The early publication, *Vootie*, was largely a private club for professional or semi-professional artists; whereas, later productions such as *Rowrbrazzle* specifically invited amateurs to contribute sketchbook drawings.

My third source in this account of the history of the Fandom is Simo's 2009 *An Informal History of Furry Fandom* (Simo 2009. http://www.furrydolphin.net/2009_files/furry-history.html), is a very useful addendum summarizing Patten's history of the early Fandom, and updating the history to 2009. Simo does not divide his history into periods, but I have done so in a series of charts included as Appendix 7. For the sake of convenience I have placed the first portion of the history that is similar to

Patten's *Chronology* in its own table, and highlighted relevant sections. Simo's *Informal History* is loosely grouped around a series of key events that mark turning points or important issues in the development of the Fandom.

Simo draws on Patten for the chronology of Furry history at the inception of the Fandom, but his particular area of interest and expertise is the later history. His construction of Fandom history is quite different from that of Rhoades and Patten in that he offers an account of conflict and power struggles as they occurred in the period marked by the Great Internet Furry Flame Wars of 1996 and 1998. His care in retrieving Internet correspondence reconstructs for the reader the crucial period when Furies asserted their vision of the Fandom as participatory, creative, and inclusive. In addition, he deals with Furry-mass media relations as they have unfolded in the first decade of this century. I have included much of Simo's commentary in the extended version and have placed related data in the tables included in Appendix 7. The three principal resources used in this chapter construct the history of the Furry Fandom in differing ways and with some variation in emphasis, but complement each other in producing an overall view of the evolution of the Furry sub-culture.

Each of the three major Furry historians discussed in this chapter approaches the history of the Fandom in a different way. "Perri Rhoades", a writer and collector of children's literature, music, and animation with a Furry theme, presents a compelling picture of the creative use of anthropomorphic animals throughout Western history and reinforces the idea that young people experience a great deal of exposure to anthropomorphism during the process of "socialization". Fred Patten writes the definitive chronology of the birth of a fandom, and reminds us of the satire and humor that marked the independent comics and anthologies of the 1980s and 90s, a trait that remains strongly evident at Furry conventions, on Furry websites, and in Furry artistic productions. Essayist, Simo, places the Fandom in the context of the growth and development of the Internet. We can see in the somewhat populist tone of his work, the roots of the World-Wide-Web in the "Whole Earth" movement, and, through his analysis of the Great

Internet Furry Flame Wars, we can follow the dissent that developed as “amateurs” and “professionals” attempted, and fought to, influence and control the Fandom and its Internet manifestation.

Despite their differences, however, there are strong areas of commonality in these three accounts of Fandom history. First, all three writers clearly value and recognize the importance of myth and fantasy, in tracing the antecedents of the Furry Fandom as we know it today. Secondly, these historians recognize the element of emic dissent and factionalism within the Furry phenomenon. They may be on different sides on the issue of overt “erotica”, but they all accept boundary challenges, satire, and humor as defining traits in the Fandom. All three writers seem to take a rather cautious approach to the mass media and its presentation of Furrries, but they do not hesitate to point out that the Fandom has been exceptionally adept in using the technology of media innovation to present itself in performance.

Finally, I have frequently commented on inclusivity as a characteristic of the Fandom. “Perri Rhoades” includes a “You might be a Furry if...” section in her history that encompasses almost everyone. (Perri Rhoades” n.d. <http://www.perrirhoades.furtopia.org/Furry.html>). Fred Patten was a major player in producing *Rowrbrazzle*, the inclusive fanzine that replaced the “old-boys network” of *Vootie*. (http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Fred_Patten. Accessed 28/02/10) Simo, not only through his *Informal History*, but also through such essays as “The Lords of the Fur” (<http://www.furrydolphin.net/frustrated.html>. Accessed 25/02/10), continually advocates an inclusive approach to membership and participation in the Furry community. Through an examination of the historical development of this large real-life and Internet sub-culture, we can, perhaps, gain a deeper appreciation of issues of inclusion, exclusion, cultural boundaries, and the forms in which they may manifest themselves.

A LANGUAGE OF FUR

The Furry Fandom is distinguished by a number of elaborate dictionaries, grammars, languages, and numeric systems. “Primal”, perhaps, the most intricate of these language systems, (Trickster 2001) is a charming and carefully constructed language system containing a large element of satire and parody. Briefly applying Hymes’ elements of an ethnographic framework for the analysis of language (Hymes 1974), I suggest that the discourse of Primal is mock-academic in “setting and scene”, the participants are engaged in a teacher-student exchange, the “ends and outcomes” must be regarded as entertainment. The “instrumentalities” are, principally, electronic documents, the “genre” may be best described as a “conlang” (a constructed language), and the “norms of interaction and interpretation” reveal the enthusiastic creativity of this sub-culture. The “act sequence” becomes increasingly challenging particularly with regard to sexual boundaries. The tone is light-hearted and satiric. Applying a functionalist approach (Halliday 1973, Robinson 1972), I suggest that Primal and the various Furry expressions catalogued in Furry dictionaries are best viewed as a system of representation, or coded behavior designed to regulate Self-Other relations in social situations, and to allow individuals to present the Self strategically to Others. (Di Pietro 1987). Furry discourse is intended as an element of the performance of a self or selves both in lived experience and in virtual roles. (Goffman 1959) Further discussion of these points is available in the extended version.

Primal: the Furry Language (Trickster 2001) is an example of a highly developed “conlang”, like Klingon, created by a single author, with collaborative assistance from Furies who wish to post additions to the language. Appendix 8 includes a pronunciation guide, an example of the use of attached prefixes and suffixes, an appendix of common expressions and a guide to Primal script. An example of another variant, the Raptorian script, for the use of those with dragon, dinosaur, or reptilian Fursonas, who write by slashing with a claw, is also included in this appendix.

The contrast between a complex, partially satiric, “conlang” like Primal and New Age productions such as *Animal-Speak: The Spiritual & Magical Powers of Creatures Great & Small*

(Andrews 1996), a work that suggests various rituals and ceremonies to assist in understanding the language of animals, indicates the range of Furry concern with language – from satiric parody to New Age mysticism.

Why would a Furry undertake the daunting task of creating a new language to express relationships with “high-status lycanthropes and other mythical creatures”? (“Trickster” 2001:5) Lakoff and Johnson’s seminal work, *Metaphors We Live By* (1980:51), suggests that metaphors “are the data that reveal how abstract thinking occurs”. From a concrete metaphor, we build abstract concepts described by Lakoff and Johnson as “conceptual metaphors”. These compelling metaphors may be found underlying the language that we use to describe interactions, as Lakoff and Johnson’s well-known example of “argument” as “war” illustrates (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:23) Lakoff and Johnson go on to suggest that conceptual metaphors combine in codes that form overarching systems of meaning or conceptual organizing grids for the entire signifying order of a culture. Perhaps the appeal of productions like *Animal-Speak* (Andrews 1996) is connected to the conceptual metaphor of people sharing perceived qualities of animals (“He is a lion in battle.” “That guy is a skunk.”) I would like to suggest, however, that inexplicably complex cultural productions like the Primal language may occur, at least in part, because they affect a jointure of several compelling conceptual metaphors concerning the nature of “self-hood”. The first is the common expression of the self as an animal (“She’s a fox”. “He’s a wolf in sheep’s clothing.”) As mentioned above in connection with *Animal-Speak* (Andrews 1996), the self may be connected, through metaphor, to qualities perceived to exist in animals. The second conceptual metaphor is the expression of self as a mythical creature (“I may be a werewolf.”, “That woman is a chimera.”) This conceptual metaphor may be gaining force as an increasing number of people participate in gaming worlds populated by dragons, wizards, and an astonishing variety of mythical shape-shifters. Thirdly, and, perhaps, most importantly, is the expression of self as performer (“That child is acting out.” “Do you have a role-model?”) When these three conceptual metaphors come together to create a concept of self as

“animal-mythical being- performer”, perhaps we can expect a complex and imaginative cultural production like Primal.

“Primal” is only one of a number of complex cultural language-related productions found in the Furry sub-culture. The complex Symbian language handbook produced by Ottawa Furry “Indref Ashen” (http://indref.furtopia.org/symbia/sym_measure/php), and numerous examples of Furry dictionaries which may perform the role of regulating encounters, delineating cultural boundaries, and marking the emitter’s identity (Robinson 1972) are discussed in the extended version. These dictionaries are not fully developed language systems, but, instead, present a guide to Furry dialect expressions inserted into the language spoken by the interlocutor. The dictionaries discussed are “Cloudchaser Shaconage’s Furry Dictionary” (<http://www.cloudchasershaconage.furtopia.org/furrydef.txt-retrieved> by Wayback Machine), my own dictionary of Furspeak, FurCode, and Furry Related Terms (Appendix C in the extended version), “Captain Packrat’s Furry Dictionary” (<http://captainpackrat.com/furry/furry3.htm>), “Furry Grand Central: A Furry Glossary” (<http://www.furcen.org/fgc/glossary.html>), and Simo’s “New Furry Dictionary” (<http://www.furrydolphin.net/furry-dict.html>). Examples from these works are provided in the extended version. The origin and use of the “Furcode”, a type of Usenet shorthand used to describe the characteristics of a Furry is also discussed, as is the use of pictograms in Internet communication and embodied language forms such as “skritchng” and the “furpiling”, seen at conventions.

We might turn to explanations of selfhood and identity as constructed (Foucault 1984), multiple (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), and performed (Goffman 1959, MacCannell and MacCannell 1983), in an effort to understand why mapping the language of Furies produced such a wealth of discourse surrounding speech acts, and verbal and written communication. If we can accept the idea that selfhood may not be singular and essential, but may, in fact, be a construct, or even multiple constructs, as is the case with Furies, it becomes much easier to imagine how members of this subculture could create such intricate and elaborate language structures. In the performance of the constructed self, Furry languages may serve as the surrounding discourse, the narrative of the constructed self, or, perhaps, as an elaborate

prop in the theatrical performance of the self. Keating suggests that the linguistic and discursive construction of the self may become a significant area of future study in anthropology:

Discourses have a normalizing and regulative function; at the same time, there are counter discourses. Discourses have the power to create reality by naming and giving meaning to aspects of experience from a particular perspective. Narratives are an important way in which relationships and events are organized and naturalized. I see linguistic anthropology having an increasingly important role in anthropology more generally as the importance of talk as a form of social action is realized and more anthropologists become interested in how social realities are linguistically and discursively constructed. (Keating 2000:23)

The “speech play” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1976) of Furies may be seen as an elaborate and creative manipulation of language to form the discourse and narratives that enable participants in the Fandom to present constructed selves in a richly-textured context.

THE ARTFUL FURRY: VISUAL REPRESENTATION IN THE FANDOM

“Art is the backbone of Furriness”

(“Eleventh Fur”. Personal Communication)

“Eleventh Fur”, an Ottawa Fury whom I interviewed at a Furry convention (full text of interview is available in the extended version of this paper), indicates in this statement the centrality of the visual and plastic arts within the Fandom. His observation is borne out by the surveys discussed in “Where the Wild Things Are”. It is not surprising; however, that visual representation is the dominant form of cultural expression in the Fandom. The Fandom centres on an interest in anthropomorphic animals, a theme which has been rearticulated in the plastic arts since the earliest human cultural expressions. This sub-culture’s reworking of anthropomorphism reflects the particular history of this Fandom, with its emphasis on “funny animal” comics, animated film, and animal representation in children’s literature. Furry art seems to operate as an important semiotic system within the Fandom; it draws on a rich and vibrant stream of resources to produce a flood of compelling and challenging works which draw participants into the sub-culture.

But Is It Art?

As Bourdieu (1984) observes, art objects as repositories of symbolic cultural capital not only function as objects of monetary exchange, but also reinforce the elite status both of those who invest in “fine art” and of those who produce art in this tradition. In the modern Western art world, the world of art historians, dealers, auction houses, galleries, museums, as well as critics, “tastemakers” and wealthy connoisseurs, where enormous sums of money are spent in the exchange of “fine art” objects, the cultural elite often represent a discrete social class, identified by its “taste”. The “fine art” distinction, encoding the values of a dominant group, became a “natural” category through a process described by Barthes (1973) as “mythification”. (Blundell 2000: 69) As Marcus and Myers point out, however, the hegemonic development of a Western “fine art” elite has been challenged: “A concurrent development to keep in

mind is the current blending of traditional boundaries and the segmentation of art worlds by media and markets.” (Marcus and Myers 1995: 3) Anthropology has thoroughly deconstructed “art” as a natural category, as Geertz observes with some impatience at the “surface bootlessness of talking about art.” (Geertz 1976:1474) Macquet offers a phenomenologist’s definition: “...art is not an independent entity...but a mental construction agreed upon by a group of people.” (Macquet 1986:4) A number of postmodern commentators (Benjamin 1968, Jameson 1984, Baudrillard 1988) observe that the stream of visual imagery pouring forth from the media has almost destroyed the elite world of “fine art” and substituted a virtual reality resulting in “the conflation of bourgeois ideology and the cultural sphere”. (Sullivan 1995: 310) Within Macquet’s broad definition, we may certainly be justified in describing the Fandom as having its own “art world” and, using Deleuzian vocabulary, might, perhaps, describe the Furry art world as a rhizomatic accretion embedded in a matrix of art accretions, among which are the nodes of power and capital currency identified as “fine art” or “high art”.

The criteria that invest works of art with cultural capital may be seen in the Romantic view of the artist as a “unique genius”(Miller 1991:52) and in the later view, associated with Durkheim’s theory of *anomie*, that the artist, as avant-garde commentator, expresses the fragmentation of organic solidarity in conditions of modernity. (Maquet 1986:172) “Unique genius” theory and the autonomy of the individual artist have been repeatedly deconstructed in post-modern commentary. As Hart comments in her study of the transition of a piece of textile art from the wall of a village house to the wall of the Smithsonian institute, the art world fabricates the identity of the artist: “In fact, a producer of images cannot be said to be creative until he or she has first earned approval, and along with it the label of “artist”, from the art world’s social network of art critics, art historians, and curators.” (Hart 1995:141)

Scuffles about the privileged position of artists in the art world and in the Fandom have, from time to time, disrupted the Furry sub-culture in an interesting way, perhaps marking a transition from the privileged Romantic unique genius, through the privileged Durkheimian avant-garde commentator, to a position as privileged “professionals” within a culture of late capitalism producing objects of cultural

value in the art marketplace. “Simo”, a thoughtful Furry essayist, in *The Lords of the Fur* (Simo n.d. <http://www.furrydolphin.net/frustrated.html>. Accessed 16/08/09) protests the periodic appearance of a “ring of power” composed of privileged artists who oppose the inclusion of amateurs and “sketchbook” artists in the Furry sub-culture. Simo observes: “Within the fandom, there is a figurative “ring of power” that keeps coming back every time you think it’s disappeared forever. This would be the elitism of <low_reverential_tone> SERIOUS ARTISTE<low_reverential_tone> wannabes.” The ringleader in the SERIOUS ARTISTE sub-group appears to be Perri Rhoades, and his discourse is certainly reminiscent of the privileged position accorded the artist in the Western art World:

Being the creator of a franchise like *Spectral Shadows* doesn’t make me a lifestyler. It makes me a professional. And there is a big difference between the people who labor to create works of professional quality and fans who merely consume. . . .The problem with furry fandom is some people have this mistaken idea that you can have a whole fandom of creators. But it doesn’t work that way. Everything that directly comes out of The Furry Community is amateur by nature, not expected to be widely sold, and certainly nothing anyone could make a serious living at. Being truly successful requires a change of thought, a drive to reach a larger audience, and a belief that you’ve got something in you that’s so original eventually it’s just going to knock the world on its ear. (Rhoades Live Journal Post. In Simo n.d. *The Lords of the Fur*. <http://www.furrydolphin.net/frustrated.html>. Accessed 16/08/09)

Rhoades’ argument for a privileged position for “professional” artists is a fascinating reversal of the Durkheimian view of the artist as marginalized and bohemian. Not only does Rhoades claim the position of “unique genius”, but he also links the artist’s privilege to hard work on the art production line cranking out professional-quality products “widely sold” and indicative of true success. In late capitalism, the art marketplace, fed by the mechanical solidarity of hard working (although uniquely insightful) art producers, determines the privileged status of the artist based on a successful sales record. Not surprisingly, Simo energetically protests this claim for power and status:

Here is the root of the problem: the elitism that drips from every word. “The problem with furry fandom is some people have the mistaken idea that you can have a whole fandom of creators.”

How, exactly, is this “a problem”? For whom, exactly, is it a “problem”? What we see here is that same old desire to return this fandom to its original roots: a good ol’ boy’s club for professional artists and their fawning sycophants....

Having a venue that allows you to do what you love is what makes Furry-dom a great place to be. What will make it a not-so-great place to be is to fill it with elitist pretension. Furry-dom has

always been of the fans, for the fans, and by the fans. It is not now, nor has it ever been, a fast track to a professional career. The DiY nature of Furry-dom is what makes it the unique fandom that it is. You want a marketing vehicle, then you want to be a Juggalo—or to join one of the other bullshit “fandoms” that corporations establish to get idiot “fans” to do their marketing for them. (Simo.n.d.The Lords of the Fur. <http://www.furrydolphin.net/frustrated.html>. Accessed 16/08/09)

Not only does Perri Rhoades claim the elite status of a professional artist, he further attempts to circumscribe the subject matter of Furry art. This is a very touchy subject with Furies as a result of the “Great Internet Furry Flame War”. The issue in the Flame War involved splinter groups of Furies who policed and continue to police the Internet for evidence of “pornography” in Furry art. Rhoades seeks to limit Furry art to representations of cartoon anthropomorphic characters and specifically attacks “a bunch of people collecting porn art and having cybersex online”. (Rhoades Live Journal Post. *In* Simo n.d. The Lords of the Fur. <http://www.furrydolphin.net/frustrated.html>. Accessed 16/08/09) Simo protests this limitation of subject matter as a restraint on participation in the Fandom:

The other hallmark of elitism is the drawing of the circle as small as possible. According to Rhoades, it’s about cartoon animals. Period. Apparently (*sic*), if Bugs Bunny leaves you cold, if you think Mickey Mouse just plain suck; if you think cartoons are strictly for kids, then you are out of the fandom. Even if you are fascinated by “Francis” movies, and/or the *Mr. Ed* TV series; if you think that the concept behind *Dr. Doolittle* is just about the coolest fucking thing you ever heard of, too bad: you don’t qualify. (Simo. n.d.The Lords of the Fur: <http://www.furrydolphin.net/frustrated.html>. Accessed 16/08/09)

Although one might be surprised to think of the Furry Fandom as “a fast track to mainstream acceptance” (Simo n.d.The Lords of the Fur:<http://www.furrydolphin.net/frustrated.html>. Accessed 16/08/09), it would appear, from the heated exchange between Simo and Rhoades, and from the Flame War that began in a splinter group’s efforts to censor Furry art postings, that the privilege and status that the art world has accorded artists recognized as successful in the marketplace, founded on Romantic notions of “unique genius” is still a contested area in the Fandom.

Has the persistent notion of “fine art” and an elite “art world” had any impact on the Furry art world? I would suggest that it has to some extent, since many Furry artists and much of their audience live within the cultural framework of Western society. The distinction between “fine art” and “Furry art”

that has been internalized by some Furry artists can be seen quite clearly in the “Portrait of an Artist-Amy Pronovost”, the first entry in Appendix 9. This Furry artist divides her web gallery separating and commenting on the category of “fine art”.

Although the criteria that may determine “fine art” are of interest in considering the ways in which cyber-art is developing in opposition to “fine art”, the “fine art” distinction does not enter into the Furry art world as intrusively as it does outside the boundaries of the sub-culture. “Fine art”, for example, is typically adjudicated by panels of “experts” and displayed in galleries. The art gallery, as a sacred site (Leppert 1996), is discussed in more detail in the extended version. Furry art, and the art of most cyber-cultures, is typically displayed on individual websites or in web galleries which may be extremely large. Some web galleries show the influence of the “fine art” tradition in retaining this category, but this distinctive earmark of the Western approach to art is largely irrelevant in the art world of cyber-galleries. The table in Figure 6 shows ten randomly chosen smaller cyber-galleries listed on the “Tigerden” website (<http://www.tigerden.com>), a website that includes a large list (2537 artists) of artists with some Furry affiliation. The name and web address of each gallery is shown, along with a list indicating how the works of art displayed in the gallery are categorized. The two large cyber-galleries, VCL and DeviantArt, shown at the end of the table, are not strictly comparable as they are extremely large web-sites and would require a more complex method of cataloging their acquisitions, but the categories used by some DeviantArt subscribers are of some interest. Only a few galleries, (such as AmaraVisions) and some artist’s pages on DeviantArt, include a category that reflects the “fine art” or “high art” tradition. In the case of AmaraVisions the title of this section, “Arty Farty Arty Stuff”, may indicate the artist’s uneasiness with this category, although she does go on to tell the viewer that “This is the fine art gallery of AmaraVisions.” The categories used in the “Paintings” sections of some DeviantArt cyber-galleries also reflect some traditional fine art categories – subject categories such as landscapes and scenery, portraits, still life, fantasy; genre categories such as pop art, psychedelic art; stylistic categories such as abstraction, surrealism. In contrast with traditional galleries in the “art world”, posting submissions on large sites such

as VCL or DeviantArt is a simple procedure. The judgment of a panel of “art experts” is not needed and, clearly, art works of widely varying levels of sophistication are accepted and posted. The smaller cyber-galleries are often web-sites created by the artist or his/her associates using some of the many web page “kits” available on the Internet. The most common method of categorizing art works is to indicate pictures of “general interest” as opposed to pictures for “mature adults”. It is interesting that, although much of the content of some Furry art is explicitly sexual, Furry art sites often seem to take great care to screen pictures that may be construed as pornographic and place them in a site that requires informed consent, a “promise” of being over a specific age, and a little effort to access. Aside from categorizing the possible “Offense Quotient” of a given picture, Furry art sites tend to categorize by genre (cartoons vs. paintings vs. carvings), by medium (pencil drawings vs. computer graphics), by theme (Star Wars vs. Furrries) and by coloration.

Cyber-Gallery	Address	Categories Used to Catalogue Exhibit
Stormfire Studios/ Firestorm 6	http://www.stormfirestudios.ca/	Max Lyon Mascot Suit Gallery, General Art Gallery (commissions, Special, portrait, other), Fur Park (comic strip), Art Sketches, Guest Art, Comic Clip Art, Animations
LizTail Studios	http://www.liztail.com/artwork.php	Color, Black & White, Quickies (Mature Themes Hidden)
Wolfie’s Furry Art Page	http://wolfiespack.com/furry/	General Audience, Mature Adult
Blue Snowangel Productions	http://www.geocities.com/blue_snowangel/art_gallery.html	Fur & Scales Gallery (Color and Line Drawings), Star Wars Gallery, Adult Gallery, Commissions & Badges
Furryhart Studio	http://www.furryhart.com	G-Rated Art (Furrries, Cartoons, Fantasy and Original Creations), R-Rated Art (Furry Cheesecake Art)
Corvus Nest	http://www.furry.org/corvus/	5 Albums (Categories unknown)
Artwork of the Dioxide Hyena	http://www.geocities.com/kibblescafe2000/gallery.html	General, Adult
StripeyManey Gallery	http://www.stripeymaney.com.artwork.html	General Artwork, Mature
WillowFox’s Art Page	http://www.willowfox.furtopia.org/	3D Animatronics, Carved, Clay, Drawings, Flutes
AmaraVisions	http://www.flying	Arty Farty Arty Stuff (Drawings & Sketches, Paintings, Etc.),

Home Art Gallery	armadillo.com/supersilly/artystuff/artystuff.html	Fox-Shark Drawings and Comics (Comic Strips, Fox Shark Art)
VCL (large site-317247 Images)	http://www.us.vclart.net/vcl/artists/	Grouped by Artist, New Artwork, New Sketches, VCL Sieve Sorted by File Name
DeviantArt (large site-52932 Submissions)	http://www.deviantart.com	Displays Newest Art, Most Popular Art Traditional Art Category (Animations, Drawings, Street Art, Body Art, Paintings, Mixed Media, Typography, Sculpture, Printing, Collage, Misc.) Paintings Category (Illustration, Abstract, Animals, Fantasy, Landscapes & Scenery, Macabre & Horror, Misc. People, Political, Pop Art, Portraits, Psychedelic, Sci-Fi, Still Life, Surreal, Space Art)

Figure 6: Table of Randomly Chosen Cyber-Art Galleries Indicating Categories of Art

This brief glimpse at a few of the multitude of cyber-galleries displaying Furry art that await the Internet browser may indicate that the tremendous growth of on-line galleries has altered the exclusivity and inaccessibility that is associated with “fine art” display areas. A large cyber-gallery such as Deviantart, that as of July 25, 2009, has posted over 52932 submissions, offers many advantages. First, the objects viewed are selected by the viewer and constitute what the viewer wants to see rather than what the art world thinks the viewer should see. The Internet offers a vast variety of art objects, and viewers seem to find favorite galleries relatively quickly. Secondly, many cyber-galleries are reasonably non-judgmental; the viewer need not fear being considered stupid or uninformed, and the stifling etiquette of the gallery or museum simply disappears as the viewer browses through cyber-galleries in his/her pajamas. The cyber-gallery offers the additional advantage of being inexpensive and the visit is limited only by the viewer’s preferences. For artists, the cyber-gallery means freedom from panels of adjudicators drawn from an art world that may be quite impossible to reconcile with the artist’s objectives. To put together a small but credible cyber-gallery is not outrageously expensive, and the artist can control the sale and distribution of works of art. Perhaps one of the most positive aspects of cyber-galleries for artists is the chat room or dialogue opportunity that is usually provided with a cyber-gallery package. The comments of viewers are usually very encouraging, and, even if artists encounter some negative dialogue,

other viewers will frequently defend the artist's position. The cyber-gallery also reaches a viewing audience that may not be available through the conventional museum or gallery. For example, DeviantArt, offers free membership to access pages where artists may share and sell their work, start an art collection or track favorite artists. The registration procedure requires only that the artist type in a name. If we accept Macquet's definition of art, not only is it art – it is also accessible and widely circulated, rather than the purview of an elite clientele.

But Is It Furry Art?

As I considered the physical arrangement of Furry conferences, I was intrigued by the location of Dealer's Dens and Artists' Alleys. These areas appeared to mark the parameters of the meeting area and might be considered as boundary locations – areas of more intense activity where Furies and non-Furies vied for the attention of conference attendees. Here various artists and craftspeople pay for and set up tables selling products that may or may not be related to the Furry community. This "marketplace" is well attended and well patronized, but it is here that convention-goers can overhear remarks about whether a specific product is, or is not, Furry, whether a specific dealer participates sufficiently in the Furry sub-culture, or whether a product will enhance a Furry lifestyle. Most dealers' tables market works of art, T-shirts, posters, and other memorabilia; but, as mentioned above, the dealers' tables at C-ACE 2005 (Canadian Anthro & Cartooning Exposition), a meet-up held in Ottawa, certainly probed the boundaries of the Furry sub-culture by including a number of arms' dealers tables, featuring weapons demonstrations, (See Figure 7 below) an inclusion that one might think conflicted with the anti-hunting and ecologically conscious positions taken by many members of the Fandom. One might consider the dealers' areas of Furry gatherings as areas of boundary dispute, definition, and re-definition when determining what the parameters of the Furry sub-culture actually are. Their location, on the fringes of the meeting area or in separate "Dealers' rooms", as shown on the map in Figure 7 below, may indicate their status as border areas. "Artists' Ally", the location where participants go through the process of acquiring ConBadges and polished representations of Furry characters, is a major area of exchange at any Furry meet-up. It may be

integrated with Dealer's Dens or may be positioned in a different room. At major conventions, Furry organizers place artists in a separate area where displays of "mature" art may be closed off from children.



**Figure 7: Dealers' Tables and Area: AnthroFest 2007.
Photographed by the author.**

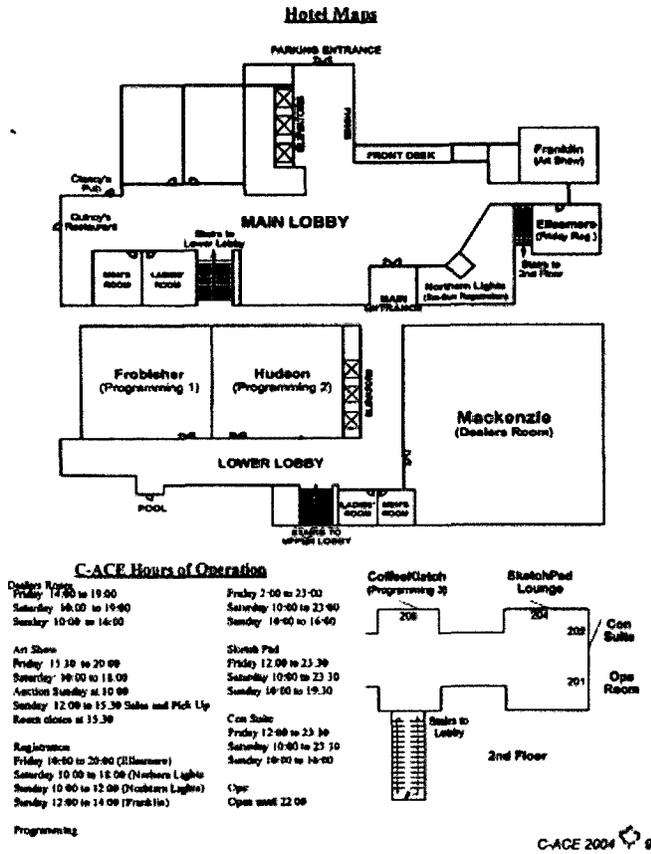
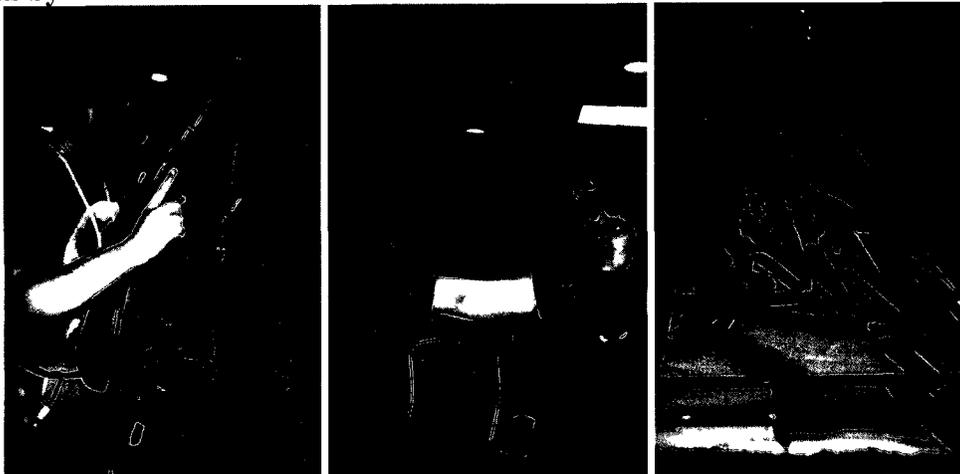


Figure 7: Schedule of Dealers' Room Hours and Location, Site Photo: C-ACE (Canadian Anthro & Cartooning Exposition) Convention. Chimo Hotel, Ottawa, Ontario, 2004. Photographs by the author.



Weapons' Dealers Tables and Demonstrations: C-ACE 2005. Chimo Hotel, Ottawa, Ontario. Photographs by the author.

Figure 8: Negotiating the Boundaries of the Furry Sub-Cultures: Tables at a Furry Convention.

Although Fredrik Barth's examination of boundary issues in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969) is largely concerned with the maintenance of ethnicity, some of the concepts that he develops in his well-known introductory essay may be quite useful in considering the art world of the Furry Fandom as a field. Barth observes that some cultural systems are loosely organized; sub-cultures, he observes, may not be "bounded strata" at all, and may be based on "the recognition of an ego-centered level of 'people who are just like us'"... (Barth 1969:27) Membership in cultural groups, Barth suggests, is fundamentally ascriptive, that is, a group member identifies him/herself as a member of a certain ethnic group regardless of other factors, such as lifeways or hierarchical status, that may be considerably different from the norm within the ethnic group. Ascriptive membership in the sub-culture certainly seems to describe a major criterion for inclusion in the Furry Fandom; indeed, in researching Furry artists on-line, I found that it was important to seek a statement of self-identification with the Furry community in order to ensure that a work of art that I was discussing actually was produced within the boundaries of the Fandom. Likewise, former members of the Fandom, may exclude themselves from the Furry community by making a simple statement denying their membership, as can be seen in the case of former Furry artist, "Klar", whose commentary and works are presented in the second artist's profile in Appendix 9.

Boundary making, Barth points out, is a fluid and dynamic process. Once made, however, boundaries must be maintained in order to demonstrate "difference" between members and Others. He identifies the development of membership criteria and signals and the process of exclusion as key factors in boundary maintenance. In the Furry sub-culture, the art world plays an important role in developing membership criteria and signals, through the production of fursuits and ConBadges which might be considered semiotic statements of cultural ascription as well as works of art. My ConBadge at AnthroFest 2007 (Figure 8: Example 1), for instance, clearly identifies me as "Other" rather than as a community member. For Furry artists, even the boundaries of membership and anthropomorphic content are permeable. As can be seen in several of the web galleries discussed in this section, an artist is not

excluded from the Furry community for the production of art works that are unrelated to anthropomorphic animals. Abstract works and art photography are not uncommon inclusions in Furry galleries, nor is the production of “commercial art” a particularly divisive issue. One might conclude that, while the Furry sub-culture, and its art world in particular, shows some indication of central tendency, its boundaries are much more permeable and ephemeral than those of an ethnically-defined cultural grouping.

2007

Attending



Home: - <http://www.northernfurs.ca>
 Forum: - <http://www.northernfurs.ca/E/index.php>
 ICQ: - 22602097
 Mail: -

ChrisLee - Administrator

Anthropologist: Carlton U

Example 1a



QUASI SKUNK

QUASII@ADVANCENET.NET
 ICQ# 101452281
 Quasiskunk

MOBILE 217-766-4400

Quasiskunk

Example 2a



Example 2b



Example 3

Figure 9: ConBadges, Cards, and Graphic Designs from Anthrofest 2007.

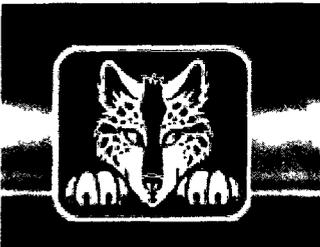


Example 1: Official badge issued at Anime Weekend Atlanta 2007 (left) compared to Artist's badge commissioned from Angel Jules Studios and drawn for Jigsaw Forte. ("Conbadge". WikiFur, the furry encyclopedia. <http://furry.wikia.com/wiki/Conbadge>. Accessed 29/07/09)



Orion displays his unusually large collection of badges

Example 2: Furry badge collector ("Conbadge". WikiFur, the furry encyclopedia. <http://furry.wikia.com/wiki/Conbadge>. Accessed 29/07/09)



Example 3: Personal snow leopard insignia from Tanidareal web site. (xxghhead-01_rollover.jpg from <http://www.tanidareal.com>)

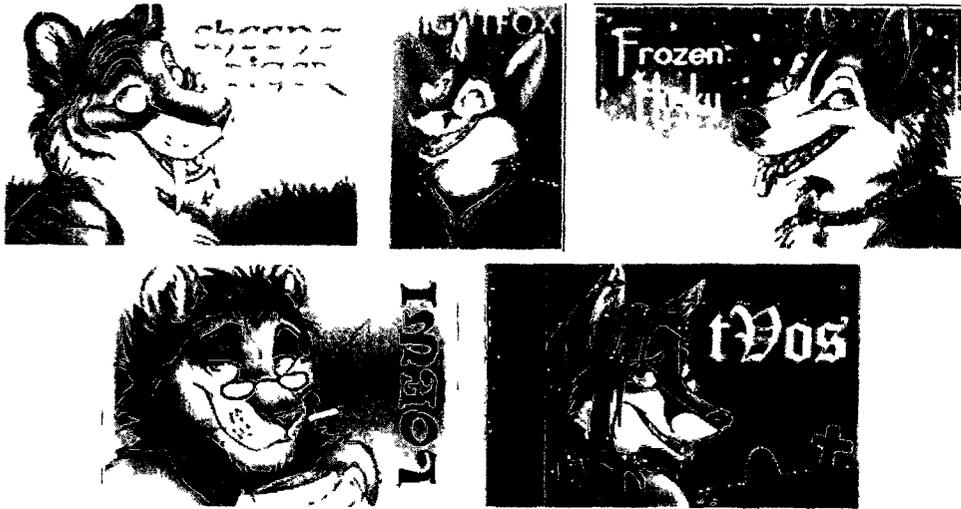


LARGER THAN LIFE

ANTHROFEST
JULY 27 - 29, 2007
MONTREAL, CANADA

Example 4: Cover page of program for Anthrofest 2007

Figure 12: Furry Badges and Graphic Designs



Example 1a: Commissioned Artists' Badges from Tanidareal (<http://www.tanidareal.com>)



Example 1b: "Traditional" Artists' Badges from Tanidareal (<http://www.tanidareal.com>)



Example 3: Artist's Alley at Anthrocon 2006 (Artist's Alley AC2006.jpg http://furry.wikia.com/wiki/Artist's_Alley)

Figure 10: The Production of Furry ConBadges: Commissioned and Non-commissioned Works.

Inclusivity remains a predominant trait in the Furry art world, but that is not to suggest that there is no controversy over the “Furriness” of Furry art. WikiFur, the furry encyclopedia (http://furry.wikia.com/wiki/Furry_art), speculates that two very different criteria for membership in the Furry art world may be at work:

The definition of what should and should not be considered furry is a subject of ongoing controversy. Some individuals favor a definition that includes any and all media that relates to the anthropomorphism of animals, stretching from prehistoric cave paintings to representations of Egyptian gods to contemporary Warner Brothers cartoons, to the most lewd and graphic images that can be found on VCL [a large Furry cyber-gallery] can and should all be classified as furry art. Others favor a more exclusive definition, arguing that only those images and media created by individuals who operate within the social boundaries of the furry fandom and whose output is distributed primarily inside of the fandom’s channels should be considered to be furry art; and while extracurricular media might be enjoyed by furry fans, it is not furry in and of itself. (Yeah, but is it Furry? http://furry.wikia.com/wiki/Furry_art. Accessed 20/07/09)

Clearly, the two criteria conflict in this article. Those who favor a very wide and inclusive definition, extending to all anthropomorphic art, are applying a criterion based on subject matter. Those who support the exclusive position are applying the more traditional culture-based criterion, that is, membership in the perceived cultural community. Even there, praxis indicates that there are degrees of membership as seen in the discussion of “Artist’s Alley” where part-time artists, sketchers and non-professional Furry artists draw badges for free or for reduced prices, and “Dealer’s Den” where professional artists are provided with electronic and digital hook-ups and have reserved tables. Perhaps it would be appropriate to depict the Furry art world as a Deleusian rhizomatic accretion. In Figure 11 below, the first, inclusive, criterion forms the basis of the rhizome with a node of particular power and efficacy. The general category of Furry art is described by subject matter. This treatment articulates well with the opinions of Furrries themselves. When I attended Anthrofest 2007 I picked up a thoughtfully written pamphlet called “What is Furry Fandom?” The opening sentence describes the Fandom in terms of anthropomorphic creatures: “Furry fandom is about creatures with the form and/or traits of both humans and animals – anthropomorphic animals.” (Anon. What is Furry Fandom? n.d.:1) The author considers the subject matter of Furry art in the first short essay on “Art and Writing”: ““But why use anthropomorphic animals?” is an often-asked question. ‘Aren’t they just humans with animal heads?’”

(Anon. What is Furry Fandom? n.d.:1) The pamphlet then points out that animal imagery is frequently used metaphorically “to express or highlight specific aspects of human nature”, “to express personality and emotions, though[sic] ears, tails, and occasionally stereotypes...”, and “to avoid discussing aspects of human society, or to draw attention to them instead”. (Anon. What is Furry Fandom? n.d.:2) WikiFur, the furry encyclopedia, identifies anthropomorphic animal representation as the defining trait of Furry art:

The most basic and pervasive idiom of furry art is the depiction of humanoid figures with animal traits: heads, tails, ears, fur, and so on. This isn't always the case: furry artwork can include completely non-humanoid animals whose only anthropomorphic traits might be their facial expressions, dialogue, range of emotions acted out, to the completely opposite end of the spectrum in completely human characters with animal ears and tails attached to them, as is popular in anime fanart. Another popular theme in furry art is in the transformation of people to animals and vice versa, as in werewolves or other mythical creatures, or in science fiction devices, such as the use of genetic engineering.” (“Furry Art: Defining traits”. http://furry.wikia.com/wiki/Furry_art. Accessed 18/07/09)

The rhizomatic accretion of Furry art, thus, takes as its primary subject matter and defining characteristic anthropomorphic animals and the transformation experience, but another factor is also at work.

Concentrated in a node that may indicate increased power and influence are members of the Furry art world selected according to a high level of participation and recognized membership in the Fandom. Surrounding the concentrated node is a less potent area inhabited by amateur artists, professionals selling works to Furies without membership in the Fandom, and artists on the boundaries with a limited interest in the Fandom.

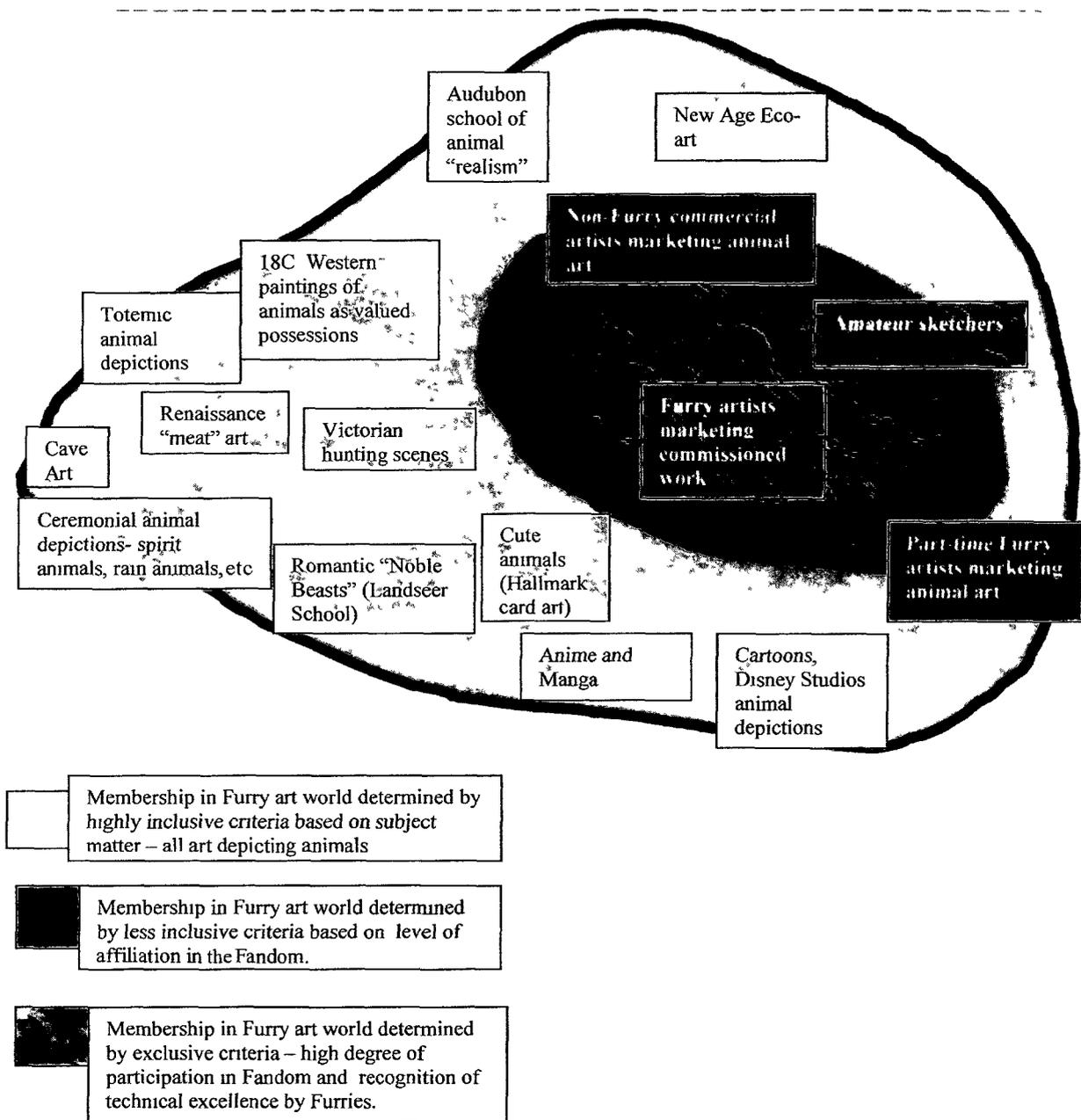


Figure 11: Rhizomatic Diagram of Membership in the Furry "Art World" Indicating Possible Criteria.

Two characteristics which give an indication of the inclusivity found in the Furry art world are discussed below:

Amateurs and Sketchbook Artists:

Furry gatherings abound with amateur and professional artists, sketchbooks in hand, who will happily draw anthropomorphic animals for conference-goers. Figure 18 below is a collection of sketches

made for me by volunteer artists at Anthrofest 2007. WikiFur, the furry encyclopedia, includes a very encouraging article for aspiring Furry artists reproduced below:

Creating Furry Art

One of the trademarks of the furry art community is its inclusivity. Anybody who wants to put a pencil to paper and draw animal people is welcome to do so and can quickly find a place in the furry art scene should they have a mind to, and many of the galleries listed above have no content restrictions, thus making them ideal for beginners to share their work.

If you are unsure of how to begin creating furry art, here is a simple step-by-step how-to:

1. Get a pen or pencil and a sheet of pencil and a sheet of paper. Any kind will do.
2. Draw whatever it is you have in your head!
3. Lather, rinse, repeat.

That's it! That's all there is to it. Don't be afraid of making mistakes, and don't be afraid of what other people may say about your artwork. Just draw, all the time. The best avenue of improvement for the artist at any skill level is to practice, *constantly*. Anybody can draw, and the people that are exceptionally skilled artists are so because they are drawing nonstop. Patience and diligence are all it takes! ("Furry art".

http://furry.wikia.com/wiki/Furry_art. Accessed 20/07/09)

Perhaps one of the most marked traits of the Furry Fandom is its support of the visual arts and of amateur artists. Aside from the busy scene already described in Artist's Alley and Dealer's Den, Furrries with sketchbooks circulate on the floor of a gathering and gather during or after ConFurance events to trade sketches, often volunteering to share their artwork with participants and visitors. Figure 11 is a page that I collected during Anthrofest 2007 where a number of Furry artists had voluntarily shared their drawings with me. In 2002 Furry artist, Rich Chandler, posted a handbook of "Sketchbook Etiquette" at <http://home.kendra.com/mauser/sketchbook.html>. (2002 Chandler) Some excerpts from the handbook are listed below that give an indication of the popularity of visual representation at Furry gatherings and indicate the protocol that surrounds collecting sketches:

The humble sketchbook started as a way for an artist to carry around a lot of paper, which he turned into drawings, and which he could show to other people so they could see his ideas and how his style developed over time....This grew until artists started keeping two sketchbooks, one for their own work, and one for the sketches of their fellow artists. The camaraderie and intimacy

expressed in these books led to some wonderful artwork. Eventually non-artist friends and fans wanted to have books like these too.

The sketchbook as we know it today, and I'm referring specifically to the ubiquitous black sketchbooks fans are known for carrying, has a certain tradition behind it that a significant number of newcomers to the fandom are sadly unaware of.

The most important thing to remember is that sketchbooks are for SHARING art. They are for showing to other people, so that an artist's work is exposed to and seen by a lot of other people....If you're going to have a sketchbook, treat it as if you were the custodian of a public trust, like a library. This attitude is very important.

They also grew out of a way of showing friendship. Money doesn't buy love or friendship. While it may buy a sketch, remember that much of the sketching you will see going on will be between friends, because the artist WANTS to do it for a friend....

(2002 Chandler. <http://home.kendra.com/mauser/sketchbook.html>. Accessed 11/01/2005)

The handbook goes on to remind Furry participants of the tradition of trading sketches, the importance of courteous behavior toward artists, the nature of the activity as a way of having fun and socializing, the rules of copy write and the importance of sending the artist a copy of the sketch, and the "heinous act" of stealing sketches from someone's sketchbook. The next section provides some guidelines for artists reminding them to treat sketchbooks left with them with care, to deal with excessively persistent fans with firmness and courtesy, to return sketchbooks promptly and, above all, to have fun in sharing sketches with fans. (2002 Chandler. <http://home.kendra.com/mauser/sketchbook.html>. Accessed 11/01/2005).

The centrality of visual representation as a defining characteristic of the Fandom can be appreciated in the protocol surrounding correct handling of a sketchbook, but is also seen in cyber-correspondence on Furry art websites. Most websites include facilities for comments from visitors and browsers, often on each individual work of art. During my fieldwork, I found that the overwhelming majority of comments, both at Furry gatherings and on the Internet, were very supportive and enthusiastic, praising both the skilled professional artist for his or her imaginative use of sophisticated media and the obvious amateur for improvement and creativity. Often the chat areas of a website include lively dialogue between fans and the artist about methodology and concepts expressed in the artwork. The anonymous author of "What is Furry Fandom?" is rather cynical about the prevalence of visual representation in the Furry sub-culture:

Unlike SF [science fiction] fandom which has a strong literary history, furry fandom has tended to focus on images rather than text. Part of this comes from the fandom's origins in comics and animation, but a large part of it is economic.

Within its fan market, furry art takes less time to produce and is easier to sell than stories. (n.d. Anon. "What is Furry Fandom?":1)

Despite this author's cynicism about the economic motivation of a few Furry artists, one might speculate that the design of imaginative fursuits and unusual anthropomorphic combinations is such an important part of the sub-culture, with its emphasis on transformation, that visual representation has quite naturally become a dominant form of communication between members of the Fandom. Below, I have included a page from a research notebook that I was taking notes in at a local convention. The importance of art, and strength of the tendency to create, can be seen in the amount of art that was produced in the few minutes that my book was left unattended. I am sure that more than one artist contributed to this work, but I have never been able to find out who they all were.

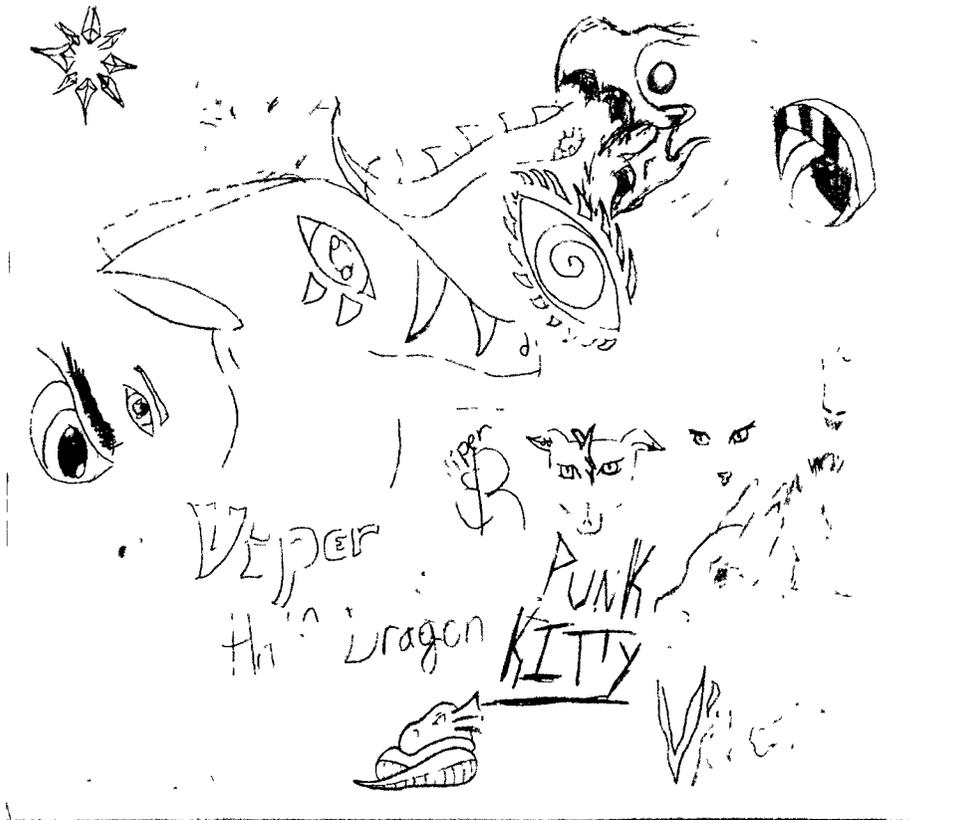


Figure 12: Sketch Page Collected by the Researcher during Anthrofest 2007.

Articles of Material Culture:

While the persistence of the “aesthetic criterion” has limited or rendered problematic, until recently, the acceptance of articles of material culture as works of art in the “high art” world, anthropologists have traditionally accepted these items as expressions of the artistic impulse. Gell, reconsidered the issue of art vs. artifact in his essay on Susan Vogel’s “ART/ARTIFACT” exhibition at the Center for African Art (1988). The exhibition opened with a display of a bundled Zande hunting net, a controversial object that prompted protest. (Danto 1988) Gell, in responding to the question “When is a fabricated object a ‘work of art’ and when is it something less dignified, a mere ‘artifact’?” (Gell 1996:219) observes that there are basically three theories on this issue: the “aesthetic theory” holds that a work of art is aesthetically superior, or “beautiful”; the “interpretive theory” holds that a work of art may not be beautiful but will be meaningful if interpreted “in the light of a system of ideas that is founded within an art-historical tradition”, (Gell 1996: 219). The third theory, the “institutional theory” holds that there is no quality in the object of material culture that, intrinsically, makes it a work of art. The object is a work of art because “it is taken to be one by an art world, i.e. a collectivity interested in making, sharing and debating critical judgments of this type.” (Gell 1996: 16) Gell points out that “the anthropology of art” has inherited a reactionary definition of art” (Gell 1996: 36). The “aesthetic” notion, he argues, has had “a continuing hold over the anthropological mind” (Gell 1996:37):

What the “anthropology of art” ought to be about, in my opinion, is the provision of a critical context that would enfranchise ‘artefacts’ and allow for their circulation as artworks, displaying them as embodiments or residues of complex intentionalities. (Gell 1996:38)

Gell’s observations provide a suitable theoretical platform for the examination of the Furry art world where multiple forms of artistic endeavor happily co-exist and provide a rich and varied experience for the ConFurance attendee or the web browser. Furry art is nothing if not inclusive; indeed, inclusivity may be one of the key characteristics of the Furry sub-culture. WikiFur, the furry encyclopedia, in an

article entitled “Creating Furry Art” comments that “One of the trademarks of the furry art community is its inclusivity”. (“Furry Art”. http://furry.wikia.com/wiki/Furry_art. Accessed 29/07/09) The article refers to the acceptance of amateur artists at Furry conventions, but the observation applies also to acceptance of a wide range of artistic productions as works of art. Figure 13 below gives some indication of the wide range of artistic production in the Furry art world. WillowFox’s Art Page (<http://www.willowfox.furtopia.org/>), for example, is a striking and well-organized gallery of the work of an artist clearly well acquainted with computer-mediated art production. Most noticeable is the range of art objects, from graphic designs to carved and painted flutes with accompanying .MP3s to demonstrate the sound of the instrument. The gallery includes carvings in wood and crystal, clay modeling, computer-mediated puppets, sculpture, and more conventional drawings. Likewise, Tanidareal, a German Furry artist, operates a sophisticated web gallery displaying and selling her Furry artworks. Among these are badges, paintings and drawings, stuffed toys (complete with sewing directions) and ingenious and carefully crafted Fursuits. The interaction of what is often considered “high art” with handicrafts and decorative artworks has yielded a vibrant art scene that has become one of the most striking features of the Furry sub-culture.

Autonomy and Visual Representation in the Fandom:

The issue of autonomy is of some interest in a study of Furry visual representation because the strong influence of the Disney Studios, “funny animal” cartoons, and Japanese art forms such as manga, may lead to a perception of Furry art as derivative and lacking in the qualities of creativity and unique expression so often cited as exemplary in the discourse of the Western art world. Barthes’ theory of intertextuality (Barthes 1977[1968]) questions the possibility of individual creative thought. The author, he contends, works in an environment of texts, or, as Foucault (1972:23) calls it, “a system of references”, drawn from innumerable centres of culture. Barthes further argues that the notion of “genius” simply mystifies the creation of art. Ideas do not exist independently of the signs which represent them. The matrix of signs within which an artist makes a work of art or of literature is active and productive, rather than a passive mirror of the author’s creative genius. Barthes’ theories of an active and productive matrix

of signs articulates well with the flood of imagery produced by many Furry artists and the relative lack of emphasis on the “identity” of the artist. Many Furry artists continually create, transform, and recreate identities for their Internet personas, for their Fursonas, and for their video-game roles. In some cases, the “real” name of the artist seems quite unimportant and difficult to discover. For example, despite the signature on “Goats in the Shell” which appears in Appendix 9, I was unable to find an individual artist who takes credit for this picture, used as the graphic symbol at a major Furry convention. Likewise, “~kiohl”, the artist responsible for “The Hunters” (Figure 16), is identified in a very cursory way as “Emily” and little personal information is provided. In creating a web identity, many Furry artists include photographs that, presumably, are of themselves, but are not identified as such; some, however, provide only a badge or symbol representing their Fursonas.

The proposition that a work of art can be the autonomous product of an individual producer seems problematic at best. Even the physical production of a work of art depends on a collaborative enterprise involving the developers, manufacturers and distributors of art supplies with the artist. If the simple production of a pencil sketch is a communal project, consider the complexity of a typical Furry computer-mediated graphic. Here the production process involves not simply a few art supplies but entire communities of software and hardware designers, manufacturers and retailers, as well as distribution networks from the artist’s Internet service provider to the World Wide Web – and this is without even considering the complexity of the images themselves and the cultural matrices within which they are imbedded. Figure 14 summarizes the steps suggested in an on-line tutorial offered by “Kelly” on the “DrawFurry” website (<http://www.drawfurry.com/?p=23>). This tutorial offers guidance on how to produce computer-mediated pictures like that of the site mascot, Kirin. Each step suggests a supporting network of researchers, developers, manufacturers, retailers and service providers, as seen in Figure 15, a diagram that suggests the kind of support network or complex communal process required to produce a common form of Furry cyber-art.

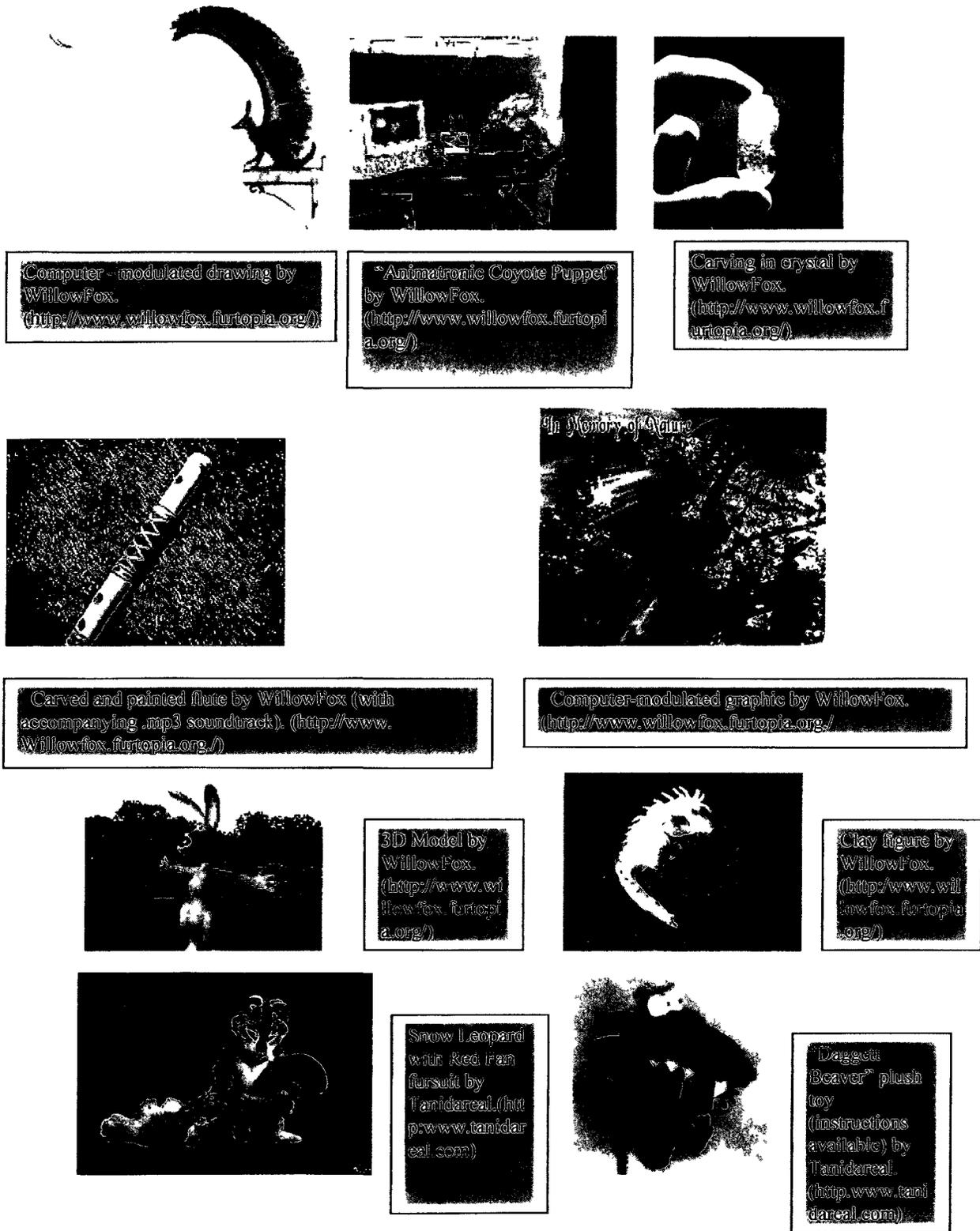


Figure 13: The Many Faces of Furry Art



This website offers Furry artists a range of tutorials in the use of computer graphics and the production of computer-mediated works of art. “Kelly’s” outline of the steps involved in producing the computer graphic of Kirin, the website mascot, is summarized below:

1. Make a sketch of the character you wish to represent. Kelly uses a blue col-erase pencil and cleans up the sketch with a 5 mm. mechanical pencil.
2. Scan the sketch into Adobe Photoshop and create a layer of flat light grey over it.
3. Ink the sketch by adding a new layer for inking. Using a Wacom tablet and an oval brush stylus, ink in the outline of the sketch in black.
4. Add flats (transparent digital “layers”) and paint in the basic colors on your sketch.
5. Add a background if you wish. Here a simple blue-grey circle adds depth to the picture.
6. Add new flats layers to create shading. Shadows might be added in blue-grey and highlights in white. Adjust the opacity of shadows and highlights.
7. Redraw the black outlining in color by selecting a “line art” layer and setting “lock transparent pixels” to prevent painting outside the lines. The outline might appear in darker versions of the picture’s main colors.
8. Add “pizzazz” by putting on another layer filled with a warm-to-cool gradient. Creating this layer will brighten the image.

Figure 14: Production of a Digital Picture: drawfurry.com’s mascot, Kirin

(“Kirin step-by-step: digital art walkthrough. Tutorial by Kelly, posted 13/04/07.
<http://www.drawfurry.com/?p=23>. Accessed 20/08/09.)

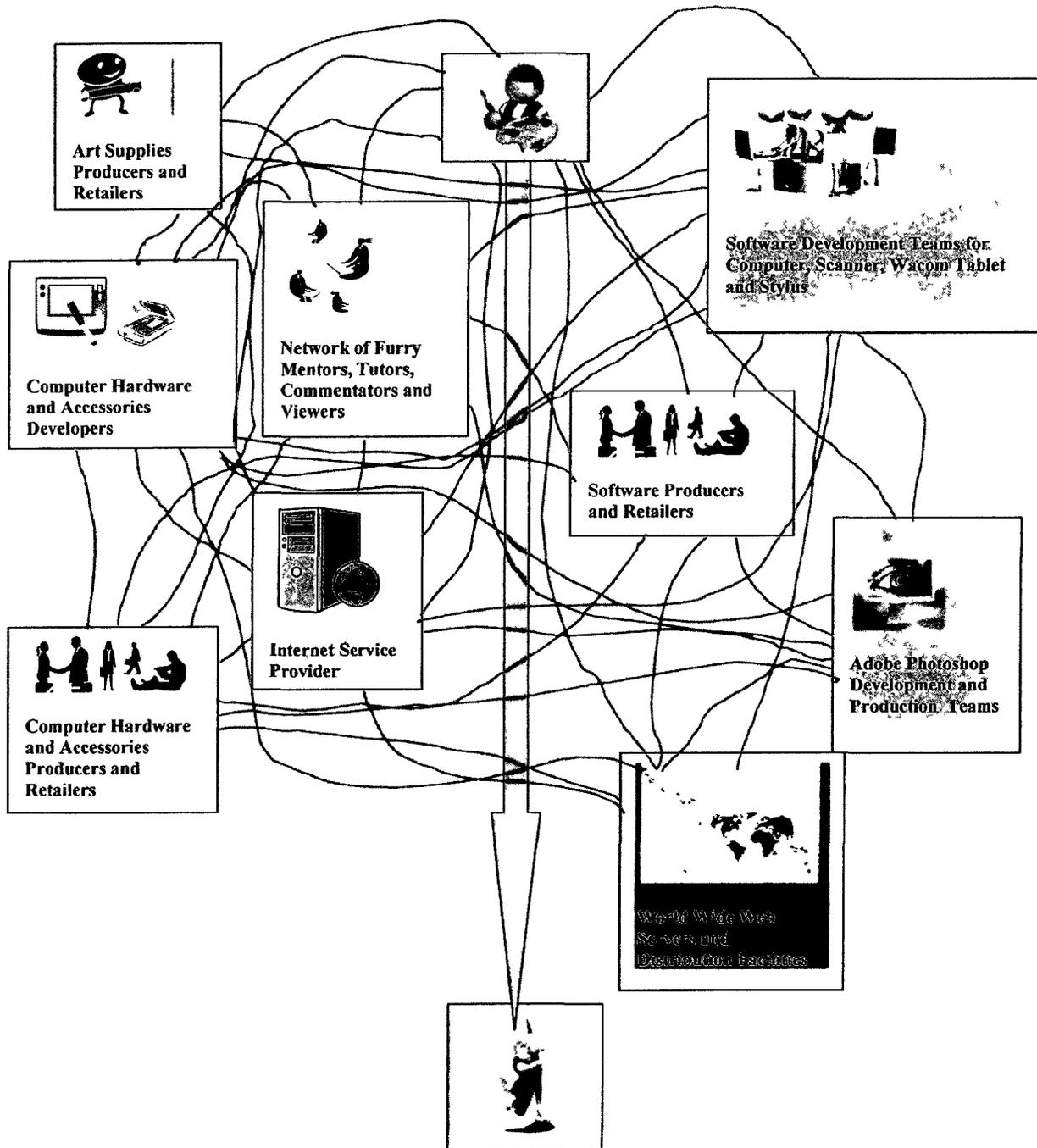


Figure 15: Some Aspects of Furry Art as a Collective Enterprise.

Furry Art and The Datastream

In the Furry community, the images produced may not be the striking examples of “unique genius” valorized by the Western art world, but the complex interaction of multiple communities in their production may be the principal source of the “cultural capital” that they generate. Deleuze and Guattari

suggest that the entire proposition, that representations such as visual art objects can exist as autonomous productions outside their cultural context, is impossible because no individual exists independently. Likewise, as is certainly the case in cyber-art, the individual work of art is the production of the pack, a progression from zero in nondecomposable steps, a multiplicity on a world-wide scale. As Deleuze and Guattari point out: “There are no individual statements, there never are. Every statement is the product of a machinic assemblage, in other words, of collective agents of enunciation (take “collective agents” to mean not peoples or societies but multiplicities)”. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 37) In Appendix 9 I have included a “gallery” of art, much of it in the “Furry” or anthropomorphic mode created by Vaughn Saball and displayed on his website. (<http://www.willowfox.furtopia.org/art>. Accessed 09/09/09) This gallery illustrates the range and methodology found in Furry visual representation- the capture and rearticulation of images from pop culture , the integration of arts and crafts, and the reproduction of images both drawn from and released into the datastream. In Figures 16 and 17 below I have attempted to present some of the complexity involved in the art of cyber-space seen as a multi-voiced transaction using Deleuzian notions of rhizomatic structure, smooth and striated space, molar and molecular lines, and lines of flight. The picture seen in Figure 16 is a piece of Furry art called and is attributed to “~kiohl” by DeviantArt, the gallery where it is posted. (<http://kiohl.deviantart.com/art/The-Hunters-5362905>). “~kiohl” , who lists her name as “Emily”, maintains a large gallery through the DeviantArt website. She represents herself as a 27 year old resident of California who has been posting art works at <http://kiohl.deviantart.com/> for the past five years. On her website “~kiohl” carries on an extensive dialogue with fans, friends and people for whom she does commissioned art works, principally “sprites”, animated anthropomorphic or fantasy creatures that her clients can post on their websites. Much of her art is done in a cartoon or fantasy style, but there is also a strong Japanese influence – from manga to classical Japanese art created on fans or panels. She gives a little biographical information on the website, emphasizing her interest in fantasy and other types of video games such as Final Fantasy, World of Warcraft, Dungeons and Dragons and Ecco the Dolphin, an influence that is quite clear in “The Hunters”. “~Kiohl” lists the “tools of her trade” as pencil, paper, Intuos3 tablet, Photoshop CS2 and ImageReady CS2.

“The Hunters” is a pencil sketch, scanned and colored using Adobe Photoshop. In the artist’s comments on this website ~kiohl indicates that the picture was created for “furartxchange”, a gallery within DeviantArt hosting 158 pictures. There are four pictures in this gallery on the theme of “Vantids”, so this type of anthropomorphic creature may have become a “meme” or commonly accepted Internet symbol. The Vantid character, itself, is associated with the website and gallery of Amber Hill, a popular Furry artist who maintains several web presences. (<http://vantid.deviantart.com/gallery/>, <http://www.furaffinity.net/user/vantid/>, <http://vantid.artspots.com/>) Hill uses the Vantid motif to distinguish her web gallery, although it is not clear whether this is a Fursona for this artist or not. In the diagram, I have treated the Vantid character as Hill’s Fursona for the purpose of illustration. Much of Hill’s work depicts fantasy wildlife and anthropomorphic animals. As Hill is a Californian with a career in graphics design, she may be a friend or acquaintance of ~kiohl.

The Vantid portrayed in “The Hunters” is an anthropomorphic mélange of creatures with human eyes, a fox face and front legs, a thick blue mane, a jeweled blowhole or nostril on its forehead and the body, ears, dorsal fin and tail of a sea-dragon or monster. One might suggest a wide range of derivations beginning with the *kitsune* or transformative fox of Japanese folklore and mythology (“Kitsune”. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fox_in_Japanese_Folklore. Accessed 01/09/09). Kitsune, mystical foxes that can take on human form, often as a young woman, or can possess the bodies of humans until betrayed into showing their true kitsune form, can also be found in aquatic formats. Some folk legends associate the kitsune with jewelry or with a jeweled ball or pearl that the kitsune holds in its mouth or carries on its tail; the ball may glow with *kitsune bi*, or foxfire, or may represent the kitsune’s spirit. In the Shinto religion, the kitsune is closely associated with Inari, the deity of rice and a number of rice dishes are named after this anthromorph. Shrines to Inari, in kitsune form, are common in Japan and Inari’s kitsune possess the ability to ward off evil and protect against evil *nogitsune*, rogue fox spirits that do not serve Inari. While the Vantid is partially an aquatic kitsune, it is also a were-dragon or aquatic form of fantasy dragon, as indicated by its tail, ears, and dorsal fin configuration. In format, it is somewhat reminiscent of

the Wasago, or composite sea-monsters drawn by Charles Edensaw for Boas, with their wolf heads or bodies, killer whale dorsal fin and curled smooth tails. (Boas 1955 [1927] Fig. 134, Fig. 135:159) The Vantid is accompanied by its “friends”, two dolphins portrayed in a style similar to that used in the video game *Ecco the Dolphin*. The trio are in pursuit of what, at first glance, appears to be a bird. The mysterious aquatic bird, shedding feathers in its flight, turns out to be a flying (or swimming) banana. A Web search turns up a number of references to flying bananas, including a trampoline team and a musical ska band, as well as antique aircraft and trick bicycle riders, but the connotative meaning of this particular banana is quite unclear to this researcher. One might suggest, however, that it would be inconsistent with the Edenic vision of the Furry community to depict the Vantid and its dolphin friends as preying on fish or other marine species.



Figure 16: “The Hunters” by ~kiohl.
(http://kiohl.deviantart.com/art/The_Hunters-5362905)

Figure 17 presents “The Hunters” as a rhizomatic structure or accretion that may describe the “Vantid” meme reasonably accurately, and suggests that this visual representation is linked to its

environment through molar, molecular and lines of flight. The molar lines connect the rhizome to structures of power and control that are usually corporate entities, such as Internet service providers and hardware and software production and manufacturing teams. These entities exercise control over the visual representation through their development, manufacture and marketing of the tools of the artist's trade, and through their framing of the institutional structures through which the art work is displayed and disseminated. Molecular lines connect the rhizome to possible sources from which the artist may have drawn elements of form and style embodied in the work of art. Deleuze and Guattari use molecular lines to indicate "kinship" relations; here they are used to indicate the close "kinship" between art productions of the Disney empire and the Sega gaming corporate entity and this picture, and also to indicate its relationship to the "Vantid" website of Amber Hill. "Lines of flight" suggest a few of the many possible ways in which the view enters into an interpretative relationship with the picture.

Thus far I have suggested that Furry works of art are embedded in culture, both in "real-life" culture and in the complex, diverse, and global culture of the datastream, but one may also observe that Furry art is not only a product of a vast and international cultural stream, but also produces meaning within that stream. When I first saw the skillfully executed graphic, "Goats in the Shell", seen in Figure 18 below and produced as a "badge" or symbol for Morphicon/2007, I was impressed with the way that it illustrated the Boasian criteria for "form" in artistic representation –symmetry, repetition, and rhythm.(Boas 1955[1927]:10-12) In the picture, a cyborgian figure-part woman, part male goat- is posed as a "Vargas" showgirl. The figure is dependent on external sources for its power, even though it is feeding on a tin can; the repetitive ellipses of wires running out of the box suggest "lines of flight", but also emphasize the figure's inconnectivity. What was most interesting to me, however, was the particular history of this figure and the insight it could provide in considering the cyborgian motif within the Furry sub-culture.

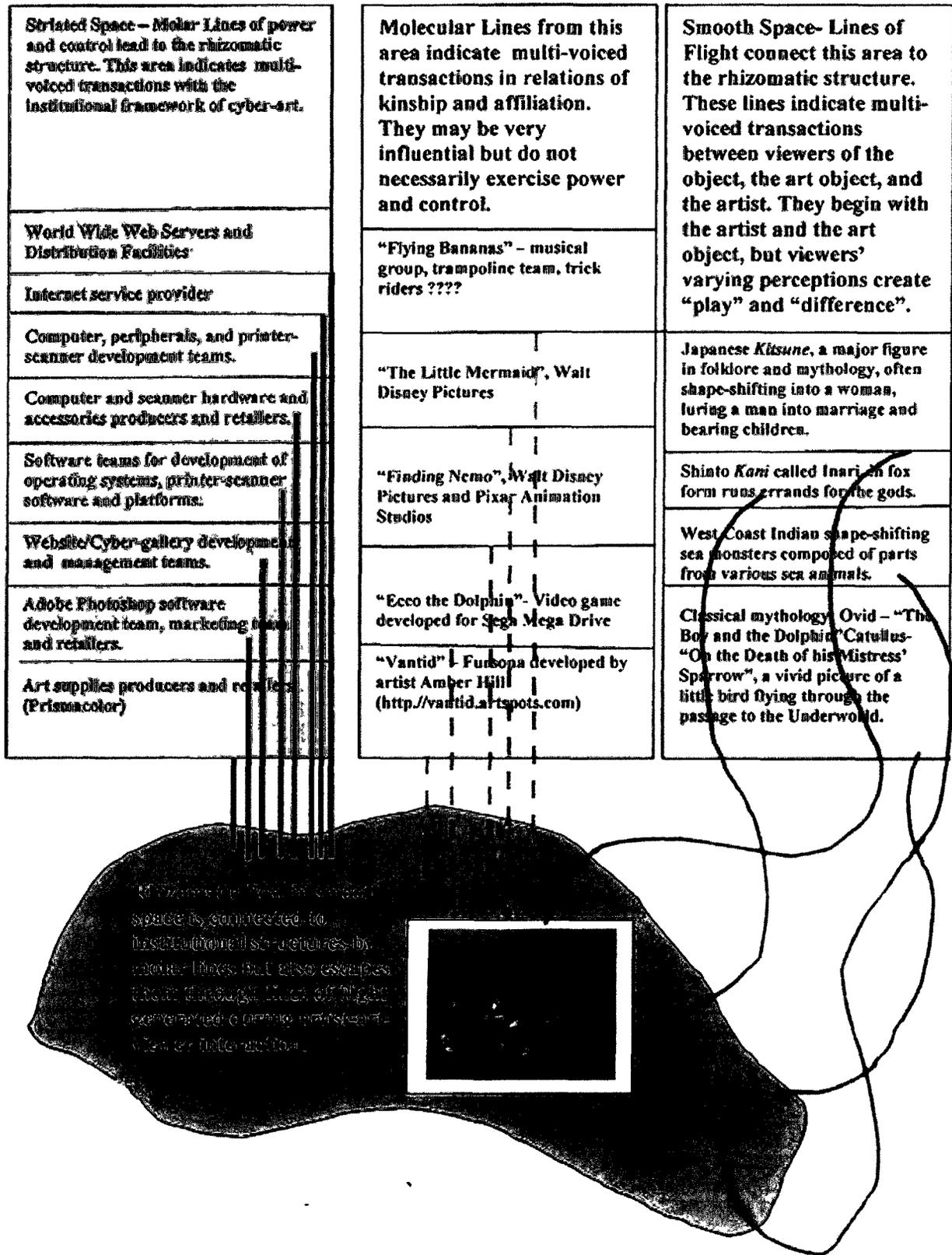


Figure 17: "The Hunters" by ~kiohl. As a Rhizome (http://kiohl.deviantart.com/art/The_Hunters-5362905)



Figure 18: Goats in the Shell.

(<http://web.archive.org/web/20060710170442/www.morphicon.org/2007>. Accessed 29/03/09.)

While this anthropomorphic goat, with its masculine beard, and feminine body shape, may have suggested a wealth of sexual possibilities to some ConFurance participants, the figure has a depth of meaning when its title “Goats in the Shell” is considered in its particular historical context. The title is based on a 1995 Japanese anime film, in the cyberpunk (*Bladerunner*, *Neuromancer*) genre. The film, officially titled *Armored Riot Police/Ghost in the Shell* is based on a manga that explores the possible complexity of a cyborg’s emotional and mental states. In “Doll Parts: Technology and the Body in *Ghost in the Shell*”, Susan Napier observes that the film is a brilliant, lyrical and reflective elegy for a “lost (or perhaps never really existing) world of human connection.” (Napier 2000: 106) The central character, Major Motoko Kusanagi, is a cyborg in the form of a woman. We see her taking human shape as she floats in a fetal position in a vat of liquid. Kusanagi is produced to be an assassin, responsible for damage control when a military project goes wrong and a sentient computer virus, Puppet Master, hacks into government computer systems. Her true quest, however, is for her “ghost”, her “spirit”, or her “soul”; her

body is a “shell” and many of its parts are government property, standard issue “doll parts” reminiscent of the Vargas pin-up girls mentioned above. “Although she often discusses her ghost with herself and her colleagues in dialogue that is striking in its philosophic overtones, it is Kusanagi’s cyborg body rather than her mind that becomes the vehicle for this quest. For it is her body, standing at the nexus between the technological and the human, that can best interrogate the issues of the spirit.” (Napier 2000: 107)

Kusanagi suffers three “falls” in the film. The first “privileges the body” (Napier 2000:108), as she plunges off a building, hangs from a cable outside a window, kills an official from a hostile country with an excessive amount of violence, becomes invisible and disappears into the electronic network of a high-tech city (Hong Kong). In her second fall, Kusanagi dives into the polluted waters of an urban harbor, again in a quest for her “ghost”. When her colleague, Batou, asks what she is searching for, her reply is Biblical: “For although I see through a glass darkly soon I shall see face to face.” Napier suggests that her third fall is into the mind of the Puppet Master (temporarily housed in the body of a beautiful female cyborg). (Napier 2000: 110) Both Kusangi and the Puppet Master are ripped apart by gunfire and their armless upper torsos are discarded on the floor of a gigantic nineteenth-century hall. The Puppet Master begins to speak with a male voice through Kusangi’s mouth inviting her to leave the (Platonic) cave and fuse with him in a world beyond the body. In desperation, Kusangi’s friend, Batou, scrounges the body of a young schoolgirl. In this guise, Kusangi looks at the vast electronic city, asking “So where do I go from here?” The film ends with her reflection that “the net” (from which she came) is wide and infinite. Napier suggests that the film contrasts sharply with American cyber-punk films. Although *Bladerunner*, *Neuromancer* and *Armored Riot Police: Ghost in the Shell* all explore “what it is to be human in an increasingly technological world where the gods seem to have disappeared and the human soul seems more and more vulnerable to technological and institutional exploitation...” (Napier 2000: 112), the American films return their cyber-protagonists to organic human forms, or destroy them. The Japanese film, in contrast, suggests that hope lies, not in human embodiment, but in the ability of technology to transcend the human and create new cyborgian forms of life. Even the music of the film, as Napier suggests, is inspired by Shinto liturgy, an “invocation to the gods to come and dance with the human.”

(Napier 2000:113) An examination, not only of the form, but also of the particular history of this interesting Furry picture suggests that “Goats in the Shell” is not simply a cute Vargas-style pinup of an anthropomorphic creature, but a thoughtful and compelling examination of the limitations of human embodiment in conditions of modernism, as well as a challenge to conventional boundaries.

Cultural Appropriation:

Furries, among many Internet sub-cultures, are guilty of appropriating cultural symbols and styles of artistic representation from other cultures. Whether the wholesale borrowing of styles, motifs and entire representations that takes place in cyber-space is healthy cross-cultural fertilization or harmful cultural appropriation and exploitation is a most perplexing question. If a Furry artist appropriates Donald Duck and replaces the duck’s head with a snarling leopard, there is, perhaps, a tendency to say something like, “Oh yes – the artist is commenting satirically on a Disney trope – rather clever, but really quite derivative. No harm done.” The artist may be mildly castigated for the derivative nature of his/her work, but we assume that the Disney corporations, so dominant in the global media marketplace, can defend themselves and certainly deserve a little ridicule. If, however, the same artist were to remove the head from a San rock painting of a sacred rain animal and replace it with the head of Donald Duck, we might be inclined to cringe and remark on a tasteless, offensive and potentially dangerous example of cultural appropriation. Figure 19 below provides several examples of Furry works of art that can either be interpreted as “cross-cultural fertilization” or as the appropriation of visual forms of representation.

All of these pictures are posted on the “FurAffinity” cyber-gallery and can be accessed within a one-hour period; thus, some idea of the amount of image “borrowing” or cultural appropriation that takes place in cyber-space can be gained from a simple “browse” through its offerings.

(<http://www.furaffinity.net>. Accessed 13/09/09) The first picture, I believed at first viewing, was of the West Coast Raven figure, a popular trickster god. The image, however, was produced by a 16-year old artist from New Zealand. The second picture, reminiscent of early European and San rock paintings, is actually a tattoo produced by an itinerant Furry tattoo artist. Picture number 3, with its affinity to

Australian aboriginal acrylic painting, bears an inscription on the website that reads “PunkarooCGAT” and is produced by an artist who describes him/herself as “Art Whore”. Number 4, a kind of “New Age”, pseudo-East Indian picture, is provided without information. The remaining four pictures are representative of one of the largest sources of Furry visual appropriation, modern and traditional Japanese art. Pictures 5 and 7 seem to evoke manga-style comic books and figures, while Number 6 resembles popular Pokemon cards and figures. Number 8 is an interesting drawing of the traditional *kitsune* figure, this time as a fully developed 9-tailed fox with elements of a dragon’s head.



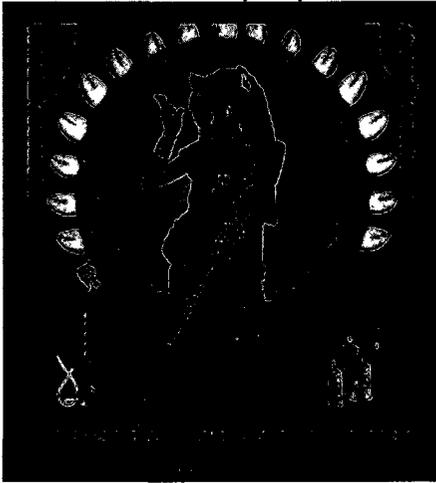
1. RainbowRaven Icon by Kitty-sama



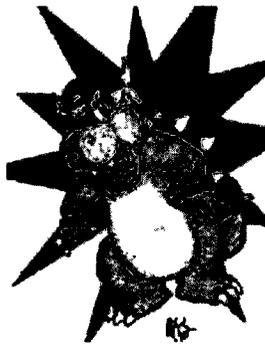
2. Mi Tatuaje by Troublefree



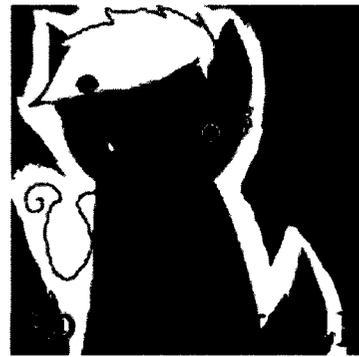
3. Punk and Mori Floats by Dirtiran.



4. The Dream by Tetra-chan



5. Gabi Koopa Fighting Pose by Tetra-Chan



6. So Productive: Kraven is also productive without anti-alias by Drakonstance.



7. Digimon: Rise of the Orochi, Ch.1, Part 3 by Ralord



8. 9-Tailed Fox by StarlaFox.

Figure 19: Cross-Cultural Exchange or Appropriation?

It is not within the scope of this paper to make pronouncements about the potential impact of the wholesale exchange and appropriation of visual imagery that takes place in cyber-space every minute. It is, nevertheless, a topic that could benefit from serious anthropological attention and from studies that could trace the mutation and transformation of culturally-specific visual representations as they are appropriated and re-used in cyberspace. Certainly, for indigenous peoples who feel threatened by the

appropriation of their cultural symbols, close and detailed studies of the use of indigenous visual representations would help to clarify the actual impact of cultural appropriation as it is practiced in cyberspace.

Sources and Derivations: Comments on the History of Furry Art References from Ancient Civilizations:

If an inclusive definition of Furry art is adopted, all anthropomorphic characters found in the art of any culture could be considered part of the art world of the Furry Fandom. Certainly Furry artists have drawn inspiration from works of art from ancient times to the present and across a wide range of cultures. Ancient civilizations that include anthropomorphic deities or folkloric figures are frequently used as reference points by Furry artists. Ancient Egypt, with its anthropomorphic pantheon is a popular source of artistic inspiration; the examples shown in Figure 20 below also illustrate a common Furry approach to classical works of art – a satirical commentary on the sexuality of these works that may often be downplayed in the exhibition of ancient art works within the institutional framework of national museums. One might observe that, in its artistic referencing of the anthropomorphic pantheon of ancient civilizations, the Furry art community tends to maintain its pattern of challenging and deconstructing accepted boundaries. The challenge here is to the institutional framing of ancient Egyptian works of art in exhibitions tending to emphasize archaeological scholarship, historical data, and theoretical reconstructions of cultural systems, rather than attempting to present representations of lived experience.

The shape-shifting human-animal combinations of Greek and Roman mythology are another popular motif drawn from ancient works of art. Only a few examples of the genre are provided below in Figure 19, but many more appear in Furry cyber-galleries; indeed, only one example, Centaurs, forms an entire sub-category of Furry art and culture with a number of cyber-galleries and web pages dedicated to Centaur and pony-boy art, whether in the form of drawings and paintings or in edited photographs attaching human torsos and heads to equine bodies. Because the Furry sub-culture is a global phenomenon, references to the traditional art of a wide spectrum of cultures outside the Western art tradition are frequently seen. Asian traditional art forms are probably the most common reference, as the

frequent appearance of the kitsuni figure illustrates; the lovely black and white Ying-Yang design, similar to those that appear on traditional textiles, illustrates the success that Furry artists have experienced in working within this tradition. Characters and motifs that appear in folklore and folktales also frequently appear, with a heavy emphasis on dragons, gryphons, and figures from Celtic and Scandinavian mythology, perhaps in keeping with the Furry interest in role-playing games.

“The Trope of the Primitive” (Marcus and Myers 1995: 15):

“The trope of the ‘primitive’ continues to exercise considerable rhetorical power in the present, and not simply in New Age frameworks...” (Marcus and Myers 1995:15) Modern artists such as Picasso have employed references to ‘primitive’ or ‘tribal’ art to produce the “shock of the new” and “disrupt dominant conventions during several moments in the history of modern art”. In challenging art world conventions (for example, those concerning perspective and multiple representation) artists have often relied on anthropology’s presentation of non-Western people as “exotic”, “different” or “other” in order to deconstruct aspects of modernity, to expose the fragmented and superficial nature of Western society, and to enhance the perception of the role of the artist, in conditions of modernity, as avant-garde social critic.

311. Anubusette

THE HARDEST SUBJECT TO DRAW IS A HUMAN IN A SEXY POSE. A HUMAN IN AN EROTIC ANIMAL POSE IS ANOTHER LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY. NOW MAKE IT AN ANTHROMORPHIC IN AN ATTRACTIVE ANIMAL-LIKE POSE WITH A THEME....



AND SOME ART DIRECTORS
THINK THIS IS CHILDISH.
TRY TO DRAW IT SOME TIME!!

Anubusette by Steve Martin



Egyptian Gals V by Amber Williams



Centaur Couple Silhouette by James Fourlegs



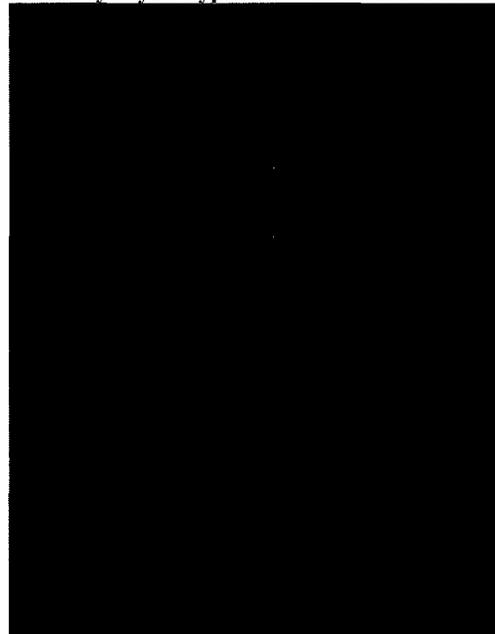
Jason-the-Kitsuni by Alyn Gryphon



Untitled Document by E. Dyer



Phoenix&Grif by Alyn Gryphon



Hart by Klar

Figure 20: Global Classical References in Furry Art: A Few Examples.

While Furry artists certainly utilize a number of visual references to produce social criticism, it may be more accurate to suggest that “the trope of the primitive” is more frequently used in Furry art to portray a pantheistic nostalgia for a previous ‘Golden Age’, an Edenic past or state of “primal purity” where sharp Linnaean boundaries between human and animal did not exist, as seen in the first picture, “Lutalo”, in Figure 36 below. Morphy and Perkins suggest that: “Art can be one of the means by which the image of a culture is conveyed across time and space. But the images that are created in this way often involve cultural stereotypes that belong to the consuming culture rather than to the producing culture. The processes of selection and interpretation can create a simplified, essentialized, atemporal image of a

particular society which bears little relation to its recent history or contemporary existence.” (Morphy and Perkins 2006: 19) Not only can the selection and interpretation process create the impression of an essentialized ethnographic present for the producing culture, it can also be employed to lend authority to the art works of the consuming culture, linking it, through the semiotics of visual representation, to a prior Golden Age perceived as organically whole. If we examine the second image in Figure 21 below, we can see a suggestion of the use of what some artists I have talked to describe as a ‘primitive’ or ‘tribal’ reference to lend pictorial authority to an image and to place it in an essentialized and timeless context. The rising winged dragon in “You Dropped a Sparkle” may be European in concept (and similar to those dragons used as avatars in popular role-playing games), with Asian influences, but the image becomes visually compelling because of its black-and-white treatment and the shape and shading of elements such as the dragon’s wings and head in a style usually linked to the art of West Coast Indians. The blue winged wolf that picks up the “sparkle” almost seems to belong to a different world because of his coloration which lacks the authority of the traditional black outlining technique. The third image, “Natsilane Dance” by Redvarg illustrates the cross-cultural blurring and fusion of boundaries typically found in the art of cyber-cultures. The Natsilane story is a Tlingit myth, a tale of betrayal and revenge and also an explanatory myth accounting for the creation of Orcas or killer whales. The crashing waves are treated in a style reminiscent of traditional Japanese watercolors and ink drawings. The dancing horse, not a factor in the original tale, may represent the folk hero riding on the backs of two killer whales or bringing gifts to the tribal village. The blue delineation of the horse’s ribs, diaphragm, spine and windpipe links the image to Cree or West Coast indigenous art and immediately places the horse in the realm of myth. “Tribal Icons” by Apocastasis blends a number of indigenous styles ranging from Haida art of the West Coast to Australian aboriginal technique to suggestions of Mayan and Aztec art works to create an effect of tile work or stained glass. In contrast, “Native Pattern” by Keenan_ArcticFox is the final picture in a series that “dissolves” the hard outlines of a Haida-style painting into liquid and flowing lines to create a compelling and largely abstract pattern.

Representations like “Haida Malamute Stamp” by FoxFeather and “Raven Stealing the Sun” by Windfall clearly refer to the art and literature of West Coast Indians. In including them in this discussion, however, I would like to point out how visually compelling these pictures are. Despite the problems associated with the appropriation of styles and motifs that are labeled “primitive” or “tribal”, that a misleading impression of ethnographic timelessness may be presented and that the powerful statements of the original works may be diluted when their authority is borrowed and applied to other art works, perhaps it is important that we do not lose sight of one possible reason that Furry artists may include frequent references to this type of art – with its clean lines and vivid use of color and black and white outline techniques, indigenous art lends itself superbly to graphic design programs and computer mediation. Not only does it lend authority to the images produced, it also articulates well with the methods of art production favored by Furry artists.

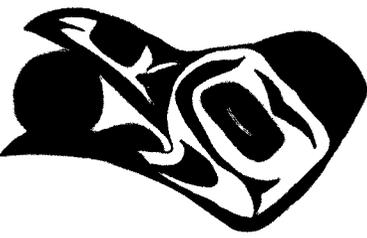


nocturnax.deviantart.com

“You dropped a sparkle” by Nocturnax



Haida Malamute Stamp by FoxFeather



Raven Stealing the Sun by Windfall



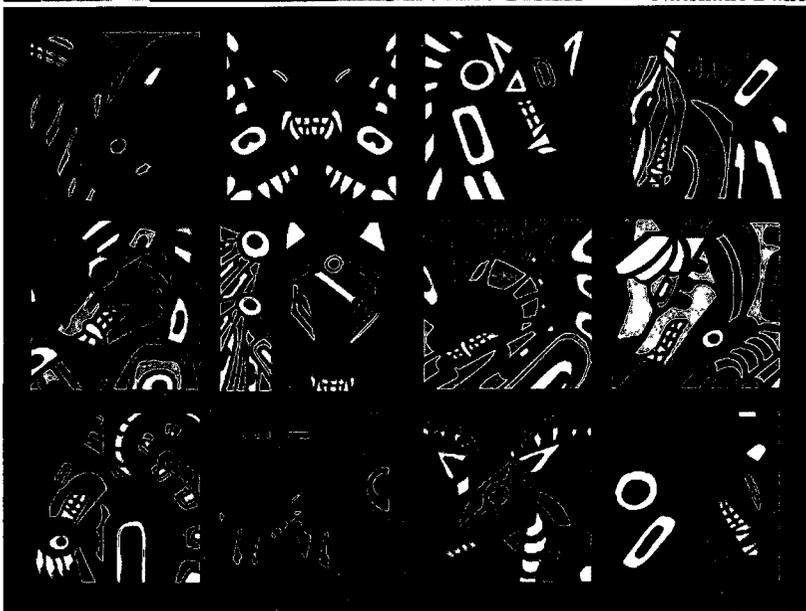
Native Pattern by Keenan_ArcticFox



Lutalo by Jaxxblackfox



Natsilane Dance by Redvarg



Tribal Icons by Apocastasis

Figure 21: The “Trope of the Primitive” in Furry Art.

Animal Depiction in Western Art:

While many Furry art works refers to “primitive” art, to ancient civilizations or to modern cartoon art, there are also some intriguing references in Furry art to animal depiction as it developed historically in the Western art world from the Renaissance to the present. In the extended version of this paper I have included a discussion of oil painting and the creation of desire and value as seen in Holbein’s “Portrait of a Lady with a Squirrel and a Starling” (Figure 22)(Berger 1977), dead animal painting and “the aesthetics and political metaphysics of killing ” (Leppert 1996: 79) as seen in #1 and #4 in Figure 22, and “Renaissance meat art” (Leppert 1996: 92) as seen in #2 below. As Leppert observes, “The question of power, and even more of its attendant prestige, is deconstructed by Rembrandt.” (Leppert 1996: 92)

We find, in Furry art, frequent reference to the deconstruction of the power and prestige associated with dead animals, mentioned above, although the media used have changed. The art of cyber-space makes sparing use of the technology of oil painting, replacing it with acrylics, pencil crayons, watercolours, scanners and graphics programs that provide instant shading and veils of color. Nevertheless, careful and realistic depictions of fur, feathers and scales are valued and enhance the prestige of the owners of ConBadges and character representations. Thematically, however, dead animal representation in Furry art has much more to do with Rembrandt’s “The Slaughtered Ox” than with “Windsor Castle in Modern Times”. The “memento mori” theme is still popular in Furry art (as seen in #5 in Figure 22 below), but it is often constructed in ways that are remarkably similar to the Rembrandt handling of the idea of animals’ suffering and sacrifice seen in his representation of an ox carcass. In #7 in Figure 22 below, “Hanged Bird”, we have not only a skilful composition in black, white and grey, but an evocative reminder of crucifixion that also successfully communicates the suffering of the dead animal. “rell_rebirth_”, (#6 in Figure 22 below), is an even more complex handling of suffering and sacrifice. The cyborgian figure, suspended in a web of wires and tentacles, evokes pity with its gaping jaws and blank eyes. It is not entirely a machine, as the bubbles in the fluid surrounding it suggest, but a suffering machine-animal amalgam, stripped of its covering, with bared musculature like a suspended carcass. The title, however, tells us that the “rell” is undergoing suffering in order to experience “rebirth”;

a dying and reviving god allusion that links it to Rembrandt’s suggestion of the crucifixion in “The Slaughtered Ox”. Perhaps this is simply a personal reaction, but the handling of this subject in grey, black and white, without the opulence of oil paints, seems to me to suggest a brutal and mechanical “rebirth” that will inevitably result in another cycle of suffering and mechanized death.

On a happier note, #8 in Figure 22, “Faux Fur” by Mirroreyes, is a delightful reversal of the Renaissance painter’s use of fur and texture to enhance the prestige of the painted subject. Although the media here are acrylics, watercolors and pencil crayons instead of oils, the fluffy fox still suggests tactile opulence, while the lovely soft human skin with its dangling hand, draped in furry folds around her shoulders, presents a portrait of a vixen who, indeed, must enjoy the prestige and status accorded to one who owns such an appealing pelt.



1. Die Jagdbeute by Jan Fyt (1649)

2. The Slaughtered Ox by Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn. (c. 1638)

3. Vanitas by Phillipe de Champaigne ... (c. 1671)



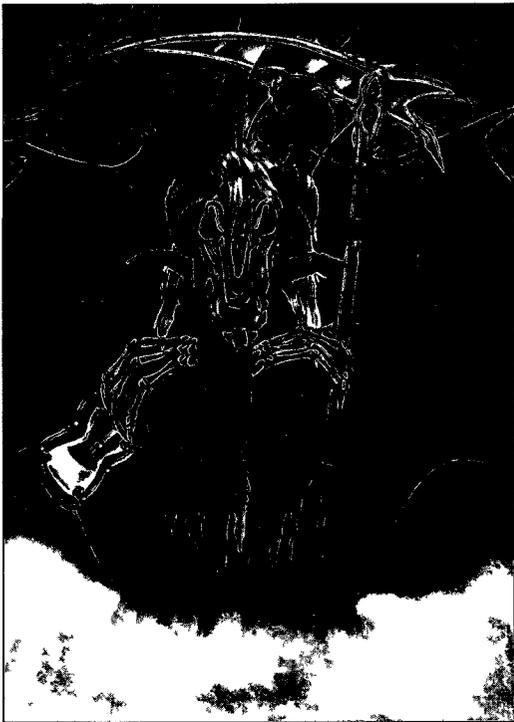
4. Portrait of a Lady with a Squirrel and a Starling by Hans Holbein the Younger (c. 1527)



5. The Ambassadors by Hans Holbein the Younger (1533)



6. Windsor Castle in Modern Times: Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, and Victoria, Princess Royal by Sir Edwin Landseer 1845.



5. dEATH by Maja Wrzosek



6. rell_ribirth_color_complete by Tina Leyk



7. Hanged Bird by Lightbulby



8. Faux Fur by Mirroreyes (watercolor, colored pencil and acrylics)

Figure 22: Animal Representation: Images of Power and Possession

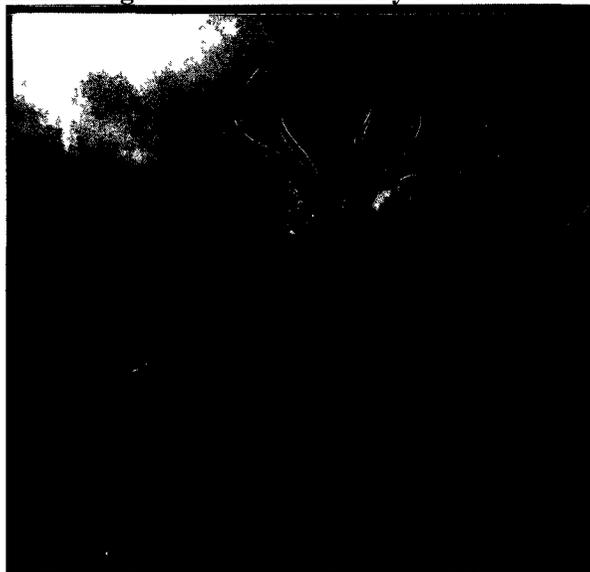
Margaret Atwood, in *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1966), observes that writers depicting Nature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries suffer from a marked “double vision”. Her observation is also true of visual arts representing wildlife and domestic animals. Juxtaposed with the painting of hunting trophies, fox hunts, and the conquest of ferocious wild pheasants, we find idyllic scenes that present what Leppert describes as, “a powerful wave of nostalgic melancholia [that] swept the consciousness of the educated, aristocratic elite.” (Leppert1996:226) This Romantic and Edenic vision, seen in #1 and 2 in Figure 23 below, contrasts with the heap of dead birds portrayed in “Windsor Castle in Modern Times”. Landseer, who, perhaps, has garnered insufficient attention as a transitional figure, takes us from the images of dead game animals as markers of power, wealth, and patriarchal authority to a trope that has gathered enormous public acceptance – the photo-realistic depiction of animals by widely-acclaimed “wildlife artists”. The Landseer paintings in #1 and 2 in Figure 23 below clearly demonstrate the transition and the “double vision” that Atwood notes. While Isaac Van Amburgh placidly reposes with “his” lions, tigers, and jaguars, the lioness in the foreground eyes the lamb with a look that distinctly says “Lunch has arrived”. The Edenic scenario on the right hand side of the painting is balanced by the bars

and the mildly interested spectators on the left hand side, making it clear that the entire presentation is constructed for the entertainment of viewers. Landseer's famous "The Monarch of the Glen", #2, depicting a majestic stag against a romantic background featuring the sublime and the beautiful, shows us the hunting trophy in the moments before its death. The technique displayed in Landseer's work, detailed photo-realistic rendition of fur and feathers, is seen in the great variety of "scientific" plates of wildlife art that mark the animal representation of the mid-nineteenth and twentieth centuries, although, as we see in #3 in Figure 23, the Durer painting of a hare, this technique existed long before Robert Bateman and Terry Redlin became best-selling wildlife artists. The American wildlife artist (and hunter), John James Audubon (See #4 in Figure 23 below), is usually credited with popularizing the trend toward extreme accuracy in the depiction of wild animals, and he and his followers, the "Audubon School", prompted a popular revival of this type of painting, linked, again with marked "double vision", to both the sportsman and the environmentalist. Bateman's "Dozing Lynx" (#5) and Redlin's "Night Watch" (#6 in Figure 23 below) are popular examples of this construction of wildlife in a setting that is perceived as natural. The genre is understandably popular with Furry artists, although it specifically excludes anthropomorphic animals, perhaps because of its suggestion of an Edenic natural setting and because of its tactile appeal in the rendition of fur and feathers. #8 in Figure 23 below, "Coyotes", is a painting in this genre by Furry artist J.C. Amberlyn. Following in Audubon's footsteps, Roger Tory Peterson developed a set of "Field Guides" to birds, animals, shrubs, trees, wildflowers, and other manifestations of nature that may, perhaps, link painting in the Audubon School tradition to Boasian observations on "primitive" art. Peterson's plates in his well-known *A Field Guide to the Birds* (1947) combine realistic and detailed drawings of birds with the identification of "field marks" or signifiers indicating the Linnaean classification of a particular bird according to its "species", a classification system that is similar to the Boasian identification of signifiers in West Coast Indian animal renditions in *Primitive Art* (1955 [1927]). This semiotic system, which uses black lines to point to "field marks", is illustrated in #7 in Figure 23 below, a plate from Peterson's *Field Guide*. While #9, 10, 11, and 12 in Figure 23 below lack Peterson's black lines, they each incorporate a set of signifiers indicating the "species" depicted on these four

examples of Furry ConBadges. The fox in #9 is characterized by large pointed ears, red-brown fur, tilted eyes, a grinning mouth and a long nose. The ring-billed gull in #10 clearly bears its identifying field marks, while, in #11, the wolf shows not only the usual field marks- big ears, long nose, pale eyes, thick fur- but also includes a symbolic crescent on his/her forehead indicating its mystic nature. #12, “Nambroth”, makes clever use of the field mark semiotic to indicate a mutant species with a raptor beak, blue eyes, a tuft of eagle or hawk feathers and fox’s ears. As we can see in these ConBadges, the photo-realistic style and field mark semiotic in popular Western wildlife art have been widely adopted in Furry art works.



1. Isaac Van Amburgh and His Animals by Sir Edwin Landseer 1839.



2. The Monarch of the Glen by Sir Edwin Landseer 1851



3. Young Hare by Albrech Durer



4. Swamp Hare by John James Audubon



5. Dozing Lynx by Robert Bateman



KINGFISHER JAYS BOBOLINK, ORIOLES AND TANAGERS	
BEITED KINGFISHER	1 1/2
CANADA JAY	1 1/2
BLUE JAY	1 1/2
BOBO LINK	1 1/2
BALTIMORE ORIOLE	1 1/2
ORCHARD ORIOLE	1 1/2
SCARLET TANAGER	1 1/2
SUMMER TANAGER	1 1/2
WESTERN TANAGER	1 1/2

6. Night Watch by Terry Redlin (Peterson 1947)

7. Plate 54 showing Peterson's "Field Mark" system.



8. Coyotes by J. C. Amberlyn



9. Crimson Fox Badge by L.N. Dornsyfe



10. Ring-billed Gull by Amber Smith-Cochrane



11. Wolftale Shadow by Reaperfox



12. Nambroth by Nicole A. Robinson

Figure 23: Animal Representation from Landseer to the Present: Photo-Realism and Field Marks.

Illustrated “Children’s” Literature

Another influential style in the development of Furry art is the Western tradition of lavishly illustrated children’s literature, usually featuring anthropomorphic characters. These well-dressed anthropomorphic “funny animals” are the mainstay of much Furry representation and their production is part of a long history of “cute” illustrations for children’s stories. An early example is the illuminated painting of Puss-in-Boots found in the manuscript version of this story written by Charles Perrault in 1695 seen in #1, Figure 24 below. The field of art, as seen in the illustrations for children’s literature, is a vast one and outside the scope of this discussion, but a few examples, seen in Figure 24 below, will illustrate some aspects of the use of this genre in Furry art. Picture #1 shows the bright colors and well-developed background used in the illuminated illustration for *Puss-in-Boots*. #2 shows the pastel watercolor technique, line drawings, and simplified background used by Beatrix Potter in the “Peter Rabbit” series. #3 shows the black and white line drawings with limited background detail drawn by E.H. Shephard for *Winnie-the-Pooh* (Milne 1926). In #4 we see the black and white simplified line drawings of Joel Chandler Harris, with minimal background. In the Furry art world there is a large field of work that

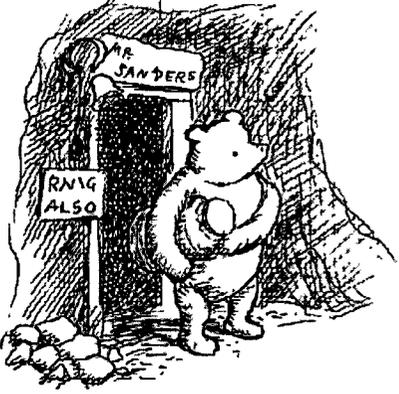
 <p><i>Le chat botté</i> <i>conte</i></p> <p>Il y avait un chat en attendant pour le roi un jour qui ne fut pas son maître en vain. Et ainsi se les parties furent les parties de la vie les parties de la vie</p>		
<p>1. Illuminated illustration “Puss-in-Boots” by Charles Perrault (1695)</p>	<p>2. Illustration from <i>The Tale of Peter Rabbit and Mr. McGregor’s Garden</i> by Beatrix Potter (1902)</p>	<p>3. Winnie-the-Pooh drawn by E.H. Shephard for A.A. Milne’s <i>Winnie- the-Pooh</i> (1926).</p>
		
<p>4. Br'er Rabbit from <i>The Tar Baby</i> by Joel Chandler Harris (1904)</p>		<p>5. Br'er Rabbit from Walt Disney Productions’ <i>Song of the South</i>. (1946)</p>
		
<p>6. The Cheshire Cat by John Tenniel for <i>Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland</i> (1865)</p>	<p>7. The Cheshire Cat from Walt Disney Productions’ <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> (1951)</p>	<p>8. Furry Cheshire Cat by Frank Gembeck</p>

Figure 24: Illustrations for Children’s Literature

might be characterized as “The Hallmark Card School”. These art works usually feature cute anthropomorphic animals, often well-dressed, often embedded in rather sentimental settings or frameworks, suitable for a greeting card. Although the artists may use the simplified black and white drawing technique that we see in Harris and and Shephard, it more common to see a more pronounced use of color and fairly well developed backgrounds in this type of Furry art. Children’s literature is not the only source of this type of art. Some of these pictures have affinities with popular children’s television programs such as *Care Bears* or *Strawberry Shortcake and Friends*. Three examples of Furry art from “The Hallmark Card School” are seen in Figure 25 below. It should be noted that, where there is a Disney version of a popular work of children’s literature, Furry artists may tend to use the Disney version as a source of inspiration, rather than the original illustration. In #4 and #5, Figure 24, we see the transition from Harris’ simplified ink drawing of Br’er Rabbit from *The Tar Baby* (1904) to Disney Studios’ typical bright colors and dramatic presentation of Br’er Rabbit in the animated feature film, *Song of the South* (1946). The Cheshire Cat drawn in black and white by Sir John Tenniel in 1865 (#6 in Figure 24) becomes a garishly striped purple version in #7, Disney’s *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), and those stripes go with him into the Furry art world with Frank Gembeck’s turquoise version of the same character, seen in #8 in Figure 24.



The Master of Color:
..Kotenolgaff's Gallery

Homesick by Kathy-lu

Love Kitties Love Coffee by Erin
Middendorf



Bluebear



Fair Lyred



Ferretlight



Greenwolf

(These little creatures are Furry Fairies offered for adoption by Malystriyxx at: <http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Labyrinth/1018/index.htm>.)

Figure 25: Furry Art in the “Hallmark Card” Style.

Other Sources: Anime and Manga:

Although Patten (n.d., <http://yarf.furry.com/chronology.html>.) strongly emphasizes the role of the print world and “funny animal” comics in the formation of the Furry sub-culture and its art, it would present an inaccurate picture of the Furry art world to suggest that there are no other sources of inspiration. No study of Furry art could be complete without mention of the strong influence of anime, manga and related video games, of fantasy art and of the Disney Studios, Warner Brothers and other large media production companies, such as Dreamworks, in interacting with and supplying sources for Furry artists. Their roles in the formation of the Furry sub-culture will be discussed further in the chapters on comic books and media productions.

Japanese manga and anime, and their offspring in video games and television programs, will also be discussed in later sections, but it must be noted that many Fursonas and works of art are based on characters either directly from anime and manga, or inspired by them. One artist, Klar, whose interview appears in Appendix 9, observes that she was inspired to begin drawing cartoons and funny animals by her experience with the character of Sonic the Hedgehog, the central figure depicted, in anime style, in the video game of the same name (Figure 26 below).



Packaging for *Sonic the Hedgehog*, Sega/Genesis.



Screen from *Sonic the Hedgehog*

Figure 26: Sonic the Hedgehog: A Source for Furry Artists.

(Sega/Genesis packaging: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sonic_the_Hedgehog_\(video_game\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sonic_the_Hedgehog_(video_game))). Screen and character: <http://MyWii.com.au/img/game/large/Sonic-the-Hedgehog>)

Illustrated books are an ancient tradition in Japan, but the Japanese date the origin of the manga genre from 1815 when the famous artist, Hokusai, coined the word “manga” from “man” meaning “whimsical or careless” and “ga” meaning “drawings” (Okum 2004:8). Japanese illustrators and animators began experimenting with anime early in the 20th century and produced an anime “talkie” in 1933, *Chikara to Onna no Yo no Naka*. (Baricordi *et al.* 2000:12) As a result of the limited market for live-action films made in Japan, animated films enjoyed great popularity and Japanese film-makers and animators, inspired by the success of the Disney Studios, managed to adapt and simplify Disney’s complex animation techniques to meet the needs of lower budget operations. Manga comic books became extremely popular after the Second World War, attracting a wide audience of adults and children. As Okum observes, manga is not a genre limited to children and often deals with “adults-only” themes:

Manga produced in Japan is published weekly as part of huge 300+ anthologies of comic stories. They are regarded as cheap entertainment for commuters, read and then discarded. They usually aren’t preserved as precious artifacts like American comic books. ...The Japanese fan base is truly amazing with tens of thousands of people attending conventions in an attempt to catch a glimpse of their favorite artists. Fans also create elaborate costumes and dress up as popular manga characters. Artistic fans can try their hands at *doujinshi*, amateur comics about their favorite manga and anime characters. (Okum 2004:8)

The Western manga and anime sub-cultures may have difficulty in adapting original Japanese works because Asian books are read from right to left, but Western manga has developed rapidly and today enjoys a large share of the comic book market. Osamu Tezuka, “the god of manga”, (Gravett 2003) originated many of the characteristics that characterize the animated manga that we know as “anime” and developed the giant robot genre called “Mecha”, one of the most popular elements of anime. From this brief account, one can see that there are many areas of articulation with the Furry sub-culture – the “adult-content” themes found in media often considered the purview of children, the theatrical conventions and gatherings, and the challenges to machine-human-boundaries as well as to conventional sexual roles.

The world of manga and anime art is a rather formal and stylized one with conventional elements that often appear in Furry adaptations of this genre. Some of the drawing techniques of the manga artist, the large eyes and wild hair of the characters, can be seen in “Elements of Manga Style and Their Reflection in Furry Art” in Appendix 9. Here we see the characteristic most frequently associated with manga and anime- the large eye. Okum notes the connotative function of hair color and style as a semiotic system; for example, a character with violet hair would be construed as “exotic and knowledgeable, but somewhat secretive”. If the hair is styled in a spiky “fright wig”, the character is also “powerfully energetic with a touch of the supernatural”. (Okum 2004: 24) As it is considered rude to display teeth in Japanese culture, teeth would be drawn on a smiling figure only if the figure is careless, tactless, or very young. (Okum 2004:32) Proportions vary according to the type of character; children and “chibi”, for example, usually have large heads, hands, and feet. This appendix illustrates the major character types found in the manga and anime genres. (Okum 2004:12-14) In addition, “cat-girls” are very popular characters. (Okum 2004:72) The most obviously anthropomorphic character in the manga cast is the mascot, shown in the appendix as a “cabbit”, a hybrid cat-rabbit with a huge fox tail; often, the mascot’s fur is colored blue. (Okum 2004:59) The articulation between manga’s characteristic figures and the anthropomorphic Fursonas of the Furry sub-culture is most clearly seen in the mascot figure and the hybrid “cat-girl” type of character. The cyborgian element may be found in the “mecha” character, seen in

the appendix, or in the “mindless goons”, and in various manga figures that are human-machine composites. In the appendix, Okum explains some conventions that appear in manga and anime art, and are repeated in Furry art. Figure 27 below illustrates a number of Furry visual representations derived from manga and anime.

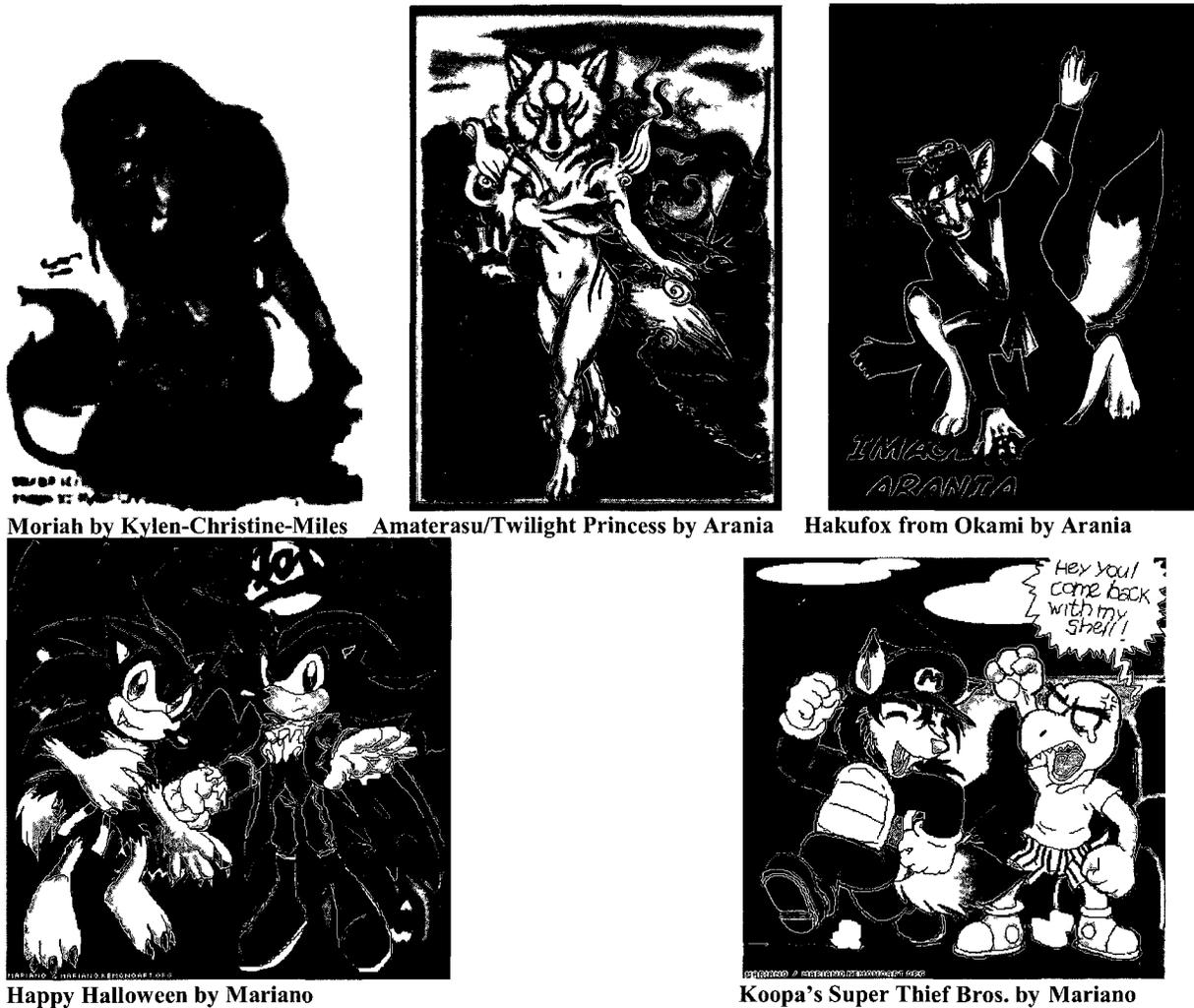


Figure 27: Furry Visual Representations Derived from Manga, Anime and Anime-Based Video Games.

Other Sources: Fantasy Art

Just as the world of manga, anime and anime-based video games has proven to provide a rich source of imagery for the Furry art world, so, too, the genre of fantasy art has inspired Furry artists. Although fantasy art has not yet garnered sufficient support in the art world to merit a place in museums and galleries and may not be considered “high art” by the cultural elite, it is certainly one of the most

popular forms of artistic expression in cyber-space. From fantastic backgrounds and character studies for role-playing games to individual acrylics or oils, fantasy art can be seen in a majority of on-line galleries. The genre might be considered a facet of the Romantic movement, particularly of the cult of the Sublime and the Picturesque. Burke observes in *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1755) that the “beautiful” could be considered a landscape of soft flowing curves; the “sublime” might be a craggy awe-inspiring wilderness, while the “picturesque” mediated between the two and drew beauty from the tension between them. Turner’s *The Chancel and Crossing of Tintern Abbey, Looking towards the East Window*, seen in Figure 28 below, illustrates the genre by contrasting the elegantly designed Gothic arches with the ruin and decay of the Abbey destroyed by Henry VIII. This type of scene has been reproduced innumerable times in role-playing games of the *Dungeons and Dragons* genre and in comic books and graphic novels. The genre lends itself well to role-playing games and works of fantasy art, as can be seen in science-fiction and fantasy artist Bob Eggleton’s *Cthuhlu 2000* below where the soft beauty of the sky is contrasted with the jagged peaks and rugged features of the winged figure in the foreground. Rebecca Kemp, a Furry artist, utilizes the same convention in *The Assassin* seen in Figure 28 below. Here the flowing lines of the cat-man and his cloak contrast vividly with the ruined castle on a jagged peak in the background.

The ambiguous position of fantasy art in relation to the “art world” can be appreciated in viewing George Grie’s *Mermaid Syndrom* in Figure 28 below. Grie (Yuri Georgevich Gribanovski) is a Russian-Canadian digital neo-surrealist living and working in Toronto. His widely acclaimed photo-realistic style, combined with the use of digital graphics, has made him a pioneer in computer-mediated visual representation; yet, the semiotics of Grie’s art work, drawing on the discourse of fantasy art, limits his acceptance in the world of “fine art”. This is an issue that the “art world” may have to address in the near future as work like that of George Grie gains the audience that it deserves. We can see in *Natsilane Dance* by Furry artist, Redvaarg, that this type of work commands attention in cyber-galleries. Fantasy art articulates well with the Furry sub-culture in subject matter as well as in stylistic characteristics.

Rukis_pale_blood, seen in Figure 28 is a character portrayal intended for inclusion in a fantasy role-playing game, a venue in which anthropomorphic characters are very popular. Four anthropomorphic characters drawn or painted by one of the most well-known fantasy artists of the *Dungeons and Dragons* line, Larry Elmore, appear in Figure 28.



**The Chancel and Crossing of Tintern Abbey,
...Looking towards the East Window by J.M.W. Turner**

Cthuhlu 2000 by Bob Eggleton



The Assassin by Rebecca Kemp

Mermaid Syndrom by George Grie



Natsilane Dance by Redvaarg



rukis pale blood by Rukis Roo Paw Graphics



Four Visual Representations of Anthropomorphic Animals by Larry Elmore



***Rulers in the Darkness* (cover art) by Bob Eggleton**



***Crimson Dawn* by Larry Elmore *Dragonstar* by Bob Eggleton by Nathalie~Sutton**



Furry Dragon by Nathalie~Sutton

Daytime by Alphonse Mucha

Faithry Image by Swandog



Elfquest #5. Cover Art by Wendy Pini



Male Faerie by Matt Madron

Figure 28: Furry Visual Representation and Fantasy Art

Of course we cannot omit the ubiquitous dragons of fantasy art, mainstays of fantasy. Two dragons by famous fantasy artists, Bob Eggleton and Larry Elmore, are shown in Figure 28 above, along with one by a Furry artist, Nathalie~Sutton, whose *Dragonstar* gives an idea of the importance of these artists as a source of inspiration in Furry visual representation. Of course, Furry artists like to challenge boundaries, and Nathalie~Sutton does so as she plays around with her graphics program to produce the fuzzy white dragon seen in Figure 28 above.

A further source of fantasy art may be found in Pre-Raphaelite and Art Nouveau works, illustrated above by the panel, *Daytime*, painted by Alphonse Mucha. This delicate and fanciful style, with its discourse of fairies, wilting maidens, mythic beasts, glinting light on leaves, flower garlands, and graceful arches, has found acceptance in the “art world”, perhaps because some Pre-Raphaelite works have become religious icons. It has also been adopted by a number of Furry artists, as we can see in the picture of the swan princess, *Faithry* by Swandog, seen in Figure 28. The style is echoed in the delicate coloring and flowing locks of the cover picture from the influential comic series, *Elfquest*, and is widely imitated by Furry artists, as seen in the *Male Faerie* by Matt Madron.

Lions and Tigers and Bears: “Funny Animals” in Fandom Art

“Funny animals” is a term used in the film and comic book industries for anthropomorphic animals, usually represented in the form of cartoons. They are, of course, the most important element in Furry visual representation and are, most frequently, derived from the productions of major media companies whether in the form of animated films, television programs or video games and comic books based on characters presented in films. The list of funny animals reproduced in Furry art forms is a long one, and includes all the major studios producing animated cartoons. Warner Brothers and Time-Warner contributed Bugs Bunny, Porky Pig, Tom and Jerry, the Peanuts crew, Daffy Duck, Sylvester and Tweety, Wile E. Coyote (a popular Furry character), the Roadrunner, Pepe Le Peu (There are entire websites devoted to skunk Fursonas.), the casts of Pokemon 1,2 and 3, and the cast of the outstanding animated version of *Watership Down*. Hanna-Barbera contributed characters with similarities to Yogi Bear and company, Scooby-Doo, Top Cat, Huckleberry Hound, and various Smurf-like anthropomorphic creatures.

From Dreamworks, the Furry sub-culture absorbed characters from *Shrek*, *Shark Tale*, *Over the Hedge*, *Kung Fu Panda*, *How to Train your Dragon*, *Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit*, and *Chicken Run*. LucasFilm contributed a renewed interest in *Howard the Duck* and Willow, as well as the popular Ewoks and Wookie of the *Star Wars* films, both of which have re-appeared in Furry representations. From Spielberg, Furrries have been inspired by the *Tiny Toons* series, *An American Tail*,

The Land Before Time, and the *Transformers* series. In addition, Spielberg produced *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*, a strong influence on the development of Furry Fursonas, although this film was released by Walt Disney/Touchstone.

Impressive as this list of animated influences on the Fandom may be, the single most significant contributor to the flood of animated funny animals in which Furies have been immersed since they were old enough to sit in front of a television set must be considered to be the Disney Studies. In anthropology today, it is fashionable to “de-construct” the Disney Empire employing the rhetoric of “world domination”. Baudrillard, for example, comments: “The whole Walt Disney philosophy eats out of your hand with these pretty little sentimental creatures in grey fur coats. For my own part, I believe that behind these smiling eyes there lurks a cold, ferocious beast fearfully stalking us.” (Baudrillard 1989:125) The political and social implications of the Disneyfication phenomenon will be discussed in other chapters of this paper; with regard to the influence of Disney art and animation, however, one must comment that what Furies see “behind these smiling eyes” may not be what Baudrillard sees. Baudrillard’s basic objection to Disneyfication is not the usual attack on Disney’s concealed ideological messages, but an objection on the grounds that Disney’s world is not “real”:

But the Disney enterprise goes beyond the imaginary. Disney, the precursor, the grand initiator of the imaginary as virtual reality, is now in the process of capturing all the real world to integrate it into its synthetic universe, in the form of a vast “reality show” where reality itself becomes a spectacle, where the real becomes a theme park. The transfusion of the real is like a blood transfusion, except that here it is a transfusion of real blood into the exsanguine universe of virtuality. After the prostitution of the imaginary, here is now the hallucination of the real in its ideal and simplified version.... (Baudrillard 1996:1)

Baudrillard’s use of the imagery of blood seeks to embody one form of experience as “real”, while the virtual world is “exsanguine”, a “synthetic universe”, a “prostitution” of the imagination. For the Furry, however, growing to adulthood in an environment saturated with media images, we must question whether “reality” is limited to the physical body and its bloodstream. In a media-dominated habitus and in the virtual world of cyber-space, “reality” may be a more complex amalgam of potential embodied presence and images of potential presence that are equally “real” but occupy a different niche

in conceptualization of the lived environment. Furry artist, Klar, in her interview transcribed in Appendix 10, comments that at no time did she think she was her avatar, but her avatar was, in some way, part of her. The concept of the unified self, embodied in its cells and in its bloodstream, that appears to underlie Baudrillard's critique, seems quite different from Furry acceptance of the self as multiple, as a rhizomatic accretion that includes the cells and the bloodstream as well as the multiplicity of visual representations that surround the physical body and enter it through the senses. For Baudrillard, the image stream is not a delightful plaything to be addressed and re-arranged artistically, but a virus or a cancer that will pre-empt presence and leave behind it only a virtual absence of self:

And so it does not take much work for Disney to scoop up reality, such as it is....It is no longer the contagion of spectacle that alters reality, but rather the contagion of virtuality that erases the spectacle. Disneyland still belonged to the order of the spectacle and of folklore...Disney World and its tentacular extension is a generalized metastasis, a cloning of the world and of our mental universe, not in the imaginary but in a viral and virtual mode....It is no longer a spectacular logic of alienation but a spectral logic of disincarnation; no longer a fantastic logic of diversion, but a corpuscular logic of transfusion and transubstantiation of all our cells... (Baudrillard 1996: 138)

As the *Air Pirates*' encounter with Disney's battery of lawyers suggests, Disneyfication is not accepted uncritically, but it is certainly accepted and integrated into the sub-culture. Perhaps the judgment of Hiaasen in *Team Rodent: How Disney Devours the World* (1998) may better reflect the Furry attitude toward Disneyfication:

Disney is so good at being good that it manifests an evil; so uniformly efficient and courteous, so dependably clean and conscientious, so unfailingly entertaining that it's unreal, and therefore is an agent of pure wickedness....Disney isn't in the business of exploiting Nature so much as striving to improve upon it, constantly fine-tuning God's work. (Hiassen 1998: 218)

The list of Disney and Touchstone Productions that have inspired Fursonas and Furry ConBadges is long indeed, including *Mickey's Revue*, *Three Little Pigs*, *The Wise Little Hen*, *Fantasia*, *Dumbo*, *Bambi*, *Song of the South*, *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad*, *Cinderella*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Lady and the Tramp*, *One Hundred and One Dalmations*, *The Jungle Book*, *The Aristocats*, *The Rescuers*, *Pete's Dragon*, *The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh*, *The Fox and the Hound*, *The Great Mouse*

Detective, Who Framed Roger Rabbit?, Beauty and the Beast, The Lion King, Toy Story, A Bug's Life, Tarzan, Brother Bear, Finding Nemo, The Chronicles of Narnia series, Ratatouille, WALL-E, The Princess and the Frog, Beauty and the Beast, and An American Tale, and a host of made-for-television productions.

It is in the Disney pictures that deal with animals as the “exotic other”, however, that we can see most clearly the tendency to re-engineer Nature and “fine-tune God’s work”. *The Lion King* provides a good example of the Disneyfication of animals and the subsequent “Furrification” of Disney animals because this film has provoked a flood of Furry artistic responses. Perhaps the enthusiastic adaptation of Disney’s anthropomorphic animals in their Disneyfied theme-park settings suggests that Furry artists deal with the “media stream” by re-engineering Disney to meet their own criteria. While some of the images derived from Disney reflect the Edenic and childlike world of *The Gummi Bears*, Disney images also appear in “mature content” Furry art suggesting that Furry artists are posing an interesting question: “What happens when Bambi grows up?” Figure 29 below gives some indication of the great influence that Disney art has had on Furry art. The Disney sources are represented along a solid line, suggesting the molar and corporate structure that generates and distributes these images. The Furry re-engineered images are shown as a rhizomatic accretion and the images are linked to their sources by molecular lines indicating kinship.

Dumbo (1941) Bambi (1942) Song of the South (1946) The Story of Robin Hood and His Merrie Men (1952) The Jungle Book (1967) Pete's Dragon (1977) The Fox and the Hound (1981) The Great Mouse Detective (1986) The Lion King (1994) Chronicles of Narnia (2005) Ratatouille (2007)



Football at the Foot of Everest .by Patrick Robbins



Bild in GroB by Stephanie Jungmann



LeoI by Simba



Untitled by Sara Palmer



Mutual Enjoyment by Andy Fox



Scar by Sara Palmer



BrerRabbitFox2 by Andy Fox



Andy Fox by Goldenrod#2



Badge for Laimika by TaniDaReal



Feran2 by Eddie Widdows



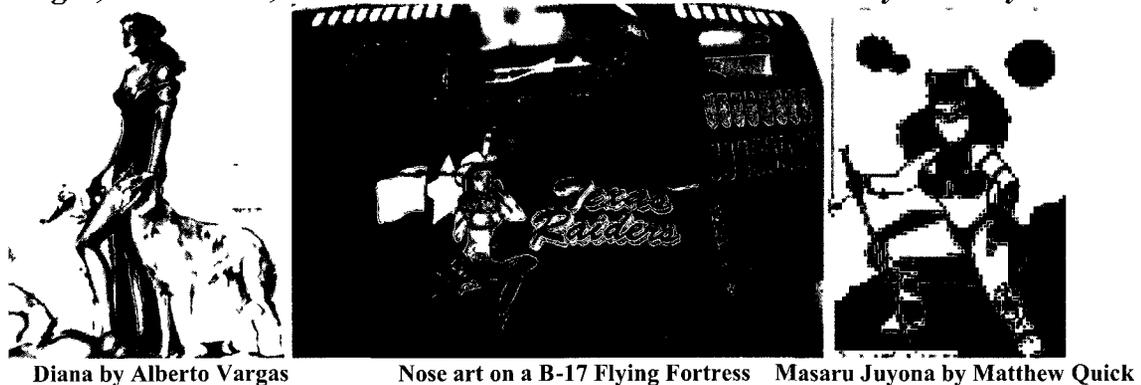
Monday Morning. Mourning Mouse by Atlatl



Marco_the_Rat by Marco

Figure 29: Some Disney Influences in Furry Art.

Vargas, Nose Cones, and Mature Content: The Issue of Obscenity in Furry Art



Diana by Alberto Vargas

Nose art on a B-17 Flying Fortress

Masaru Juyona by Matthew Quick

Figure 30: From Vargas to Furies

The pin-up art and erotica popularized by Alberto Vargas in *Esquire* and *Playboy* from the 1940s until the 1970s served as the inspiration for an entire genre that migrated from calendars and magazines to the noses of aircraft and, today, populates cyber-space in vast quantities. In the Furry art world, there are entire galleries devoted to Furry pin-up art and erotica. Most Furry galleries are divided into two categories – general Furry art for any audience and “adult” art with “mature content”, often protected with login procedures or disclaimers from the artist. This catalogue division marks a much deeper split in the ranks of Furies and represents the one issue that, seemingly, has proven to be a source of intense controversy within the Fandom. It seems somewhat ironic that a Fandom that has such strong affinities with the independent comic series and magazines of the 1980s, with their emphasis on satire and sexuality, would harbor groups that reject Furry erotica so strongly. Furry essayist, Simo, argues, however, in *This Judgemental Little Business (The Furry Manifesto)*: *One very pissed off Furry fan has a go at defining “Furry”* (<http://www.furrydolphin.net/why-us-furies.html>. Accessed 16/10/09), that the “pornography” issue actually conceals an agenda concerned with power and domination, a contention that may articulate with Vance’s observations in *Four Essays on Art, Sexuality, and Cultural Politics* (Vance 1995).

Furry art works that feature explicit sexuality might be grouped into three categories as shown in Figure 31 below. The first category features anthropomorphic characters- male, female or bisexual -with exaggerated sex organs. Here the emphasis appears to be on enthusiastic depiction of primary and

secondary sexual characteristics. The second group focuses on sexual encounters with multiple partners of the same or a differing species. In this category, the artist’s focus is on the expression of sexuality in group settings. The third group concentrates on sexuality expressed through practices that are sometimes considered “kinky”, “fetish”, or even “deviations” from a supposed norm – bondage, sadism, erotic encounters between children, or, in this case, “cubs”.



1. Chessia.nightfox by Doug Winger



Trevor Fox “Pulled Over” by Milky



Wild Horse by Retsabla



2. Haru’s Group Session by Benezia



A1 Training by Zebu Rider



3. Trevor & Sinclair: Some Like it Rough by FuzzWolf



Police Beat by Arania (Lusty Lycanthropes)



Extra Credit by Arania (Lusty Lycanthropes)



Front Cover of *Southpaw Magazine*, Issue #2

Figure 31: Sexually Explicit Furry Art.

A1 Training by Zebu Rider, in Group 2, suggests an affinity with “PonyPlay”, an elaborate kink, fetish, roleplay, and/or lifestyle characterized by “women and men all over the world...getting erotically charged...by dressing up in bridles, bits, and saddles, getting down on hands and knees, and giving their lovers ponyback rides.” (Gates 2000: 13) Gates, in *Deviant Desires: Incredibly Strange Sex*, does not hesitate to identify some sexual practices as “perverted” and “deviant”, although in her “Introduction” she does suggest that “deviance” is culturally relative: “Cultures construct elaborate rituals to control sexuality, insisting that the sanctioned rules are “natural”, and declaring outsiders who deviate from their roles to be “unnatural” and perverse. Culturally-approved ceremonies reinforce existing power structures, while using sexual shame and fear to keep people in line.” (Gates 2000: 7) Many of the “deviations” she describes are pictured in Furry “mature content” art works – balloon fetishes, body inflation which enjoys several dedicated galleries, giantesses, Crushies, adult babies, and fat admiration. The cover page from erotic cub fanzine, *Southpaw*, is of some interest because it indicates concern with the issue of child pornography. The Anthropomorphic Arts and Education organization, a committee that is involved with governing a large Anthrocon, Further Confusion, ruled that depictions of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct could not be sold at dealers’ tables and banned the sale of this magazine at the conference in 2008 on the grounds that the governing body wished to avoid the risk of legal action. The magazine was also banned at Eurofurence in the previous year. Interesting to note, however, is the fact that *Softpaw*

is printed and distributed in Canada where a 1989 ruling on *Omaha, the Cat Dancer* determined that Furrries should be considered animals and were not subject to the legislation concerning child pornography. (http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/News:AAE_bans_Softpaw_from_Further_Confusion_2008. Accessed 17/10/09)

Within the Fandom, the issue of explicitly sexual Furry art came to prominence in September, 1998 when “Squee Rat” (Charla Trotman) and several associates, Eric Blumrich, Peter “Hangdog” Schorn, Ralph Hayes and Nate Patrin, formed the “Burned Furs”, an association of Furrries who felt that the explicit art and actions of Furrries at ConFurences undermined and degraded membership in the Fandom. The Burned Fur “Manifesto” launched “The Great Internet Flame War”, an episode in Furry history that went on for several years and finally ended with the demise of the Burned Furs website on December 7-8, 2000, although the relentless pursuit of Furry Internet “pornography” continues.

“Flaming” is “a hostile and insulting interaction between Internet users [that] usually occurs in the social context of a discussion board, Internet Relay Chat (IRC), by e-mail or on Video-sharing websites.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flame_wars. Accessed 16/10/09). Various “backlash” groups have formed since the Burned Furs, among them Antifur, now inactive, Something Awful, an active and intrusive Internet presence, and Portal of Evil, as well as Crush Yiff Destroy, and Third Rail Furs, characterized by Furry essayist, Simo, as “another crop of self-righteous dumbasses with delusions of cleaning up Furrydom. (n.d. http://www.furrydolphin.net/burned-fur_II.html. Accessed 16/10/09)

Simo, who seems to be an articulate spokesperson for many Furrries, in *This Judgemental Little Business (The Furry Manifesto) One very pissed off Furry fan has a go at defining “Furry”*, (n.d. <http://www.furrydolphin.net/why-us-furrries.html>. Accessed 16/10/09), has addressed the Burned Fur position in a number of articles and makes some interesting comments on the content of the Burned Fur “Manifesto”:

Take another LQKK at *This Sordid Little Business*: the majority, nine out of fourteen paragraphs, do not mention perversion *at all*. There are just two paragraphs which discuss “perversions”:

zoophilia, and plush-o-philia. (Isn't it ironic that the fursuit sexers don't even rate a mention, let alone a reprimand?) Either Squee Rat's moral compass is badly in need of a reswinging, or the "Attack of the FurryPervs" was never the real issue in the first place. (Simo n.d. <http://www.furrydolphin.net/why-us-furries.html>. Accessed 16/10/09:25)

Simo goes on to point out that the real issue in the Burned Fur "Manifesto" is that some Furry artists feel that their potential careers in "the art world" are jeopardized by the presence of sexually explicit Furry art of amateur quality on the Internet. Simo contends that the talent of the artists involved in Burned Furs was problematic at best, and that the entire movement does not articulate well with the Furry art world's tendency toward inclusivity:

So there you have it: the "cutting edge" <low_reverential_tone> SERIOUS ARTISTES <low_reverential_tone> who were going to define a whole new genre of visual storytelling. Marginally talented shit-eaters one and all. Now we can begin to understand the emphasis placed upon those "career destroying", "dream jeopardizing" Furries. Unlike most Fandoms, Furry is unique in that it is very much a DIY fandom. However, a DIY fandom is the *last* thing they wanted. They wanted devoted acolytes who were content to worship THE GREAT ONES, from a discreet distance and buy their shitty art. They wanted passive, spectator fans who would go to fur-cons to queue up for the grudgingly given autograph. . (Simo n.d. <http://www.furrydolphin.net/why-us-furries.html>. Accessed 16/10/09:25)

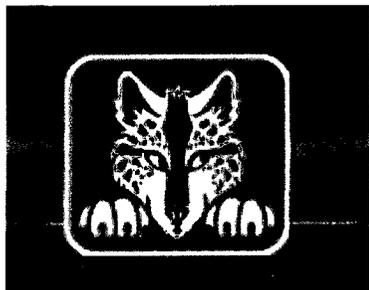
Simo argues that the Burned Fur Flame War and the more recent "Third Rail" assault on Furry "adult-content" websites constitute, in fact, an attempt to impose hegemony on a sub-culture noted for its inclusivity and tolerance of difference in the interests of a self-designated elite seeking upward mobility within the art world. It is an interesting thought that the battlefields of class struggle in conditions of late capitalism may be the "porn sites" of Internet sub-cultures where the fight for control of the means *production of visual representation continues*.

How Does Furry Art Mean?

I would suggest that Furry art forms the dominant semiotic system within the Fandom's sub-culture. In the extended version of this paper I have included a discussion of post-modern thought on this topic and have included the section on Derrida's deconstruction of structuralist theory of signs (Derrida [1966] 1978) and a short discussion of Wollheim (1970) on "a token of a type" in Appendix 9, in considering how art means. Perhaps it would be useful to reconsider the hermeneutic circle as it applies to works of visual art in the light of Barthes' comments on the role of the viewer or reader as creator in the

interpretative process (Barthes 1977 [1968]), and in the light of Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) resistance to a deterministic interpretation of the interpretative process as suggested in their emphasis on "lines of flight" that continually connect to entities outside the hermeneutic circle. The hermeneutic circle is not, necessarily, a kind of planetary model, with artist, art work, and viewer rotating around each other in a closed system. Perhaps it would be more useful to think of it as a juxtaposition of 'force fields' introduced into the arena of play by the 'presence' of a representation that triggers lines of flight, the interactions that we call reflexivity and creativity. Looking at the interpretative process itself as a vibrant hermeneutic interplay, both creative and reflexive in nature, between artist, art object, and viewer removes the focus from the art object itself and the artificial constraints surrounding its appropriateness and subject matter, whether it is a traditional ritual object produced in a small-scale social setting, a statement of class struggle approved by the art world and hung in a major gallery, or an anthropomorphic fursuit.

Certainly the badges made for ConFurances and Furry gatherings, and the site logos found on many Furry websites can reasonably be interpreted as functioning as a semiotic system within the sub-culture. The Wolf/Snow-Leopard morph, used by TaniDaReal on her website identifies her to the Furry community just as clearly as the written captions that introduce the site. This artist has, in fact, developed a kind of anthropomorphic alphabet, representing in her "mood badges" various emotions that she attributes to a wide range of anthropomorphic animals. The badges are intended to be worn at Furry gatherings, linking the Furry participant to the anthropomorphic animal, and, from there, to the larger Fandom gathered at a ConFurance. The Snow-Leopard fursuit, produced by TaniDaReal is a visual representation of her Fursona. This intricately crafted fursuit functions, not only as a work of art, but also as a theatrical costume within the performance arena of a Furry gathering. As a theatrical costume it embodies the transformative experience and links its wearer to the Furry challenge to conventional boundaries.



Website Logo



TaniDaReal Fursuit



Mood Badges

Figure 32: Functional Works of Art by TaniDaReal.

(<http://www.tanidareal.com>. Accessed 25/08/09)

While one may interpret these works of art as performing a social function in unifying and maintaining the Furry sub-culture around the central theme of anthropomorphism, that is not to suggest that this is the only way in which these objects may be viewed. A functionalist explanation describes many aspects of TaniDaReal's work and her somewhat shamanistic role in supporting and maintaining the Furry community. Her comments on her relationship to fursuits and her totemic animal which are included in the "Portrait of the Artist" in Appendix 10, however, may indicate that Deleuze's suggestion

of the presence of “magic” in the transformative experience of “becoming animal” is not without merit (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:236).



Figure 33: Fursuits by TaniDaReal
 (<http://www.tanidareal.com>. Accessed 27/08/08)

The centrality of visual representation in the Furry sub-culture must lead to a consideration of the role that artists play in the Furry community. Well-known Furry artists are clearly respected members of the community, but do some Furry artists play a shaman-like role in the sub-culture? In “Shamanism and North American Indian Art” (Pasztory 1982:12) Pasztory observes that there are two forms of art among Northwest Coast Indians, shamanic art and non-shamanic art. The point is further explicated by Jonaitis (1986) in her discussion of Tlingit art forms. She comments that Northern Tlingit secular or “crest” art,

the beautiful finished masks and objects of art presented at potlatches and summer celebrations and gatherings, is quite different from the roughly finished, exaggerated masks and ceremonial paraphernalia used in winter shamanic rituals. These objects may represent symbolic figures, such as the “Cannibal raven mask and dress” seen in Figure 19.2 [from Boas 1897: pl.31] in Rosman and Rubel’s discussion of “Structural Patterning in Kwakiutl Art and Ritual” (Rosman and Rubel 1990: 347). Leach (1973) discusses the way in which these symbolic masks, costumes and accessories perform an important function for shamans conducting winter ceremonies and initiations into secret societies. Among the Kwakiutl, he speculates that, while “crest” masks show man transforming into animal, shamanic masks may depict animal becoming man; thus, the unthinkable and deepest taboo in human society, the taboo against cannibalism, can be enacted, and initiates in the *tsetsequa* can become supernatural animals participating in rituals depicting cannibalism because they are no longer human. Leach observes that art makes possible the crossing of cultural boundaries. It, in fact, “may be saying what may not be said”. (Leach 1973: 227) Thus, the artist not only creates value through the production of cultural capital, but also enables the expression of “what may not be said” (when it should be said) through its embodiment in the form of art.

Although Furry art does not always display the high seriousness that we like to ascribe to Kwakiutl or Tlingit art, even if Rosman and Rubel describe *tsetsequa* art as a mixture of “awe and buffoonery” (Rosman and Rubel 1990: 355), it may also perform both non-shamanic and shamanic functions within the Furry sub-culture. Furry badges, with their signifying markings, may be somewhat similar to “crest” art proudly proclaiming their bearers affinities with animal species that “give them thunder” or impart desirable qualities. Fursuits and masks, however, may be seen as more serious transformative devices, as the discussion of the room in which Furies may unmask at ConFurences in the chapter on “Masks and Costuming” indicates. The ever-present sketchbook and the torrent of visual imagery on Furry websites showing machine-human-animal transformation, the breaching of trans-species boundaries, may, perhaps, be interpreted as embodiments of the major concept that demarcates

the Furry sub-culture – the challenge to conventional notions of machine, human and animal boundaries. In this case, the artist seems to perform a ceremonial and shamanistic function, permitting an expression of “what may not be said” through visual representation.

The non-shamanic art vs. shamanic art distinction might, however, be considered somewhat suspect because all art, as a set of signifying signs, is discourse embedded in a cultural context; the cute kitten sketched on a Hallmark card is, after all, a very specific embodiment of cultural affinities. In a sense, therefore, all art could be considered shamanic, as it participates in, embodies, and alters the discourse between and within individuals and cultures. Perhaps a better way to look at the role of the artist in a sub-culture is to describe the artist as the producer of two forms of cultural discourse. In the first instance, the artist produces objects of cultural capital and representations of cultural values that unify a sub-culture, giving its members a sense of belonging and shared interests, protecting them from external attack. In the case of Furrries, this function may be particularly pronounced because the sub-culture has experienced both ridicule and virulent denunciation for its alleged emphasis on “deviant” forms of sexuality – homosexuality, bestiality and pornography. In the second instance, the artist functions, not as a cohesive force, but as a critic. The artist may direct criticism externally, at a society represented as fragmented and lost to a perceived unity of man and nature, or internally, to perceived flaws and failings within the Furry sub-culture.

The second role of the artist, as avant-garde critic creating an oppositional art, has rapidly evolved since the advent of Impressionism, although as Marcus and Myers observe: “Historians disagree considerably in their understanding of the emergence of such a set of discursive practices.” (Marcus and Myers 1995: 14) Today the survival of “fine art” as a category in Western cultures and its institutional frameworks in publicly funded museums and galleries is heavily dependent on the art world’s representation of “fine art” as commentary or as avant-garde critique both on art, itself, - its techniques, media and modalities- and on the characteristics of late capitalism. “A common view is that transcendence of the fragmented, dislocated nature of contemporary life in the industrial era is a central

concern of high art.” (Marcus and Myers 1995: 15; 1991 Miller 1991: 52) Not surprisingly, this theme is prevalent in the discourse of Furry art with its connections to New Age romanticism, its emphasis on the essential unity of machine, man and nature, and its appropriation of certain aspects and interpretations of Native American spirituality, “the trope of the ‘primitive’” that constructs an Edenic world distinguished by its unity and cohesion. (Marcus and Myers 1995:15) An example can be seen in Willowfox’s computer-modulated graphic, “In Memory of Nature” (<http://www.willowfox.furtopia.org/>) .

Although one might expect the “risk” or “hazard” attached to the creation of art forms (Keane 1997) to focus on art that offers a critique of late capitalism and its lifeways, this does not appear to be the case in the Furry art world, perhaps because the unity of the Edenic vision can be easily linked to mainstream eco-movements. Controversy and risk to both the sub-culture as a whole and to its internal solidarity, instead, swirls around the perceived boundaries between art and pornography, an issue that will be discussed later in this paper. One can see, however, from the previous discussion of Furry cyber-galleries and their carefully segregation of “mature content” from “general content”, that (what some describe as) sexual explicitness in visual representation is a divisive issue in the Furry sub-culture and one that provokes attacks on the sub-culture both from external critics and from those within the sub-culture who perceive themselves as moral police patrolling the Internet in order to identify and comment on sexually explicit Furry works of art.

The portrait of artist, Ever Achen or Ever Ashen (Appendix 9), may offer some commentary on the important roles that artists play in the Furry community. (Ever Achen or Ever Ashen is the name of this artist’s on-line Fursona and is used here with her kind permission.) I first interviewed Ever at a Furry Meetup in Ottawa in 2004. Since then I have communicated with her, with varying frequency, over the entire course of this research. She kindly agreed to answer some questions that occurred while I was finalizing this material in 2009, although she had partially left the Fandom by this time. Most notable is the dual role that she played in the Ottawa Furry community for a number of years, both as a producer of objects of cultural value and as a “shamanic” presence and “matriarchal” figure,

facilitating and encouraging the growth of a Furry sub-culture in this area, encouraging and allowing others to join, and performing the “transformations” (artistic depictions) that gave them their sub-cultural identity. (See Appendix 10)

Some Observations On Furry Art and Culture:

I hope to have shown in this discussion of the Furry art world that, despite the ephemeral and amorphous nature of phenomena in cyber-space, there may be a few indicators of central tendency applicable to the Fandom, and, perhaps, useful in the study of other cyber-cultures. I have listed my observations below.

1. With respect to a possible dichotomy between the application of aesthetic and semiotic criteria to the art of the Furry Fandom, reliance on semiotic interpretations of the Furry art scene seems to be a productive approach for a number of reasons. First, Derrida’s theory of “difference” or disjunction between the signified and the signifier articulates well with the nature of cyber-communication and the streams of transient imagery produced in Internet discourse. Secondly, Furry art, as a major component of the sub-culture, might be best viewed as a cultural artifact in the context of the Furry sub-culture and of cyber-cultures in general, rather than as an isolated aesthetic production in a decontextualized space. In the third place, an examination of common Furry art forms, such as the ConBadge and the commissioned character portrait, indicates that these representations form one of the most important, if not the single most important, semiotic system within the Fandom. These visual representations serve not only as indicators of affiliation with the Fandom and as markers of character traits that their owner wishes to be represented as possessing, but also as symbols of status and power, depending on the skill and prestige of the artist who produced the representation. This is not to suggest that aesthetic criteria should be ignored; clearly, Furies apply aesthetic criteria in judging the efficacy of these representations and are usually enthusiastic in praising “improvement” in amateur representations and in according prestige to the owners and producers of art works considered to be of good quality.

2. Furry art, as an important semiotic system within the sub-culture, might be viewed as an on-going discourse expressing one major characteristic of this sub-culture, its tendency to challenge accepted boundaries. Furry art continually challenges the boundaries between humans and machines; humans and animals; humans, machines and animals, and raises boundary issues, particularly in the areas of transformational embodiment and sexuality involving humans, animals and machines.

3. There appears to be some degree of disjunction between the Furry art world and the elite art world found in Western cultural systems. While some Furies are sensitive to the dictums and power structures of the art world, many either deliberately ignore the art world or are unaware of it. Some Furry artists aspire to become “professionals”, a term which they appear to associate with popularity and extensive sales, a position that articulates well with trends in the art world favoring market share as an indicator of professionalism. Other Furry commentators vigorously oppose the establishment of a dominant group of “professional artists” who are perceived as a power elite. This dichotomy within Furry ranks, rather than “pornographic” or “obscene” visual representations, may have been the cause of the Great Internet Flame War, and suggests that, in some ways, the Furry art world may be considered a site of class struggle in conditions of late capitalism.

4. In lived practice, Furry artists do enjoy positions of power and prestige within the sub-culture. Convention activity tends to focus on Artists’ Alley and Dealers’ Dens, and acquiring ConBadges and character portraits is desirable; indeed, one might see Furry artists as supplying much of the discourse of this sub-culture. Furry artists also often play social and political roles as convention organizers and initiators and as the co-ordinators of websites and on-line forums, newsletters, or bulletin boards.

In the Fandom, artists are the creators who bring into being the virtual embodiments of members of the sub-culture. An amateur artist may simply sketch and color his/her “character” as he/she visualizes it. The character, itself, may be derivative with Disnefied features and “anime eyes”, but it is, nonetheless, the unique creation visualized by the Fan and is rendered into being either by the Fan or by a

“professional artist”. The “professional” Furry artist may create a visual representation from a table in “Artists’ Alley” or may accept a commission tendered over the Internet. One might see the Furry artists as shamanistic in their ability to initiate ConFurence goers into various levels of the sub-culture and to bestow power and prestige on members through the institutions of the ConBadge, the commissioned character portrait, and through the design, production and sale of costume elements or fursuits. The task of rendering a character into being or embodying it in the form of a visual representation is a serious one, and can be associated with hazards of misrepresentation (Keane 1997) as we see in the previously quoted interview with Klar when she complains that patrons seeking visual representation of their characters can fail to describe the characters they envision accurately and, subsequently, reject or demand revision of the images. As a result of their central role as the “embodiers” within the sub-culture, artists can exercise powers that might be described as shamanistic.

5. In contrast to the Western art world, the Furry art world is inclusive, despite sporadic efforts from splinter groups to exclude amateur artists. Amateur sketchbook artists are actively encouraged and protocols have been developed for handling sketchbooks. In addition, chat and discussion areas attached to websites and web galleries tend to log enthusiastic praise for the works displayed, although the Burned Fur-Third Rail-Crush Yiff Destroy minority groups “flame” these areas if the work displayed is perceived to be obscene. The art, itself, tends to participate in discourse on anthropomorphic and cyborgian transformative states and, thus, may be somewhat thematically isolated from the discourse of the art world, although it serves as a unifying factor within the sub-culture.

6. The art world’s criteria for excellence in visual representation does not articulate well with Furry art, or, indeed, with cyber-art. Concepts such as creativity, unique genius, authenticity, and autonomy may be best viewed as constructs of the Western art world and its markets; although they are prized as highly in the Furry sub-culture as they are in the art world, in the continual image-stream or mediascape of the Internet, individual claims to originality may appear irrelevant. Furry artists, already challenging conventional boundaries, may also feel little need to pose as isolated Romantic heroes. Furry artists

frequently utilize “borrowings” and appropriations from non-Western cultures, as well as outright “poaching” from “funny animal” producers such as the Disney studios and popular video game companies; this tendency suggests that, in cyber-space at least, the distinction between cultural appropriation and cross-cultural fertilization is a “leaky” boundary and may reward further study. An additional area that may merit attention is the transformation of appropriated images once they have migrated from their producer to an art form within another cyber-culture.

7. It may be more productive for ethnographers examining Internet sub-cultures to consider the position of art in Internet sub-cultures as similar to that found in small-scale societies. The characteristics of cyber-cultures – unstable boundaries, multiplicity rather than singularity in identity, ephemeral and transient concepts of habitus, communal art production through the efforts of specialized teams rather than through singular ‘vision’ and effort, and an endless stream of globally produced imagery as source material may seem to bear little resemblance to the traits of a small-scale society, but, if we consider the deconstruction of unitary post-Renaissance concepts of identity and individuality that occurs in cyber-space, there may be sufficient resemblance to encourage methodologies already tested in small-scale societies.

8. Although Furry art is well grounded in the Western tradition of animal representation, other influences have contributed very strongly to its success. The influence of 1980’s independent “funny animal” comics and fanzines, as well as Japanese anime and manga, cannot be over-emphasized. From these sources one might speculate that Furry art gains much of its wit, humor, proclivity for social satire, and aggression in mounting boundary challenges.

9. Although the media tend to portray Furrries as odd but harmless fun-seekers, and although critics like Baudrillard may dismiss their art works as derivative and part of a torrent of cyber-kitsch, it is, perhaps, possible to see some Furry artists as avant-garde social critics, filling the same role as artists in the “fine art” world do. If we accept Vance’s postulate (Vance 1995), that fundamentalist and conservative attacks on avant-garde works in the art world are part of a larger attempt to ensure hegemony through the control

of visual imagery, and if we accept Bageant's (2007) contention that visual imagery is used by a dominant (corporate) power structure to create a social hologram that maintains existing class divisions, then Furry web galleries may be seen as part of the frontlines in a cyber-attack, not only on our assumptions about machine-human-animal boundaries, but also on structures of power, domination, and class in conditions of late capitalism.

The great Canadian poet, Earle Birney, often commented on the role of the poet as "maker", a maker of imagery and of metaphor (Birney 1991). Whether the sources of imagery and metaphor are "authentic" or not, the poet, or the artist, goes about his/her business of "making". To use Deleuze and Guattari's imagery (1987), the cyber-artist dips into the turbulent hydraulic flow of the "mediascape", combines and "makes" representations, and releases them back into the stream of cyber-culture. Are these representations "high art"? Perhaps not. Or, perhaps, they are works of art that are resistant to the art world's criteria of "authenticity" and "unique genius". Perhaps these works have little to do with the criteria used in the selection and production of art to meet the needs of the art marketplace. When we consider the prolific artistic output of Furry artists enthusiastically "making" at varying levels of proficiency, perhaps we are looking at a celebration of mediated objects, the imagery of the "mediascape" re-made using the techniques of cyber-mediation that created these very images, and interpreted by artists who grew up within the flow of mediated imagery and are presently engaged in the indisputably "authentic" artistic enterprise of "making" their cyber-environments.

FURRY THEATRE: COSTUMING, MASKS, AND PERFORMANCE IN THE FANDOM

Theatrical Performance in the Fandom:

Furry theatrical performance usually occurs at meet-ups and conferences, but theatrical productions are also broadcast on public-access television and on the Internet. Much of the Furry presentation of self in drama occurs in the form of spectacle- not a surprising development because the fursuit that forms the basis of Furry costuming is built for public display and is often reminiscent of the type of suit worn by the mascots of sports teams or the suits worn by costumed performers in theme parks. In *The Society of the Spectacle*, Guy Debord discusses the spectacle as a manifestation of a globalized consumer society in conditions of late capitalism:

The spectacle is heir to all the weakness of the project of Western philosophy, which was an attempt to understand activity by means of the categories of vision. Indeed the spectacle reposes on an incessant deployment of the very technical rationality to which that philosophical tradition gave rise. So far from realizing philosophy, the spectacle philosophizes reality, and turns the material life of everyone into a universe of speculation. (Debord 1995: 17)

Debord sees in the spectacle a disturbing manifestation of public passivity, a type of “bread and circuses” that distracts from the reality of life in a modern industrial state:

Understood in its totality, the spectacle is both the outcome and the goal of the dominant mode of production. It is not something *added* to the real world – not a decorative element, so to speak. On the contrary, it is the very heart of society’s real unreality. In all its specific manifestations – news or propaganda, advertising or the actual consumption of entertainment – the spectacle epitomizes the prevailing model of social life. It is the omnipresent celebration of a choice *already made* in the sphere of production, and the consummate result of that choice. In form as in content the spectacle serves as total justification for the conditions and aims of the existing system. It further ensures the *permanent presence* of that justification, for it governs almost all time spent outside the production process itself. (Debord 1995: 13)

It is certainly easy to see the connection of fursuit parades, masking, and musical productions to the endless stream of spectacles presented at theme parks like Disney World, or on television, and to sympathize with Debord’s analysis of these presentations as consumer-oriented “bread and circuses” intended to placate and amuse the global masses. This analysis, however, may be somewhat unfair to the Furry Fandom. There is no question that the Fandom consumes and internalizes the products of the entertainment media at an astonishing rate, but, in my opinion, the Furry Fandom illustrates precisely how the Deleuzian concept of “lines of flight” operates to effect change rather than to “ensures the *permanent*

presence of that justification (Debord 1995: 13) No one can argue that sub-cultures like the Fandom are going to be the “War Machine” that overthrows the oppressive economics of late capitalism; indeed, most Furrries seem to be very staunch supporters of capitalist economics. Nonetheless, the Fandom is an example of the way in which a group of people, given the “means of production” in the form of the tools made available through informed access to the Internet, can respond with creativity and enthusiasm to the global media culture in which they are immersed and can remodel its productions to present the self in interesting and challenging guises.

“Babs Bunny”: An Individual Performer:

Theatrical productions at Furry gatherings may range from individual acts to group productions and, ultimately, to major theatrical presentations. Some Furry performers present individual acts at conferences and larger meet-ups. Figure 34 below illustrates some of the aspects of a well-known Furry artist, performer, and puppeteer, Babs Bunny (Juliette Magera). Babs Bunny, featured in WikiFur, originally used a pink rabbit Fursona taken from *Tiny Toons Adventures*, but has now created an original Fursona – Babbette Liliias Jackrabbit- shown below. As a fursuiter, Babs presents Bunny Bloom, Money Penny and Lili Fox. The fursuit used for Lili Fox is shown below. Babs also creates puppets which have appeared in two Furry puppet shows, *Funday Pawpet Show* and *Rapid T. Rabbit and Friends*. Her most well-known puppet is Nick Rhabbit, a parody of Nick Rhodes from the musical group, Duran Duran.

(http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Babs_Bunny)



Babbette Liliias Jackrabbitt:
Babs' Fursona



Babs' "Lili Fox" character



Babs and One of Her Puppet
Creations

Figure 34: Babs Bunny:Fursuiter, Performer, and Puppeteer

http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Babs_Bunny

Cabaret and Group Performances:

Some Furrries choose to appear as a group in performance and may present skits, short dance programs, and musical numbers at Furry gatherings. Groups of fursuiters and puppeteers may also appear in organized games that provide one of the program elements at Furry conferences. Figure 35 below illustrates some Furry group performances and games. "Cabaret Fur Le Dance" was a Furry variety show that raised money for charity during the entire duration of ConFurence (1992-2003). The original cabaret featured "Omaha Sternberg", an erotic dancer based on the well-known "Omaha the Cat Dancer" character, and was a benefit for the creator of Omaha the Cat Dancer, Reed Waller, who suffered from cancer. The name was based on a story idea from Rod O'Riley, and involved a group of mutant creatures created by a secret military project, released after a media scandal, and now earning a living by operating and performing in a night club. The performing troupe associated with Cabaret Fur Le Dance included Foster T. Reynard (a fox), Rollow and Shayla Deluta (a mated pair of river otters), Morocco Jihad (a calico cat), and Arthur Lotus (a racoon and Reynard's partner). The cabaret show featured erotic and modern dance numbers, belly dancing, Flash-Dance disco dancing, sword dancing, modern ballet, musical acts and comedy sketches. As is commonly seen in any type of Furry performance or exhibit, the shows were usually divided into two segments, the first half being for general audiences and the second half featuring "mature content". Although this cabaret ended in 2003, a new cabaret continues the

tradition as Califur, a large southern California conference. Wednesday nights at FurryMUCK, a very large on-line Furry role-playing game, usually features a performance at the virtual version of Cabaret Fur Le Dance. (http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Cabaret_Fur_Le_Dance)



RainRat at Further Confusion 2008



LatinVixen Group



Fursuiters at Howloween 2004



A Furry Drag Race



“Furry Tales” Fursuit Table

Figure 35: Furrries in Performance

(<http://en.wikifur.com>)

Furry Musicals:

Furry theatre also includes a few larger-scale productions. Among these is *Shadowland*, a musical performance written by Steven Banks, performed by the Swiss dance company “Philobolus”, and scored by David Poe. This musical features an interesting combination of live-acting, shadow-play, circus performance and musical numbers. The plot centers on a young girl’s transformation into an anthropomorphic dog. *Shadowland* is available as a video on YouTube. (Pilobous’ *Shadowland*) (<http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Shadowland>)

A musical, *Furry Tales*, written by Pittsburgh playwrights Bill Medica and J.D. Carter, inspired by their experience at Anthrocon 2006, was performed in a Pittsburgh cabaret on the first day of Anthrocon 2007. The story featured a Furry, “BlueWolf22”, a troll operative of an Internet site, “everythingawful.com”. BlueWolf22 infiltrates the Fandom and is supposed to gather sordid details of sexual deviancy at a convention. Instead he hooks up with three furs, “Gorillanator”, “HuggyBunny”, and “MisoKitty2”, sees the light about the Fandom, and finds new Furry friends. The musical received mixed reviews from Furies invited to attend its opening performance. Uncle Kage, Master of Ceremonies at Anthrocon 2007 observed that: “It was a good production, it was a nice story...but it was not quite *our* story.” Instead *Furry Tales* was “a story of four pathetic losers who can’t get laid. And at the end of it, they are still pathetic losers, but two of them managed to get laid...They did have good intentions – they were trying very hard to portray us in a sensitive fashion, but- not really knowing us, they portrayed us in as sensitive a fashion as you could if all you knew about Furies you had got from *CSI*.” (Funday PawPet Show Interview with Uncle Kage. Show #339, 1:53:30, July 15, 2007, as reported in http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Furry_Tales) A musical written by Chama C. Fox is currently in development and is scheduled for live performance at Eurofurence 14. The musical, *Wolf Land*, will focus on “social and ethical issues ...as the wolves struggle for survival in a world beset from without – and from within.” (http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Wolf_Land)



Figure 36: Advertisement for *Yiff! A Furry Musical*
(<http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Yiff!>)

Yiff! is a more ambitious musical created by composer/lyricists Tim Seward, Darren Wayte, and assisted by Vahn Fox. This production was first performed in a showcase-concert format in 2007 and in a

longer version in 2008 in London. Now renamed *furReality*, the full musical is scheduled for production by the theatre company, “The Scenic Route” in London in the summer of 2010. Videos of the first two productions are available on YouTube. A description of the plot and characters appears in Appendix 10.

Furry Puppet Productions:

Furries are also enthusiastic puppeteers and are often involved in building elaborate hand puppets, mechanical figures, and computer-operated robotic puppets. Each year DoPE (the Department of Pawpetry Entertainment) stages an elaborate pawpet show at Eurofurence. This show features the work of a number of well-known European Furry artists. Furries Cheetah and Eisfuchs write the story and participate in directing and creating sound for the show. The principal performers are Eisfuchs as performer and voice of “Lori”, the naïve vixen, Fairlight as performer and voice of “Poke”, “the big-mouthed and perverse ferret”, Lynard as performer and voice of Lionel C. Scruffycat, the rational lion, and TaniDaReal as voice and performer of “Mika”, the tough snow-leopardess. Eurofurence XI boasted a staff of more than 20 people in this large-scale puppet production. (<http://en.wiki.fur.com/wiki/DoPE>)

The Funday PawPet Show, whose logo is illustrated in Figure 37 below, broadcasts weekly on the Internet on Sundays from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at <http://pawpet.tv/watch/>. This long-running show began in 1999 and is managed by several Florida Furs, among them founder Randy “Yappy” Fox. As the show is four hours long, it represents a significant effort from its producers, all done at a total annual cost of \$2400, including licensing and bandwidth purchase. The format of the Funday PawPet Show includes a humorous opening Roll Call, usually featuring guest or cast member; Photo Captions, a segment where viewers and chatroom participants send in captions for humorous photos; Shout Outs, an opportunity to post personal and general interest messages, and ArtJam, a segment featuring original artwork submitted by viewers. (http://en.wiki.fur.com/wiki/Funday_PawPet_Show) Clearly this Internet puppet production continues in the tradition of participatory creative production already well established in the Fandom.

The Fandom’s longest running puppet show is *Rapid T. Rabbit and Friends* which has been broadcasting on public-access television since 1983 (5:30 PM on the Manhattan Neighbourhood Network,

Time Warner Cable channel 57, and RCN channel 85). It features hosts Rapid T. Rabbit and Cuppy, Rapid's nephew Rupert and Pyro Puph Dragon. It is also available on the Internet and has show downloads and CD-ROMs available to the public.

(http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Rapid_T._Rabbit_and_Friends) The Furry convention, Megaplex, usually held in the Orlando area of Florida, began as Pawpet Megaplex, and usually includes a significant puppetry component.

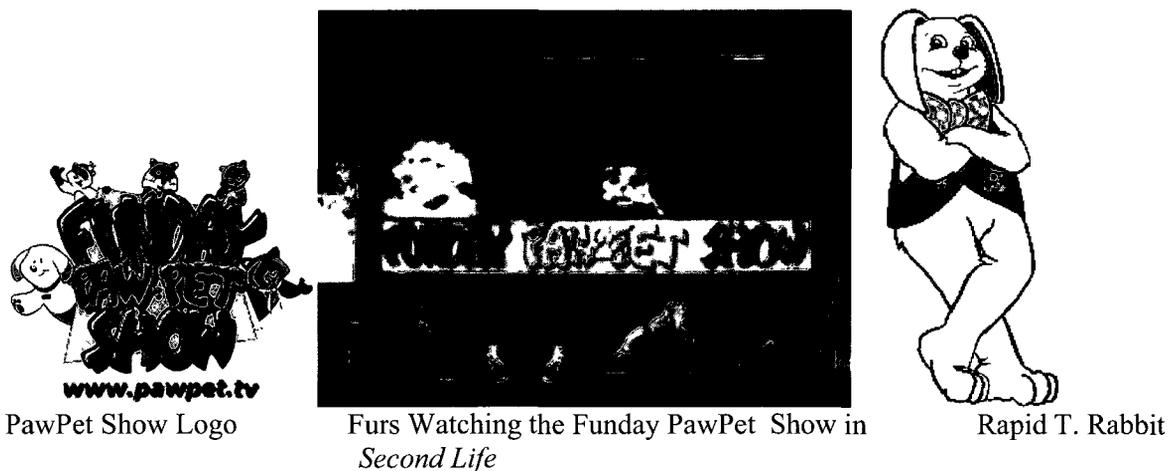


Figure 37: Logos and Motifs from Popular Furry Puppet Shows

(http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Funday_PawPet_Show;
http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Rapid_T._Rabbit_and_Friends)

Fursuiting: Make-up, Accessories, Masks, and Fursuits:

Although fursuiters make up a minority component of the Fandom, they usually attract a great deal of attention and often are involved in many of a convention's attractions. Fursuiting traces its history to antiquity (<http://fursuit.org/construction/introduction/history>), citing the use of masks and costumes in Egyptian tomb art, early Greek theatre, medieval religious pageants, Renaissance masques and court ballet, and modern sports, military and commercial mascots and emblems as antecedents and exemplars of widespread fursuit use. Native American costumes including the Hopi "eagle dance costume and the Zuni "Shalako mask" are also provided as examples of masks believed to channel and represent supernatural powers. One might also look at "Cosplay" and "PetPlay" as activities that are closely related to Furry fursuiting; these activities are described in Appendix 10.

Usually, however, fursuiting in the Fandom is a creative expression undertaken with considerable enthusiasm. Fursuiters often create their own costumes or participate in designing more elaborate commissioned costumes. A set of conventions has grown up around the practise of fursuiting in order to protect and facilitate safe and effective fursuiting. Convention organizers usually provide a “Headless Room” where Furrries in full fursuits may remove the heads from their costumes, as they are not usually seen in partial costume. The Headless Room is equipped with fans, cold drinks and ice, sewing kits and hot glue guns. Fursuiters are encouraged to be sure that they are well hydrated and have an opportunity to cool their bodies. Some up-to-date fursuits are equipped with battery-operated fans or coolants developed for use in body armour used in Iraq. In addition, fursuiters are expected to have “handlers” or “Fursuit wranglers” who accompany them and assist them to move around safely despite their limited vision in full costume. Some technologically skilled fursuiters have installed cameras and screens inside the heads of their fursuits. To a surprising degree, fursuiting is a rather stylized performance. One may find various guides to effective fursuit technique and performance on-line. Fursuiter “Santa Fox” provides guidelines for the expression of emotions and thoughts, as well as basic performance techniques, on his website. These guidelines are seen in Appendix 10.

Furry costuming may be divided into four basic categories: make-up, accessories, masks, and fursuits. Furry face-painting can be as simple as a set of drawn-on whiskers or as complex as the make-up seen in theatrical productions like the musical, *Cats*. It may also depart from realism and express the features of mythological or fantasy animals. Figure 38 below provides some examples of Furry make-up worn with or without other costuming elements. As the examples illustrate, Furry facial make-up uses signifiers similar to those identified by Boas (1955[1927]) to provide rapid identification of animal typology. Colour and facial spots indicate a tiger in the first photo from AnthroFest 2007, while the second photo reflects the make-up of *Cats* and the third example shows the coloration and markings of a zebra.



Figure 38: Furry Make-up.

Accessories, which may be purchased from Dealers' Dens at Furry meet-ups, are commonly seen at conventions. They may be used to create a "scratch costume" or simply worn as an accessory. Simple "scratch costumes" may be created from Halloween masks or eared headbands combined with street clothes or spandex body suits. Tails may be created from rope or fabric, or may be purchased. A dealer's tail costs about \$50.00, and a full head mask from a costume shop or dealer may start at \$40.00 and go up to over \$300.00, depending on the quality of the mask. A commissioned work is obviously more expensive. Wrist bands, fur hoods or collars, and gloves with fabric paw pads are also used as accessories. (www.fursuit.org/construction/introduction/scratch). "Scratch costumes" may be simple indicators of group membership or may be rather impressive artistic statements, as shown in Figure 39 below:

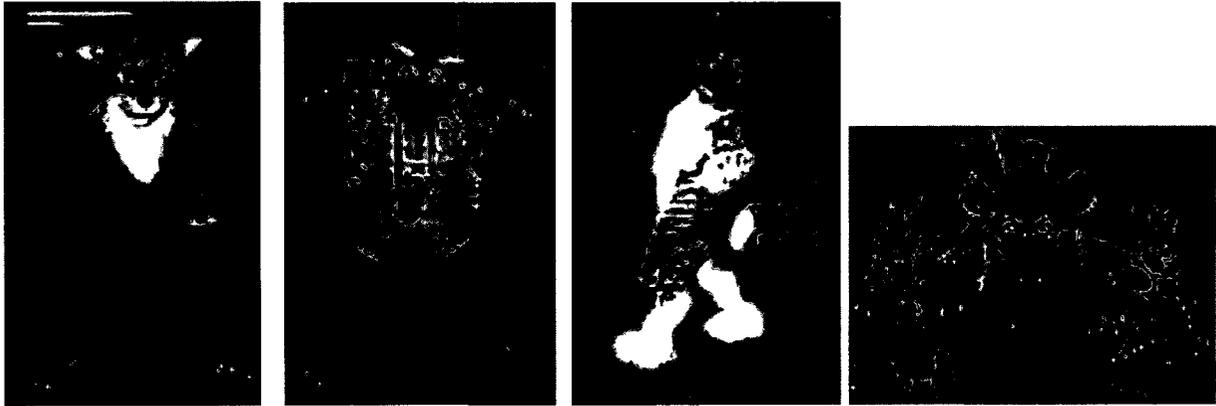
Furry masks and heads can be very elaborate productions. They may be built on a hockey or Halloween mask or may be created on a foam block or plastic or wire armature. Some heads are created from papier mache covering a wooden frame or use latex prostheses glued to the face or head with spirit gum. The most elaborate and expensive heads are custom made to fit the head of the wearer. On-line workshops provide detailed instructions to guide viewers through the construction of a Furry full-head mask. I found the mask workshop provided at <http://www.stripedsmiles.com/TheMask.html> a very interesting and carefully presented lesson on the intricate art of creating a Furry head. The steps involved in this painstaking process are summarized in Appendix 10.



Figure 39: Furry Accessories and “Scratch Costume” Elements.

Full fursuits can be very expensive and elaborate: “It’s not unusual to have a suit go from \$1000, all the way to tens of thousands, made by studio people for some television shows.”

(<http://fursuit.org/construction/planning/commissions>) A full fursuit includes a head, a full body costume including forepaws and hindpaws and an attached tail. Suits may also include under padding or under suits to provide the appropriate shape. Partial or half-suits may include a head, paws and a tail attached to a belt. The wearer may put on ordinary clothing over the paws to complete the suit. A three-quarter suit consists of a head, arms and pants that include the legs, feet and tail of the animal represented. The wearer adds a shirt to the costume. (<http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Fursuits>) Various fursuits are shown in Figure 40 below, including the fursuit of Wgg, the Gnoll, with its elaborate fantasy mask:



“Griever” “Cornwall” “Akita Inus Kendo” “Wgg the Gnoll”
Figure 40: Various Full Fursuits

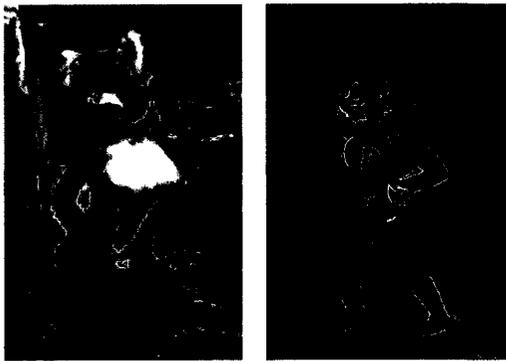


Figure 41: Two “BoobSuits”



Figure 42: “Quad Suits”



Figure 43: Fursuit Dancers at Anthrocon 2006.

Figure 41 illustrates two rather controversial “BoobSuits”. This type of suit, featuring padded breasts, has been criticized by some Furies as stereotypical and demeaning to female Furies. Figure 42 shows three rather unusual suits of the type called “QuadSuits” because they use a four-legged rather than biped structure. The third suit, “Lord Mannoroth”, made by “Shaggy Griffon” is a “TaurSuit” and features little wheels under the rear paws to support and propel the long body and tail. Figure 43 shows the use of fursuits in public presentations at the Fursuit Dance at Anthrocon 2006. Furry masks and costumes can be expensive and elaborate presentations of the Furry self, but I think most viewers would agree that they illustrate the creative and imaginative aspects of the Furry sub-culture. For those who, in the Furry tradition, wish to “Do-It-Yourself” there are many websites offering tips and instructions on the construction and maintenance of fursuits. The website instructions of German fursuiter and creator, Markus G. Nowak (“Tioh K’Trah”) are presented in Appendix 10.

Considering the Furry Mask and the Performance of Self:

The complex interactive functioning of mask and face, suggested in Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and in Napier: “...we may wish to suggest that the mask is a means of transgressing boundaries *because it provides an avenue for selective personification in manipulating certain recognized paradoxes*”(Napier 1986:17), is illustrated in two Furry pencil drawings in Fig. 44. In contrast to Menander, our post-modern Furry has the task of bringing a human-Furry manifestation into “haecity” with a cyborgian head. As the dangling wires indicate, the heads in the human-animal-machine amalgam may be removed and re-wired. The mask “assures the erection, the construction of the face itself, the abstraction or operation of the face. The inhumanity of the face.” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:181) “Masking as concretion is a reduction to one dimension, namely, to empowered exteriority.” (Grimes 1975: 511) It would be an error, however, to suggest that the impact of the masked performance resides simply in the representation of a powerful beast or a cuddly lion cub. The mask is emotionally poignant and powerful *because we can see through it* – because it is a mask and has holes in it. It juxtaposes the concrete and fixed form of death, of stock characters, of popular and iconic “funny animals”, with the fluid and mutable life form wearing the

mask. Masks are boundary-dwellers, and it is the boundary between the fixed eye-holes of the mask and the mutable eyes underneath it that intensifies our response to it.



Figure 44: Considering the Mask:

1. Pencil Drawing of Two Furrries and a Head. (Drawing a119738503, “Alpha Unit”)

2. Menander in Relationship with the Mask of a Young Man. (*Plate 7 Menander relief. The poet Menander contemplates the masks of a young man, a girl, and an old man. Marble relief, ca. Ist. c. A.D. Vatican Museum. In Napier 1986: 31*)

3: Pencil Drawing of Furry in Relationship with Cyborgian Head. (a1196864152278. “Alpha Unit”)

Grimes’ second category is “masking as concealment”. (Grimes 1975: 511) Deterritorialization, decontextualization, social control, and “uniform theory” (Haney, Banks, and Zimbardo 1973) are discussed in this section of the extended version. “Masking as embodiment” is Grimes’ third category. This is a problematic area as it presupposes a “real” or “fixed” selfhood, revealed through performance that presents itself as unmasked, yet is both stylized and culturally relative. Deleuze and Guattari deal with it as “the sorcerer” in their discussion of transformative embodiment. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 237) Grimes’ fourth category is “masking as expression” – expressive masking as constructed performance. (Grimes 1975:516) “Expressive masking is a dialectical process in which one no longer is worn by his mask, no longer merely hides behind his mask, and does not tease himself into believing he can become maskless, but instead takes responsibility for his mask and wears it so his face, society, and gods are seen through it but not identified with it.” (Grimes 1975:516) I would suggest that this is the

most common form of masking found in the Fandom, and, in conjunction with Rushton's (2002:226) idea of "originary evanescence", suggests the enthusiastic and playful Furry approach to the face, the body, and their representation in masks, accessories, make-up, and costuming: "...The face is, therefore, *potential*- it is of the order of the possible and the *virtual* (as Deleuze claims in the wake of Bergson). It is the face that opens up the world as an experience of possibility; it is the very conception out of which worlds are born." (Rushton 2002:225)

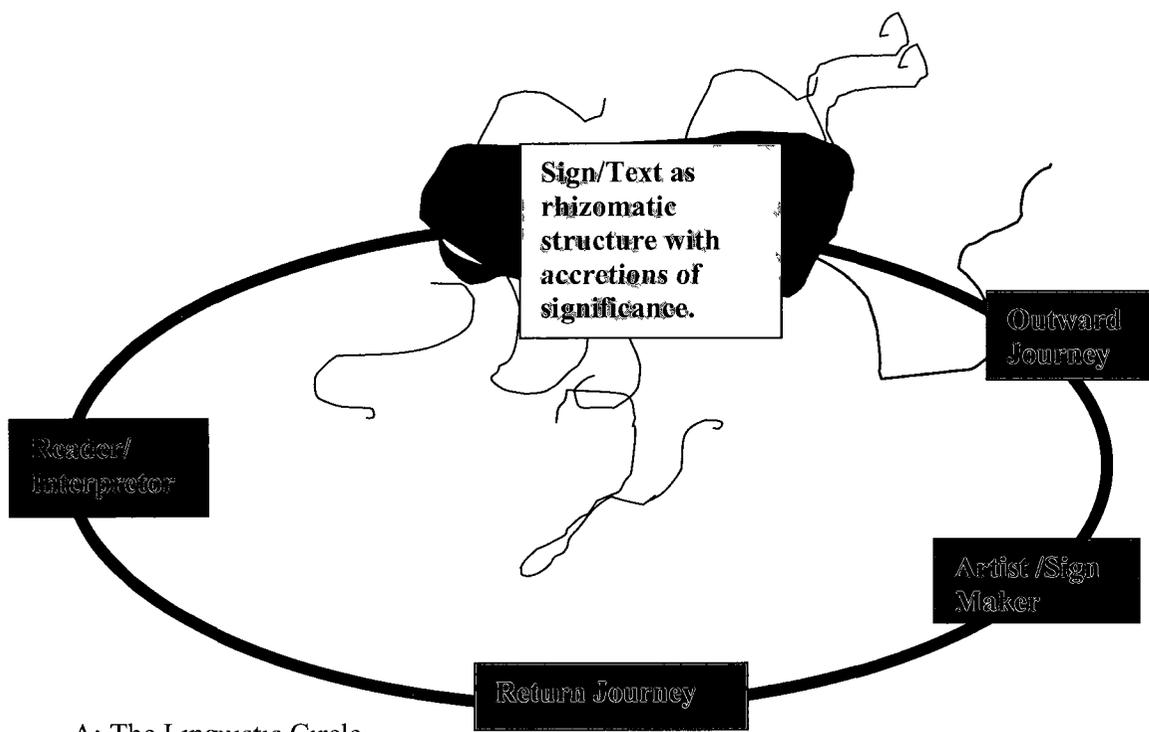
The mask may be seen as a transformative device, potent in addressing ambiguity, paradox, boundary challenges, change, and transitional states. (Napier 1986:xxiii) This approach, and four varying anthropological approaches to the mask are included in the extended version. Once again, as in the previous chapter on Furry languages, I was made aware of the enormous effort expended by Furies on creative representation when I began exploring Furry on-line workshops on mask and costume making.

The special efficacy of masks in transformation results, perhaps, not only from their ability to address the ambiguities of point of view, but also from their capacity to elaborate what is paradoxical about appearances and perceptions in the context of a changing viewpoint. Masks, that is, testify to an awareness of the ambiguities of appearance and to a tendency toward paradox characteristic of transitional states. They provide a medium for exploring formal boundaries and a means of investigating the problems that appearances pose in the experience of change." (Napier 1986:xxiii)

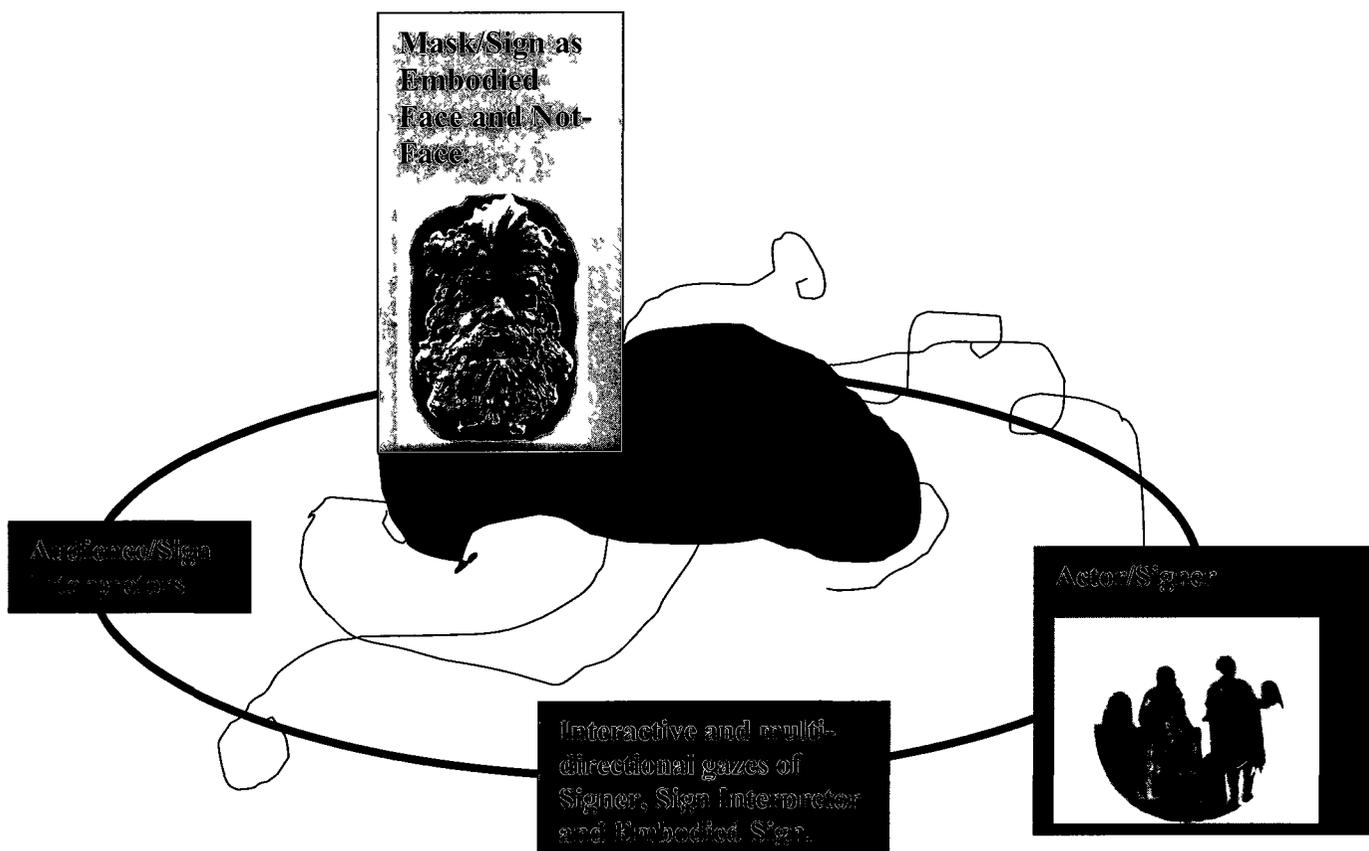
The potency of masks in expressing potential transformative states and in challenging accepted boundaries has long been of special interest to anthropologists. In lived practice we commonly accept masking and costuming in the everyday presentation of self. We are so accustomed to women in make-up, tattooed and body-pierced people, uniforms of many different sorts, and men in many different configurations of facial hair that we scarcely recognize that the artistic effort invested in embellishment or re-making of the face (or body) constitutes masking. Through masking festivals with ancient roots, we still express transformation in the world around us – from autumn to winter at Hallowe'en, from plenitude to abstinence at Mardi Gras festivities. But how can we conceptualize the elaborate masks and costuming

of an entire emergent sub-culture (Barth, 1969) that expresses the experience of masking as animal transformation and shape-shifting, “becoming fur”?

As an object upon which an artist expended a great deal of time and effort, we may consider a mask as an object of art and as a representation from which the viewer may attempt to make meaning. In what sense does it “signify”? Blundell points out that it is a recognized principle of the anthropology of art that the visual arts are semiotics systems, just as language is a system of signs and signifiers. (Blundell 2000: 39): “Like the elements of articulate speech, art forms can be employed as signs in the process of signification because they are capable of meaningful interpretation.” Thus, as part of a semiotic system, the mask can be placed within an hermeneutic circle of interaction and interpretation (Ricoeur 1981) as illustrated in Figure 45 below which compares a work of literature within the hermeneutic circle to a mask:



A: The Linguistic Circle



B: The Mask Circle

Figure 45: Texts and Masks within the Hermeneutical Circle.

ALL WALT'S CHILDREN: FURRIES AND THE MASS MEDIA

To introduce this section I have borrowed Scherer's metaphor, the "news cyclone", (Scherer 2010:18) and applied it more widely to the "habitus" or milieu of the non-print mass mediascape within which the Furry sub-culture has been shaped and shapes its representations of the self, of others, and of the external world. Stephen Fjellman, in *Vinyl Leaves: Walt Disney World and America* (1992), marks a much wider and earlier movement toward chaotic disruption and fragmentary re-packaging in his analysis of the "Disnification" of America and the subsequent global export of the Disney world-view. Fjellman repeatedly employs the imagery of endless mathematical repetitions of quadratic equations, "Mandelbrot sets" and fractal reproductions, to describe postmodern cultural forms as metastasis: "Postmodern cultural forms – in their endless proliferation, their ironic self-reference, their evanescence, and their intimate connection with commercial mass media – have an elective affinity with the field of commodities....With its themes within themes within themes, Walt Disney World represents the replication of similar patterns at different scales that is characteristic of fractals." (Fjellman 1992:402-403) *Avatar* (Cameron 2009), a remarkably Furry film, was released as I was writing this chapter and illustrates many of Fjellman's points- an entire forest filled with cute anthropomorphic creatures, scary mutant dinosaurs, Pernian dragonriders, mindless goons and Techno-bots borrowed straight from manga, a dashing but flawed hero who attains his "real self" through a combination of technological transformation into a cyborgian machine-animal-human amalgam, and spiritual embodiment as a Na'vi achieved through communal prayer and unity with Eywa, a Gaia-like reification of the "life force"- a bricolage, often created through computer-mediated fractal engineering. History and its uncomfortable narrative is encapsulated and set aside, and, in the best tradition of Mickey's Magic Kingdom, the virtual reality of the devastation of Pandora is over-coded with the virtual fantasy of a happy ending. In *Avatar* we have a blockbuster film with massive popular appeal that develops the same discourse as the Furry sub-culture, a discourse of challenge to traditional human-animal-machine boundaries, a discourse of virtuality, encapsulation and over-coding of historical narrative, a discourse of perceived rejection of industrialist expansion and the consumer markets that fuel it, a discourse of transformation and re-

embodiment in an Edenic, but clearly virtual, setting. Where did this film come from? The answer is that it came from the same mediascape of science-fiction, cyborgian speculation, “funny animals”, “sword n’sorcery” role-playing, Internet gaming, film and television presentations of historical “spectacle”, and the torrent of Internet discourse that formed and continues to form the Furry sub-culture.

How Furrries Are Shaped by “Walt’s World”:

How has the non-print media “habitus” been a formative influence in the making of the Furry sub-culture? Two of the strongest influences in the creation of the non-print milieu of the Furry sub-culture, the world of Disney and “funny animals”, and the world of anime, have contributed some marked characteristics of this sub-culture. I will briefly describe Fjellman’s observations (1992) concerning the contribution of Disney’s theme parks to the formation of the conditions of late capitalism, the global exportation of this worldview, and the Disney approach to historical representation as fragmented and encapsulated narrative. A more comprehensive discussion of the “Disney effect” is presented in the extended version. The Disney version of American history is a *performance* that construes “culture as spirit, and colonialism and entrepreneurial violence as exotic zaniness, and the Other as child.” (Fjellman 1992:399) Disney naturalizes *performance* and provides charming and intriguing settings within which we can represent various versions of the self, particularly of the self as anthropomorphic animals. Disney naturalizes a version of “the good citizen” as consumer, rather than producer. Disney’s proposed solutions to historical issues, such as environmental degradation, third-world exploitation, and urban *anomie*, is either a revisionist re-creation of a legendary past (Main Street, U.S.A.), or a futuristic proposal for change expedited by technological innovation. This version of history is made intellectually acceptable by re-packaging and de-contextualizing cultural symbols and historical events. “*Walt Disney World is an epicenter of decontextualization....*” (Fjellman 1992: 400) That Furrries have been profoundly influenced by the “Disney effect” is further discussed in the extended version and is supported by the sociological studies already outlined. What could be a more comfortable backgrounding for self-performance than a Disney theme park – safe, clean, sensually stimulating – with historical and social issues conveniently re-packaged and shelved pending futuristic solutions, and a horde of cute furry anthropomorphics to provide

humor and virtual family ties. Furrries are not, however, passive recipients of the “Disney effect”; the high degree of computer expertise, “do-it-yourself” mentality, emphasis on innovation and creativity, as well as the roots of the Fandom in “funny animal” satire and parody may also account for Furrries’ enthusiastic adaptations and manipulations of Disney tropes.

The second major factor in the creation of the Furry mediascape “habitus” is the rapid growth and development of Japanese animation in the mass media. Napier (2000) identifies three “modes” in anime – the apocalyptic, the mode of carnival or festival, and the elegiac. The apocalyptic mode, with its dystopian vision of a society shattered and betrayed by human greed and the lust for power, urban landscapes lying in ruins as a result of uncontrolled technological developments such as huge *mecha*, may be seen in Furry “wounded cyborgs”. The carnival or “festival” mode is the exuberant mode of sexuality, chaotic and humorous reversal, and pornography. I would suggest that the strongly marked Furry emphasis on “mature content”, particularly in the visual arts, is heavily influenced by Furry-dom’s rhizomatic connections with the anime fandom. Anime reflects Japanese cultural attitudes and values. Representations that are not considered shocking in Japanese culture such as nudity, adult-child relationships construed as unacceptable in Western cultures, and bacchanalian transformative sexuality in traditional Japanese art forms, may present themselves as “pornography” in the sub-culture. The elegiac mode introduces a social pessimism not seen in Disney’s animated features. One might speculate that, within the Fandom, anime naturalizes ambiguity, transitional modes, and boundary challenges.

How Furrries Shape “Walt’s World”:

The remainder of this section describes, in some detail, how Furrries are instrumental in shaping their mediascape “habitus”. Of particular interest is the section in the extended version on Internet gaming, as it plays an important part in my suggestion that the Fandom is an adaptive culture, but Furrries are also shapers of the new spaces of the Internet. Furrries have a strong radio presence, particularly in Internet broadcasting. Two profiles of Furry radio stations are provided in Figure 46 below and a few sample Furry radio programs are profiled in Figure 47.

Two Furry Radio Stations



Founded in 2006 by Markus Damone, this Internet radio station is largely staffed by volunteers. It has two streams attached to major on-line games, the SecondLife stream that is played from 15 SecondLife "locations", and the Furcadia stream that is played on this Furry on-line gaming site. AllFur Radio also broadcasts from large conventions, such as AnthroCon. Its home FurCon is Rocky Mountain Fur Con. The station features "The Lazy Sunday Talk Show", a program of interviews and opinion, with call-in topics, and "Tiggs and Tiff's Tuesday Asylum", a British commentary show. There is also an interactive website for listeners to enter their suggestions, requests, or complaints or to post contests and notices.



The Furry Broadcasting Company was created in 2005 by Jate Davis. It is unclear whether this large and well-organized station will continue, as the broadcast stream ended in December 2009. The station featured an extensive playlist from a wide spectrum of music. Listeners could request songs, and vote on which songs remain on the playlist. "Furry staples" are frequently re-played. The talkshows on this station featured a wide range of material. "Active shows" described as currently available include "The Brainstew", a live and interactive socio-political show, "Bunny Suicide", a gaming and news show that reviews video games and roleplaying systems and includes a comedy segment on "Dumb Laws", and "Storm Gryphon Tonight", an opinion program that discusses everything from furry politics to computers in Canada.

Figure 46: Profile of Two Furry Internet Radio Stations.

(All information and logos are from: <http://en.wikifur.com> and station websites)

Furry television and film does not seem to be as well developed as Internet radio programming, perhaps because it is more expensive to produce. The *Funday PawPet Show* and *Rapid T. Rabbit and Friends* are two examples of Furry television programs that have moved into the mainstream. *Furry TV* offers a webcasting service featuring pawpet shows, particularly *The Gamerkitty Experience*. In addition, *FursuitTV* provides on-line broadcasts of videos, including commercials, conventions, and media appearances where fursuiters are on display. The website lists dates when shows will be broadcast. Typically the program is streamed on the first Saturday of each month and episodes are repeated and made available for downloading. (<http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/FursuitTV>) An ambitious cross-over animated production of *ThunderCats* is in production and scheduled for release from Warner Brothers in the summer of 2010. *ThunderCats* is a long-running Furry comic book series about six humanoids based on felines who have fled Planet Thundera and arrived on Third Earth. Their worst enemy, an undead

mummy called Mumm-Ra awaits them in many episodes. Popular among Furry convention-goers is *Kaze: Ghost Warrior*, a rather remarkable animated short film, intended as a pilot episode. The film was created, in its entirety, by Timothy Albee (“Amadhi”), using two computers, with a total budget of \$5000. (See Figure 48 below) Albee is a skilled harpist and provides the musical soundtrack as well; in addition, he is an artist, has worked on a number of commercial animated films, and has provided several guides for would-be filmmakers.

Sample Furry Radio Programs

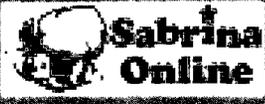
	<p>This is a weekly podcast with three co-hosts featuring satirical reviews of current events, beer reviews, Internet clips, sportscasts, and listeners' letters.</p>
	<p>A three-hour show that plays classic rock and a wide variety of electronic music. It also features “tech talk” and interacts with an IRC ChatRoom.</p>
	<p>This program runs from 8:00 p.m. until midnight on Thursdays, and also broadcasts a live video stream. It plays alternative music and also produces an MP3.</p>
	<p>This on-line audio drama is based on the comic book series by Eric Schwartz. It features weekly episodes and holiday specials.</p>
	<p>This British Internet program also broadcasts on BritFur FM. It is a 3 hour variety show with an extensive playlist and often operates charity benefit programs.</p>

Figure 47: Sample Furry Radio Programs.

(All information is taken from: <http://enwikifur.com> and program websites.)



Figure 48: Filmmaker “Amadhi” (Timothy Albee) and *Kaze: Ghost Warrior*. (http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Timothy_Albee; *Kaze: Ghost Warrior*, cover photo)

Furries may negotiate the netscape with a little more ease than some of us, but their experience is not different, and they have a host of Furry-oriented Internet forums, websites, and facilities from which to choose. Five of these facilities are briefly described in the chart in Figure 49 below, in order to illustrate something of the range of this aspect of the Fandom. As the chart indicates, Furry web resources range from massive multi-use sites such as Furtopia, through sites that have a national focus and work to unify and stabilize national communities, such as Furry.ca, the Canadian furry community website, to specialized forums like Serenity Hollows, a forum with an emphasis on virtual retreat from virtual conditions of modernity. Furry-dom contains a large number of themed sites ranging from “TAC” Furries- Transgender, Androgne, and Crossdresser Furries- to “Furmorrah” – a Christian-oriented Furry forum. In this information-swapping cyber-world, Furries may “rant” about perceived injustices, make friends and impress fellow travelers, Twitter, post informational notices, find a surrogate family, publish or probe for opinion of artistic creations, shop, swap technological know-how, create interesting new presentations of the self, and make up sets of rules controlling virtual worlds.

<p>Furtopia http://www.furtopia.org/</p>	<p>This is described as a “grassroots furry community website”. It provides web hosting services for Furry artists, writers and musicians free of charge. It is a very large site, in operation since 2002, and recently added Artistsworld.com, a web gallery for non-Furry artists. In addition, Furtopia operates a community bulletin board, Furtopia discussion forums, Radio Furtopia, FurJournal, an IRC network, and hosts an online MUCKing client. It supports and raises funds for charities and enforces a “Family Rating” rule.</p>
<p>furry.ca the Canadian furry community website</p>	<p>Furry.ca is a nation-specific site for the Canadian Furry community. It provides forums, resources, mailing lists, events listings, personal directories, a message board, and CafePress, on on-line store. In 2003 the</p>

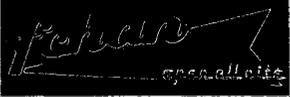
http://www.furry.ca	site was destroyed by a hacker, but was rebuilt in the same year.
 http://fchan.us/	This site is an "imageboard" designed to serve a Furry-related art community. It began in 2004, amidst some controversy concerned with a prank Furry art board. The site is operated by elected administrators. It is moderated by an elected panel and the postings are closely supervised for drug references, "cub art", and art suggesting incest, as well as for non-Furry material.
 http://www.myfursona.com	This is a "social networking site" founded in 2007. There are about 5000 users registered. It is completely programmed by its founders, with no pre-existing software. It provides access to a forum, Twitter, LiveJournal, Facebook and several other groups. This site hosts real-life FurMeets and conventions.
 http://www.serenityhollows.net/	This site is an example of a site designed for a specific use. It is a nature-themed on-line "retreat", providing an "announcement stump", an art forum, a games and entertainment discussion forum, a technology forum, current events discussion board, and some games. The site has about 60 members.

Figure 49: A Few Furry Forums and Internet Facilities.

World of FurCraft: Furry Role-playing Games and Internet Gaming:

There are many ways one can conceptualize MNORPG (Massively Multi-User Online Role-Playing Games) environments. They are places where alternate identities are conceived and explored. They are parallel worlds where cultures, economies, and societies are being created. They are environments where the relationships that form and the derived experiences can rival those of the physical world. They are new platforms for social science research. They are places where people fall in love, get married, elect governors, attend poetry readings, start a pharmaceutical business, and even commit genocide. Whatever MNORPGs are, or will become, one thing is clear. They are not just games. (Yee 2006: 325)

There are several types of games developed and produced specifically by and for Furrries. The chart in Figure 50 below provides a few examples, from a wide field of possibilities, and attempts to explain the characteristics of these games.

Game	Type of Game	Characteristics of Game
 Yiff: The Card Game	<p>- a Furry-themed card game with 160 cards showing Furry celebrities or Furry characters, often nude, aroused, or in bondage.</p>	<p>-in this game the rules are organized around Passion, Exhibitionism, Romance, and Kink. Typically two people play the game using fur-cards, modifiers, and scenario cards. The winner is the first player to pair all fur-cards in a yiff, ending with no fur-cards in his/her paw.</p>

 <p>Jadeclaw: An Anthropomorphic Fantasy Role-Playing Game.</p>	<p>A single-player role-playing video game. This is a companion game to <i>Ironclaw</i>, and was designed by Chuan Lin.</p>	<p>While <i>Ironclaw</i> placed a character in a medieval European setting, <i>Jadeclaw</i> is set in the Far East. Players may select a wide variety of characters, including reptiles, birds, and dragons, and may give them a large number of attributes, including martial arts. The game includes an interesting cast of non-player characters including insects.</p>
 <p>Inherit the Earth: Quest for the Orb.</p>	<p>This is an adventure role-playing game now in the form of a multi-platform CD. It may be played on Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, DOS, and Amiga. New versions may be played on Pocket PCs and iPhones.</p>	<p>This game is part of a series that includes comic books. The cast is 100% Furry and the graphics were drawn by Reed Waller. The player guides "Rif the Fox" in a quest to find the Orb of Storms.</p>
 <p>Furry Pirates: Swashbuckling Adventure in the Furry Age of Piracy.</p>	<p>This RPG may be used by multiple players on a local network.</p>	<p>The game was written by Furrries for Furrries and features anthropomorphic animals. Players select a species such as Avian, Ungulates, etc. Each species has different attributes. Players may choose a profession such as Thief, Alchemist, Craftsman, Fighter.</p>
 <p>The World of Feila.</p>	<p>This is a Furry forum that concentrates on role-playing.</p>	<p>The Feila forum offers an art and literature gallery, a graphical battle arena, a collection of role-playing boards, a contest and game area, and a discussion forum.</p>
 <p>Second Life: Furry Community</p>	<p>This enormous on-line virtual world has over 8 million registered users. The Second Life server provides platforms for the creation of persistent worlds and games. At any time, 20,000-60,000 users may be logged on. Furrries have a major presence in the game with multiple areas, including entire islands, devoted to Furry housing, entertainment and creative services.</p>	<p>Players create avatars and buy body parts, vehicles, accessories, toys, animation capabilities, and extra features. They may start or participate in business to generate income. Furry players may build and wear virtual fursuits. Furry communities on this platform may be highly developed social networks.</p>

Figure 50: A Small Selection of Furry Games.

FurryMUCK, one of the first and largest multi-user role-playing games on the Internet. A MUCK is a multiple-user chat kingdom, derived from a MUD (multiple user dungeon). FurryMUCK is one of the oldest and largest games of this nature on the Internet. In its lifetime, it has moved from North

Carolina State University, to the University of California, to Carnegie-Mellon University, to the University of Toronto, to St. Norbert College; it now has a stable home and a dedicated server. The game is administered by a Mayor and a group of technical “wizards”. Detailed pages on how to connect, find a home, build a room, and play an avatar are provided on-line. New players tend to live under the Bandstand in the West Corner of the Park, a central meeting place and visitor’s portal to the game. FurryMUCK is also represented in a comic strip, *West Corner of the Park*, and runs an extensive on-line shopping service. Although Furies have extensive rhizomatic connections to many other gaming worlds, FurryMUCK continues to be a popular on-line site hosting over 400 players a night, with a database of 200,000 players (“FurryMUCK Home Page”: <http://www.furry.com/>)

Turkle (1995) and Yee’s Stanford University *Daedulus Project*, which explores the demographics, motivations and derived experiences of 30,000 users of large on-line game configurations (such as *Second Life*) over a three year period (Yee 2006), were of great assistance in conceptualizing Furry construction of virtual worlds, virtual identities, and Fursonas. Drawing from these sources and from my field work, I will end this section with some observations on Internet gaming and the Furry sub-culture:

1. Gaming blurs distinctions between work and play. (Yee 2006b) Gamers spend, on average, 22.71 hours per week on gaming operations, more than half a normal work-week. On *Second Life*, for example, a gaming syndicate or “guild” may start a business, producing and selling a product for virtual profit. By the time investors have located stable supply sources, arranged virtual transportation, set up a manufacturing plant, arranged packaging, and initiated record –keeping and product shipping, they have probably repeated exactly what they do in a day at the office on their own time for no wages. Why? Gamers cite a sense of control and power, the performance of satisfying tasks, and improvement of leadership skills as motivation. (Yee 2006a: 33) Yee’s observations may be of considerable importance in conceptualizing the Furry sub-culture. Furies already pose a number of boundary challenges, but the boundary between “work” and “play” is one that has, perhaps, not been as thoroughly discussed as sexual

boundaries or human-machine boundaries. If the gaming sub-culture, which is very large indeed, is willing to devote over 20 hours a week to doing the same work that they do at the office voluntarily, and pay *Second Life* to do it, it would seem that the Internet gaming community is posing some very serious questions about the nature and satisfaction of the workplace in conditions of late capitalism, and, perhaps, challenging the boundary between work and play.

2. Internet gaming restructures social groups. Since identity in Internet gaming is usually performed through the construction of avatars, the people behind the avatar in any given gaming group may be quite unknown to each other. Thus, it is not at all improbable that a group in a role-playing game setting out to find the lair of a monster might consist of a hairy little blue gnome played by a 40-year old female homemaker, a “hot babe” in biker gear with a propensity for tossing fireballs played by a nineteen-year old male college student, a Viking giant with a magical sword played by a 32-year old computer aficionado, and an anthropomorphic Avian played by a 65-year old retired cartoonist. It may be unlikely that, in a real-life situation, these people would band together to perform a mission, but in the world of MUDs and MUCKs the demographics offered by Yee (2006a) suggest that the conventional boundaries of social groups may shift and dissolve.

3. Internet gaming encourages, and, perhaps, naturalizes a perception of identity as potentially fluid, dynamic, multiple and performed, rather than as unitary, static, and essential.

4. Internet gaming may encourage the development of skill sets that may be quite different from those required and valued in real-life environments; story-telling and the elaboration of gaming narratives come to mind immediately.

5. Yee’s findings (2006a) on the intensity of salient relationships in Internet virtual worlds suggest that perceptions of what constitutes family, friendship groups, community, and social peer groups may be in the process of change for some people.

6. Internet games are frequently based on opposition and difference. Avatars, for example, are deliberately crafted to be unusual, particularly in Furry game worlds. This suggests that the world of Internet gaming may offer an appealing and dynamic alternative to the controlled and compartmentalized discourse of corporate media productions.

Furries are indeed “Walt’s Children”, firmly embedded in a culture that is shaped and interpreted by the mass media; simultaneously, however, they are producers of media and creators of elaborate virtual worlds. The media “cyclone” is a matrix of complex rhizomatic relationships that are, as yet, poorly understood and rapidly changing. As the “habitus” of sub-cultures like the Furries and as a source of continual social change, this is a rich field of future study.

FURRY LITERATURE

When we consider the field of Furry literature, the problem of the exclusion of popular fantasy novels, graphic novels, comic books, and comic strips, may be a hindrance to serious discourse on the shape of Internet literature in the future. The debate centres on exclusionary criteria similar to those that determine the characteristics of “fine art”. Figure 51 diagrams the interaction of predominantly visual genres, such as the comic book, and predominantly text-based genres, such as trade novels, in the matrix of global hypertext that forms the Internet, and may help us to predict the rhizomatic accretion of a mutant form, the graphic novel. Passing through this rhizomatic accretion is a Deleusian plane of immanence, indicating that a new form is in the process of coming into being. This “mutant” form may have more in common with the pictogram than with the alphabet; in fact, that is the case in the discourse of comic books where an entire vocabulary of pictograms – light bulbs, horizontal speed lines, stars, shaped text boxes indicating quick movement, or violent explosions, etc.- has developed.

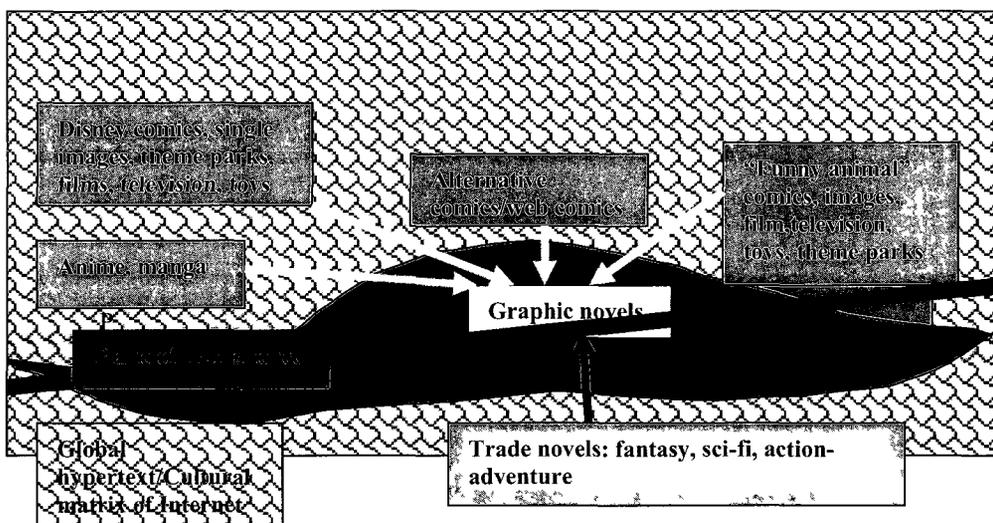


Figure 51: Rhizomatic Accretion within Matrix/Global Hypertext of Internet Showing Melding of Predominantly Visual Media Forms (yellow arrows) with Predominantly Text Forms (black arrow) to Produce the “Mutant” Form of the Graphic Novel.

The web comic, perhaps more than any other Furry literary form, illustrates the need for a serious re-evaluation of Internet representation so that we may continue to produce insightful discourse on emergent sub-cultures, rather than falling into Jameson’s trap of considering the cultural artifacts of the Internet as a superficial stream of “kitsch”. (Jameson 1984) Levy suggests that we may need to think in

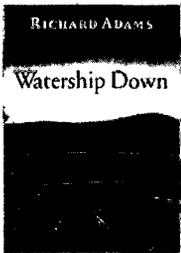
terms of a different and more interactive hermeneutic model when considering Internet music, art, and literature: “Everyone is asked to become a singular operator, qualitatively different, in the transformation of the universal and untotalizable hyperdocument. A continuum extends between the visitor and the engineer of virtual worlds, between those who are content merely to visit and those who will design systems or sculpt data.” (Levy 2001: 129) Thus, in the web-world of Internet literature, the hermeneutic circle describing the interaction of writer, artifact, and reader becomes larger and different in kind as a result of the production of artifacts that are not archived but may be altered by technicians or by Internet users. “The genres of cyberculture,” Levy argues, “are similar to *performance* art....Like installation art, they demand the active involvement of the receiver....Their center of gravity is a subjective process, which frees them from any spatio-temporal closure.” (Levy 2001:135) He suggests that we are not viewing a spectacle or reading an archived text; we are participating in an event. (Levy 2001:135) *Mouse Guard: Fall 1152* (Peterson 2008) provides an interesting example of Levy’s argument. The book, which exists in a real-life archived form, began its life as a series of web-comics, existing both as real-life strips and as virtual comics. Collected and printed they became the graphic novel. At the end of the text is a “Pinup Gallery” of fan art “by esteemed authors & friends”, representations posted on the Internet in response to the web-comic that depict scenes that *are not* in the graphic novel. Is the graphic novel an archived text or an event, an on-going visual and verbal discussion between the author and those who are more than fans, becoming actual contributors to the collective event of the graphic novel?

This section examines a typography of “Furry novels” classified according to “degree of furriness”. A partial list appears in chart form in Figure 52 below. Because Furrines tend to appropriate cultural artifacts from the mediascape, as I observed in my remarks on Furry visual representation , it is difficult to determine boundaries that separate Furry works from non-Furry works. A “Furry Novel List” is available on-line, originally compiled by Dan Lorey and maintained until 2001, the last date of alteration, by Dave Farrance (<http://anvil.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/furry/furry-novels.txt>. Accessed 01/03/10). Although the list itself may not longer be current, the categories that Lorey created are of

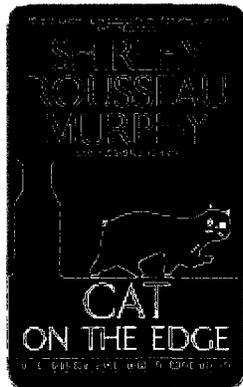
considerable use in attempting to impose a few limitations on the large and amorphous mass of literature that is claimed as “Furry”. Lorey sorts Furry literature by “degree of furriness”: “For the list, I’m defining a “furry novel” as a novel containing at least one major furry character/plot thread – the presence of humans will not be grounds for disqualification”. (Farrance and Lorey 2001.

<http://anvil.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/furry/furry-novel.txt>). A fourth category was added by Dave Farrance, “due to popular request” (Farrance and Lorey 2001.

<http://anvil.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/furry/furry-novel.txt>) and appears in conjunction with the third category. The typology rests primarily on the attributes assigned to the major characters and is reproduced below in chart form:

Category by “Degree of Furriness”	Some Novel Titles Assigned to the Category Listed by Author
<p>1. Animals behaving intelligently- animals in their natural form showing innate intelligence.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div>	<p>Adams: <i>Watership Down, The Plague Dogs, Shardik</i></p> <p>Brown: <i>Murder She Meowed, Pawing through the Past, Cat on the Scent</i></p> <p>Dann: <i>The Animals of Farthing Wood series.</i></p> <p>Grahame: <i>The Wind in the Willows</i></p> <p>Harrington: <i>The Cockroaches of Stay More</i></p> <p>Horwood: <i>The Duncton Chronicles series</i></p> <p>Jacques: <i>Redwall series</i></p> <p>Jarvis: <i>The Deptford Mice series</i></p> <p>Kilworth: <i>The Foxes of First Dark, Midnight Sun</i></p> <p>Kipling: <i>The Jungle Book, Just So Stories</i></p> <p>London: <i>Call of the Wild, White Fang</i></p> <p>Roberts: <i>Red Fox</i></p> <p>Salton: <i>Bambi series</i></p> <p>Smith: <i>Dalmatians series</i></p> <p>Stanton: <i>Appaloosa series</i></p> <p>Wangerin: <i>Chauntecleer series</i></p> <p>White: <i>Charlotte’s Web</i></p>

2. Intelligent animals – animals, in their natural forms who, through science, magic, or other means, are able to express their intelligence through interaction with humans or with other animals.



Baxter: *Mammoth* series
 Beagle: *The Last Unicorn*
 Bell: *Ratha* series
 Brin: *Uplift* series
 Card and Kidd: *The Mayflower Trilogy*
 Conly: *The NIMH* series
 Dahl: *Fantastic Mr. Fox*
 Duane: *Wizardy* series
 Garrett and Heydron: *The Gandalara Cycle*
 Greeno: *The Ghatti's Tale* series
 Harper: *Tales of the Wolves* series
 Lackey: *Magic* series
 Lewis: *The Chronicles of Narnia* series
 Milne: *Winnie-the-Pooh* series
 Murphy: *Joe Grey Mystery* series
 O'Brien: *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*
 Robertson: *Chronicles of the Cheysuli* series
 Ruff: *Fool on the Hill*
 Von Gunden: *K-9 Corps* series

3. Intelligent Animalmorphs – the central characters are anthropomorphic species/ Shapeshifting anthropomorphs



Anderson and Dickson: *Hoka* series
 Anvil: *Pandora's Planet*
 Arnason: *A Woman of the Iron People* series
 Barrett: *Aldair* series
 Bryant: *Cinnabar*
 Carver: *Star Rigger's Way*
 Cherryh: *Chanur* series
 Crispin: *Starbridge*
 DeLint: *Ascian in Rose, Ghostwood, Moonheart*
 Dickson: *Dilbian* series
 Fawcett: *Guardians of the Three* series
 Foster: *Icerigger* series, *Spellsinger* series

	<p>Gotlieb: <i>Starcat</i> series</p> <p>Kagan: <i>Uhura's Song</i></p> <p>Kahn: <i>Time</i> series</p> <p>Lackey: <i>Winds</i> series</p> <p>McCaffrey: <i>Doona</i> series</p> <p>Merrit: <i>Fox Woman</i> series</p> <p>Miesel: <i>Shaman</i></p> <p>Niven: <i>Ringworld</i> series, <i>Man-Kzin Wars</i> series</p> <p>Norman: <i>Turning Point</i>, <i>Fortune's Wheel</i> series</p> <p>Pinkwater: <i>Lizard Music</i></p> <p>Rogers: <i>Samurai Cat</i> series</p> <p>Schmidt: <i>The Questioner Trilogy</i></p> <p>Smith: <i>Underpeople Series</i></p> <p>Stallman: <i>Book of the Beast</i> series</p> <p>Swann: <i>Moreau</i> series</p> <p>Van Vogt: <i>Voyage of the Space Beagle</i></p> <p>Varley: <i>Gaiety Trilogy</i></p> <p>Wentworth: <i>Blackeagle</i> series</p>
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Figure 52: Farrance and Lorey's Typology of Furry Novels (Farrance and Lorey 2001.

<http://anvil.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/furry/furry-novel.txt>

Among Furry readers the fantasy, or “sword n’ sorcery” genre, is a possible “third-order system” (Barthes 1983 [1956]) in which a semiotic, such as the “rose-passion” semiotic, becomes a signifier in and of itself, indicating or signing that the story one is reading should be construed as existing within the rhizomatic accretion of medieval romance and picaresque questing tales, is a popular choice, perhaps because of its common use in on-line role-playing games. The modern fantasy novel comes fully equipped with a great deal of easily recognized baggage; we immediately recognize its conventions – the legendary culture-hero, the lost sword, the ancient, wise magician or interpreter, the encrypted message, the reptilian or cyborgian attributes of the enemy, the benevolently-ruled closed community that has been disrupted, the humorous side-kick, the spirit-vision that may enable transformative embodiment, the trials and labors of the questing knight. These are the ingredients of the fantasy genre; add anthropomorphic

animals, and a Furry novel is on the way. What is, perhaps, interesting about Furry stories is their emphasis on *difference*. The Furry fantasy genre collapses anthropomorphic folktales and fables, the “funny animal” allegory, the “naturalistic” animal story, and the picaresque quest into one genre. The unlikely hero is more interesting precisely because he/she is not human; it is the development of non-human characteristics and their application to the human pattern of the picaresque quest that creates an interesting tension in these novels- the mouse that struggles with a sword-belt, the military tactics of rabbits, and the apparent disorganization of sparrows. Although the genre, itself, may be somewhat shopworn and essentially “trivial”, it is in its evocation of *difference* that we may look for its appeal. The ambiguous and boundary-challenging embodiment of the animal-protagonists, set against the static feudalism of the monastery, the court, the manor-house, may resonate with some readers who are continually faced with rigid and static concepts of embodiment set against turbulent and chaotic environments in the workplace.

Redwall: Where Legends Are Made by Brian Jacques is examined in detail in the extended version as an example. The trade novel, compared to the graphic novel version of *Redwall*, illustrates comic book conventions and their use in the graphic novel. If we examine Figure 53 below, the opening three frames of *Redwall: The Graphic Novel*, the advantages of a graphic novel presentation of the story are evident. Heller (2002), in *The Graphic Design Reader*, points out that lettering is an essential component in the success of the graphic novel. In the large opening frame of the story, the lettering appears on small scrolls, accompanied by Barthes’ mythologically significant rose, so that the reader knows immediately that we are in the fantasy world of medieval sword n’ sorcery romance. The bucolic landscape is rendered in detail, with the tiny figures of the mice adherents of Redwall Abbey presented in a simplified form. Scott McCloud in *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* observes that this technique is called “the masking effect” and allows readers to “mask themselves in a character and safely enter a sensually stimulating world” (McCloud 1983:43). The technique, originally developed in the richly detailed backgrounds of Disney animations, is now standard practice in anime and in European

comics such as *Tintin*. In the second frame, the protagonist is still relatively undeveloped, but the peaceful, orderly, and prosperous surrounding courtyard is established. In the third frame, we see the endearing features of our hero and his awkward sandals which catch in the hem of his surplice and set up the tumble that initiates his heroic quest. In three frames the graphic novel has established genre, setting, tone, a major aspect of the theme, introduced the main character and initiated the plot.



Figure 53: Good Guys vs. Bad Guys: Graphic Development of the Mice of Redwall Abbey in Opening Frames vs. Cluny the Scourge and the Rat Horde.

(Jacques and Blevins 2007: 1,7)

In contrast, page 7, shown in Figure 53 above, brings us the Bad Guys- Cluny the Scourge and his horde of homeless rats, ferrets, and weasels. The drawings feature rough and spiky lines with areas of darkness and shadow. So forcefully evil is the character of Cluny that his barbed tail escapes the borders of the frame in the second panel and is developed in great detail, a technique McCloud describes as

“objectifying” the tail so that it becomes “an object, something with weight, texture and physical complexity.” (McCloud 1983:44) The headlong flight of the chaotic horde is emphasized as the horse’s leg projects from the frame off the page, and in the dramatic diagonal lines of the fallen animal.

In the first panel of Figure 54, Father Abbot and Matthias survey a tapestry depicting the triumph of Martin the Warrior, Redwall Abbey’s legendary protector. St. George and the dragon would appear to be the inspiration for this piece. Inset in the panel is a small frame surrounded by its white border. This frame, positioned in the left-hand corner, must be read first and its border indicates a transition in time and/or space. The second panel is an “establishing shot” of the banquet table surrounded by Redwall Abbey’s cast of characters. Like a camera, the artist moves through from the long shot in the inset frame in panel 1, to an upward tilt to show us the culture-hero, Martin the Warrior, to an establishing shot of Constance the Badger, Basil Stag Hare, Jess Squirrel, and other abbey retainers in panel 2. Panel 3 develops through a series of triangles and diagonal shapes arranged in opposition, and emphasized by the comic convention of lines of force. While the panel tells the story of the beheading of the serpent that has stolen the protective sword from Edenic Redwall, the exhaustion of Matthias, and the dead serpent are minimized in two bottom frames, while attention focuses on the powerful S-curve of the snake, visually mimicking the hissing menace. A tilt-up in panel 4, combined with sharp jagged lines and dark shadows presents Cluny’s menacing figure. Panel 5 provides a very interesting example of the power of the graphic novel and comic strip technique in combining visual and verbal representation. In the upper frame, the mice appear as tiny insect-like creatures, but, from the lower frame, the extremely foreshortened figure of Matthias literally leaps out of the spatial boundaries of the frame. His text balloon intrudes into the previous frame as the illustrators portray a transformation from mouse to culture-hero. Wolk describes the technique used here as “the default style of the superhero mainstream” that conveys “somatic excitement” (Wolk 2007:50). In the final panel, we return to the bucolic setting of the first page, with the Abbey dominating the landscape, but over it towers the figure of the Warrior mouse. We realize that this martial presence in juxtaposition with the peaceful Abbey is a spiritual protection because the

comic convention of shading to indicate luminous rays in the sky informs us of a supernatural force. The graphic novel concludes at the bottom of the final frame with the roses with which it began, marking our exit from this excursion into the fantasy realm of the medieval quest.



Figure 54: Comic Strip Conventions from *Redwall: The Graphic Novel* (Jacques and Blevins 2007).

Mouseguard: Fall 1152, an illustrated graphic novel created from a serialized comic strip by David Peterson (2007) is also discussed and illustrations are included in Appendix 11.

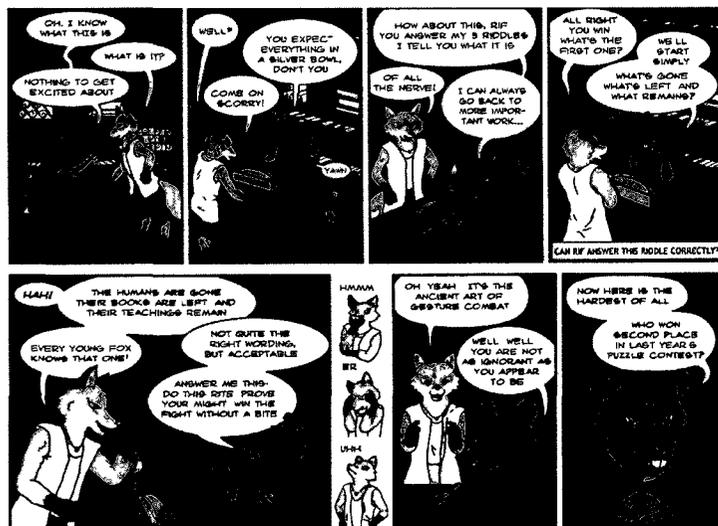
Furry Comic Books and Web-Strips:

The Internet abounds with Furry serialized tales and web-comics; they are displayed on individual websites, on web pages dedicated to a particular comic strip, and are usually featured elements of large web galleries, such as DeviantArt. It is difficult to impose any kind of order on the carnival of literature, comics and comic art that Furry artists and writers produce both in print editions and, most frequently, on the Internet; Levy describes these aspects of cyberculture as “the global hypertext, a virtual metaworld in perpetual metamorphosis, an abundant musical or iconic flow.” (Levy 2001: 128) Very roughly speaking, one might suggest that there are three basic groups: a group of rather innocent and unsophisticated Furry animal comics centering around ecological and Edenic themes, a group that is closer to the “indie” comics that were a formative influence in the early years of the Fandom, and a vast group that represents every sexual variation on the fringes of Furry-dom. In this discussion, I will briefly introduce *Inherit the Earth* from the first group, *Sabrina Online* from the second group, and will provide a chart of a few of the “mature content” offerings from the third group.

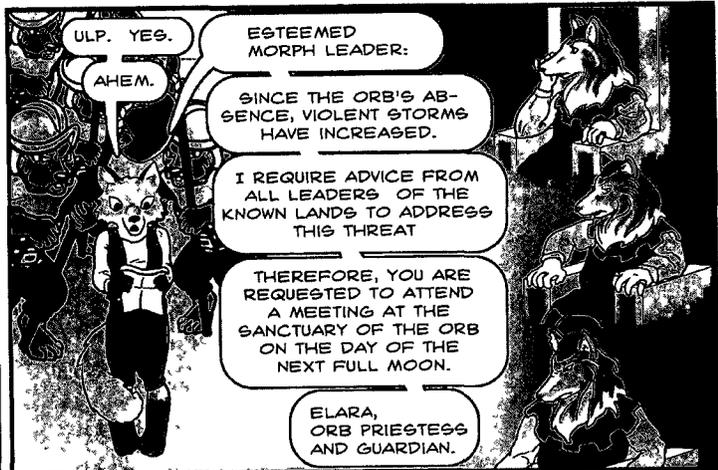
Inherit the Earth: Little Wolf Lost. Part 1 is a comic book in the traditional pamphlet format (Hershey and Pearce 2007) The comic originated in a computer game, *Inherit the Earth: Quest for the Orb*, released in 1994 by The Dreamers Guild, a small company composed of independent computer game developers including Allison Hershey and Joe Pearce. The Internet abounds with Furry serialized tales and web-comics; they are displayed on individual websites, on web pages dedicated to a particular comic strip, and are usually featured elements of large web galleries, such as DeviantArt. It is difficult to impose any kind of order on the carnival of literature, comics and comic art that Furry artists and writers produce both in print editions and, most frequently, on the Internet; Levy describes these aspects of cyberculture as “the global hypertext, a

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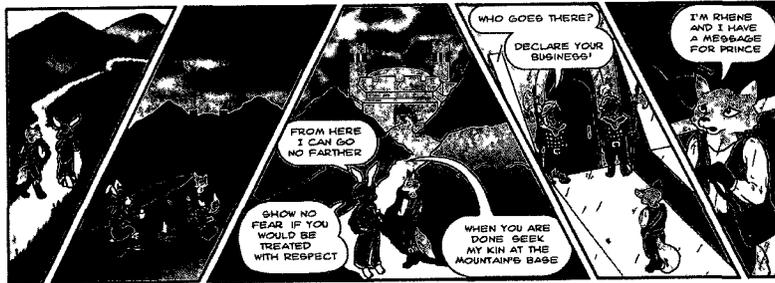
Very roughly speaking, one might suggest that there are three basic groups: a group of rather innocent and unsophisticated Furry animal comics centering around ecological and Edenic themes, a group that is closer to the “indie” comics that were a formative influence in the early years of the Fandom, and a vast group that represents every sexual variation on the fringes of Furry-dom. In this discussion, I will briefly introduce *Inherit the Earth* from the first group, *Sabrina Online* from the second group, and will provide a chart of a few of the “mature content” offerings from the third group. *Inherit the Earth: Little Wolf Lost. Part 1* is a comic book in the traditional pamphlet format (Hershey and Pearce 2007) The comic originated in a computer game, *Inherit the Earth: Quest for the Orb*, released in 1994 by The Dreamers Guild, a small company composed of independent computer game developers including Allison Hershey and Joe Pearce. Wolk (2007) suggests that there is an aesthetic schism developing among young cartoonists. This schism may be seen in the discussion of Furry comics and web comic strips. On the one hand, is the “smooth wave” (Wolk 2007:369) seen in the lush visual representations in *Mouseguard* (Peterson 2007:369) and in the rather stilted use of comic book conventions seen in the illustrations from *Inherit the Earth* in Figure 55 below:



Time as Vertical Space (Hershey and Pearce 2007:9)



Time and Change Expressed Vertically (Hershey and Pierce 2007:27)



Diagonal Panels and Central Focusing (Hershey and Pierce 2007: 25)

Figure 55: Comic Conventions seen in *Inherit the Earth*.

On the other side is “the rough wave”, a group of cartoonists who derive their inspiration from the “indie” comics of the 1980s and ‘90s and use jagged, “ugly”, perhaps even visually offensive, stylistic techniques in drawing their comics. “What these young artists have in common, ideologically, is the anti-Hollywood narrative, and representational, labor-intensive, make-it-nasty tendencies of contemporary visual art. They’re the first generation of cartoonists to migrate to comics from the fine art world, attracted by the possibilities for narrative and language in the context of drawing that comics offer and gallery art doesn’t.” (Wolk 2007: 367) Figure 56 showing recent *Sabrina Online* strips illustrates some characteristics of the older “indie” comic. The frame borders are roughly drawn or missing altogether; backgrounds and foregrounds are missing or minimally developed. The focus is on the characters drawn with very decisive black lines and heavily shaded areas. The frames look crowded and cluttered, an impression that is intensified by large hand-lettered dialogue bubbles or boxes that take up much of the available space.



Sabrina Online by Eric W. Schwartz: “De-corruption begets corruption” and “All those impressionists worked in porn too.” 2009. (<http://rigby-jones.net/es/sabrina/2009-03.html>.)

Figure 56: *Sabrina Online* by Eric W. Schwartz
 (<http://rigby-jones.net/es/sabrina/2009-03.html>)

The author’s willingness to discuss issues like child pornography is also typical of this genre.

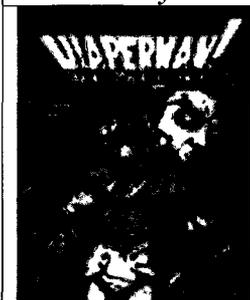
Sexually explicit comics, catering to the many faces of Furry sexuality, abound both on the Internet and in print. A few examples may be seen in the table included in Figure 57 below:

Title and Illustration	Observations
<p><i>Fur-Piled, “Mr. Tangerine Speedo”.</i></p>	<p><i>Fur-Piled</i> is described as a gay-themed, slice-of-life web comic. It is produced by Leo Magna and is available on-line in 5 languages. The plot centers on the lives and mishaps of a group of friends living in California. The main character is Arthur Husky, shown in the inset frame. His partner is Saetto, a gay “furret”, but in this frame Arthur is dallying with another partner, attracted by his tangerine underwear. Three print collections of <i>Fur-Piled</i> have already appeared from 2006-2009.</p>
<p><i>XXXenophile</i></p>	<p>The <i>XXXenophile</i> series by Phil Foglio is an anthology series of erotic fantasy stories. The original series consisted of 10 comic books and was collected in 5 graphic novels. Each graphic novel added a new story featuring, for example, Orgasm Lass, a superhero, and her four-armed sidekick, Foreplay. The comics are sexually explicit, but also satirize some elements of the fantasy and science-fiction genres. A collectible card game based on the series is also available.</p>



Heathen City

This is a serial graphic novel written by Alex Vance and illustrated by four artists. It features “gay themes, graphic sex, strong language, and violence”. In the first episodes, a gay hustler quits his life of prostitution, but becomes embroiled in a criminal conspiracy. Taking along his new lover, he seeks out an old friend, rekindling their past love. The threesome flees to London, Paris, Shanghai and the Pacific Ocean attempting to avoid their enemies.



DiaperMan

DiaperMan: The Complete First Series is a graphic novel compilation of the cartoon series, *DiaperMan*, a webcomic that is produced primarily for the BabyFur community. BabyFurs are a sub-group that may practice infantilism, wear clothing that resembles that of a toddler or baby, or may wear diapers. In this series, the superhero and some of main characters wear diapers for various reasons. The series parodies the superhero genre to some extent, featuring characters like “The Spanker” and “The Fetish Five”, but also expresses the sexual “kinks” of the BabyFur and DiaperFur sub-groups.



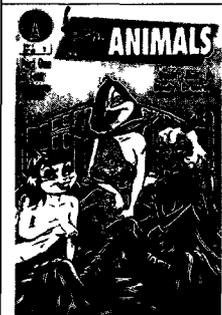
The Accidental Centaurs

This webcomic, created by John Lotshaw, began in 2002. Two Earthling scientists working on a teleportation system are sucked through a worm-hole into an alternative universe when the system explodes. They are transformed into something so inscrutable that all they can do is interpret themselves as centaurs. The W!rxn, omniscient beings that preside over the alternative universe give them a ring containing Lenny, a djinn. Humor and bizarre plot twists are the earmarks of this series.



Bound to be Friends

In *Bound to be Friends* we have an excursion into the manga field of schoolgirl bondage. Ricardo Canheta, the author, brings us two teenaged bunnies discovering their sexuality. Dominant Mika and submissive Karin attend the same school and soon find out that they enjoy bondage, domination-play, and S & M.



Filthy Animals

This is an older production, first distributed by Radio Comix in 1997. First written by Keith Wilson, it was later produced by Stan Jinx and Cindy Crowell. The story involves a group of anthropomorphic animals, Veronica (a duck), Conner (a rabbit), Marlene (a kangaroo), Kitty (a cat), and Monique (a leopard). The protagonists work in the pornography industry and become mebroiled in some very “mature” situations.

 <p>WWW VIKING COM - QUEST FOR FUN <i>The Quest for Fun</i></p>	<p>This comic is described as “hardcore erotica”. It appears as a subscription series, and features Alma, a pirate Siamese cat, Scyra, an Amazon warrior-mouse, and Zandria, an iguana rogue/cleric. The protagonists travel the world searching for tireless men.</p>
 <p><i>The Adventures of Queerman</i></p>	<p>This series is a spin-off of a well-known Furry “mature-content” series, <i>Associated Student Bodies</i>, an 8 issue set of comics from the 1990s, now collected in a hardcover format. The ABS story features a young lion, Daniel, who goes to college, shares a dorm room with a wolf, Marcus, and encounters a floor of predominantly homosexual roommates. The series, and <i>Queerman</i> explores Daniel’s sexual attraction to his roommate and his interaction with the outside community and his family. Of course, the series has spawned parodies, including the BabyFur version, <i>Incontinent Student Bodies</i>.</p>

Figure 57: A Few Titles from the Very Wide World of Furry “Mature Content” Comics.

(Information and illustrations from WikiFur: <http://en.wikifur.com/>)

In the introduction to *Cyberculture*, aptly titled “Deluges”, Pierre Levy insists that the transition to communication in cyberspace is, in fact, a move toward a new medium, one that is not necessarily going to resolve our planet’s problems, but one that will effect change in two ways: “First, that the growth of cyberspace is the result of an international movement of young people eager to experiment collectively with forms of communication other than those provided by traditional media. Secondly, that a new communications space is now accessible, and it is up to us to exploit its most positive potential on an economic, political, cultural, and human level.” (Levy 2001:ix) Finding and mastering “a new communications space” at an early stage in its development, Furies proceeded to fill it with the artistic productions of their sub-culture - from paintings and ConBadges to fursuits and sexually explicit comic books. This development may be seen in the Furry use of the format of the graphic novel, whether it is a serialized collection of comic strips or an illustrated summary of a full-length novel as an emergent art form that challenges the boundaries of art and literature. As an economic entity, it may be construed as the inevitable outcome of the process of migration of the arts to the Internet. When web-comics are easily available, free and can be appropriated at will, how can the cartoonist or writer generate any income from

his/her work? The answer lies in the graphic novel. The graphic novel fulfills a liminal function as an archival and transitional form between the virtual and the real. It is also a very powerful emergent form of representation combining the dominant mode of communication within the Furry sub-culture, visual representation, with verbal representation to form the narratives that shape and are shaped by the Furry community.

MUSICAL FURS

Although music is not the predominant form of expression in the Fandom, it is, perhaps, in the field of music and musical composition that we see most clearly the issues of identity, collective authorship, authenticity, and creativity that are raised when a sub-culture has a strong presence in cyberspace. This section discusses the Furry presence in music, particularly in computer-mediated electronic music, as active participants and shapers of the music world, rather than as passive consumers of radio, television, and music studio productions. In the sub-culture of the Fandom, Furrries may compose, perform, and record their own musical compositions; they may appropriate compositions that deal with themes “of a Furry nature” (http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Furry_music), such as theme songs from “funny animal” cartoons or television shows, or they may appropriate and re-mix or synthesize electronic tracks that have already been produced and are available on the Internet. DJs at Furry gatherings may make their own sound mixes to provide backgrounds at conventions or music for dance parties which are a major feature at Furry conventions. Enough Furry music exists in the form of CDs and downloadable MP3s to provide Furry-themed and Furry produced music for entire weekend programs. A group of Furrries called “The Fauna Project” have been actively involved in the promotion, creation, and performance of Furry music and have already produced the three CDs seen Figure 58:



Furry Fantasies II- 16 tracks from from Chama, Cheetah, Eisfuchsm, Fairlight, Jumpy, Redlouts, Sayh, Soulstorm.



Silky Fur – music composed by Chama, Fairlight, NightCat, and Sayh in many genres.



Furry Fantasies- original compositions from Arnie, Chama, Cheetah, Cougar, Helge, Lutra, Nessus, Sayh and Skaven

Figure 58: All-Furry CDs Available from the Furry Music Foundation.
(<http://fmf.fauna-project.org/cd/>)

At the present time, the Fauna Project is in the process of compiling another CD and is inviting submissions and demos from groups and individual performing artists; in addition, the Fauna Project offers to assist performing musicians in producing, arranging and recording their songs. The work of

these dedicated Furry musicians supports the Furry Music Foundation, an organization that offers a large archive and catalogue of downloadable music organized by genre and specializing in music with relevance to the Fandom. Their full catalogue is available at <http://fmf.fauna-project.org/cd/> and may be downloaded. This website, founded and administered by Chama C. Fox, also provides profiles of many Furry composers and performers. It provides a distribution channel for the Furry community so that artists may showcase their works. The site was originally hosted in Sweden and moved to Germany. From there it was structurally re-adjusted by Nessus and, since 2006, has been hosted on the Fauna Project server in Germany. The Fauna project is currently compiling another CD, assists Furry musicians in producing, arranging, and recording music, and supports the on-line archival Furry Music Foundation. A small selection of their archive, showing the many modes of Furry Music is presented in Figure 59:

Song	Genre	Written By	Music Type
Parallel Oasis	Abstract	MystelFox	Electronic
Deep Blue	Drum & Bass	Kuroo	Electronic
The Last Dawn	Dance	PhoenixWing	Electronic
Aztec	Ambient/Jungle	Ejordwolf	Electronic
Others: Dance	Folk/Electroacoustic	DJ Vix-N	Electronic
Force Volcano	Progressive/Techno	Tambako	Techno/Trance
Echoes	Industrial/Electronic	Darkspaw	Electronic/Trance
Furions Ferret	Aggressive Demostyle	Chama	Techno/Trance
Secret Dance	New Age/Techno	2	Techno/Trance
Psychotic Garbily	Minimalistic/Techno	Tambako	Techno/Trance
Abandoned Hilltops	Classical	Goldenrod	Classical
The Hunt	Orchestral	Jumpy	Classical
Invention in E Minor	Baroque	Roobus	Classical
Steps	Choir/Orchestral	Chama	Classical
Tree Rat	Vocal/Choir	Jumpy	Classical

Image du Grel	Synthesizer	Ilud	Ambient/New Age
Dusk at Ephel Duath	Ambient	Moonchild	Ambient/New Age
The Temple	Rock	Moonchild	Ambient/New Age
Wolves Trail	Dream	Fjordwolf	Ambient/New Age
Silk Fur	Melodic	Banlight	Ambient/New Age
Prayer for Danny	CCM	Half	Ballad/Soft Rock
For a Cat	Ballad	Jumpy	Ballad/Soft Rock
Sonar Range	Dream/Synth	Sayh	Ballad/Soft Rock
A Song for Bob	Ballad	Jarrell	Ballad/Soft Rock
The Fox and the Prince	Song/Ballad	Chama	Ballad/Soft Rock
Welcome (Hurry Forest Theme)	Alt/Rock	Runt	Pop
Simple Things	Blues	Half	Pop
When the Night Comes	Brass/Disco	Sayh	Pop
Dead Men Tell No Tails	Various	Goldenrod	Pop
Urban Chaos	Pop	Timwi	Pop
Match of Doom	Death Metal	2	Rock/Metal
Ambient Stress	Garage	Brahman	Rock/Miscel
Trapped in a Strange Time	Rock	Nessus	Rock/Metal
Midnight's Dye	Metal	Isacms	Rock/Metal
Dragon Fire	Rock n Roll	Jumpy	Rock/Metal

Figure 59: Selected Titles from the Furry Music Foundation Archives.
(<http://fmf.fauna-project.org/music>)

The extended version of this study discusses the growth of electronic music as a “global hypertext” (Levy 2001 129), the production of Chicago “house music”, Detroit electronic dance music, “techno”, and “trance” music, and the complex field of New Age music. Writing in a period well before the popularization of the personal computer, Horkheimer and Adorno postulated that modernist media

formats, and the radio in particular, were technological developments that “took control of the individual consciousness”. (Horkheimer and Adorno 2007[1947]:121) Radio, they commented, “is democratic: it turns all participants into listeners and authoritatively subjects them to broadcast programs which are all exactly the same. No machinery of rejoinder has been devised. . . .” (Horkheimer and Adorno 2007{1947]:122) Perhaps they would find that the computer provides a “machinery of rejoinder”. Not only are Furrries able to operate and program their own web radio sites, but the material for the production of music, without the control of “talent scouts, studio competitions and official programs of every kind selected by professionals” (Horkheimer and Adorno 2007[1947]:122) is accessible to those who are able to use the readily-available software. Indeed, an examination of the development, technological change, diversification and transformation of the mechanics of musical production as electronic music, the dominant genre in the Furry sub-culture, entered cyberspace shows a pattern of turbulent flow, rhizomatic accretion, and lines of flight surrounding a plane of immanence closely resembling the Deleuzian abstract schema.

Readers who are unfamiliar with the rather confusing terminology of electronic music may wish to consult the extended version to clarify the many divisions of this field. Furry musicians frequently blend sounds drawn from the many rhizomatic accretions within the complex matrix of contemporary music. As I wrote this section, “Kurrel the Raven” posted another large collection of Furry music, *Furry x 60II*, sixty works by Furry musicians in all of the genres discussed above, in addition to pop, blues and grunge, rap, and orchestral music, genres with which the reader may be more familiar. This new album, released in July, 2009, does not seem to be available on line as yet. It contains some familiar names from the first collection, but, as Kurrel predicted, broadens the scope of Furry music to include challenging genres. Below in Figure 60 are representations of five Furry musicians who compose and produce music in very different genres. The first, Australian composer Kurrel the Raven, is the organizer and compiler of *Furry x 60* and *Furry x 60II*, the author of *The Ravenspiral Guide to Music Theory*, a Furry artist and illustrator, a fursuiter and presenter of “Ythrykythyr” , a character with five head tentacles, digitigrade

legs and two thumbs on each hand, and of “Doujoux”, “a rotund fuzzy character of no species in particular” (http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Kurrel_the_Raven) As a composer, Kurrel tends to produce happy, upbeat tunes like “Happy Clappy”, “Chicken Man”, and “Kazoolah!”, all tracks on *Furry x 60*. He also has a penchant for rap music and is the author and composer of “The Furry Song”, a staple at Furry conventions, which has appeared in many different versions and genres. “Char”, the next representation in Figure 60, posts her music on FurAffinity. Her work is very melodic, in a trance style, with an acoustic clarinet track added in “Clarinets”. “Soul Camel” is the German composer of a larger electronic work “Die Goeddisfatir”. On *Furry x 60*, his work is represented by “Swinging the Chain”, a vocal with electronic background. The song is a thoughtful meditation on identity and the presentation of self through personae. “Equium”, the fourth composer in Figure 60, is represented on *Furry x 60* by the challenging electronic composition, “Field”. On *Furry x 60II*, this composer is represented as “orchestral”, suggesting that the range and scope of Furry music is extending. Avant-garde composer, “Dust Frolic” is the final representation in Figure 60. This challenging musician is represented on *Furry x 60* by “How the First Pangolin Disintegrated”, an electronic work that may defy categorization.



Kurrel the Raven

Char

Soul_Camel

Equium

Dust_Frolic

Figure 60: Representations of Some Furry Musicians from *furry x 60* and *furry x 60II*.

(<http://members.iinet.net.au/~knw/furryx60/> and http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Furry_x_60_II)

A good example of a Furry musical work in the electronic genre is the Electro-Funk composition by “JM”, “Horses have standards”, is an interesting work easily accessed on the on-line compilation *Furry x 60* (<http://members.iinet.net.au/~knw/furryx60/>). The lyrics of this piece are emphasized by the deadpan vocal delivery, set against an Electro-Funk background:

Being a horse isn't all trotting and sugarcubes:
We have an image to maintain.

The Horse Qualification Society is responsible for horse standards.
We are tested every three months.
All horses are tested for inner calmness, loyalty and firmness of buttock.
Results are seasonally adjusted.

If you fail once, you are given a warning.
After all, we all make mistakes.
If you fail twice, you are given a paint job and reassigned to “zebra”.

Zebras don't have standards.

(JM “Horses have standards”. *Furry x 60*. <http://members.iinet.net.au/~knw/furryx60/>)

The extended version offers a portrait of versatile Furry musician, “Electric Kleet”.

“Trance” music, a descendent of electronic dance music, is very common in Furry music compilations and may be heard on both *Furry x 60* (<http://members.iinet.net.au/~knw/furryx60/>) and on the Furry Music Foundation’s archival collections. (<http://fmf.fauna-project.org/cd/>) Trance is a combination of industrial, techno, and house. It is easily identified by the short melodic synthesizer phrases that recur throughout the track. The music of Furry composer, “Char”, as heard on three tracks on *Furry x 60*, “Clarinets”, “Pretty 3” and “Pretty 1”, illustrates the melodic charm of one side of trance music, while “Steinkreis” in “Taken” and “Snowfall” provides a trance sound that is much closer to industrial electronic music. (<http://members.iinet.net.au/~knw/furryx60/>) Germany is said to be the birthplace of trance culture as an off-shoot of techno. By the mid-1990s, progressive trance had emerged commercially as a dominant genre of dance music. “Kurrel the Raven”, compiler of the *Furry x 60* collection comments on the prevalence of trance and electronic remixes of videogame tracks as a sign of possible immaturity in the Furry music scene: “And sure, the music that is posted on FA [FurAffinity] is still mostly trance and videogame/anime soundtrack remixes and other sounds of furies starting out being musical, but there is definitely something else brewing which reflected how surprisingly unusual furies can be.” (Kurrel the Raven. 2008. “liner notes”. *Furry x 60*. <http://members.iinet.net.au/~knw/furryx60/>) Trance music showed the same rhizomatic adaptability that techno and house music had demonstrated, leaving behind the established structure featuring an introduction, build, breakdown, and anthem, to experiment widely in combination with other forms. Across Europe and North America huge trance

festivals, showcasing trance music in many formats, attract up to 90,000 visitors. (Spaarnwoude Dance Valley Festival, Los Angeles' Electric Daisy Carnival http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trance_music) Canada is host to the World Electronic Music Festival, 3 days of Trance, Hard Dance, and Jungle (variations of techno), and Bal en Blanc, a large Montreal rave that features house music in one room and trance in another.

A connection with Furry spirituality may also account for the popularity of New Age and ambient music in the Fandom. New Age is an extremely diverse grouping, as is obvious in the wide diversity of offerings found in the "New Age" bins in any music store. One might suggest that it is unified by its apparent purpose rather than by a distinct musical style. New Age music is intended to assist in relaxation and meditation, and often forms a background for other activities such as alternative healing practices, yoga, or chanting. It often centers thematically on mental or spiritual journeys, dreams, and trances sometimes associated with aboriginal cultural expressions, wholeness, wellness, and harmony, mindfulness of nature and the environment and futuristic concepts of the cosmos. Stylistically, New Age music is rhizomatic. A New Age artist may focus on a single instrument – a flute, a piano, a harp, a sitar or tamboura- but the instrument may be situated in a context of complex electronic sampling and synthetic sound. Often New Age appropriates classical themes or jazz samples. It has a close connection with ambient music, another rather amorphous genre, which focuses on sonic texture, often to a larger extent than on melody or rhythm. Ambient music is, unsurprisingly, popular in the Fandom, as it is a musical genre that permeates our public spaces, often without notice: "This was the soundtrack for countless planetarium shows, on massage tables, and as soundtracks to many videos and movies." (Barden, n.d.) "Ambient" as a term is often linked to other musical genres, not always, but often electronic – ambient techno, black ambient, ambient dub, ambient industrial, ambient house. Perhaps the most common appearance of ambient music, now, is found in the fusion genre, "space music". Viewers of films such as *Avatar* will be very familiar with this blend of electronic sampling, synthesizing, and sequencing with some acoustic tracks added to the final product. In that film, "space music" acts as a

signifying sign, indicating that we are about to view an occurrence that should be interpreted as spiritually significant.

The rapid development of electronic music provided the resources for composers and performers to produce complex musical recordings without the expense of live studio performers, technicians, and sound engineers. Today, electronic music is so much a part of our lives that it seems unremarkable: “The novelty of making music with electronic instruments has long worn off. The use of electronics to compose, organize, record, mix, color, stretch, randomize, project, perform, and distribute music is now intimately woven into the fabric of modern experience.” (Holmes 2002:1) As the extensive lists of Furry CDs and downloads available from The Furry Music Foundation archives indicate, Furry musicians have grasped the opportunity to control the process of music production and have developed bodies of work in most major areas of electronic music.

IDENTITY AND THE SELF, EMBODIMENT, AND TRANSFORMATION

Aside from the more general contention that it is the business of anthropology to engage with concepts of the self (Cohen 1994), and particularly with the self in lived practice (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain 1998), the exploration of concepts of identity, self and agency is particularly important to a study of the Furry sub-culture for several reasons. First, the sub-culture poses a challenge to the conventional boundaries between human and non-human species. Can we accept the contention that language and the range of cognitive abilities developed as a result of language acquisition (Chomsky and Foucault 2006[1971]), combined with the ability to formulate a concept of the self (Cohen 1994), necessarily mark the boundary between humans and non-human species? Where do these concepts fit in to modern and post-modern theories of identity, self, and agency? Secondly, the Furry sub-culture has suggested to at least one research team and many reporters that there is a strong element of “disorder” or deviance within the Furry community. How do concepts of “disorder” and measurements of deviance from statistically formulated “norms” articulate with anthropological practice and understanding of identity and the self? Thirdly, the Furry sub-culture invites us to re-examine the question of transformation and re-embodiment within “figured worlds” (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain 1998), a postulate that requires the exploration of a theoretical framework that will accommodate flexible theories of identity, self, and agency.

As I examined and reflected on how Furrries talk about self, identity, and agency, and how they embody and perform identities in lived practice, both in “real life” and in cyberspace, I began to appreciate why anthropologists avoid discussion of this complex and contested topic. Not only is theory in this area marked by fragmentation and disjunction, multiple discourses of identity, self, and agency are difficult to separate both in the literature and in practice. It is quite possible, for example, for two entirely divergent views of identity to co-exist within a single statement made by a Furry. A respondent, when asked about Fursonas, may say, for example: “On FurryMUCK I can express my real self by playing an anthropomorphic snow leopard, a wolfman with super-powers, and a feline cyborg.” The essentialist “real self” co-exists, apparently without tension, with a view of the self as multiple,

fragmented, and performed. In this section I will point out several narratives of self, identity, and agency which co-exist in a multi-voiced dialogue within the Furry sub-culture. I also suggest that two discourses, one of performance, and one of process, may underlie Furry embodiment and transformation in the lived practice of the Furry sub-culture in real-world Furry gatherings and in the Furry cyber-community.

One might, perhaps, argue that a co-existent multiplicity of concepts of the self, identity and agency also characterizes the social sciences. In this study it has been one of my principal concerns to work with concepts of identity, self, and agency that will articulate well with a sub-culture that spends a great deal of time developing avatars and alternative identities, embodying aspects of other species, representing machine-human-animal morphs, and enacting cyborgian transformations; nevertheless, these concepts are not necessarily those of Furies themselves, nor those of sociologists who have surveyed and studied the Furry sub-culture. In Western thought two conflicting views of identity and the self co-exist – the “universalist” or “essentialist” view, “envisioned as stable and enduring characters set in place...through rituals and other socializing practices the core values of what were assumed to be pervasive cultures” are described by Holland *et al.* as “anathema to constructivism, a kind of double essentialism.” (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain 1994:27) In contrast to the view of the self as essential and innate, Holland *et al.* propose an ingenious version of the self labeled as “sociohistoric” based on Vygotsky’s theory of semiotic mediation (Vygotsky 1978), Bakhtin’s dialogism (1981), plural and competing “sites of the self” (Smith 1988), Leontiev (1978) and Bourdieu (1977) on the self as heuristically constructed in practice. In this narrative, the self is construed as an actor or actors presenting identities within “figured worlds”:

Persons develop more or less conscious conceptions of themselves as actors in socially and culturally constructed worlds, and these senses of themselves, these identities, to the degree that they are conscious and objectified, permit these persons, through the kinds of semiotic mediation described by Vygotsky, at least a modicum of agency or control over their own behavior. (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain 1994:40)

This view of the self, as actor creating multiple identities and enjoying “a modicum of agency” through the adaptation of narratives of the self and agency to lived practice, is by no means uncontested,

but, perhaps, forms a useful theoretical basis in considering how Furies talk about issues of identity, self, and agency.

A Multi-Voiced Transaction: Narratives of Identity, Self, and Agency in the Fandom:

My fieldwork among Furies leads me to suggest that there are at least six narrative accounts of identity, self, and agency forming a complex, perhaps contradictory, network of dialogue within the subculture, perhaps best characterized as a “narrative flow” blending and flowing into each other as they have done historically.

In the discourse of Furies, particularly among those who identify themselves as “Christian Furs”, it is not surprising that the Platonic/Augustinian narrative, including concepts of the unitary self, the pastoral good shepherd-flock motif (Foucault 2006[1978]: 183-184), and agency conceived as the negative inversion of will, appears for it continues to form one of the basic narratives of Western civilization. Among Furry “Lifestylers”, particularly those engaged with Neo-Paganism, this narrative is particularly noticeable in the Edenic vision of a pre-lapsarian world order of “natural” unity.

It is also not surprising to find that the narrative of modernity and its associated view of the self as essential and embedded in a context of natural law thwarted by institutions, yet progressing toward freedom, is a pervasive view in the Fandom. *Conversations with a Dying Unicorn* by Ken Pick: (<http://thingsthatarerectangles.wordpress.com/2009/11/04/51-the-unicorn-story>. Accessed 07/10/2010), provides an interesting example of the clash of Augustinian and Cartesian ideas of the self. Descartes faced a dilemma similar to that of the Church in attempting to create a place for human agency within the mechanical universe of natural law and resolved the problem with his contention that the body is dubitable, but the mind is not; therefore, body and mind are two distinct entities: “The mind by which I am what I am, is wholly distinct from the body, and is even more easily known than the latter.” (Descartes *Discourse on the Method*. In Prinz 2009: 45) Somers and Gibson (1994), in their analysis of the development of social science’s concept of a discrete individuating actor, suggest in “Reclaiming the Epistemological “Other”: Narrative and the Social Constitution of Identity”, that the modernist

sociological concept of the “subject” was formed by an uneasy combination of Hobbesian self-interested individuals free to create a new world (naturalism), Kantian reason suggesting a morally autonomous modern individual, and the French Enlightenment’s “free self” , “driven naturally to repel the force of political authority, tradition, custom, and institutional bonds...” (Somers and Gibson 1994:48) Whether the social actor is the Marxian proletariat casting off the chains of economic oppression or an American consumer shopping for an identity in an outlet mall, the “metanarrative” of modernity requires “the duality of subject and object, the individual versus society. The identity of the subject was abstracted from history; social relations and institutional practices – even collective memory- would exist as external objects of power and constraint.” (Somers and Gibson 1994:49) The “natural laws” of scientific and economic determinism require an essentialist concept of “real” or “true” self to preserve the metanarrative of progress toward a state of individual freedom, a theoretical framework frequently seen today in “rational choice theory” (Becker 1976, Elster1989) Somers and Gibson’s account of a “metanarrative” of modernity and the requirement for an essentialist self progressing toward freedom from institutional constraint may be helpful in explaining the frequency with which Furies refer to their discovery of the Furry community as a way of finding their real selves or true identities.

Many elements of Furry discourse fall within the dominant narrative of modernity. Conceptualizing Furry meets as areas of respite within which Furies can enact their “real selves” free of the constraints of institutionalized society, as well as perceiving animals and their representations as Fursonas as existing in a kinder, gentler world regulated by the balance of natural law ,provide two examples of the narrative of modernity in Furry discourse, while the predominant plot line of many Furry comics and games, featuring a warrior-hero fending off the institutionalized and repressive forces of any number of Evil Empires, emphasizes the modernist revolutionary concept of agency – an autonomous moral hero(ine) hacking his or her way to individual freedom.

While the Augustinian essentialist self and the Cartesian mind-body division may be readily seen in Furry literature and in Furry visual representation, the lived practice of Furies suggests that a

Laconian view of the self as intrinsically and inevitably fragmented and alienated may be a dominant discourse, particularly in gaming when players present the self in multiple avatars with remarkably different characteristics. It also seems to be closely related to the representation of the cyborgian self as comic book heroes and heroines shapeshift through multiple selves often in conflict with each other.

In contrast to essentialist views, Freud's view of the self as the site of conflict between instinctual and cultural forces, as re-interpreted by Lacan (2006[1949]) in *The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I*, suggests that a false view of the self as a unified person emerges in the "mirror stage" of childhood, between six to eighteen months of age, when the original "hommelette" learns to identify with its own image as seen in a mirror or as reflected in the adults surrounding it. The "ego" or unified self is, always exterior and is formed by external situations: "The result in adult life is that you are in a constant but fruitless state of desire for some mythical inner unity and stability to match the unity and stability you thought you saw in your childhood reflection." (Ward 1997: 136)

While the common Furry conceptualization of Furry gatherings, both in real life and in cyberspace, may be expressed in terms of spaces where the "real self" may be actualized, one may also interpret these statements as recognition of "figured worlds" or loosely bounded communities of interest where narratives of the self, perhaps perceived as socially divergent, may be expressed. As Holland *et al.* (1998) point out these communities may not be recognized as conventional social groupings reflecting divisions based on ethnicity, class, gender, etc.: "Figured worlds and their situated realizations, rendered collectively and personally as spaces of authoring, are socially animated by groupings that may not be reified as social groups.... These same politics may bring together persons who share little else.... As Bourdieu's fields are meant to be, though in an even less structured and durable form, our spaces of authoring are games peculiar to themselves." (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain 1998: 287) This way of conceptualizing self, as both constructed and constructing within diverse and bounded social worlds, seems to articulate well with Furry selves as constructed within their habitus and the larger field of the media stream, and as constructing through the creation and performance of avatars, alternative identities,

and visual gaming elements in cyberspace. In several Furry narratives of self, seen in the fieldwork interviews in the extended version of this paper, the Furry community appears as a safe and Edenic setting, constructed by Furrries, where participants may find acceptance and express the “real self”, which they have constructed in their Fursonas, in a secure and friendly setting without fear of disapproval; thus, the constructivist and the essentialist narratives blend, without apparent contradiction in the accounts of Furrries whom I interviewed.

The work of G.H. Mead and his colleagues in social psychology (1934), based on pragmatism and psychological behaviorism, mounted a major challenge to theories of the self as unitary and essential. In Mead’s work, and in the school of social interactionism, a major narrative stream in the social sciences, the self is theorized as dualistic, but the self is conceptualized as consisting of the “I”, which is spontaneous, inner, creative, and subjective, creating a narrative of the self as subject. The “me”, which is “the organized attitudes of others”. (Scott and Marshall 2005:589) creates a socially constituted self as object. Mind emerges from the social process of communication by signs and develops as a result of interaction between the human organism and its social environment; thus, the development of mind may be seen as linguistic behavior as the growing child participates in social acts of communication and develops an understanding of acts as provoking response or as symbolic, the basis of thought. In the Furry community we see several narrative streams based on social interactionism and views of the socially constructed self in action within “figured” or social constructed worlds.

The Constructivist narrative clearly has a place in Furry discourse, as has a variation of this narrative, the rather conflicted discourse of modern psychology. Morris Rosenberg’s *Conceiving the Self* (1979) formulates the concept of self which is widely used in therapy, counseling and psychology. (Scott and Marshall 2005:589) Rosenberg, in a rather uneasy melding of essentialism and social interaction theory, postulates a “self-concept” or “totality of the individual’s thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object”. (Rosenberg 1979:53) One can see, in Rosenberg’s version of the self, a fragmentation, multiplicity and element of performance that point toward post-modern

conceptualizations, but, as his theories are used in psychological praxis, they tend to emphasize the self as an inner need or unrealized potential. Concepts, routinely deployed in psychological testing, such as “self-awareness”, “self-conception”, “self-disclosure”, “self-image”, and “self-perception” suggest a “true” or “real” inner self. One might suggest that, in psychological praxis, the concept of the essentialist self as innate and “real” has shifted somewhat, perhaps as a result of the dominance of social interaction theory in the social sciences, toward a version of the self as a set of statistical norms and measurable deviations.

Within the Furry community scaled normative testing seems to be well accepted. The Gerbasi study (Gerbasi *et al.* 2008), for example, uses a number of standardized test instruments and constructs a scale for the measurement of the newly-postulated “Species Identity Disorder”. Although one might wonder why Furies enthusiastically participate in testing that could result in identification as a “disordered” person, the answer, perhaps, lies in “labeling theory”. Goffman (1963) suggests that the modern state demands a medial approach or the establishment of a bureaucratically regulated “normalcy”: “it [the modern nation state] seems to provide the basic imagery through which laymen currently conceive themselves”. (Goffman 1963:7) “Deviants”, Goffman suggests, live in a divided world of forbidden places, areas of reluctant tolerance, and places where one is exposed without repercussions. (Goffman 1963: 81) Goffman also proposes that those who are identified as “deviant” must act as if this stigma is not burdensome, while simultaneously maintaining a safe distance from critics: “A *phantom acceptance* is allowed to provide the base for a *phantom normalcy*.” (Goffman 1963:122) Since between 70-80% of respondents to Furry surveys self-identify as gay or bisexual, a role that has been studied extensively in labeling theory, one might speculate that Furies are willing to accept labeling as potentially “disordered” individuals because they are accustomed to labeling, because the benefits of finding a culture of acceptance outweigh the potential risks, and, perhaps, as Matza (1969) suggests, labeling enables and may, in fact, empower, its recipients.

Within a narrative of post-modernity, the performing Fursuiter may be viewed as a multiplicity temporarily achieving a plane of consistency as the machinic assemblage of a body, re-embodied in

interaction with a mask and costume and continually re-constituted through its interaction with various audiences in various arenas of performance. Although this version of identity, self, and agency may be a “best fit” when considering aspects of Furry embodiment and transformation, it is not commonly expressed in the discourse of the Furry community, possibly because its suggestion of social determinism and the conceptualization of agency as a result of complexity and multiplicity of interactions within a vast field is not supportive of self-conceptualization as a “unique genius”.

Goffman (1959) suggests that face-to-face interactions may be studied as a form of theatrical performance “managed” by actors to guide impressions and information that is transmitted in social interaction. He proposes that social interactions may take place as staged performances before an audience, or in “back stage” areas and “parking lots” where actors may manage their identities quite differently from the performance of identity or identities in public. These areas of performance constitute “frames” or settings. Goffman His conceptualization of “face work” (1967) and the presentation of self as acceptable within the applicable social framework articulates well with Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) observations of faciality and the apparatus of the modern state. Judith Butler, in “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory” (1988) reworks the concept of the self in presentation in her analysis of the social construction of gender. Butler argues that the social actor may be construed as an object, rather than as a subject of constitutive acts. (Butler 1988: 519)

This rejection of prior aspects of identity and the self, even those as seemingly essential as gender, is shared with Deleuze and Guattari who add to this analysis the idea of multiplicity – that identity is neither essential nor singular but that the self, including the embodied self, must be construed as a multiplicity wherein multiple identities may be constituted and performed simultaneously. Within this discourse, agency may be construed by what I would identify as “complexity theory”, that is, so complex and diverse are the interactions at every level from the molecular to the social, that “lines of flight” are always possible making connections that may result in what are perceived as creative actions:

Thus each individual is an infinite multiplicity, and the whole of Nature is a multiplicity of perfectly individuated multiplicities. The plane of consistency of Nature is like an immense Abstract Machine, abstract yet real and individual; its pieces are the various assemblages and individuals, each of which groups together an infinity of particles entering into an infinity of more or less interconnected relations. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 254)

Although this discussion, by no means, exhausts the multiple narratives of postmodern thought, I hope to have identified several earmarks of postmodernism:

- The “essential self” is construed as either unknowable or, as such, irrelevant.
- The self is socially constructed and presents itself through the creation of identities.
- What we think of as the actor, or subject, is actually an object constructed through constitutive acts.
- Individuals may perform an identity or multiple identities in interaction with social contexts or “frames” in which they are placed.
- These performances may involve elements which we construe as agency. In the larger context, however, the performance of identity or identities may be determined by the complexity and multiplicity of interactions within the field and habitus of the individual.

Theorists and commentators who are concerned with the constitution of identity within the fluctuating field of the media may tend to reject the Deleuzian view of agency outlined above. In Sherry Turkle’s commentary on identity on the Internet, for example, she accepts the notion of multiplicity and fragmentation of the concept of the unitary self, suggesting that Lifton’s concept of a “Protean self”, “capable like Proteus, of fluid transformations ...but ... grounded in coherence and a moral outlook,” (Turkle 1995: 258), may avoid complete fragmentation and dissonance. Placing this concept of identity within the context of Butler and Deleuze and Guattari, as discussed above, this “identity” is an object constructed from elements of a matrix perceived as a “plane of consistency” by an object already imbedded in a complex and interactive matrix. Agency, in this version of the self, lies in the web page designer’s ability to choose from “computers all over the world. But through one’s efforts, they are

brought together to be of a piece.” (Turkle 1995: 259) Thus a narrative of the unitary self, as a virtual composition, is cut and pasted together and sent out on the Internet in interaction with other virtual selves. The theory articulates well with Furry lived practice in website construction, and with Mathews’ observations on postmodern individual identity as constructed from elements selected in a shopping trip through the “global supermarket”. (Mathews 2000) The practice of identity construction on-line, and the acceptance of multiplicity leads Turkle to the conclusion that: “Today, people are being helped to develop ideas about identity as multiplicity by a new practice of identity as multiplicity in on-line life. Virtual personae are objects-to-think with.” (Turkle 1997: 260) In contrast, Bageant (2007:261-262) sees the construction of virtual identity as part of an overwhelming “hologram” concealing and distracting from real issues of class struggle, political, religious, and corporate oppression, with the self as an “actor” bewildered and overwhelmed by a glittering array of potential consumer goods which may be acquired in the achievement of an attractive identity.

In my fieldwork among Furies reflected in the interviews that I have done, I have found an interesting amalgam of the conflicting narratives of Turkle and Bageant. While Furies frequently referred to their “real-life” experiences as fragmented, alienating, constraining, and emotionally unsatisfactory, the Furry sub-culture, whether in real-life or on-line was usually described as safe, accepting, welcoming, and open. The “hologram” may, as a total life experience, be unsatisfactory, but the advent of the “hyperreal” (Baudrillard 1994[1985]) has provided virtual enclaves of safety and security, achieved through the creation and interaction of virtual identities.

Embodiment and Transformation:

Taxonomies, including the taxonomy of species, are culturally constructed. Londa Schiebinger in her essay “Taxonomy for Human Beings” observes that the Linnaean classification of species, perceived as fundamental to Western biological science, is, similarly, culturally constructed and may be construed as a “political act”. (Schiebinger 2000: 11) The categories used in biological science have come under intensive scrutiny both from within the discipline and from theorists outside the discipline. The extensive feminist deconstruction of humanistic thinking concerning the representation of the female body within a

framework that is, from a feminist point of view, anthropocentric and phallogocentric, has also called into question the construction of the animal body as “Other”. “Ecofeminist “ (Calarco 2008: 132) Carol Adams (Adams 1994) has suggested, for example, that the moral focus on the suffering of animals and legal focus on animal rights, has obscured the need for a much more fundamental re-examination of animal/human classification and the historical formation of the animal as subject. Wolfe, in *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory* (2003) suggests that the process of Linnaean classification which places “man” in the special position of a sapient being is part of a complex matrix of problematic classifications that have resulted in the marginalization of the “Other”.

Wolfe’s observations may suggest one of the reasons that Furies find re-embodiment in various animal formats appealing. From my interviews and the surveys already discussed, it seems evident that a number of participants in the sub-culture express resistance to simplistic classification, particularly binary classifications of sexuality. In view of the marginalization of people expressing alternative views of sexuality, it may be advantageous for Furies to contest the more fundamental issue of species classification than to confront dominant regimes that have already determined degrees of deviance and disorder in sexual orientation. The Derridean concept is that “The Animal” is a homogeneous, essentialist, and reductive category that assumes shared or deficient characteristics. (Derrida 2002:399) Recent attention to species classification suggests that attributing the “culture capacity” solely to humans may be deeply problematic. (Ingold 1994:2) In “Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism”, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro suggests that an appreciation of the human/animal relationship in Amerindian cultures requires “an ethnographically-based reshuffling of our conceptual schemes.” (de Castro 1998:470) Rather than defining animal species as lacking or deficient in areas that we conceptualize as unique to humans, Amerindian perspectivism, in de Castro’s rendition, “supposes a spiritual unity and a corporeal diversity”. (de Castro 1998:470) In a similar vein, Eduardo Kohn (2007:17) argues that in order to understand the discourse of the Runa of Ecuador’s Upper Amazon, we need to realize that sign process are conceptualized as inherent in all life, and are not restricted to humans. These studies of Amerindian

perspectivism, thus, challenge the notion of the body as fixed and unitary, associated with a nature that is also static and may be classified according to “species”. In addition, they challenge Western concepts of self, identity, and agency perceived as vested in human beings through their “cultural capacity”.

The Cyborgian Narrative:

In the previous paragraphs we have seen examples of the philosophic deconstruction of species division and the suggestion that such divisions, privileging human beings through concepts of self, identity, and agency, may be culturally specific to Western thought. In Furry lived practice, there is a more direct challenge, and one that has been created within the narrative of Western modernism- the cyborgian narrative, a very prominent motif in Furry thought. In the Fandom both Western narratives of potential liberation through cyborgian transformation (Haraway 1991) and more somber Japanese manga and anime narratives recognizing the loss of organic unity (Napier 2000) suggest that the animal/human/machine boundary is a culturally constructed set of divisions associated with privileged regimes of power and domination.

Calarco, in *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida* (2008) suggests that there are two possible directions that further attempts to resolve the human/animal debate may take. One is the direction suggested by Derrida who remains committed to a form of species distinction and believes that these large categories need to be re-defined. (Derrida 2002) The other is Haraway and Calarco’s position – that the boundary established in Linnaean classification, and supported by historical Western discourses of power and domination of self, identity, agency, and embodiment may no longer be either relevant nor necessary:”In brief, *we could simply let the human-animal distinction go* or, at the very least, not insist on maintaining it.” (Calarco 2008:149) I would like to suggest that the Furry sub-culture in both its real-life and virtual forms may be part of the process of “letting go” of a distinction of doubtful ontological value.

When I began this study, I believed that exciting narratives of transformative experiences would prove to be the central focus of this paper: as it turned out, my expectations were quite wrong. Instead, I

would like to suggest that there are two discourses of Furry transformation, both of which may operate simultaneously or individually – a discourse of performance and a discourse of process. Within these discourses, the narratives of self, identity, and agency mesh or conflict in a complex and multi-voiced transaction. The discourse of performance, I would suggest, follows Goffman’s idea of a presentation of an identity or identities constructed from elements of the entire social context of the individual actor. The range of levels of performance varies significantly in my experience during field work, but usually includes an idea of an altered state, whether it is an increased level of social comfort, a shamanistic representation of a totemic animal spirit, or an enthusiastic public performance in the re-embodied form of a masked and costumed Fursona. One might suggest that this public and theatrical performance of re-embodied selves may, at times, be intended to offer a challenge to conventional Western notions of how animals classified as humans should present themselves – their appearance, their “difference”, the outward and visible signs of their separation from the remainder of the animal world.

The theatrical performance of Furry selves may offer a challenge at a very obvious and visible level, but I would suggest that a quiet and persistent discourse of process underlies the discourse of performance and is instrumental in naturalizing alternatives to rigid stratification of human/animal/machine relations. This discourse is most evident in Furry cyberspace where identities may be readily created, altered and transformed. Here the cyborgian avatar may easily shift between Linnaean categories, suggesting and embodying, in the lived practice of Furry virtual communities, that transformational process rather than classification may characterize the conceptualization of self, identity, and embodiment in the new spaces of computer-mediated technology.

YIFF: FURRY SEXUALITY

In Foxish, yiff initially meant “yes!” or an enthusiastic “hello!”. Later “yiff” was assigned a more sexual connotation, a meaning that had previously been assigned to yipp... This was compounded by several fox characters on Furry MUCK who were spreading a very sexual reputation for the species at about the same time as this came into common usage.

(WikiFur. <http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Yiff>. Accessed 07/10/2010)

In this section, I move from theorizing identity and the formation of concepts of the self to an application of the concepts of multiplicity, boundary challenges, and performance to the presentation of gender identity. Following Somers and Gibson (1994), I suggest that the “meta-narrative of modernization” (Somers and Gibson 1994:45) not only requires a concept of identity as unitary and essential in order to defend ideological views of society as regulated by natural law (and benefiting from/ needing constructed/ imposed laws), and a prevailing theory of cultural evolution, but also demands the conceptualizing of sexuality as binary and essential. This view allows the identification of “deviance”, and postulates “internalized norms mediated through society’s regulative institutions of law, religion, family, community, education, kinship, and social policy” (Somers and Gibson 1994: 50), norms associated with axes of power and domination (Foucault 1990 [1978]). The identification of institutionalized norms as power/domination axes is clearly seen in feminist studies, such as Emily Martin’s commentary on the medical model of the female body as a mechanical reproduction unit and the identification of three-quarters of the female population as “diseased” as a result of PMS (Martin 1987).

In *The History of Sexuality* (Foucault 1990[1978]), Foucault contends that the conventional historical account of sexual discourse in Western society as liberated from “Victorian” repression, cannot be supported; this discourse of repression should, instead, be regarded as integrated with and supportive of the narrative of modernity; sex becomes “sexology”, a field of study, and the repressed worker, through the miracle of either free-market capitalism or Marxism, will eventually throw off his or her chains, and achieve a liberation of the essential self, scaling the heights of sexual freedom: “...the demand for sexual freedom, but also for the knowledge to be gained from sex and the right to speak about it – becomes legitimately associated with the honor of a political cause: sex too is placed on the agenda

for the future....Tomorrow sex will be good again.” (Foucault 1990[1978]:6-7) Foucault outlines the appropriation of sexuality by the field of medicine and its depiction as a risky business where disease and dysfunction are commonplace, as well as the “annexation” of sexuality by psychiatry and psychology.

Foucault’s commentary on the explosion of discourse surrounding “perversion” and the equating of sexuality, particularly “perverse” sexuality with the essential self is, in my opinion, applicable to the Furry community. As Foucault notes, the identification of deviance creates the deviant subject and bestows both individuality and species, an observation that has considerable bearing on the formation of “TinySex” or Internet communities of sexual interest intersecting with the Furry sub-culture.

Foucault argues that the growth of the discourse of perversion is a symptom or “real product of the encroachment of a type of power on bodies and their pleasures.” (Foucault 1990[1978]:30) Western cultures, he asserts, are engaged in complex power-pleasure games; the “frozen countenance of the perversions is a feature of this game.” (Foucault 1990[1978]:47) The discourse of perversion is directly imposed and embodied: “It did not set up a barrier; it provides places of maximum saturation. It produced and determined the sexual mosaic. Modern society is perverse, not in spite of its Puritanism or as if from a backlash provoked by its hypocrisy; it is in actual fact, and directly, perverse.” (Foucault 1990[1978]:47) I would suggest that Foucault’s comments may be clearly seen in an examination of the discourse of sexuality on the Internet. On Furry web-sites dedicated to various “perversions”, the dominant expression of sexuality is found in visual representation. Here the characters depicted in explicit sexual acts are represented as little more than enormous, exaggerated sexual organs –cartoon bodies with huge breasts and phalluses- impaling or being impaled by other collections of sexual organs, as if the very organs of the body had been entirely taken over by a sexual discourse of domination and submission. The table in Figure 61 below gives some idea of the “immense verbosity” (Foucault 1990[1978]:33) of Furry rhizomatic connections with alternative expressions of sexuality. In Figure 62, I have attempted to give a brief outline of the most of the sites mentioned in Figure 61.

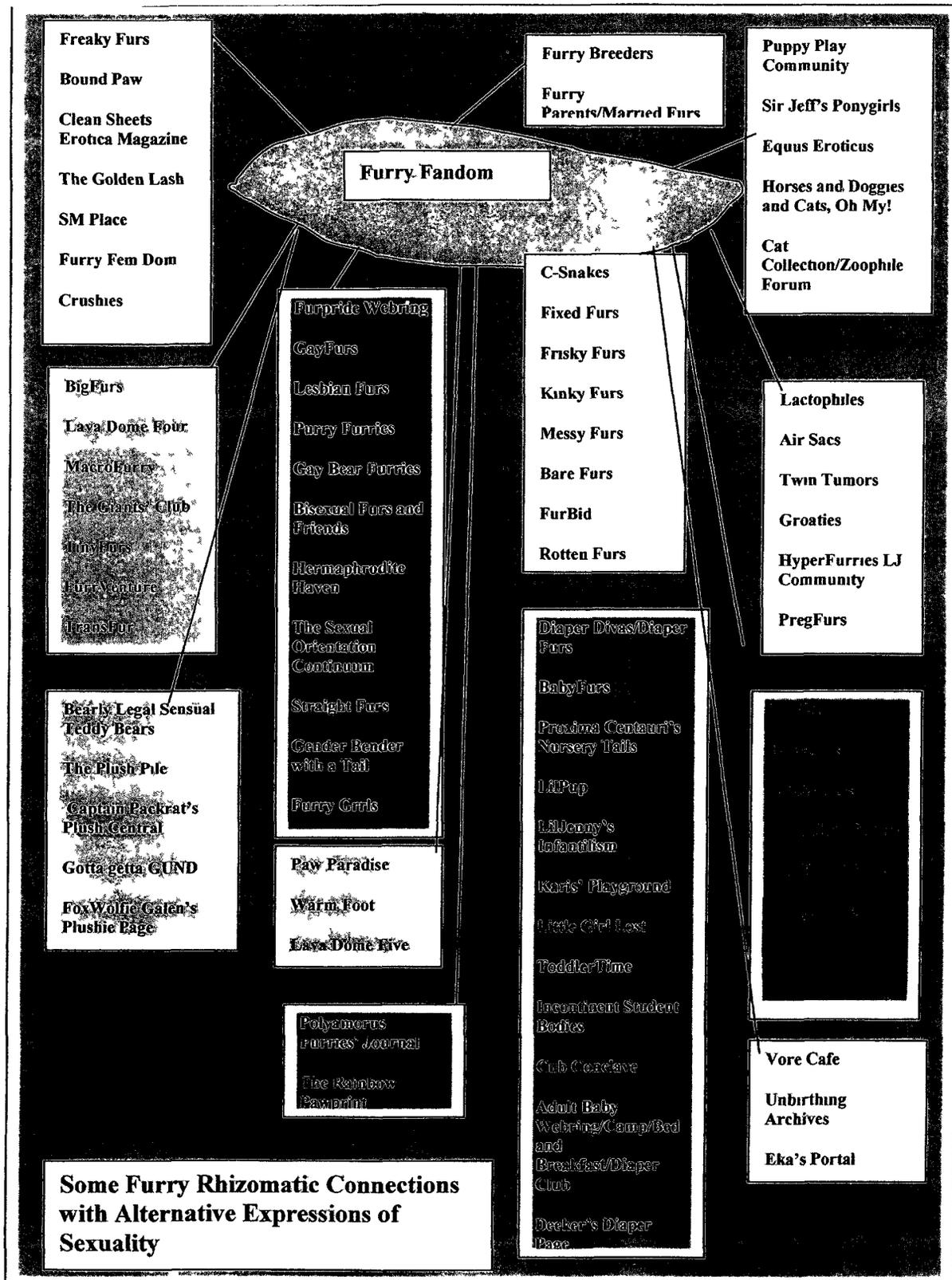
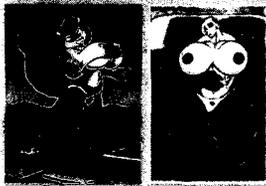


Figure 61 Diagrammatic Representation of Some Furry Rhizomatic Connections with Alternative Expressions of Sexuality

Title	Description
Family Furs	Furry Breeders: a term used to ridicule or describe Furry parents. Furry Parents/Married Furs – a LiveJournal community for Furry couples with children. Some conventions feature Furry marriages or “PawFasting” ceremonies.
PetPlay	-Can range from zoophilia to affection displays with household pets. Some erotic cults where participants play animal roles in dominance/submission scenarios are rhizomatically connected. Sub-sets are “Puppy Play” and “Pony Play”. “Sir Jeff’s Ponygirls” is part of a large and well-organized sub-culture featuring grooms, owners, trainers, and “ponies”. Pony play stables, clubs, costuming and tack manufacturing form a thriving industry. Gates (2000:33) claims that “The Equestrian Extravaganzas and British Pony Weeks sound like erotic theme parks for grown-ups....”
 <p>Body Inflation</p>	Lactophiles: erotically stimulated by breast milk; Air Sacs: the addition of breasts to non-mammalian avian avatars using inflatable costumes or depicting enormously inflated body parts. Twin Tumors: The addition of breasts to “Sealies”; Grotties: this Furry “insider” term is used to describe female breasts and is named for Furry artist, Jim Groat. Preg Furs: this community is erotically interested in pregnancy.
  <p>Balloon and Rubber Fetishists</p>	Balloonies: Furry avatars made of vinyl, latex, or rubber, may be “poppable” or “unpoppable”; Inflata-Furs/The Inflation Nation: a fairly large sub-group interested in body inflation in avatars or Fursonas, they may inflate only erogenous zones. If they inflate the entire body, they are related to macrophilia. DeviantArt has a special area for inflation art labeled “PhatPhat”. Rubber Furs: a LiveJournal site for Furs who combine rubber or latex with anthropomorphics in an avatar. The Latex Lounge is an area of “Second Life” for rubber and latex fans.
Vore	Vorarephilia is deriving erotic enjoyment from eating someone, being eaten or watching something being eaten. Vore Cafe on “Tapestries” is a location for Vores where players should expect to eat or be eaten. “Unbirthing” is a related activity where one is swallowed alive by female or male genitalia and encapsulated in the body. Eka’s Portal is a large community website for “unbirthners”.
 <p>Infantilism</p>	A large and growing population linked to the Edenic vision, baby animal television productions, and Disney and cartoon characters. BabyFurs may wear child-like clothing, diapers, and carry bottles or toys. “Cubbing out” refers to role-playing a baby. Some Furies role-play as caregivers; Diaper Divas/Diaper Furs: these Furies may be interested in “watersports” or “golden

	<p>showers”, a large global sub-culture. Diaper Furs role-play adult characters, while “LilFurs” role-play babies or toddlers. BabyFurs are a large and well-organized segment of the Fandom with a code of public behavior and rooms set aside for role-playing at conventions. Proxima Centauri’s Nursery Tails, a Canadian Furry playing a large Shire horse/unicorn, hosts this site with more than 2000 BabyFur images. LilPup, pictured here hosts C’ubhouses for BabyFurs at conventions. Incontinent Student Bodies is a “watersports” and DiaperFur comic book. Cub Conclave and Treehouse are BabyFur hangouts on Second Life and Tapestries. Adult Baby WebRing/Camp/Bed and Breakfast/Diaper Club is a popular website for real-life and virtual camping experiences for adult baby role-players.</p>
<p>Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual</p>	<p>Furpride WebRing: for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Furies. GayFurs; a majority population in the Fandom with a wide range of websites, chat rooms, specialty sites and LiveJournal communities. Lesbian Furs also have a range of communal sites. Purry Furies, “the first-ever furry lesbian sex movie” is a Canadian film featuring “Catgirls” in sex play. Hermaphrodite Havens are features of large role-playing games for avatars with hermaphrodite characteristics. The haven on FurryMUCK is the most widely used feature of the game with a dance club, apartments, a lake, an inn, a mall and an area for cross-dressers and transvestites. It is also known as the “yiffiest” and “spoogiest” public area in FurryMUCK. Straight Furs is a LiveJournal community for heterosexual Furs. Furry Grrls is a LiveJournal community for players of cross-gender characters.</p>
<p>Plushies</p>	<p>Some Plushies have sexual relations with their favorite plush toys, but others see the toys as totems or avatars. Plushies who are uncertain about their desires may consult the “Plush Code” for guidance. Plush animal rights are discussed on one website. Bearly Legal Sensual Teddy Bears is a group for bear collectors. The Plush Pile is a storefront on Tapestries for role-playing scenes with avatars and plush toys. It is unusual in that “snuff” scenes are allowed. Captain Paekrat’s Plush Central is a specialized site for Plushies. Gotta Getta Gund is a site for plush toy collectors, although Gates (2000) claims that Mattel’s “Nlecko” raccoon is the most popular Furry plush toy. Fox Wollie Galen’s Plushie Page is a website for the spokesperson for the Plushie contingent of the Fandom.</p>
<p>Giantism/Dwarfism</p> 	<p>MacroFurs are giant furs that range in size from 8-9 feet tall to titans that can crush cities. MacroFurs may be born as giants or may take drugs to become giants. The concept is related to “macrophilia”, a paraphilia where participants imagine that they are tiny and are at the mercy of gigantic humans. Macro roles usually involve playing with miniature sets or being eaten, suffocated or crushed under a giant’s foot. (Gates 2000: 107) Macroplay seems to be related to dominance/submission</p>

	<p>communities and to Crushies. HyperFurs are Furry representations featuring extremely enlarged erogenous areas and sexual characteristics, sometimes associated with the style of Furry artist Doug Winger. Hyper Furs are not necessarily giants or MacroFurs, although they may exhibit very exaggerated muscles or paws, as well as large sex organs. HyperFur representation is of some interest because it contributes to the argument that cyborgian characters in comic books and films may contribute to the discourse of objectification of women as sex objects characterized visually by exaggerated sex organs, and it extends that discourse to male characters.</p> <p>The Giants' Club: This area of FurryMUCK is a club for MacroFurs.</p> <p>TinyFurs: This term may refer to participants in TinySex or to the miniaturization of victims of MacroFurs.</p>
<p>Bondage, Domination, Sado-Masochism</p>	<p>BDSM sites are probably the largest component of the Internet sex scene. A few of them are specifically connected to the Fandom, but many are related through rhizomatic connections with individual Furies or associated groups. Most TinySex sites include BDSM games and designated areas where Furies may play domination/submission games using "safewords", "slave contracts", and mutually acceptable game scenarios. Tapestries MUCK was specifically founded for role-playing in BDSM scenarios.</p> <p>Bound Paw: Although some BDSM games result in actual physical injury, there is a sub-section based on Japanese erotic rope bondage that finds bandaging, casts, and hospital paraphernalia erotic. Usually the violence occurs outside the scenario and the medical restoration of body integrity is the focus of the game.</p> <p>SM Place: This is a forum for discussion among BDSM players.</p> <p>Furry Fem Dom: Female Furry dominatrix figures are less common in Furry BDSM role-playing, but occur fairly frequently in Furry visual representation. The BondoFox website is a gallery specializing in depictions of female Furies in dominatrix gear.</p> <p>Crushies: Crushies are a specific fetish group, usually related to SM, outside the Furry community, although they are often confused with it. The fetish usually involves videos of women's feet, often in high-heeled shoes, crushing insects, worms, snails, baby mice, or other creatures. Obviously, the majority of Furies are completely opposed to this practice. Crush videos supplied a niche market until 1999 when a several celebrities took up the anti-Crushie cause and a bill was introduced and passed in the U.S. outlawing the sale of videos depicting animal torture and</p>

	killing.
 <p>Paw Fetishists</p>	<p>Paw Paradise: This is a message board for paw fetishists, who find Furry animal paws erotic for their beauty and sensitivity, or, in the case of macrophilia, for their size and ability to crush things.</p> <p>Lava Dome Five: This is a web-site that offers a series of galleries available for Furies, particular for reptile fans and paw fetishists, to post art, stories, messages, etc.</p>
 <p>Messy Fetishists</p>	<p>Messy Furs: “Messy play” or Splosh! may range from getting sprayed with water, to “mudlarking” to smearing the body with industrial grease, cream pies, eggs, baked beans or porridge, to pouring food into one’s underwear. A “messy play” practitioner interviewed by Gates (Gates 2000:160) felt that messy play is closely related to infantilism. Gates speculates that this type of play offers safety and security juxtaposed with loss of control that may or may not be punished in the role-play. (Gates 2000:160)</p> <p>The Rainbow Pawprint: This is a variation of Splosh! or “messy play”. In “Rainbow play” people may smear themselves with various types of paint.</p> <p>C-Snakes: These fictional creatures are pink parasitic “Cum-Snakes” that take over a host’s body, consume the organs and mind, and then seduce others into becoming hosts by having sex with them. They are popular in some Furry art, comic books, stories, and role-playing games.</p>

Figure 62: Some Furry Rhizomatic Connections

Furies seem to enjoy classifying and re-classifying the vast discourse of sexuality on the Internet. In this brief overview of Furry rhizomatic connections with sexual sub-groups in cyberspace, I have attempted to simplify the field a little by cataloguing various sexual interest groups according to their main focus. The groups and web-sites shown were extant and selected during my Internet fieldwork in 2007-8 but, in the shifting and ephemeral world of the Web, may no longer be with us, nor is this a definite and all-encompassing list. It should be understood that many of the groups listed here are not specifically Furry, but are connected rhizomatically to the Fandom through the sexual interests of Furies.

Of Categories and “Queers”:

Several narratives appear within the dispersed field of “sexology”. Prior to the introduction of “queer theory” these narratives involved further categorization and measurement of “deviant behavior”. Merton’s (1968) reconstruction of Durkheim’s “strain theory” suggests that deviance from “societal norms” results when individuals are unable to achieve a society’s articulated cultural goals through

institutionalized means, a position that has been incorporated into the narrative of modernity where the individual quest for freedom is thwarted by various institutions. Merton's "innovation", "retreatism", and "rebellion" may all apply to the Fandom. "Strain theory" articulates well with the way that a number of Furrries interviewed described their relationship with the Fandom. In the first construction ("innovation"), Furrries, unable to function well within institutions such as the family or the workplace, find that they can express their cultural goals within the real-life or cyberspace of the Furry sub-culture, for example, on a Furry art web-site. Others choose to stop caring about societal goals and norms ("retreatism") retreating into the Fandom as a site of safety and security where there is at least some degree of acceptance. A third group adapts to "strain" by "rebellion", that is, by seeking to redefine societal goals; often this redefinition takes the form of an attack on perceived "boundaries" both with regard to species and gender identity. A second narrative, within the mode of symbolic interaction, suggests that "deviant" behaviors are social constructions encountered and created during maturation through experience as symbolic exchanges. "Labelling theory" explains how individuals come to perceive themselves as "deviant" as a consequence of the application of various standards, norms, or scales of deviance and disorder developed within administrative and managerial organizations. My fieldwork interviews illustrate several examples of this narrative, particularly when Furrries comment that they are aware of the consequences of being labeled as homosexual or bisexual and attempt to avoid these consequences through concealment of their Furry activities. A third narrative, "conflict theory" might, perhaps, be considered an aspect of the narrative of modernity insofar as it includes both Marxist and capitalist accounts of institutions and social structures as conflicted sites of opposition to the achievement of individual freedom. It should be noted, however, that, despite variation in the accounts of deviance provided by these narratives, the notion of deviance from standardized and apparently measurable norms is incorporated in each theory.

The difficulty in applying these theories to the Furry sub-culture, however, lies in the migration of Furrries to the Internet. While theories of "strain", "conflict", and "labeling" may be directly applicable to Furry sexual representation in "real-life" situations, how can we conceptualize the many web

communities “built” or accruing to web sites based on virtual representation of sexual practices, yet functioning as sites of power and desire? “Queer theory” demonstrates an unwillingness to fix difference, particularly with regard to sexual identity, to any literal, scaled, and historically constituted account of categories. It articulates well with postmodern concepts of identity and the self as fluid, multiple, socially constructed and performed, rejecting the idea that identity is singular and essential. Within the Furry sub-culture, which has been described in some surveys as overwhelmingly homosexual, resistance to classification may, perhaps, be seen in the increasing description of sexuality as “bisexual”, when a respondent is faced with a requirement to select a category indicating sexual preference. Queer theory asserts the performative nature of many aspects of sexuality, particularly with regard to “coming out” or remaining “in the closet”, and suggests that “in” and “out” are ambiguous and leaky boundaries subject to border negotiation. This position can be quite clearly observed in the Fandom where many Furies may be “out” to a selected group of friends but “in” to employers or to some family members. It may also be construed as a recognition of the contingency of expression of the self in performative acts, and an awareness that the construction of bounded categories of gender identity, other than as tentative and shifting unities to assert transgression and resistance to dominant structures of power and control, may not be possible. This dialogue of transgression and resistance is evident in the many Internet sub-cultures that intersect with the Fandom and may, partially, explain part of the Furry attraction to alternative sexual expressions: “In queer times, the status of sexual outlaw has become something of a badge of honour – a celebration of one’s position outside the culturally constituted boundaries of normalcy....Queers are attempting to redeploy the sexual self in a confrontational manner within public cultural arenas.” (Stychin 1995: 152)

Of Cargo Cults and TinySex:

On-line depictions of sexual activity between Furies have been presented up to this point in this paper as visual representations characterized as “mature content”. “TinySex”, however, moves Furry sexual activity into the rather controversial arena of the presentation of self in role-playing games.

“TinySex” is the name given by Furrries to cybersex, “when two or more furs get together on a MUCK or other text based communications program and...um...yiff.” (Kashra.

<http://www.furnation.com/kashra/tinysex/TinySex.htm>. Accessed 07/01/2010) Kashra’s *The Unofficial Guide to TinySex* provides a comprehensive overview of the framework expected in a text-based role-playing game, in this case TapestriesMUCK, when Furrries wish to perform cybersex using the avatars they have developed in the game. The structure of TinySex is surprisingly formal with a common vocabulary of terminology used in typing descriptions of the sexual preferences of avatars. A “safeword” is usually developed and enforced by MU administrators at the beginning of an encounter so that participants can end the yiff immediately in the event that they feel uncomfortable with the unfolding scenario. Before a TinySex encounter begins, Kashra advises players to consult the “wixxx”, a program available on large sites such as TapestriesMUCK and FurryMUCK indicating the sexual status and preferences of other avatars. Once partners have been selected, the TinySex players establish a setting. “The Scene” involves determining the physical venue of the sexual encounter, considering the “publicity” of the setting including any restrictions or objections to a sexual encounter in this setting (to avoid being banned from the game or “flamed” by others who are offended), and establishing the relationship of the avatars, the direction of the action, and the mood expected during the encounter. “A ‘scene’ really, is more like a play.” Yiffing takes place as players, usually alternating, type “poses” or descriptive sentences. TinySex is basically an exercise in erotic, improvisational writing after developing and, perhaps, visually representing an avatar. Why does it appeal to thousands of on-line players and spectators? How can we conceptualize the creation of web communities that are, at least in some sense, “real” sites virtually embodying power and desire? Senft in “Baud Girls and Cargo Cults: A Story about Celebrity, Community, and Profane Illumination on the Web” (Senft 2000) suggests that an analogy with Melanesian cargo cults may be informative in explaining the appeal of on-line communities: The delivery of riches from the sky takes place, in on-line TinySex, as in cargo cults, through mimetic interaction: “...effective mimesis actually contains two intertwined facets: “imitation” (likeness) and the far more elusive “contact” (emanating from desire)...the crucial magical power of contact...” (Senft 2000:193)

Through the performed and constructed identity of the avatar, Furrries may mimetically experience virtual “contact” or TinySex in cyberspace communities.

Queering the Boundaries: Furrries, Obscenity, and Pornography:

In the extended version, American and Canadian legislation on obscenity is discussed. The Furry community, however, has produced an ingenious and “queer” solution to the identification of obscene and pornographic materials. *WikiFur*, the Furry on-line encyclopedia, in its discussion of “Pornography” states that:

Within the furry fandom, most explicit artistic or written depictions of sexual acts are considered “pornography”, and such material is common and, by [*sic*] the most part, freely available. Images or descriptions of single characters or groups of characters not explicitly engaging in sex acts but prominently displaying sexual organs (especially in a state of arousal) are also considered pornographic....

....Often members of the fandom and critics alike speculate that adult content makes up the majority of the fandom. The opposite point of view, voiced particularly in 2 Sense shows, claims that this is caused by the cognitive bias: since pornography is not tabooed in the furry community, its relative percentage may be even smaller than in the mundane world, but the fact that it gets more exposure makes it appear to be a larger chunk.

(“Pornography”. <http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Pornographic>. Accessed 07/01/2010)

Works containing “mature content” within this framework are clearly identified as “pornography”. The designation is uncontested and may even be considered an accolade. Within the Fandom, there would appear to be three responses to “pornography”. One is the response of a minority group, seen earlier in the “Burned Fur” movement, which subscribes to a variation of contagion theory- the spreading disease of pornography, may not undermine the moral health of a community, but it threatens the economic and social welfare of Furrries attempting to gain credibility in bounded communities such as “the art world”. A second response is the interesting and complex demand for safety and security within the Furry community. On many web-sites and in the practice of artists at Furry meet-ups, child access to pornography is rather tightly controlled through the use of sign-in procedures or separate binders at art shows. The most common response, however, is the “queering” of boundaries. The community accepts descriptors such as “pornography” and construes them as it sees fit. Because the Furry sub-culture, does not subscribe to “harm” or “spreading contagion” metaphors unless required to do so by child-protection legislation, a symbolic approach providing a rationale for pornography control is neither

applied nor accepted. Instead the Furry community has created an unbounded space for the circulation of pornography, thus stripping the definition of the term “pornography” of its connotative burden:

. The issue of the “intent” of obscene or pornographic material is explored to some extent in law through expressions of concern about the “social value” or content of the questionable material. I would suggest, however, that the question of intent is of considerable importance in theorizing Furry pornographic representation. Furry use of “funny animals”, mutant species, and astonishing hermaphrodites with grossly exaggerated sexual organs objectifies and distances the depiction of sexual activity in a great deal of Furry pornography and often produces an effect of satire and parody of “hard-core” pornographic representation. By invoking the “Disney effect”, some Furry pornography can position itself in a “theme-park” world where sexual practices that may appear violent and distasteful are merely funny and satirical. Stychin comments on this potential for parodic displacement in gay pornography:

Consequently, not only can gay representation resignify the meaning of the symbols of dominant culture, it also reveals, through a parody of gender, the contingency of the relationship between signifiers and signified. . . . Pornography, like camp and drag, has the potential of parodic displacement because it exists within a realm where subversion and confusion can be created. For example, the dominance and submission of some gay male pornography, including sadomasochism, may operate to parody the hierarchy of social arrangements and categories of dominant culture. (Stychin 1995: 67-68)

In the illustration below, four examples of “pornographic” Furry representation which may be construed as parodic displacement, probing the boundaries between the Furry sub-culture and the dominant paradigm may be seen.



“Pinup Fail” by Sun Shine “Big Red Balloon” by lead- “The Rape Never Stops” “Stamped” by
 Dog fang by jamie-the-cat half.joeyroo_sany

Figure 63: Parodic Displacement in Furry Pornographic Representation.
 (All representations posted on FurAffinity. <http://www.furaffinity.net/browse/3/>. Accessed 03/07/2010)

The Birds and the Beasts: Rethinking Bestiality and Zoophilia

Perhaps no other topic arouses more debate about the Furry sub-culture than that of allegations of bestiality and zoophilia. This is an area of sexual activity with a very long history that is frequently cited in the discourse. It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss the incidence of bestiality in ancient and modern history, but a few comments on modern and postmodern approaches may clarify Furry stances on this complex topic. “Sexual interaction with animals”, as reported by Kinsey (Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, and Gebhard 1948, Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, and Gebhard 1953) and statistically re-worked by Duberman (1997) was a relatively uncommon phenomenon reported by about 8% of males and 3.6% of females, although the conflicted statistics from rural areas report a much higher incidence. In the Fandom only the Osaki “State of the Fandom” survey (Osaki 2008) and the “Ultimate Furry Survey” (2009) collected data in this area. In the Osaki survey, 17.1% of respondents said they were zoophiles; 7.2% gave a favorable opinion of zoophilia. 45.6% reported negative or very negative reactions to zoophilia. In the “Ultimate Furry Survey” 9% of respondents reported that they were zoophiles. Perhaps some of the variation in these figures may have arisen from the terminology which has been extensively reconfigured. Miletski (2002), in *Understanding Bestiality & Zoophilia* uses the term “zoosexuality”, reserving “zoophilia” as a name for a sexual orientation, fetish, or paraphilia, “Zoophile” is most frequently used to describe people who have a strong affective bond with animals, may fantasize about sexual contact with

animals, but do not engage in sexual activity with them. Zoophilia has been classified as a mental disorder in DSM-III-R (APA 1987) and in DSM-IV, but is not commonly diagnosed and treated unless it is perceived as interfering with function. The recent surge of interest in animal rights and in species boundaries has led to some reconsideration of zoophilia. Peter Singer's alleged defense of bestiality (Singer 2001) provoked a storm of controversy in "mainstream" journals. Singer queried the species division between humans and animals and suggested "that the taboo against bestiality is simply the last residue of a fundamentally superstitious worldview." (Levy 2003: 444) Neil Levy reviews the usual objections to zoophilia – that bestiality is a "perversion", that animal behavior is insufficient evidence to support claims of consent and enjoyment, and that using animals for sexual purposes objectifies and demeans them in ways that using animals for food, transportation or experiment does not. Levy finds that none of these objections can be sustained but asserts that the notion of taboo must be retained in order to assert a human/animal boundary

Although I have attempted throughout this paper to avoid generalization and premature suggestions of central tendency in accordance with Deleuze and Guattari's strictures concerning "mapping" rather than "tracing", it may be appropriate, at this point, to attempt some more generalized observations particularly in view of the centrality of sexuality in the Furry sub-culture. I would like tentatively to advance a theory that the discourse of sexuality in the sub-culture is basically conflicted and dualistic. On the one hand, my fieldwork interviews with Furies attending Furry meet-ups suggest that the elements of the narrative of modernity are strongly entrenched in Furry renditions of the self. Many interviews contain suggestions that the respondent "doesn't fit in", may be considered deviant, must conceal his/her activities from family and friends, feels isolated, is unhappy, alienated, unfulfilled, and unappreciated in the workplace, and needs to find a place of safety and security where his/her "real self" is accepted. This discourse participates in a narrative of essentialism where the "real self", and, in particular, the sexual identity of the respondent has been identified, measured, compared to a socially constructed norm, and found wanting. The quest for free expression of the "real self" has been blocked by

various institutional factors such as schools or workplaces. The alienated Furry then retreats into the Edenic vision or presents him/herself as a “rebel”.

In contrast, the discourse of the Furry sub-culture, as seen on many web-sites and Internet gaming sites, appears to be quite different. Identities are constructed, performed, and transformed, sometimes with reference to a “real self”, but, most frequently, in transformational, mutating, and contingent modes that suggest that gender identity, race, ethnicity, and species classifications are part of an ongoing process or flow of representation and performance rather than a definitive system of classification. I suggest that this deep disarticulation between the real and essential self of the narrative of modernity and the fluid, tentative, multiple and performative “identities” associated with late consumer capitalism and the discourse of postmodernism may be a significant trait within cyber-communities, a disarticulation that can be seen in many aspects of communal culture. As Carole Vance observes in “Anthropology Rediscovered Sexuality: A Theoretical Comment” (Vance 1991: 877): “Subcultures give rise not only to new ways of organizing behavior and identity but to new ways of symbolically resisting and engaging with the dominant order, some of which grow to have a profound impact beyond the small groups in which they are pioneered.”

SPIRITUAL FUR

The spectrum of spiritual belief systems within the Fandom is as wide and varied as most other aspects of this sub-culture. Although many Furies indicate adherence to the dominant monotheistic belief pattern, there is, perhaps, a slightly higher concentration of Furies who are exploring Native American, Pagan, and New Age spirituality than one might find in the general population. Only two of the surveys of the Fandom collected information on Furry spirituality. David Rust's (1999-2000) early survey makes the qualitative observation that "we...see a large percentage of Christians....we also see a very large number of NeoPagans and –even moreso- Agnostics and Atheists." Osaki's *State of the Fandom* survey (2008) presents some statistical findings. 8.1% of respondents indicated that they were pagan, 20.8% were atheists, 24.8% were agnostics, 25.9% reported that they were Christians, and 20.8% reported "Other".

Within the Fandom there is a rather small but influential faction of Christian Furs. Some segments of this population espouse fundamentalist beliefs associated with the "religious right", a familiar and influential sector in Western society (Phillips 2006). In lived practice, their influence may be seen in the construction and identification of "obscenity" and pornography as destructive forces within the Fandom during the Great Internet Flame Wars. The separation and concealment of "mature content" Furry art may reflect the influence of this faction. The extended version of this paper lists and describes Christian groups within the Fandom. WikiFur (http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Furry_spirituality) indicates that one may expect considerable individuality in Furry spiritual belief, particularly among "Lifestylers", although this does not seem to be the case among Christian Furs: "Many lifestylers subscribe to their own form of furry spirituality, though it is not unusual for non-lifestylers to also have developed their individual spiritual understandings that may draw on elements of furry spirituality as well." ("Furry Spirituality". http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Furry_spirituality) Also included in the extended version is Ken Pick's story, *Conversations with a Dying Unicorn* (http://things_that_are_rectangles.wordpress.com/2009/11/04/51-the-unicorn-story). Accessed 07/10/2010) The story is discussed as an example of Cronon's (1995) first and second categories of "Nature discourses" in American thought, first "Nature as naïve reality" (Cronon

1995: 34), and, secondly, Nature as “moral imperative or secular deity”. (Cronon 1995:36) In this version of the Furry Edenic vision, which is a central motif in the Fandom, evangelical Christian furs struggle to restore paradise to a pre-sexual condition that erases cultural constructs of sexuality, creating a “natural” stasis in a safe and secure haven.

It is interesting to see how Pagan and New Age Furs utilize similar discourse to create their versions of paradise regained. In the extended version I have included a description and discussion of the major alternative forms of spirituality that are found among Furry Lifestylers. For many Furrries, beliefs are a matter of individual preference. Furry essayist, “Manawolf” expresses her personal beliefs in this thoughtful essay:

A Furry Narrative and Some Observations:

The Spiritual Side of Furry.

By Manawolf:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20070419205050/www.firstlight.net/~chythar/manawolf/articles/spirit.htm>



Recently, I've done a lot of thinking. Mostly about dreams and fears, but also about my spiritual side which usually seems to be in hibernation. And when I put them all together, nothing makes quite as much sense as coming to the conclusion that I was a squirrel in a former life.

Funky? Crazy? Stupid, you say? Believe me, this sounds about as strange to me as it probably does to you. It took a lot of very bizarre coincidences for me to finally decide I could believe it. Do I really believe in past lives? And less important to me but still relevant, can a human have an animal soul? Just what am I to make of the incredible range of furry spiritualities that are out there, from past lives to misplaced souls to lycanthropes? Certainly I'm not about to attack the ideologies of anyone who believes in them.... but are they actually real? What am I myself to think of them?

What has been my world view for quite some time now is that there is no real purpose, no real Meaning to life. We humans just make it up as we go along, and though it comforts us, very little of it actually relates to reality as it exists. Most religion and personal philosophy satisfies our psychological need for meaning, direction, and purpose in a nonanthropomorphic world, but it is truly simply made up. I have found fulfillment not in meaning or some great cosmic significance/plan/direction, but in being and feeling. In short, the experience and passion of living is the point. Anything else is mainly fabrication. Fabrications that people have a right to, but fabrications nonetheless. I wasn't against the possibility of paranormal things, and I'm certainly aware that there is more to this world than we can ever understand, but highly doubtful

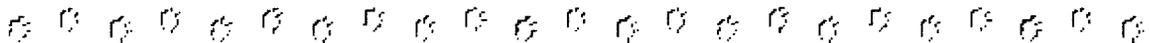
of the existence of souls and absolutely convinced of the absence of a sentient deity.

But the concept of a reincarnated squirrel seems to be in conflict with that. Since I don't believe in souls, a concept usually integral to the belief of reincarnation, why is there this connection between me and squirrels, and what exactly is it?

The answer to this philosophical dilemma was right in front of me, in a different part of my life. My mother, having gone through hard times, joined ALANON (a support group) and became interested in Buddhism. Every so often she'd talk about her 'higher power,' or even 'turning things over to God.' Being the atheist that I am, I wasn't exactly comfortable with this. But I wasn't about to argue with her about it, either. Though I couldn't share her beliefs, I respect my mother enough to let that point slide. Besides, as I observed, it made her happy. She became a more relaxed and true-to-herself person. Overall, Buddhism was an extremely positive influence on how she feels and how she lives.

And therein lies the key. It made her happy. It didn't matter if it was real. It filled a place in her life, enabled her to become a more complete and fulfilled person. It doesn't matter if some furries were actually wolves a previous life, and it doesn't matter whether something actually meant them to be wolves and they ended up in a human body instead. What matters is the effect this belief has on the person. If it makes them happy, if it fulfills a spot in their lives, if it makes them a better person... who cares if it's objectively real or not? The positive effect that belief has had is more than enough to justify its existence.

So no, I don't know if reincarnation is the way things actually work. But believing that I was a squirrel makes sense in some way I can't describe. While I may catch hell for saying the facts don't matter, in this instance I think they really don't. What matters is the effect the belief has on human happiness and fulfillment. Whether I actually was a squirrel or I am simply inventing a rationale for a belief which was invented to fulfill some psychological/emotional need is irrelevant; the belief substantiates itself by the positive effect it has on me. I may be wrong, and I recognise that. But I'm not hurting anyone, and indulging in this connection by expressing it as reincarnation improves the quality of my life - it does its job in fulfilling those gaps in my psyche. And that's what's really important.



The Spiritual Side of Furry:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20070419205050/www.firstlight.net/~chythar/manawolf/articles/spirit.htm>

“Manawolf”, the author of this essay, provides some of the more thoughtful commentary found in the Fandom on her website. During the Great Internet Furry Flame Wars, she was an effective

spokesperson for policies of tolerance and mutual respect within the Fandom. Her narrative of Furry spirituality is not typical of Furry discourse on spiritual issues, but is a mindful examination of how the expression “I am a squirrel” means. “Manawolf” establishes her stance in the third paragraph. I would suggest that her observations fall into the “agnostic” category as she indicates that she does not have personal religious beliefs but does not rule out the possibility that souls or paranormal experiences exist. She is firm about the culturally constructed nature of religious discourse: “We humans just make it up as we go along”. Her story recognizes a conflict between constructivism and essentialism on the issue of reincarnated souls, but she is able to skirt this conflict in a manner that would do honor to the memory of Foucault. Her personal reincarnation story exists because it exists in lived practice: “It doesn’t matter if some furies were actually wolves in a previous life, and it doesn’t matter whether something actually meant them to be wolves and they ended up in a human body instead. What matters is the effect this belief has on the person...the belief substantiates itself by the positive effect it has on me.” In the phenomenology of “Manawolf”, the performance of self and of multiple and, perhaps, conflicting identities, imbedded in multiple and, perhaps, conflicting narratives, brings into existence a version of the self which the actor has self-consciously constructed in order to conceptualize her identity as fundamentally unified.

“Manawolf’s” analysis of the place of reincarnation theory in her thinking and her narrative of self, identity, and belief as a performed construct or set of constructs formulated by individuals from the cultural matrix within which they are embedded, may be more typical of Furry thought than the spiritual belief systems discussed in this chapter, although it might be difficult to find another Furry who articulates these concepts as clearly as “Manawolf” does. This examination of Furry spirituality does lead me, however, to suggest that there is a dominant motif, or, in “Foucault-speak”, a “little machine”, that is quite evident in the various narratives of Furry spirituality and may, in fact, form a significant narrative pattern in the sub-culture as a whole; this is the narrative of the Edenic vision. Whether the Edenic vision is presented as a Christian pre-lapsarian Garden of Eden from which humanity has been ejected as a result

of conflicting discourses of difference – male and female difference, species differentiation, class differentiation in the post-Edenic workplace- or as a Pagan and shamanic struggle to find appropriate formulae to return to an essential unity with a reified Earth Goddess and her consort, the Horned God, or as a “Golden Age” of unity between nature and humanity prior to the destruction of environmental unity through human institutionalization of concepts of domination, ownership, and exploitation, this type of discourse forms a common thread within the spiritual Fandom. Even in “Manawolf’s” post-modern narrative, the apparent philosophical conflicts between essentialism and constructivism are no longer important if the individual’s construction of identity works in lived practice and “fulfills a spot in their lives”. It is not surprising that a prior “Golden Age”, free of constructed and conflicting gender and species identities, might be appealing to the Furry Fandom. In the next section on structures of power within the Fandom, I will suggest that the construction of both “real-life” and virtual enclaves of safety and security or pre-lapsarian “Gardens” is a significant element in Furry discourses of power. The chart provided in Figure 64 below indicates the range of spiritual belief in the Fandom and some of the organizations that express these beliefs and form rhizomatic connections to the Furry sub-culture. These are discussed in more detail in the extended version:

 <p>Otherkin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - dating from the ‘60s, this movement is associated with Tolkien fans -overlaps with Fandom at social events and art shows -focuses on relationships with mythological beings – elves, fairies, unicorns, gryphons, dragons, angelics, demons, golems, and other individual creations 	<p>Lapism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -an entertaining literary belief system originating in Geusz (2009) -converts undergo cyborgian transformation to embody rabbit genes.
<p>Indigo Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -believers focus on “paranormal” belief systems – special children born with “indigo auras” may bring about world peace, prosperity, environmental balance. 	 <p>Therianthropy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -emphasizes human-animal transformation and shape-shifting- often appears in discussion at Furry meets. -associated with lycanthropy, ailuranthropy, cynanthropy -may be expressed as mis-embodiment -small minority believe in actual physical change (“P-shifting”)

<p>Furrs Fur Christ </p> <p>-forum, art gallery, LiveJournal, site on Second Life, program at Rocky Mountain Fur Con and Anthrocon</p>	<p>Neo-Paganism  ("Blessed Be")</p> <p> ("Public Pagan")</p> <p>-probably the largest Furry spiritual accretion</p> <p>-the generic term encompasses Wicca and Neo-Druidism, as well as many other belief systems as well as individual belief constructs.</p> <p>-may be monotheistic, pantheistic, polytheistic, or constructed on a god-goddess duality</p> <p>--practices ceremonies, meditation, dances, prayer, tantric practices, shamanic intercession, trance</p> <p>-usually supportive of environmental activism and alternative expressions of sexuality</p>
<p>Rainbow Ark </p> <p>-LiveJournal community, panels, room parties, meets at conventions. Personal testimony, Bible study, discussion on-line</p>	<p>Wicca </p> <p>- world's fastest growing religion (Adherents.com.Statistical summary pages.)</p> <p>-individualistic but usually includes the Horned God and Triple Goddess – gods are construed as vehicles for transmission of power “drawn down” through ritual- may involve seasonal ritual and working of spells.</p>
<p>Christian Furry Fellowship </p> <p>-virtual church services, on-line prayer services, chat meetings, Bible study via Skype connection.</p>	<p>Neo-American Indian Spirituality/Neo-Shamanism</p> <p>-a wide and chaotic field, often attacked by Native Americans as “plastic shamanism”</p> <p>-may focus on rituals, communication with “power animals”, drumming</p> <p>- I encountered 3 Furies involved in these beliefs in my interviews – “Malantrio/Venus” (a raven-wolf morph is essential and imminent)</p> <p>-“DemonalLissa” practices some shamanistic rituals and channels the power of the phoenix</p> <p>-“Talmak” indicates that he is a Pagan priest and shaman-has a symbiotic relationship with totemic Owl spirit.</p>
<p>The Unicorn and Gryphon </p> <p>-a virtual pub for “all things anthropomorphic, furry, and Biblical.</p> <p>-real-life meetings at Anthrocon</p>	<p>Totemism- a wide and chaotic field</p> <p>-Furries may search for animal totems via a link on WikiFur</p> <p>-probably the most prevalent spiritual practice in the Fandom</p> <p>-eclectic and may be linked to Shinto, Wicca, Neo-Paganism</p> <p>-many “New Age” products are marketed in this field.</p>
<p>Figure 64: Some Furry Spiritual Orientations</p>	

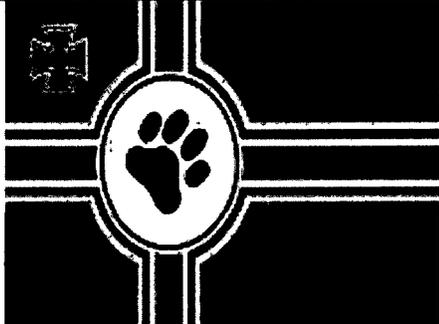
THE POWER AND THE FURRY: POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RELATIONS IN THE FANDOM

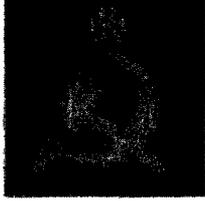
This section considers the axes of power within the field and habitus that shape and are shaped by the Furry Fandom using Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of molar and molecular lines, and lines of flight to delineate etic and emic power structures, and cultural constructs indicating elements of agency within the sub-culture.

Molar Lines: Molar lines connect the striated space of State arborescent structures to the rhizomatic accretion of the sub-culture. They represent apparatuses of institutional power and domination, and, with respect to the Fandom, are largely etic. Although Foucault and Chomsky differ on some very fundamental issues (Chomsky and Foucault 2006), they seem to agree in identifying governmental, military, educational, religious, media, and other corporate constructs as major etic apparatuses of power and domination. Furies are portrayed in the surveys as mildly liberal or politically apathetic. The University of California Davis Survey indicates that 24.5% of respondents report that they are not political, while 24% indicate that they are liberal. The Osaki "State of the Fandom" Survey reports that 45.1% indicate that they are liberal or very liberal, 30.2% say they are moderate, and 15.0% indicate that they are "Other". 11% of respondents to the Ultimate Furry Survey report themselves as "political activists". Although the findings tend to suggest that Furies are not exceptionally politically active for a population with a high percentage of university students in its membership, the causes of this lack of interest in State political processes may not be a result of apathy or anomie, but may be imbedded in the American political system itself. Noam Chomsky suggests that American political institutions, cloaked in the discourse of participatory democracy, are, and always have been, institutions of "elite decision-making and public ratification", at least partially as a result of the great power vested in the American Presidency and in an oligarchy of vested interests, including the mass media whose job it is to "manufacture consent" (Chomsky 2003: 5-6). As "The Chained Wolf" indicates in "One Fur, One Vote: The Politics of the Fandom": "There are liberals, socialists, communists, Marxists – all sorts of different groups. Not only that, but there will be environmentalists, animal rights people and so on." (The Chained Wolf

2008.http://www.furteantimes.com/r/29_one_fur_one_vote_the_politics_of_the_fandom. Accessed 05/21/2009).

Figure 65 presents “Furry Ideological Groups” as described in WikiFur. Groups associated with **the Great Furry Flame Wars are excluded unless these groups are still extant. With the exception of “Nazi Furs”** no formal Furry affiliates of any political parties are specifically listed in WikiFur, and many of the listed groups are parodic in nature, formed to ridicule existing NGPs. One might conclude from this chart that, with the exception of more extreme groups, most Furies regard political affiliation as a private matter that does not merit the formation of politically aligned groups in the Fandom.

Group Logo	Group Name	Description
	Nazi Furs	<p>The objectives of the Nazi Fur community are stated as support of “an interest in WWII era Germany for historical, militaristic, strategic, living history, reenactment, or fetish reasons.” (http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Nazi_Furs) The group claims to be intolerant of political ideologies that include racial hatred, genocide, anti-Semitism, and ethnic cleansing and states that postings expressing these opinions will be banned. It sponsors a LiveJournal community and a forum for recruiting membership. Needless to say, this is a very controversial group within the Fandom.</p>
	Furzi or Die Deutsch Furmacht	<p>Although the group has a satirical name (a furzi in German slang is someone who farts), it has provoked serious ideological conflict on Second Life. “Das Waffenamt”, a Furzi on-line store in Second Life sells German WWII paraphernalia including anti-Semitic propaganda posters and Nazi regalia. The store also streams WWII Nazi marches on its sound system. Several Jewish organizations on Second Life, including “Jews for Second Life” objected to the actions of the store owners and turned in a report on Neo-Nazi activity and hate discourse in Second Life. A series of bans were evoked by Second Life administrators, and in Canada some Furzis were arrested on weapons charges and prosecuted as a result of this investigation. (http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Furzi). Linden Lab, Second Life administrators, have deleted Furzi groups from the game.</p>

	Soviet Furs	<p>This group was originally created as a “stand-alone” community, but is now allied with Nazi Furs. Its objectives are stated to be support for fans of anthropomorphic animals who also enjoy Eurasian War and the history of the Soviet regime.</p>
	MILFurs	<p>This community is intended to offer a home to any member of the Fandom who has served or is serving in the active or reserve armed forces in the United States Marines, Navy, Army, Air Force or Coast Guard. It has now been expanded to include military personnel of “U.S. allies” who are in the Fandom. The group sponsors an on-line list of Furries in the military, panels and meetings at conventions, a LiveJournal community and various forums and art galleries. We are assured that “Operational security (OPSEC) is strictly enforced by the moderators so as to not endanger the safety of troops.” (http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/MilFur)</p>
 	420furs.org	<p>This community is a revival of “Baked Furs” and offers on-line services to recreational drug users in the Furry Fandom. It offers blogging, chat forums, an image gallery, educational services, and an e-mail service.</p>
	Dopeless Furs	<p>This is a LiveJournal community for Furries opposed to the use of recreational drugs.</p>
	Anonymous	<p>This group is a community of users of some Internet services many of whom have been active in trolling and flaming websites, including Furry websites. Some Furries claim to be members of Anonymous and openly post remarks on community bulletin boards or forums. Because of the extensive raiding of Furry websites, most Furries regard this group as hostile to the Fandom, but “some Anonymous will tolerate or even accept furry participation in the fight against Scientology.” (http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Anonymous_(group))</p>

	Cool Furries	This currently inactive group seeks to improve the image of Fandom members, to help at conventions, and to “do Good Deeds”. (http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Cool_Furries)
	Furries Against Hunting	This group opposes game hunting and supports pro-wildlife movements. They present themselves as ambassadors for game animal species and feature photographs of dead game animals killed by hunters on their website.
	Nationalist Furries	This group was still on-line as of March 2010, but has been inactive since that time. The founder of the movement believes that Furries are more than just a Fandom; they are a distinct community of people who have bounded cultural and spiritual tradition. The founder advocates a “Furry Nation” with sovereign status where citizens live in species-specific groups, each species constituting an individual state. The concept is unusual, in that Furries rarely consider species to be “pure” and frequently create species amalgams in their avatars and Fursonas.
	The Voluntary Human Extinction Movement	A number of Furries are VHEMT volunteers dedicated to wiping out world overpopulation that leads to the extinction of species by voluntarily abstaining from reproduction.
	Vivisector	This website is listed by WikiFur as an ideological community within the Fandom, but it is actually intended as a deconstruction “of a living group of animal people, their society, their motions, and their motives.” (http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Vivisector_(website)) In practice it tends to be an anti-furry site.

Figure 65: Furry Ideological Groups.

(<http://en.wikifur.com>)

A second group of Furry or Furry-related communities that are not listed in WikiFur as ideological groups, but that appear to have an ideological continuity and are, in some cases, more closely related to political parties than those discussed above are presented in the second chart in Figure 66. In

the extended version, the interesting but conflicted discourse of Furry “gun culture” is also discussed, suggesting that “the right to bear arms” is an integral part of the narrative of modernity, despite its apparent conflict with animal rights and environmental concerns.

Group Logo	Group Name	Description
	Furjectivists	Furry “AsherWolf” has founded a LiveJournal community dedicated to the
		Exploration of Ayn Rand’s version of “Objectivism”. AsherWolf ‘s adapts Objectivism, but discusses its main tenets- reliance on free market capitalism, the removal of institutional barriers to the operation of the free market, man as an heroic being in the pursuit of happiness as a moral purpose, reason as an absolute, and an insistence on the uncontroversial reality of material existence. Although Randian Objectivism has been criticized from both right and left-wing commentators, it remains popular among some conservative groups as a result of Rand’s novels.
	Pseudo-Furs	This is a satirical LiveJournal community on the topic of membership in the Fandom.
	Radical Rabbit	Radical Rabbit is a purple fursuited character performed by “Anjel” and may be found at the fursuit community on LiveJournal. The character is intended for use at pro-choice demonstrations. Its motto is “Just because we mate like rabbits doesn’t mean we should breed like them!” (http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Radical_Rabbit)
	Furry Peace	Although this group was primarily intended to combat factionalism following the formation of Burned Furs, it is still extant as a result of the on-going support of its founder, WhiteFire, a Furry legend. WhiteFire, a Unix systems administrator and software developer and Furry artist and writer, is the Head Wizard and owner of the enormous virtual gaming world, Tapestries MUCK.
	Left-Wing Furrries	One of the few groups to mention political affiliation, Left-Wing Furrries is a LiveJournal community for liberals, democrats, green party adherents and Marxists. It is owned and moderated by Cuiptur, a Furry dolphin interviewed by the author in Chapter VIII.
	Furs On Wheels	This LiveJournal community is no longer extant but was formed to provide a forum for disabled Furs.
	ConFurvatives	This LiveJournal community, moderated by Sema JayHawk, allows only right-wing Furs to participate and is not intended for open debate. It largely focuses on criticism of the Obama

		administration and describes itself as a forum for “Furries who are conservative, right-winged, republican, or even just Christian.” (http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/ConFURvatives)
	Best Paw Forth	This Texas-based free-lance costuming group volunteers to assist charities with fursuited performances.
	Fuspircacy/Fur Illuminati	This fake group was actually described by “anti-furs” as a mythical secret Furry organization penetrating the databases of on-line sources, such as Wikipedia, to spread Furry propaganda.
	The Tucson Mob	This is an informal but influential group of Furries living in the Tucson area. Members include politician Scott Malcomson and Furry writer, artist and founder of the most popular site on FurryMUCK, <i>The West Corner of the Park</i> , Jim Groat. Groat created the characters “Red Shetland” and “Equine the Uncivilized”.

Figure 66: Other Political or Semi-Political Groups.

Furries in the Marketplace:

As Deleuze and Guattari point out (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 335-6), what has traditionally been described as a “labor force” in Western economies has, to some extent, changed from a “captive” population toiling in factories and offices to a much more loosely organized nomadic and de-territorialized population, or “wolf-pack”, moving from job to job or putting together combinations of jobs, often in the cyber-marketplace. Thumper’s multi-faceted career illustrates the way in which Furries often integrate in real-life business communities while presenting an on-line business profile as well. One might suggest that many Furries are well adapted to a changing economy as a result of their technological skill set combined with an interest in showcasing their creative talent through on-line businesses. In the extended version, I have included a portrait of “Thumper”, a Furry entrepreneur. I have indicated in previous chapters on Furry visual representation, Furry media, Furry theatre, and Furry music that the Furry sub-culture has a strong entrepreneurial presence on-line in the production of on-line art and craft galleries, on-line radio and television productions, on-line fursuited businesses, on-line music merchandizing, and on-line sales of T-shirts, posters, and Furry knickknacks. Various Furry businesses

and their adaptation to economic downturn, particularly in the publishing industry are discussed in the extended version. Furrries have a strong Internet business presence in web page design and Internet systems management, and some ingenious businesses featuring Furry sex toys or operating on-line Furry nightclubs. Perhaps the strongest impact that Furrries have on the economic is in the real-life contribution of Furry meet-ups and conventions on local economies. Figure 67 includes a newspaper analysis of the impact of Anthrocon 2008 on business in Pittsburg, and a world list of Furry conventions with attendance numbers, giving some idea of the economic impact of Furry conventions (Figure 68). It seems evident that Furrries see themselves as participants in and contributors to the formal economy of the countries and local areas where they are located, and that business in the cities where they hold conventions perceives them in the same way. Furrries also often raise funds for charitable organizations; a chart showing charitable contributions made through Furry conventions is included in Figure 69.

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Furry convention a \$3 million cash cow for city businesses

By Adam Brandolph

PHOTO BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS

PHOTOS

'Banditwolf' Jasmine Gehns/Tribune-Review

About the writer

Adam Brandolph is a Pittsburgh Tribune-Review staff writer and can be reached at 412-765-2312 or via e-mail.

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A half-dozen heads are spiked on a rack in the middle of a freezing-cold room. A man in a bear costume is propped up against a row of chairs as a fan cools his uncovered face.

Another man in a purple dragon suit lies on his back. His hair is wet. He's sweating.

"It gets very hot inside here," Matthew Ledgerwood, 34, of Ontario, Canada, said from the floor of the Headless Lounge, a place where costumed attendees of Anthrocon 2008 can get hydrated and cool off. "The more you move around, the hotter you get. Without rooms like these, it would be almost impossible."

Anthrocon, the annual convention of anthromorphists, known as "Furries," is where people like Ledgerwood can come together to celebrate the humanization of animals, especially in cartoons and comics.

This is the third year Pittsburgh has hosted the event at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, Downtown, where it was moved from Philadelphia to accommodate its growing fans.

Nearly 3,000 Furies are expected in Pittsburgh this weekend, Anthrocon spokesman Karl Jorgensen said.

"Every year we get bigger," he said. "People come from all over the world to attend."

The attendees last year brought \$2.5 million into the city, Jorgensen said. More than \$3 million is expected this year.

The three-day, four-night event features artists, writers and vendors who showcase goods from collars to buttons to in-costume cooling and hydration systems for those famous furry costumes. It's the largest event of its kind.

Although the costumed patrons are the ones who often stand out, only 12 percent to 15 percent of them dress in full costume, Jorgensen said.

But most Furies want a full suit, said Joyce Clouser, 21, of Detroit.

"They're just very expensive," she said.

Starting at about \$500, they can top out at \$8,000 for professionally made costumes with electronic jaws and ears, Clouser said. Some costume designers have a two-year wait list before they'll even stitch a button.

Alex Brinley, 20, of Chicago has owned his costume for eight months. He said he likes dressing up because he can get away with things he normally couldn't, such as being wild and crazy.

"You can do it because people won't know who you are," said Brinley, whose animal costume is "Tiggy," a hybrid tiger and cheetah.

Cooled, Ledgerwood was ready to go back to the convention floor. He said his interest in mascots goes back years.

"One day I tried one on," he said, "and I got hooked."

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3. Year later, scars of LA Fitness rampage remain
4. Blight to bright. Arena remade city's image
5. Decisions of Westmoreland County judges
6. Alle-Kiski Valley prescription drug overdoses no longer 'unusual'
7. Outbound Fort Pitt repairs cause detour gridlock
8. Fresh ice lights a fire under Penguins players
9. UPMC testing 'smart rooms' to streamline care
10. Not a bed seat in the Consol Energy Center

http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/news/cityregion/s_575023.html

8/1/2010

Figure 67: Anthrocon 2008 as a "Cash Cow" for Pittsburgh Businesses.

(http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/news/cityregion/s_575023.html)

List of conventions by attendance

From WikiFur, the furry encyclopedia.

The following is a list of furry conventions and furmeets from around the world, listed by officially announced attendance figures from the most recent year available. Historical North American convention figures are available from the Anthro Fandom Convention Infosheet. Other information was found on respective convention websites or reports, where available, or entered by attendees.

Ongoing events

Contents

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anthrocon 2010; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (4,238) 2. Further Confusion 2010; San Jose, California (2,770) 3. Midwest FurFest 2009; Wheeling, Illinois (2,040) 4. Furry Weekend Atlanta 2010; Atlanta, Georgia (1,564) 5. FurFright 2009; Waterbury, Connecticut (979) 6. Eurofurence 2009; Suhl, Thuringia (955) 7. RainFurrest 2009; Seattle, Washington (911) 8. Furry Connection North 2010; Novi, Michigan (880) 9. Califur 2010; Irvine, California (851) 10. Furry Fiesta 2010; Dallas, Texas (780) 11. Mephit Furmeet 2009; Memphis, Tennessee (550) (peaked at 650 in 2008) 12. FA: United! 2010; Newark, New Jersey (510) 13. Megaplex 2010; Kissimmee, Florida (410) (peaked at 425 in 2009) 14. Rocky Mountain Fur Con 2009; Denver, Colorado (400) 15. NakamaCon 2010; Madison, Wisconsin (390)** 16. ConFuzzled 2010; Manchester, UK (350) 17. Furnal Equinox 2010; Toronto, Ontario (330) 18. Rocket City FurMeet 2010; Huntsville, Alabama (328) (peaked at 355 in 2009) 19. Morphicon 2010; Columbus, Ohio (275) (peaked at 307 in 2009) 20. MiDFur 2009; Melbourne, Victoria (247) 21. Oklacon 2009; Watonga, Oklahoma (241) (peaked at 283 in 2007) 22. What The Fur 2010; Montreal, Quebec (228) 23. RBW 2009; London, UK (226) (peaked at 290 in 2008) 24. Elliott's Winter Carnival 2009; Winter Garden, Florida (215) 25. РусФуренция 2010; Moscow, Russian Federation (197) 26. All Fur Fun 2009; Spokane, Washington (195) 27. New Year's Furry Ball 2009; Quakertown Pennsylvania (122) 28. FurryCon 2009; Karlstad (110) 29. Western PA Furry Weekend 2009; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (95) (peaked at 108 in 2008) 30. Camp Feral! 2009; Algonquin Provincial Park, Ontario (92) 31. Delaware FurBowl Jun 2010; Wilmington Delaware (89) (peaked at 102 in Feb. 2010) 32. CeSFuR 2009; Ledec nad Sázavou, Vysočina Region (74)* 33. Furthest North Summer 2008; Deer Creek Provincial Recreation Area, Alberta (52) 34. RivFur 2009; Brisbane, Queensland, Australia (50) 35. Futrzakon 2009; Dzierżazna, Łódź Voivodeship, Poland* (50) 36. Abando 2010; São Roque, São Paulo (37) 37. Furry Ski Weekend 2010; Copper Mountain, Colorado (34) (peaked at 40 in 2009) 38. Animales Sueltos 2010; Mar del Plata, Buenos Aires, Argentina (31) 39. UFACon 2009; Rosario, Argentina (30) 40. Zillercon 2009; Holzgau, Tyrol (27) 41. ConFurtiva 2008; Xochitepec, Cuernavaca, Mexico (26) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1 Ongoing events ■ 2 Recent events with no data available ■ 3 Discontinued or cancelled events ■ 4 New upcoming events ■ 5 See also |
|---|---|

- 42. Tropicon 2008; Berlin, Germany (25)
- 43. South Furrica meet 2008; Table View, South Africa* (16)
- 44. Cape May Fur Meet 2009; Cape May, New Jersey (14) (peaked at 73 in 2004)

* These events typically rotate to a new location each year.

** Attendance numbers are estimated. Feel free to add more accurate data if available.

Recent events with no data available

- Mephit Mini Con 12; Freusburg, Kirchen (200 in 2008)**
- Furloween Furloween 2009; Orlando, Florida (187 in 2008)
- Howloween 2009; Surrey, British Columbia (160 in 2008)
- Califur Diego 2009; San Diego, California (65 in 2007)**
- H-Con 2008; Grasellenbach, Hesse (53 in 2007)
- BerliCon 2008; Berlin (35 in 2007)
- Fur Weekend Camping & BBQ 2008; Gordonsville, Virginia (26 in 2007)
- Die HerbstCon Spring 2008; Phillipsthal, Hesse (20 in 2008)
- Lakeside Furs 2008; Grundlsee, Styria (20 in 2007)
- Furry Cruise 2008; Monarch of the Seas sailing out of Port Canaveral, Florida (17 in 2008)
- NEP DustPaws Summer 2007; Solingen (13 in 2007)
- Wild Nights 2009; Robbers Cave State Park, Oklahoma

Discontinued or cancelled events

- Conifur Northwest 2005; SeaTac, Washington (525)
- ConFurence East 1996; Cleveland, Ohio (estimates vary from 500 to 1,100)
- ConFurence 2003; Burbank, California (470) (peaked at 1,250 in 1998)
- Furtasticon 1994; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (estimates vary from 230 to 300)
- CritterConDiego 2002; San Diego, California (175) (peaked at 240 in 2001)
- とらんすふぁ Winter 2007; Kawasaki, Kanagawa (180)
- Furry Spring Break 2001; Orlando, Florida (150)
- C-ACE 2007; Ottawa, Ontario (127) (peaked at 224 in 2005)
- Anthrofest 2007; Montreal, Quebec (111)
- Texas Furry Con 2004; Austin, Texas (100)
- ZonieCon 2001; Tucson, Arizona (57)
- Aussie Gather 2004; Sydney, New South Wales (42)
- FranFurence 2006; Chambord, Haute-Normandie* (37)
- ConWild 2006; Calgary, Alberta (30 est.)
- TreeCon 2004; Zandvoort, Nederland (25)
- CabinCon 2005; Vinstra, Oppland (11)
- FENEC 2005; Southern California (0)
- FurFest Northwest 2006; Moscow, Idaho (0)
- FOXmas 2009; Rochester, New York (0)

New upcoming events

- IndyFurCon 2010; Indianapolis, Indiana
- Condition 2010; London, Ontario
- Campfire Tails 2010; La Pine, Oregon
- Eufuria 2010; Copenhagen, Denmark
- Bytown Furry Convention 2010; Ottawa, Ontario
- Antheria 2010; Los Angeles, California
- VancouFUR 2011; Vancouver, British Columbia

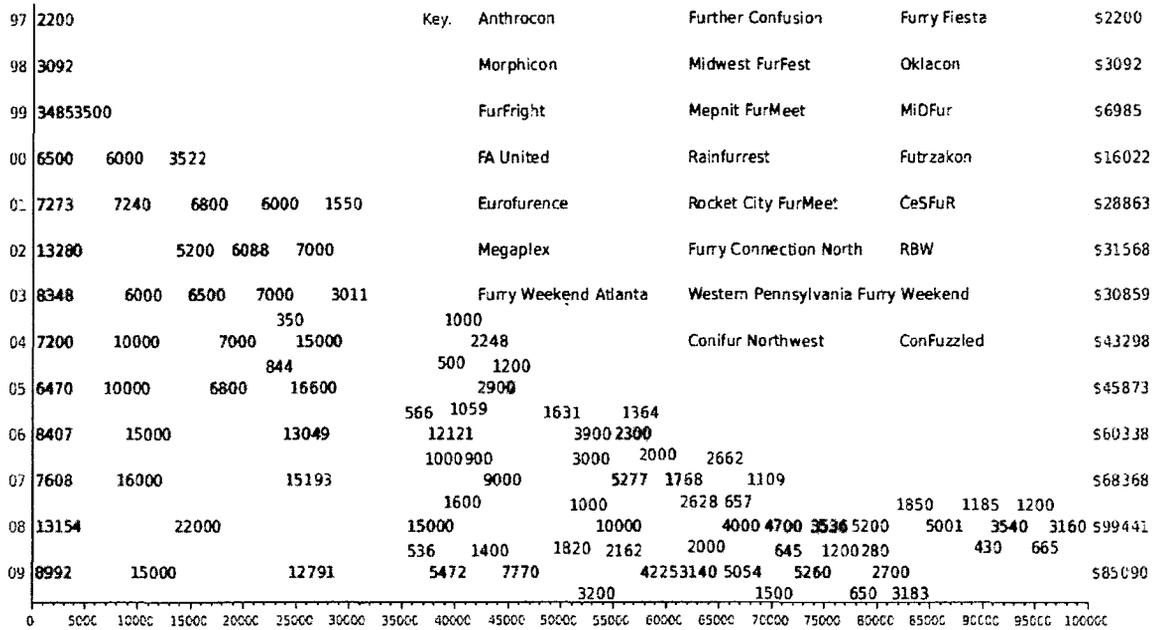
See also

http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Conventions_listed_by_attendance

8/1/2010

Figure 68: Furry Conventions Listed by Attendance.

(http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Conventions_listed_by_attendance)



Sources: AC (ex. 97 and 00) - FC - MFF - FurFright - Morphicon: 04, 05, 06, 07 - FA-U - EF: 13, 14, 15 - RBW: 07, 09 - MFM: 01, 02, 03, 04, 09 - FWA: 2005, 08, 09 - RCFM: 05 - OKL: 06 - CFN: 01, 03, 04 - CFZ: 08, 09, 10

Figure 69: Annual Contributions Made to Charity by Furry Conventions.
<http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Charity>

Media Relations of Power: Three Narratives

No discussion of relations of power in cultural communities can ignore the pervasive and invasive power of the mass media in guiding and feeding the discourse of modernity. As Bageant observes: “We are all watching the hologram and cannot see one another in the breathing flesh. Within the hologram sparkles the culture-generating industry, spinning out mythology like cotton candy.” (Bageant 2007: 262) Although Furies are both shapers and consumers of media imagery, I would like to focus on three of the most pervasive narratives of the mass media that, in my opinion, have been extremely influential in the construction of the Furry sub-culture.

1. The Narrative of the Body Beautiful:

This dominant media narrative has long been noted for its overwhelming impact on women and their embodiment, an aspect that is discussed in more detail in the extended version. The discourse has been extended, however, to encompass working class bodies and children’s bodies through the “War on Obesity”. The implications of this media narrative as a discourse of ethnicity and class struggle are explored in the extended version. The “War on Obesity” and the spreading stain of childhood obesity are

only two strains in a vast discourse of acceptable embodiment which permeates mass media representation. It is not surprising that people who are unable to emulate the Body Presidential conceal the shameful evidence of their class, race, and moral and physical failure in new and, perhaps, more neutral embodiments of anthropomorphic animals in real and virtual constructed environments.

2. The Narrative of Nature and of Animal/Human Relations:

As an alternative to doomed attempts at re-embodiment through cosmetics, clothing, surgery, and extreme regimes of weight loss, the mass media offer the possibility of re-embodiment within Nature and the bodies of anthropomorphic animals. Children are immersed in this narrative from the acquisition of their first Teddy bear to their eventual re-embodiment as Furrries. John Martin's study of the presentation of a "class habitus that naturalizes the division of labor" using a type of "totemic logic" in the popular works of Richard Scarry (Martin 2000) is one of very few studies that addresses how children are socialized through the construction of nature and anthropomorphic animals. Martin argues that "the use of totemic logic in children's literature can instruct the socializing eye as to the reality of class bodies." (Martin 2000:204)

Perhaps most prominently, anthropomorphic animals are good to teach unproblematic, simplistic solutions to complex problems. In the discourse of *Care Bears*, there is no difficulty that cannot be surmounted by hugs and cuddling. Caldas-Coulthard and Van Leeuwen (2003) contend that the cuddly toy animals of childhood, particularly Teddy bears are "semiotic objects of great cultural significance" (Caldas-Coulthard and Van Leeuwen 2003: 5). Straddling the gap between "tame" and "wild", between bear and baby, Teddy bears are transitional mediators between variant states, for example, between home environments and the first institutional experiences in school.(Caldas-Coulthard and Van Leeuwen 2003:11) I suggest, however, that, coupled with a discourse of nature as a moral imperative, a secular deity, or as Eden, anthropomorphic animals formulate a compelling discourse of deconstruction. "The myth of Eden describes a perfect landscape, a place so benign and beautiful and good that the imperative to preserve or restore it could be questioned only by those who ally themselves with evil." (Cronon 1995:

37) The Edenic vision pre-empts social constructions of gender identity, race and ethnicity, social class and division of labor, species identity, and narratives of imperfect embodiment. Anthropomorphic animals, already well established as transitional mediators, simplistic problem solvers, and conduits through which social discourse is presented, may then become attractive alternatives to problematic embodiments which conflict with hegemonic norms. I would suggest that the introduction of an overarching discourse of “safety and security” has been instrumental in combining the narratives of the body beautiful with the narrative of Nature as an Edenic enclave to form a compelling and attractive alternative, achievable in the new communication space of virtual reality.

3. The Narrative of Safety and Security:

In “From exception to rule: from 9/11 to the comedy of (t)errors”, Bulent Diken (2006) observes that the dominant narrative today, not only in the United States, but in the Western world in general, is a tale of Western states, progressing through the narrative of modernity toward the ultimate goal of individual freedom supported by natural law and the free market, yet beset and embattled as a result of the violence and irrationality of an “axis of evil” represented as a hegemonic juggernaut powered by Islamic fundamentalism. The necessity for “battle readiness” is self-evident in this narrative and ensures that the “war on terror” is a permanent condition of Western societies in conditions of late capitalism. Diken argues that the “war metaphor” and “terror” motif are effective control mechanisms because they make the exceptional an everyday occurrence, suspending our expectations of normalcy.

Within this narrative of “war” and exceptionality, the State can provide safety and security, but only if the citizen becomes a child to be protected. The narrative of safety and security in conditions of perpetual war articulates well with Foucault’s tale of the “good shepherd” and his fractious, but slothful, flock (Foucault 2006[1978]) and the metaphoric discourse of the “strict father” (Lakoff 1995). Although I hesitate to advance a theory formulated in the much-maligned magazine *Vanity Fair*, I would like to point out that Jim Windolf’s observations on a “tsunami of cute” (Windolf 2009) may pinpoint the attraction of anthropomorphic animals in a culture of perpetual terror, “a backdrop of war, economic

breakdown, and more Wi-Fi.” (Windolf 2009: 168) He points to the proliferation of “cute” on the Internet through sites like “Stuff on My Cat”, “Cute Things Falling Asleep”, “Kittenwar”, and “I Can Has Cheezburger”, that, he suggests “reflect a growing self-infantilization Windolf theorizes that the direct cause of the cuteness tsunami may be the recasting of America as an aggressive imperial power moving from “protector to invader, from defender of human rights to aggressor on the lookout for loopholes in the Geneva Conventions. It stands to reason that popular cuteness came about as some sort of correction, as a way for us to convince ourselves that we’re not as bad as our recent national actions have made us seem....a velvet rebellion led by smiley-face emoticons.” (Windolf 2009: 177). Windolf points to the development of Japanese anime, in the aftermath of the atomic devastation of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, as a precedent.

I would suggest that Windolf’s theory of cuteness has direct bearing on why Furies choose to construct identities drawn from the world of “funny animals”. In Furrydom, three powerful narratives coalesce – the narrative of the body beautiful and the need to reconstruct the appearance of bodies marginalized in media discourse, the narrative of Nature as an Edenic and pre-social enclave populated, in children’s media, by cultural mediators in the form of anthropomorphic animals, and the narrative of safety and security which encourages the presentation of self as childlike and dependent. It would be quite inaccurate, however, to suggest that the Fandom is merely a kind of on-line nursery where Furry avatars take shelter from the “war on terror”. As Deleuze and Guattari tell us, every State apparatus generates the War Machine that contests its hegemony (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 351-2) “Nomad thought”, the operating system of the War Machine, is evident throughout the Furry sub-culture in its incisive use of parody, satire and even pornography to deconstruct its own “cuteness”.

“Molecular Lines” and Emic Relations:

“Molecular lines” might be considered an intricate networks of multiplicity, relationships, and power structures within planes of consistency. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) tend to use the term “molecular” to refer to social fields that are within other, larger constructs – the pack, the family, the

multiplicity of self and identity. In this section, I will use the term to describe some emic aspects of the Furry sub-culture.

Furry personal relationships tend to be as diverse as those of the general population. Some of the Furies whom I interviewed lived at home in conventional family relations or with one parent. For Furies in that situation, I found that the majority were reluctant to discuss their membership in the Fandom with their families. There are a substantial number of Furies in married or committed relationships; some have been married at Furry conventions and others, usually same-sex couples, have held commitment ceremonies called “pawfasting” during Fur Meets and conventions. An interesting aspect of the Furry sub-culture is its retention of the “commune” concept with a number of communal residences called “Fur Houses”. Figure 70 lists Fur Houses that are still in operation as communal residences.

Name	Location	Comments
Westhaven	Brisbane, Australia	Owned by Marko the Rat and Ristin. The housewarming party in 2005 brought together most of the Furies in Brisbane.
Western Wisconsin Furry Commune	Serves the American Midwest	This house is operated by a group of Furies who provide support and a safe environment for Furies with troubled pasts and socialization issues. Robocoon who drew many of the cyborgian illustrations in this paper is a former resident.
The Iceberg	Brisbane, Australia	The house was founded by Icecleron. Current residents are Koneko, Icecleron, and Jagafeh.
The House	Sudbury, Canada	This house is occupied by Benjamin and Sedyah and their “kittlings” who are growing up as Furies, Mune Metsukai and James Bluewolf. Local Furies enjoy parties on the extensive decks.
Hotel Yorba	Santa Ana, CA, USA	The house is owned by Furry artist, Steve Martin, and is also home to well-known Furry artist and writer, Doug Winger. It has housed a long line of Furry creative artists and hosted many parties for Confurence, Califur, Rowrbrazzle, and Comic-Con International.
The Fox Box	Midlothian, IL, USA	The house is currently populated by Nihaler Fox and Rayven Wolffe, but has housed other Furies. There is an on-line version of this house on Second Life.
The Den	Brisbane, Australia	This house, plagued by “drama”, is now integrated with The Burrows. Den residents attend local Furry events and were the subject of a short documentary on Furies in 2006.
The Colosseum	Sydney, Australia	Current residents are Barbary Lion, Harley Coyote, Techie Fox, and Yummei Doragon.
The Cave	Brisbane, Australia	Current residents are Foxy Malone, Milesway, and Nikita Wolfpaw. The house has recreation facilities and a gate that goes nowhere, named “The Portal”.

Castle XV-Cel	Leesburg, VA, USA	This house hosts several Furry gatherings - Mine Mine Fur Meet, post-Anthrocon river tubing trips, bowling meets, and board gaming.
Caer Carnivore	San Jose, CA, USA	The house was first opened in New Jersey where it hosted a number of gatherings that included Toronto Furry artists. Uncle Kage, a popular Furry MC, visited frequently. Two Furry weddings were held at this house. The NJ house was re-formed in San Jose in 2008 and is currently home to Ken Sample, Lisa Lynx, Bennie and SueDeer, Cory Partypup and Orrin.
Anaheim Fur House	Anaheim, CA, USA	This house, home to Rainhopper Roo, Waggs Wolf, and Alpawolf, boasts a full-scale Theater Room and garage equipped with a movie projector, Wii, 360, PS2 and dedicated rockband station. Rainhopper and Pouchhopper Roo were married here.
The Prancing Skiltaire	Garden Grove, CA, USA	Mark Merlino's home is the most well-known Fur House. The house is decorated around Furry themes and has hosted many gatherings for well-known Furrtes. The owner is a networking engineer and the first servers for Tiger's Den BBS were located in this house. The Furry owner of Firstlight, an Internet service provider, was a longtime resident and arranged the communications network for ConFurence and Illegenden Internet Service.

Figure 70: Fur Houses in Operation at the Present Time.

(http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Fur_Houses)

Within Internet communities, Furrries may enter into “fictive relationships” with other friends and members of the sub-culture. A Furry may, for example, “adopt” a child in a Furry gaming location. One interesting aspect of Furry relationships is that very little attention is paid to “species” as a divisive concept. The only reference I have found to any problem with inter-species relations was in the WikiFur entry on the Fur House, “The Prancing Skiltaire”. During my fieldwork, I became acquainted with Ottawa Furry artist, Ever Ashen, profiled in the extended version. Ever’s Fursona is a cat. Her longtime partner, Indref Ashen, presents his Fursona as a winged rabbit. Although some Furrries may entertain very close ties to the species which they perceive as a Fursona or avatar, I would suggest that the relative unimportance of cross-species mating indicates that Furrries, predominantly, view “species” as an attribute of an avatar or Fursona that is presented in performance, rather than as an innate characteristic.

I have suggested in the section on visual representation that the Fandom is very resistant to the formation of power structures within the community. There seem to be, however, accretions or nodes of power and influence without expression of these lines of force in any hierarchical form. Figure 71 shows three possible “nodes” of power within the Fandom- one centering on artists, writers, musicians, and artisans, one centering on “shamans” who organize both real-life and virtual events and channels of

communication and transition within the community, and one centering on the many skilled technicians and engineers who bring their skills to the sub-culture. This last group may be nomadic and de-territorialized within the broader sub-culture, but is often hierarchically organized in the worlds of individual MUDs and MUCKs.

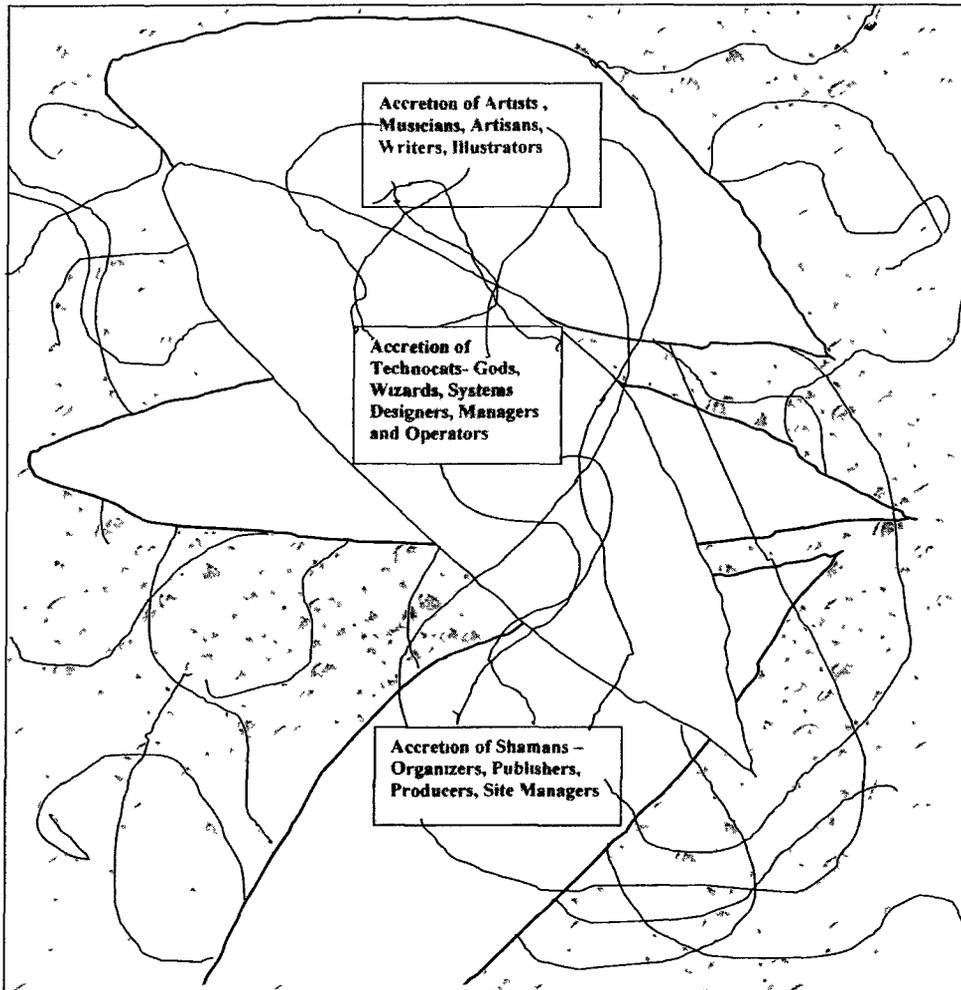


Figure 71: Three “Nodes” of Power Within the Fandom Illustrated as Intersecting Rhizomatic Accretions Within Networks of Molecular Lines of Flight.

Lines of Flight:

Turkle suggests that “...we can look at MUDs as places of resistance to many forms of alienation and to the silences they impose” (Turkle 1995: 242) I am not as sure as Turkle is that MUDs and MUCKs are entirely “places of resistance”. Certainly, to some extent, they serve as a “habitus” for constructs that would be problematic in real-life communities. Although gay social clubs and bi-sexual taverns that provide many virtual spaces for the expression of alternative forms of sexuality may be commonplace in

large cities, for Furrries in rural communities these venues would be very far underground to say the least. Nevertheless, the field and habitus of on-line games is more structured than one may realize and the exercise of power is absolute if an offending player is barred from the game.

Power Relations in Cyberspace:

The vast corporate entities that produce operating systems and programming for Internet users exercise the type of control of consumer products to which we have all become accustomed. I would like, however, to take a brief look at how power operates within the gaming world where Furrries “escape” and are “free” to create virtual environments and avatars.

Donath (1999:55) points out the basic social parameters and expectations of the Internet are shaped by the “technocrats” who build and administer websites, gaming sites, and Internet communication networks. Gaming sites and structures, however, are shaped by more than the software designers who build games and huge multi-user dungeons. Reid (1999:109) observes that MUDs tend to fall into two categories – adventure MUDs and social MUDS. Adventure MUDs function with a strict hierarchy of powers. Players cannot build environments or insert new objects into the game. They must play within the game’s structure – killing dragons, collecting treasure, communicating, etc.- and, if they collect sufficient points, they will gain privileges. Very successful players may even become Game Wizards, with administrative powers over an area of the game. A God, or game controller, has access to all files and controls the game’s elements, creating and destroying areas and characters or protecting objects and players. Competition for power is a built-in component of the game.

Social games, such as FurryMUCK, operate quite differently. The games still have Gods and Wizards with access to the actual computer files of the game, but these technocratic rulers do not usually insert random fireballs into the path of a user of a social MUD; instead, game participants are encouraged to use a library of commands to interact with other players and to expand the game by creating objects and areas. Reid (1999) suggests that the structure of social games is still hierarchical and vested in Gods and Wizards, but the games encourage emotional reactions that are different from those of adventure

games. Disinhibition, she suggests, as a result of the “veil of anonymity” is one aspect of these games. (Reid 1999:112) They also demand communication: “Communication is necessary to the existence of the MUD and successful MUDs are likely to see a great deal of communication between users, which can then form a basis for familiarity and intimacy.” (Reid 1999: 113) As a result of increased communication in “safe” spaces, MUD users may form strong personal attachments to other players. Reid quotes players as asserting that: “They are my family, they are not just some dumb game.” Anger may flare and erupt in the form of “flaming”, but the Gods and Wizards of social MUDs do exercise mechanisms of social control by banning or ridiculing offending players. Justice is often swift and arbitrary in MUDs worlds. Game offenders may be attached verbally, constrained by the implementation of commands to “gag” them, or even may be run out of town when their avatar is banned from areas of the MUD. Punishment in social MUDs, Reid observes is “...a return to the medieval...public shaming and torture. The theatre of authority in virtual reality is one which demands and facilitates a strongly dramaturgical element....The public spectacle of punishment, which Foucault (1986) describes as disappearing from the western political scene...is alive and well on MUDs.” (Reid 1999: 118)

While adventure games are permeated with the symbols and hierarchy of power, social MUDs encourage a kind of meritocracy where users obtain the ability to put up new structures and places by “inserting themselves into the social and imaginative matrix and becoming indispensable.” (Reid 1999: 126) Popularity counts in social MUDs. Since these games encourage social interaction and the formation of relationships they take on the characteristics of communities: “Within these hierarchical systems of power, social spaces form.” (Reid 1999: 131) “Although these systems may seem anarchic and uncontrollable at first glance, they are in fact highly socially structured. Users may play their cultural game according to personal whim, but they play it out on systems that are as subject to the enactment of power and privilege as more familiar face-to-face social systems.” (Reid 1999:132) Social game communities such as FurryMUCK have many similarities to the real-life communities at conventions constructed by players. In the case of the Furry sub-culture, the community is founded on a shared

interest. It is partial and incomplete, in that it forms only a portion of the participant's world. Social ties may be intense, but also may be highly specialized and intermittent:

Pundits worry that virtual community may not truly be community. These worriers are confusing the pastoralist myth of community for the reality. Community ties are already geographically dispersed, sparsely knit, connected heavily by tele-communications...and specialized in content. There is so little community life in most neighborhoods in western cities that it is more useful to think of each person as having a personal community; an individual's social network of informal, interpersonal ties, ranging from a half-dozen intimates to hundreds of weaker ties. Just as the Net supports neighborhood-like group communities of densely knit ties, it also supports personal communities, wherever in social or geographical space these ties are located and however sparsely knit they might be. (Wellman and Gulia 1999: 187)

Furries as Masters of the Universe: Safe in the Arms of the Internet.

Many Furrries are truly masters of the Internet universe. Game designers, Gods and Wizards, website designers, and savvy systems engineers abound in the Furry sub-culture. Fortunately for Furrries who lack the cyborgian abilities of these technocrats, many of them have acted altruistically in creating accessible web facilities for less informed Furrries, in assisting others with technical advice and informative panels and websites, and in setting up web-sites where Furrries may display and market the products of their imagination. I have suggested in this chapter that three powerful media narratives may coalesce in the Fandom to produce a discourse centering on an Edenic safe haven to be found within the Furry sub-culture. At the real-life level, this safe haven is, to a large extent, produced by experienced Furrries with shamanic attributes who organize the details of transition to the real-life communities embodied at Furry meet-ups and conventions. At the virtual level, cyborgian Furry shamans have produced intricate networking structures which allow Furrries to move through virtual communities and to produce multiple performances of the self in concert with the latest technical developments that cyberspace has to offer.

A MULTIPLICITY OF INTERPRETATIONS

I began this study by insisting on the retention of Fox Wolfie Galen's observation in "The Pleasures of the Fur" (Gurley 2001), "It gives me thunder", as the title of this paper. Despite the title's inauspicious reception from the Furry community, I am convinced that Galen's insight describes precisely what the Fandom provides for its participants. The Fandom and the culture that it has created is not a retreat into infantilism nor is it an endless series of "dress-up" parties; it gives Furies thunder. It has opened an arena for a serious re-consideration and contestation of the problematic narrative of modernity, now increasingly enforced with hegemonic discourses both within the power structure of the modern State and within the narratives of its instruments, the mass media. In this study I hope to have shown that the Furry Fandom has responded to a presentation of late capitalism as a progressive and hegemonic march toward individual freedom guided by "the good shepherd" and his institutionalized cohorts with wit, humor, a flood of interesting and creative cultural artifacts, and the production of compelling counter-discourses.

A postmodern framework enables the ethnographer to approach this sprawling and de-territorialized sub-culture with an acceptance of multiplicity and of diverse, simultaneous, and competing dialogues as representations of contested and ambiguous boundaries – boundaries which have traditionally defined the construction of gender identity, the taxonomy of species, the authenticity and value of objects of material culture, the limits of "good taste", particularly in sexual expression, and the material limits of spaces of communication. The "mapping" technique used in this paper has been endlessly frustrating in preventing an identification of "central tendency", but may have resulted in a better understanding of what sub-cultures like the Fandom, that have moved to an address somewhere in virtual cyberspace, may be in the process of achieving.

The Furry sub-culture has been formed by its particular history-its roots in the "funny animal" underground of the 1980s and its fortunate genesis in the "Unix hacker" phenomenon. The interest and

expertise of talented masters of the techno-universe has enabled Furrries to move between the real and the virtual both economically and representationally. Furrries' insistence on an idea as the central theme of the sub-culture has also discouraged limitation of the conceptual framework of the Fandom. The sub-culture differs significantly from many other Fandoms in that it requires only an interest in anthropomorphic animals as a "membership" criterion, although Furry essayist, Simo, (Simo 2009.

http://www.furrydolphin.net/2009_files/furry-history.html) argues that this sub-culture is so loosely organized that it is best described as a "meta-genre", and the "members" should be labeled "affiliates".

This lack of a specific source of Fandom focus and loose structure has exercised a profound effect on the sub-culture, freeing it from corporate control through copyright and intellectual property legislation that has established more rigid parameters for Fandoms such as "Trekkies". The Fandom lends itself to description as a rhizomatic accretion embedded in a field that includes the vast Internet mediascape as well as popular real-life culture. Furrries move freely between the Fandom and other areas of interest – gaming worlds such as Second Life, science-fiction fandoms, New Age or Native Spirituality, or a wide variety of sub-cultures centering on alternative expressions of sexuality.

This study has discussed a number of sociological studies of the Furry sub-culture. These studies, and my participant-observer fieldwork, suggest that the sub-culture differs from a random population sample in that Furrries tend to be younger, comparatively well-educated males who express their sexuality within the homosexual and bisexual communities. Females and ethnic minorities are not well represented according to the sociological studies, although my fieldwork, both on-line and at real-life conventions, suggests that women may play a more significant role in the Fandom than the studies suggest, and that the increasing Internet presence of the Furry community may change the data on ethnic minorities. The studies point out, and my fieldwork confirms, a high level of expertise and utilization of computer-mediated communication in the Fandom which has had a profound impact on the culture of this community and has encouraged one of the most significant traits of the Fandom- the stream of cultural

artifacts – from entire languages to erotic artwork produced by Furrries and discussed in Section B on Furry culture.

The “interest in anthropomorphic animals” criterion is the central unifying theme within the Fandom. All Furry cultural representations include anthropomorphic animals to some degree, although the term is liberally interpreted and may encompass human-animal-machine amalgams and various expressions of transformation and shape-shifting. Furrries tend to appropriate cultural materials formed outside the Fandom if they include anthropomorphic animals. Cultural productions may be measured by their inclusion and treatment of anthropomorphic animals, as can be seen in the “degree of Furriness” measurement included in the previous section on Furry literature.

The Furry sub-culture is deeply imbedded in popular media culture – in film, television, comic books and graphic novels, Disney and anime productions, and in recent trends in popular music. It continually appropriates elements from popular media culture and transforms them into culturally significant units within the Fandom. Appropriated elements may include historical references to anthropomorphic animals or mythological creatures, literary or artistic classics, popular films and television programs, and recent media productions such as sword n’sorcery novels, graphic novels, comics, and role-playing games. Appropriated elements are not limited to representations within the boundaries of Western culture, but also include the productions of global phenomena such as manga and anime. The roots of the Fandom in “funny animal” comics of the 1980s may be seen in the tendency toward parody and satire in much Furry cartooning, writing, musical lyrics, and visual art. The early influence of the Unix Hackers and the enthusiastic transition to the Internet has been a major formative factor in Furry culture. A great deal of Furry cultural activity takes place on the Internet and Furrries often interact socially through avatars created and performed for use in Internet gaming or as website signifying signs. Major areas of Furry cultural representation, particularly in art and music, evidence developing cyber-forms of collective and on-going event-based art. Furrries spend time and energy on their artistic and creative pursuits. They develop elaborate languages and scripts; they create a wide range of visual

representations using both conventional and computer-mediated tools and maintain websites and galleries to display their works. They produce elaborate and complex role-playing games and create virtual communities and environments within larger games such as *Second Life*. They produce radio and television programs, write and illustrate graphic novels and on-line web comics, build intricate costumes, accessories, robots, and puppets, and master the elements of electronic music production. They enthusiastically fill new spaces of communication created by the Internet with representations that are intrinsically collective, amorphous, and mutable. While some Fandom members may be passive receptors of the cultural products of late capitalism, there is a large component of the Furry sub-culture that is actively involved in creating and shaping cultural production. Furies are, on the whole, supportive and collaborative in the artistic productions of the Fandom, as their on-line comments indicate. Lines of division in the Furry community appear to form around issues of overt sexual expression and the display of “mature content”. It is possible that these “boundary transgressions” may mark areas of class struggle.

The Furry sub-culture challenges boundaries and raises questions about the unity and singularity of personal identity, about authenticity, creativity, and originality as they are conventionally understood in the worlds of art and music, about the presentation of self in both real-life and a computer-mediated environments, about the fusion of Eastern and Western cultural elements in the development of the anime-funny animal genres, and about conventional boundaries between animals, humans, and machines.

Some Ways of Interpreting this Study:

Several frameworks may be employed in attempting to discuss how this sub-culture works. I would suggest that one useful approach is to conceptualize the Furry Fandom as an adaptive culture, in the sense in which Agnew (1981:115) uses the term, as a description of internal selection processes, such as subgroup negotiation, that allow cultural change in order to adapt to variables like technological advances. This approach articulates, to some degree, with Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) insistence that change and the “War Machine” are inherent in the State, and their concept of “holey space” where major technological changes occur. One might consider the Furry sub-culture as an adaptation to a new space of

communication, “the communications space made accessible through the global interconnection of computers and computer memories”. (Levy 2001:74) If we use a traditional Marxist model of analysis, Furrries might be viewed as engaged in a struggle to recapture “the means of production”. Harvey (1989) traces capitalism’s shift from Fordism to flexible accumulation, from mass production and consumption to flexible and volatile labor markets and capital; as Mathews expresses the conditions of post-industrial capitalism, we are shoppers in a “cultural supermarket” – “...one is no more and no less than a pure consumer by this view.” (Mathews 2000: 181) If we add to this movement, from production to pure consumption, Durkheim’s view of anomie or alienation as a result of disassociation and loss of organic solidarity (1997 [1893]) and Merton’s development of anomie theory and its application to “criminal behavior” (Merton 1999), we see the process of marginalization in conditions of late capitalism. Joe Bageant’s provocative analysis of consumer capitalism in *Deer Hunting with Jesus: Dispatches from America’s Class War* (2007: 26-262) links Marxist alienation from the means of production, Durkheimian anomie, to the production of a holographic consumer lifestyle through the passive medium of television:

But no matter how much junk this corporation called America can stuff into its laboring class, there is still the basic foundation of oppression that characterizes working-class life but is never acknowledged. ...Americans, rich or poor, now live in a culture woven entirely of illusions, and all of us are rendered actors. (Bageant 2007: 260-261)

As an adaptive sub-culture, Furrries have occupied and captured a significant segment of the virtual means of production in cyberspace. Not only are they able to challenge conventional boundaries, create new social networks, and market the artifacts of their culture, they may also escape or express their dissatisfaction with their field and habitus by creating new virtual societies and multiple identities. Yee’s important study of “Massive Multi-User Online Graphical Environments” (Yee 2006) suggests that many Internet gamers spend at least the equivalent of one-half of a work week engaged in the virtual work of creating virtual communities, a finding that suggests adaptation to real-life employment that may be unrewarding through the creation of more rewarding virtual employment. Thus, the Fandom may be

construed as an adaptation to Marxist alienation, Durkheimian anomie, or to conditions of late capitalism, empowering Furies through the creation of alternate identities and virtual environments.

The Furry Fandom may also be interpreted as an adaptation to perceptions of social marginalization. Feelings of mis-embodiment that result from excessive media emphasis on stereotypes of physical attractiveness as well as media and government marginalization campaigns such as the “War on Obesity” (Campos 2004; Szwarc 2003; Stearns 2002; Seid 1988; Spitzack 1988), may find expression in the Furry emphasis on anthropomorphic and cyborgian re-embodiment and an acceptance of the body as a Deleuzian machinic assemblage. The Fandom can also be construed as an adaptive culture challenging a culture of binary opposition, opposing essentialist interpretations of sexuality, identity, and machine-human-animal boundaries with cultural artifacts asserting multiplicity, carnival and free play.

Although this interpretation may prove to be controversial, I would also suggest that the Furry sub-culture may be construed as an adaptation to a culture of “disability”. The emphasis on statistical measurement of perceived “norms” in Western culture has created a wide spectrum of “disorders” and “disabilities”, measured through standardized instruments presented as objective testing and reified through repetition in scholarly publications and institutional indices of deviance. The extended version of this study includes a discussion of the instruments used in the Niagara College (Gerbasi) 2009 study of “social type behaviors” and the principal author’s contention that some Furies may suffer from “Species Identity Disorder” (Gerbasi 2009) Furies challenge boundaries that we may see as reified “science-knowledge”. They challenge notions of binary opposition and essentialism in the interpretation of sexuality, identity, and machine-human-animal boundaries. They challenge cultural constructs of authenticity, individuality, and creativity as criteria in the determination of the cultural value of artifacts. They challenge what we thought we knew about totemism, transformation, and embodiment. They challenge the division between work and play, between the real and the virtual. They are, as Derrida observed, “...the species of the non-species, in the formless, mute, infant, and terrifying form of monstrosity.” (Derrida 1982:15)

Most importantly, I think, the Furry sub-culture contests hegemonic media discourses in interesting and creative ways. In the previous section I have outlined three key narratives in the media support of cultural hegemony: the narrative of the body beautiful, the narrative of Nature and animals, and the narrative of safety and security. Furrries have re-cast these narratives both in real-life and in virtual communities. The body beautiful, re-presented in a Fursuit or re-embodied in an anthropomorphic avatar avoids media censure through its assertion of difference. Nature, presented as an Edenic and chaotic pre-societal utopia, free of culturally constructed hierarchies of species, gender identity, and class structure, is the habitus of “cute” – anthropomorphic animals, already familiar as cultural mediators and guides to the Magic Kingdom. They exist outside of and beyond the reach of cultural critique in a setting that immediately asserts the dominant morality of “natural law”. As I write this conclusion, the U.S. Congress has determined that the Supreme Court has no protocol to protect itself from terrorists attacking with Weapons of Mass Destruction. Exactly how the Justices of the Supreme Court can protect themselves from nuclear holocaust is somewhat unclear; perhaps Canada can rent out space in the Diefenbunker. This overwhelming and continual production of new reasons to be terrified by the Islamic Other is the dominant discourse in the public life of America and many of its allies. Furrries, already threatened by hegemonic views of identity and sexuality, have created the perfect shelter from the storm by simply moving and setting up housekeeping in virtual communities in cyberspace. Within these “safe houses” they generate and circulate alternative, often satirical and parodic, discourses contesting cultural boundaries and constructions based on the assumption of a perpetual and normalized condition of war and terror. In a curious reversal, perhaps they give us all thunder.

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Appendix 1:
“Real Life” Furrries at AnthroFest 2007 (Montreal) and C-Ace 2005 (Ottawa)
(Photographs by the Author).



Row 1:

Fursuiters at AnthroFest 2007



Row 2:

Fursuiters at C-Ace 2005



Row 3:

Lifestylers with Very Small Furry at C-Ace



Row 4: A Furry Dragon, Sometimes Known as a “Scaley”- C-Ace 2005



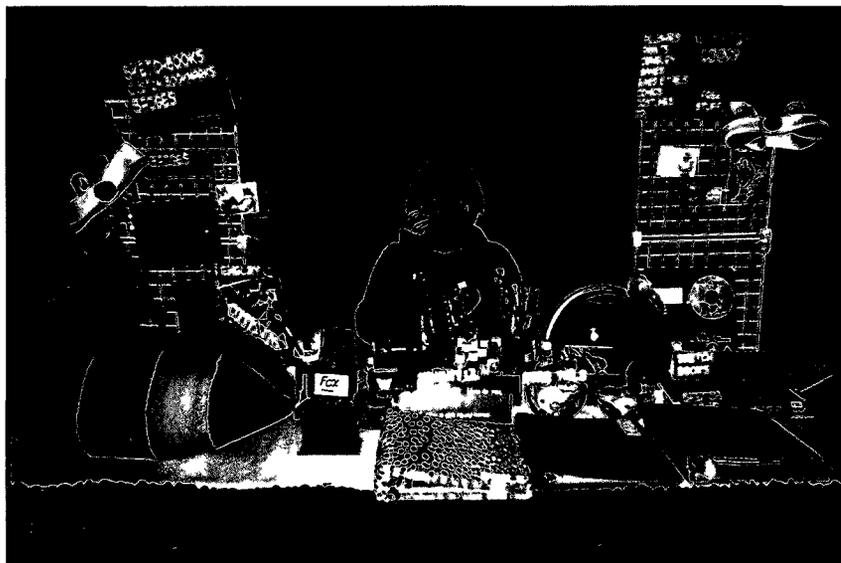
Row 5: Furry Accessories: Ears, Tails and Paws- C-Ace 2005



Row 6:

FURRY ACCESSORIES: MASK, METALLIC TALONS, MAKE-UP – C-ACE

2005



Row 7:

A Dealer's Table at C-Ace 2005



Row8:

Artists' Alley- C-Ace 2005



Row 9: Using Sketchbooks – C-Ace 2005

A Discussion Group- C-Ace 2005

**2007 Results of the University of California Davis Furry Research Team's Survey.
(<http://studyf3.livejournal.com/1383.html>. Accessed 26/10/09)**

**Furry
Survey
Results**

Dear Members of the Furry Fandom,

Thank you again for your continued interest and support for our survey. Because of the overwhelming response, we were able to collect valuable data, and we hope to continue to do so in the future.

Please note:

** In order to preserve the confidentiality of the participants and integrity of the survey, only selected data sets are given.

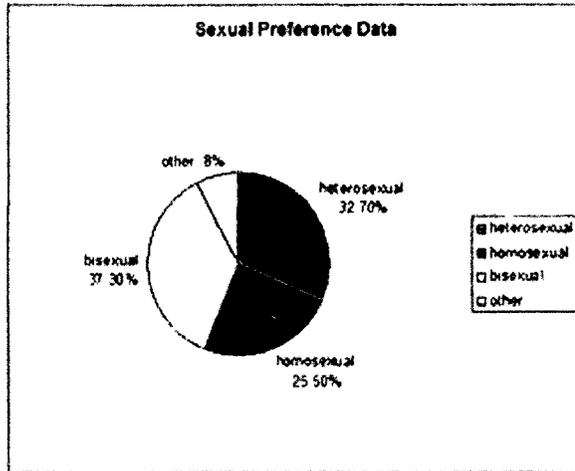
**This data is based on the results of over 600 participants. However, not everyone completed the survey in its entirety.

**Some of the charts may represent rounded figures

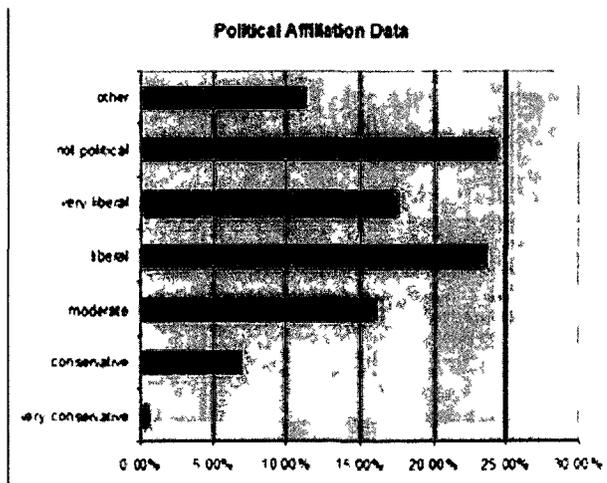
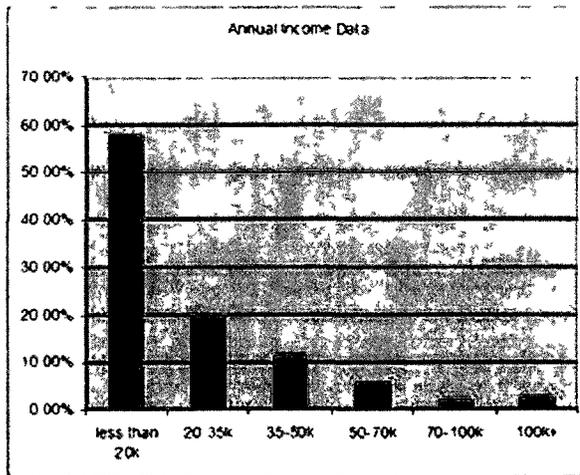
With that in mind, we would like to share some of the information we have collected with your help:

- **Most respondents were young, with the average age of 24.6 years old**
- **Most respondents were male (81%)**
- **Most respondents were White (89%)**
- **Most respondents were American (83%)**
- **The most frequent occupation listed was: Student (38%)**
- **Most respondents did not own a fursuit (82%)**
- **About half of the respondents were in a relationship, and of those that were, 76% were in a relationship with another furry**

Sexual Preference Data:



bisexual = 37.3%, heterosexual = 32.7%, homosexual = 25.5%, other = 8%



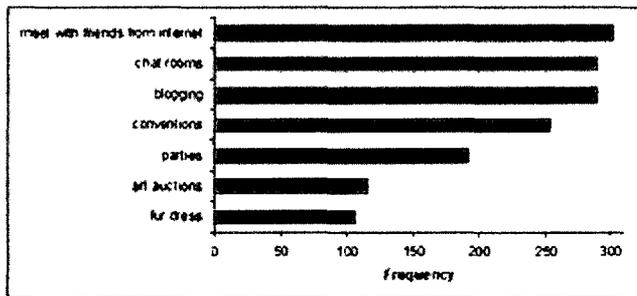
Responses to: "How much of your time do you spend actively participating in the furry community?"

How much of your time do you spend actively participating in the furry community?



** several days a week = 56.9%, once a week = 18.3%, once a month= 8.4%, a few times a year = 16.4%

Furry Activities Frequencies:



** frequency = number of respondents who indicated they participated in these activities. For example, over 300 of the 600 people who took the survey indicated they "met with friends from the internet in real life"

Thank you again for your support with our survey. We will continue to process the data collected. If you have any questions or comments or would like to participate in future research please contact us at studyf3@gmail.com.

The UC Davis Furry Research Team

Charts of Anti-Fur, Satirical and Parody Groups

Name and Logo	Observations	Relevant Dates
SOF (Save Our Fandom)	First group advocating a conservative ideology. Sought the exclusion of lifestylers and gays from the Fandom. Protested "mature content" art displays at conventions. Also known as "Shove Off, Faggots". Advocated return to "Golden Age of Fandom".	Early to mid-1990s. Disbanded by 1995.
TBOF (Take Back Our Fandom)	Coalesced around "Six Shallow Graves" editorial by Richard Chandler in <i>Gallery #25</i> . Platform was similar to SOF above. The first Internet Flame War involved this group.	1996-1998
PVC (Plain Vanilla Furs)	Created by Sidian, this group duplicated the ideology of SOF.	1996
 Burned Furs	Co-founded by Squee Rat and Eric Blumrich. Coalesced with an article by Squee Rat - <i>This Sordid Little Business (The Furry Manifesto)</i> . The group was, perhaps, the largest and most successful conservative protest group. Complained about negative public image produced by fursuiters, plushophilia, bestiality, overt sexual displays at conventions, erotic art. Ridiculed Lifestylers, Animal Spirituality and vegans. Some extremist members threatened, harassed, and flamed opponents of the group. Burned Furs was opposed by groups such as Freezing Furs, Nonaligned Furs, and Furry Peace. Essayist Simo suggested that the real agenda of Burned Furs was an elitist quest for acceptance of Burned Furs artists in the mainstream art world, with a return to domination of the Fandom by "professional artists".	1998-2001
The Antifur Collective	The purpose of this group was stated as "screwing with the minds of people who call themselves furry". The group posted false information and used flaming as a	2000-2001

	tactic in the hope of restoring the Fandom to a previous "Golden Age".	
Third Rail Furs	This was a short-lived successor group to Burned Furs, threatening to turn the "glare of publicity" on inappropriate behavior in the Fandom.	2005
 4chan	An on-line art community, largely anime. Furry posts were discouraged but the site is noted for April Furs' Day, 2003, when a Furry art board was created and flooded with non-Furry art. The site was involved in hacking into Wikipedia and other sites. Furry artists continue to try to post material at this site.	2003 to present.
 Anonymous	A large and amorphous group noted for raids, harassment and "trolling" on Furry websites. Members are committed to "tutz" (mocking and disrupting other Internet sub-cultures for personal amusement). Also committed to opposing Scientology and will accept Furry assistance in "Project Chanology".	n.d.
AWER (Anti-Were and Furry Resource movement)	Founded by "TiggyBot". The first movement opposed to spiritualism and lifestyles within the Were, Furry, and Dragon Fandoms. Opposed spiritual theanthropes. Allowed group to lapse when Second Internet Flame War (Burned Furs) became intense.	1998-2003
 Galamby	A waterfront tavern inserted into FurryMUCK as a center for artists and critics of the Fandom.	Late 1990s

 <p>Eat All Furies</p>	<p>This anti-Furry forum began as a web page and became a journal and ezboard forum under Singing Circus Dog. It harassed and threatened Furies, particularly gay members of the Fandom, and was locked down in 2004 by the administrators of LiveJournal.</p>	<p>2003-2004</p>
<p>FAASA (Furies Against Animal Sexual Abuse)</p>	<p>This was a short-lived group protesting bestialists and zoophiles in the Fandom. It was vigorously attacked by Furies and quickly ceased operations.</p>	<p>1999</p>
 <p>Furs Against Furs</p>	<p>This UK-based group was the European equivalent of Burned Furs. It opposed perceived excessive sexual activity at conventions and the public display of fursuits and costume elements such as ears and tails. The group attempted to host small alternative furreets, but disintegrated as a result of internal political dissent.</p>	<p>c. 2006</p>
<p>Gayfaggotmc</p>	<p>This was an IRC channel on Anthrochat created by Joshua Wouldt, Kasai and Auddwaggn, a zombie grey dragon. It was created to ridicule and troll the fandom, with some emphasis on the gay members of the community. Since its dispersal, a number of LiveJournal sites have claimed to be new "incarnations" of the channel.</p>	<p>2004-c 2005</p>
<p>Stiford</p>	<p>This short-lived group, founded by Darkeskunk, featured front page news, media coverage and editorial opinion on the Fandom.</p>	<p>2006</p>
 <p>LOI Furies</p>	<p>This controversial webforum denies involvement in trolling, hacking and electronic vandalism but has been accused of hacking and taking down the Furotopia site. A splinter group, The Imurgency, is dedicated to trolling and raiding furry websites.</p>	<p>2006-present</p>

 <p>Crush! Yiff! Destroy!</p>	<p>This group is dedicated to discussion of the more absurd and bizarre manifestations of the Fandom from a conservative point of view. It can be highly critical, flaming and trolling Furry websites and discussion groups.</p>	<p>2002-present</p>
 <p>Furrytags.com</p>	<p>This site was originally a photo gallery but also hosted a message board with some anti-furry activity posted on it.</p>	<p>2006-2009</p>
 <p>Something Awful</p>	<p>This large and active website, the property of Richard "Lowtax" Kyanka, hosts parodies, pranks, reviews, opinion pieces, and is home to the SA "goons" who troll and vandalize other web forums. They have vandalized WikiFur on several occasions. One of their traditions is ridiculing and harassing the Fandom, although trolling Furies often fight back. SA "goons" have invaded Furry conventions and the "Awful Link of the Day" frequently features Furry web pages. Following a 2003 Furry effort to spam an internal SA forum with Furry pornography, SA created a "Furry Concentration Camp" and exiled Furry spammers to this location. Furies took it over and posted more pornography, whereupon, SA deleted the forum.</p>	<p>1999 to present.</p>
<p>Portal of Evil</p>	<p>This website catalogues strange, amusing or shocking web pages, and is called "the Yahoo! of the weird". Flamewars occur at times between Furry posters at this site and other PoE users.</p>	<p>n.d.</p>

Table of Anti-Furry Groups within and outside the Fandom. (Information for this table is taken from WikiFur, the Furry Encyclopedia (<http://en.wikifur.com>))

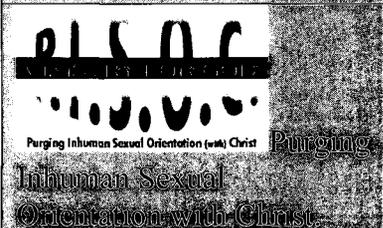
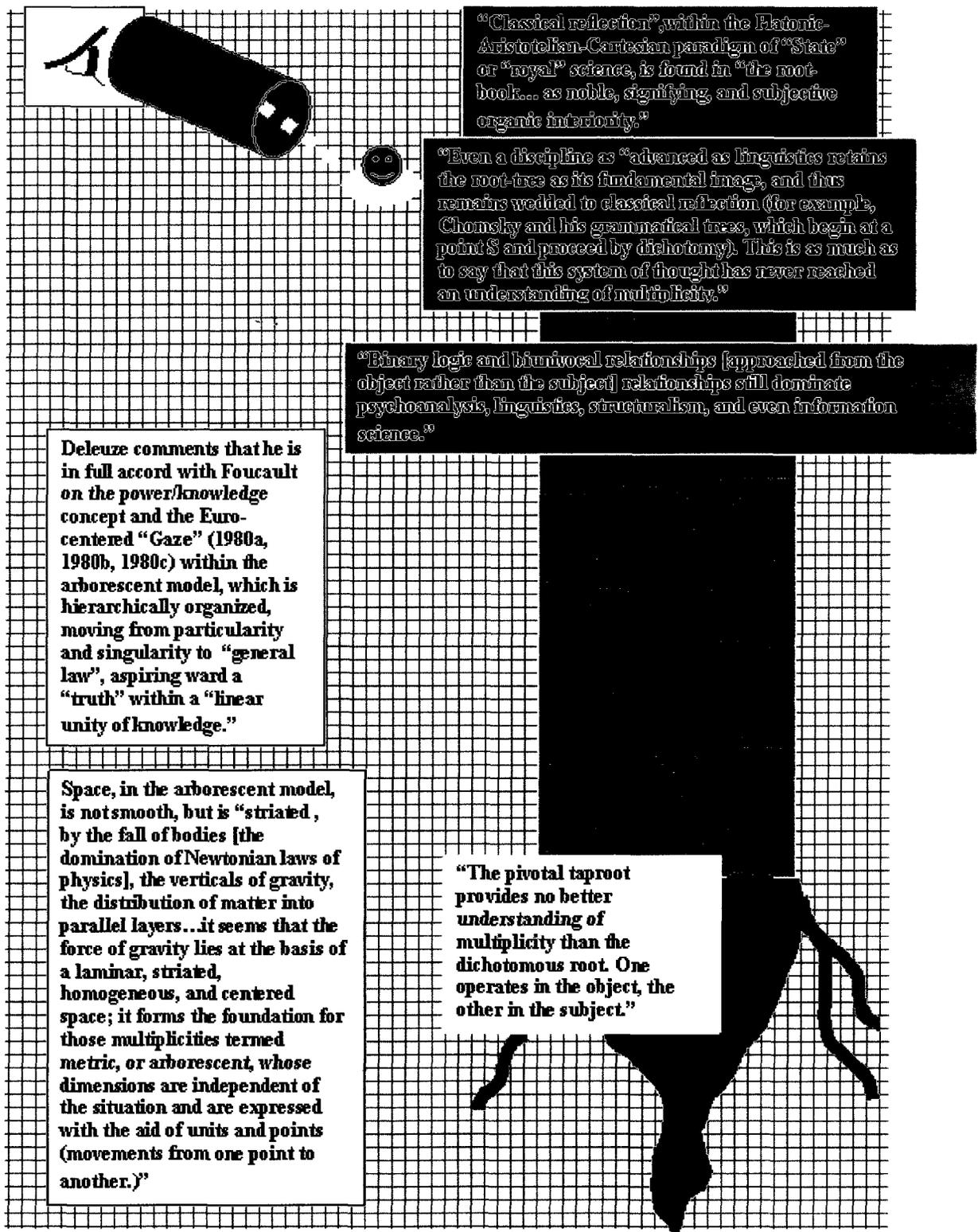
Name and Logo	Observations	Relevant Dates
	Group proposed by Furry erotic artist Doug Wiinger to oppose conservative backlash groups	2001 to present
	A hoax site contrived by 'The Anti-Fur Collective', featuring 'Mrs. White', a concerned parent whose son had become involved with Furies.	2001
	This group was formed to protest the Burned Fur movement, actively accusing the Burned Furs of bigotry and hatred. Although the name is a sardonic comment on Burned Furs, this was a serious, rather than a parody, site.	1999
	The group was initiated by WhiteFur to attempt to reconcile the growing factionalism within the Fandom prior to the Second Internet Flame War.	1998
	Proposed on a Burned Fur message board as their own 'in-house' fake Anti-Furies group in response to groups such as PISOC.	2000
	The group was intended as a parody of Burned Furs and the serious opposition group, Freezing Furs. Today the name is used for splinter Furry groups using recreational drugs. The name has been used by several groups including a deviantART club whose motto is "Drop acid, not bombs". In 2007, Bakedfurs.org, a Furry community dedicated to recreational drug users, came online.	2006(?) to present
	This website parodied ministry-based, fundamentalist based 'intervention' sites and televangelists. It featured humorous stories, among them a report that Furies maintain secret bases under San Francisco, where they experiment on Christian children to turn them into Furies.	2006
	This parody of Wikipedia is a wiki operating on MediaWiki software. It is noted for 'biased, racist, homophobic and politically incorrect coverage of topics' - including many furry topics. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Encyclopedia_Dramatica)	2004 to present

Table of Parody and Satirical Groups. (Information for this table is taken from WikiFur, the Furry Encyclopedia (<http://en.wikifur.com>))



“Classical reflection”, within the Platonic-Aristotelian-Cartesian paradigm of “State” or “royal” science, is found in “the root-book... as noble, signifying, and subjective organic interiority.”

“Even a discipline as “advanced as linguistics retains the root-tree as its fundamental image, and thus remains wedded to classical reflection (for example, Chomsky and his grammatical trees, which begin at a point S and proceed by dichotomy). This is as much as to say that this system of thought has never reached an understanding of multiplicity.”

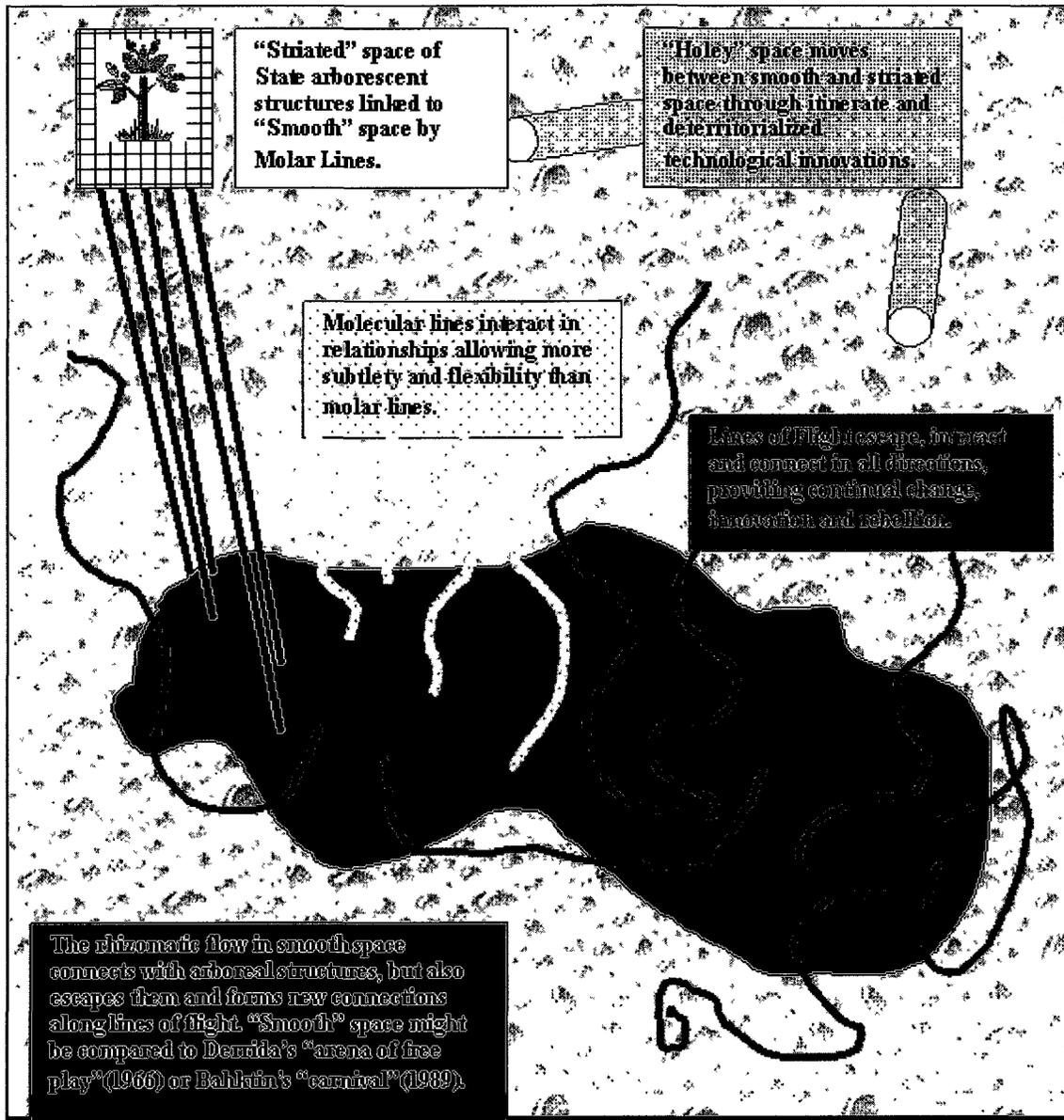
“Binary logic and binivocal relationships [approached from the object rather than the subject] relationships still dominate psychoanalysis, linguistics, structuralism, and even information science.”

Deleuze comments that he is in full accord with Foucault on the power/knowledge concept and the Euro-centered “Gaze” (1980a, 1980b, 1980c) within the arborescent model, which is hierarchically organized, moving from particularity and singularity to “general law”, aspiring ward a “truth” within a “linear unity of knowledge.”

Space, in the arborescent model, is not smooth, but is “striated, by the fall of bodies [the domination of Newtonian laws of physics], the verticals of gravity, the distribution of matter into parallel layers...it seems that the force of gravity lies at the basis of a laminar, striated, homogeneous, and centered space; it forms the foundation for those multiplicities termed metric, or arborescent, whose dimensions are independent of the situation and are expressed with the aid of units and points (movements from one point to another.)”

“The pivotal taproot provides no better understanding of multiplicity than the dichotomous root. One operates in the object, the other in the subject.”

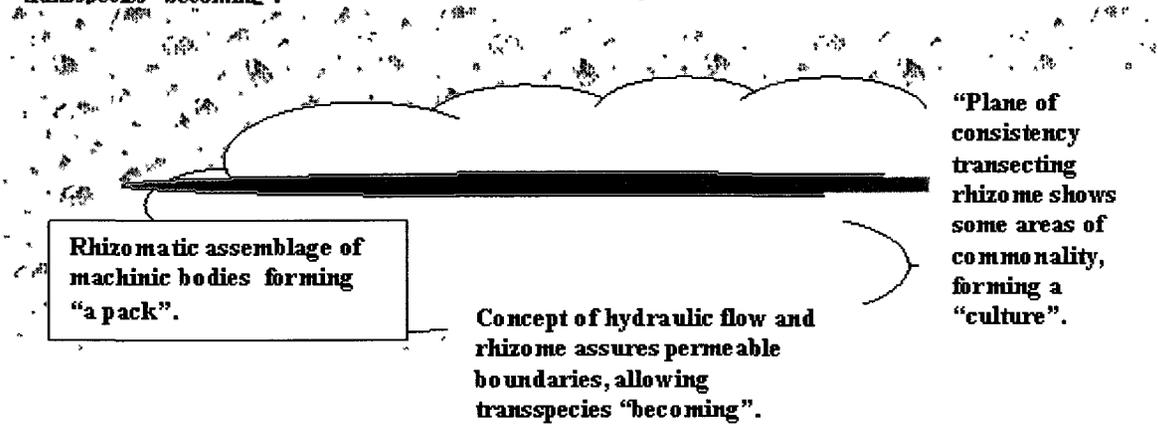
“State” or “Royal” Science: the Arborescent Model. (following Deleuze and Guattari 1987:“Introduction: Rhizome”:4-6, “Treatise on Nomadology: The War Machine”: 369-370)



The Rhizome in "Smooth Space".

**The Deleuzian view of "culture"-
Individuality, relatedness, and
transspecies "becoming".**

Hydraulic flow of time and life

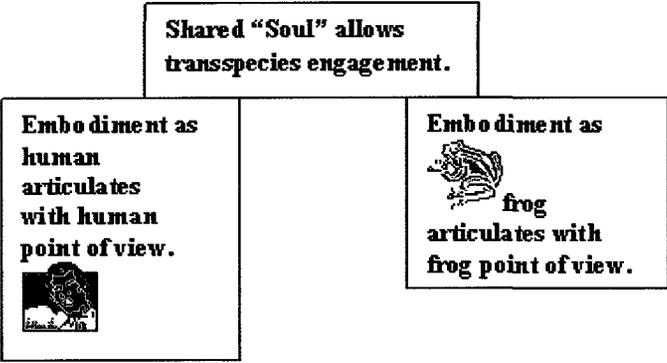


**Rhizomatic assemblage of
machinic bodies forming
"a pack".**

**Concept of hydraulic flow and
rhizome assures permeable
boundaries, allowing
transspecies "becoming".**

**"Plane of
consistency
transecting
rhizome shows
some areas of
commonality,
forming a
"culture".**

**Viveiros de Castro's concept
of Amerindian perspectivism.**



**The Body, the Pack, and the Plane of Consistency vs. Amerindian Perspectivism (From
Deleuze and Guattari 1987, Viveiros de Castro 1998)**



Theory of Faciality: The “Cartesian mind-body dualism and the feminist concept of the body as reproductive machine alienated from the “self” (1987 Martin) are suggested in Deleuze and Guattori’s theory of Faciality. In the regime of Signifying Signs, the body is a machinic assemblage with the head removed and replaced by an iconic Face. The Face, like Foucault’s Gaze, is a powerful semiotic signifier. It may be the face of the Despot-God, the face of a film star, the face on the Shroud of Turin- but it incorporates the elements of the Euro-face described above. The process is one of deterritorialization and transformation into a regime of signifying signs when required by specific despotic or authoritarian regimes.

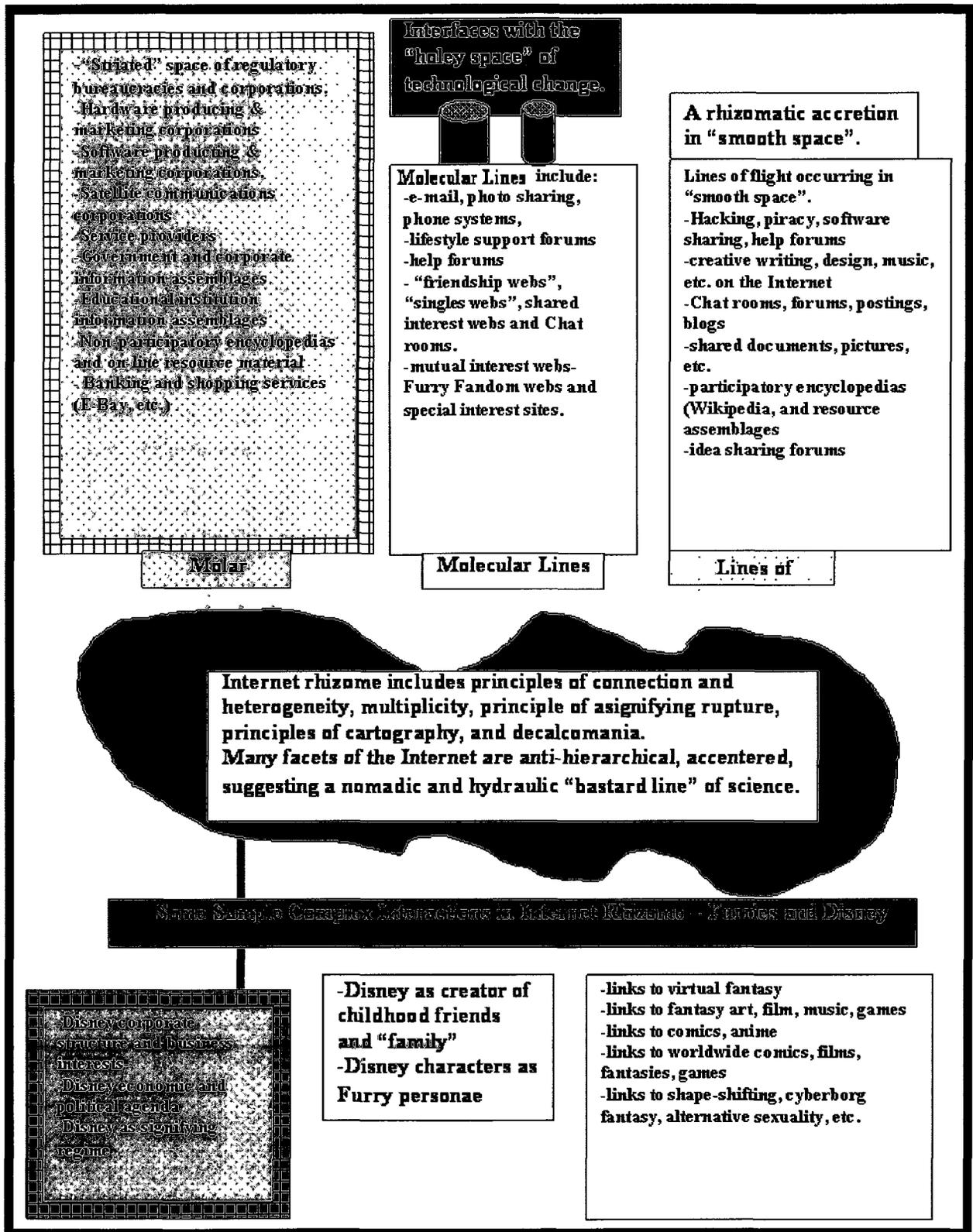
The Body as Machine-Assemblage may be extended with tools to become a new assemblage, a Nature-Society machinic assemblage – as in the nomadic Body-Stirrup-Horse assemblage. The concept suggests deterritorialization, particularly with nomad artisans, and may also encompass Marxian alienation from the means of production, or Durkheim’s *anomie*, but Deleuze insists that a society is defined by its “amalgamations”, not its tools. Thus, there is no “Stone Age” society, but a pre-signifying regime resistant to the State.

The Deleuzian Body is a machine-assemblage.

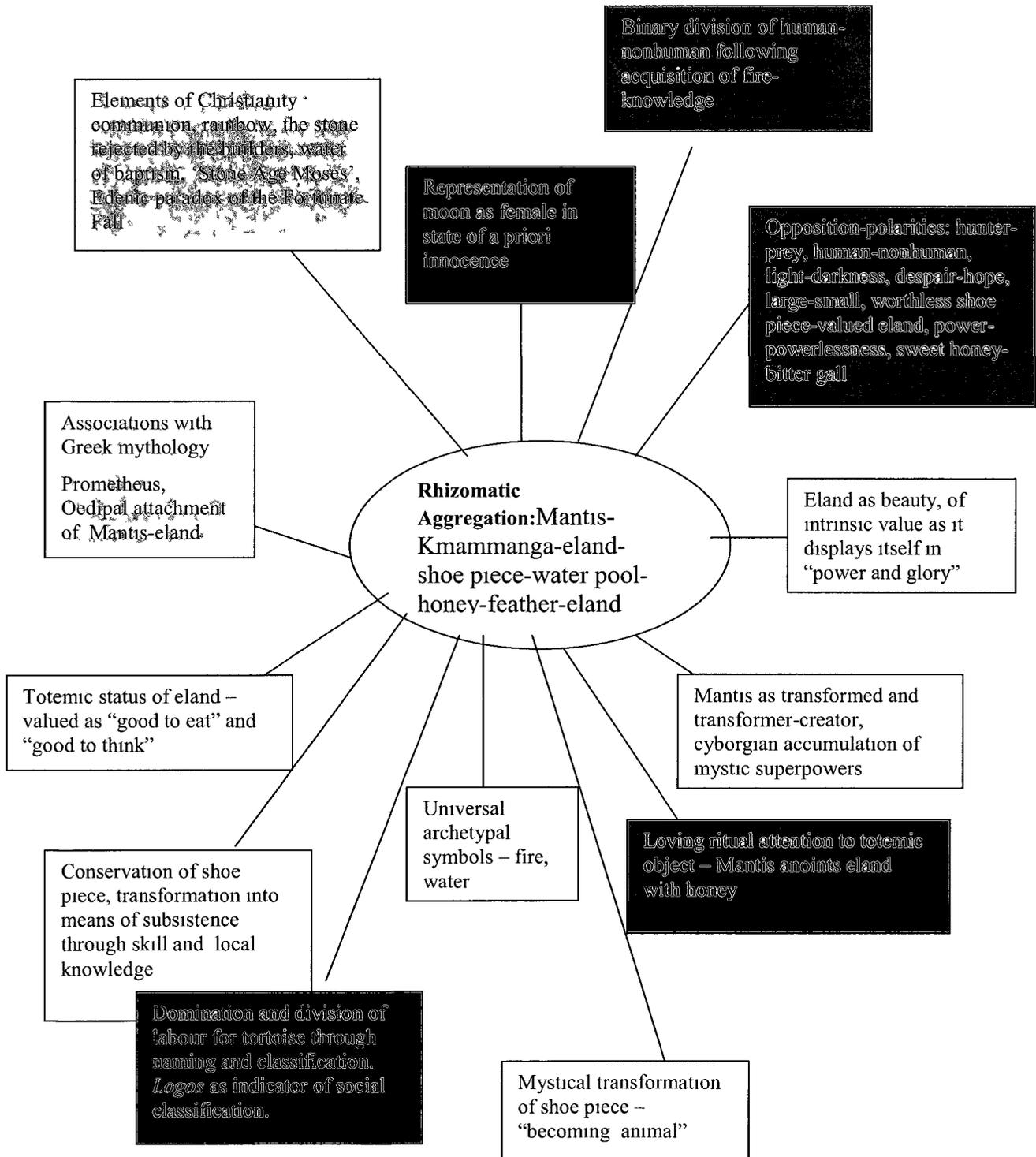
“An assemblage is a constellation of singularities and traits deducted from the flow – selected, organized, stratified- in such a way as to converge (consistency) artificially and naturally.” “An assemblage has neither base nor superstructure, neither deep structure nor superficial structure; it flattens all of its dimensions onto a single plane of consistency upon which reciprocal presuppositions and mutual insertions play themselves out.” (1987 Deleuze and Guattari: 90)

“We think the material or machinic aspect of an assemblage relates not to the production of goods but rather to a precise state of intermingling of bodies in a society, including all the attractions and repulsions, sympathies and antipathies, alterations, amalgamations, penetrations, and expansions that affect bodies of all kinds in their relations to one another.” Deleuze, considering the example of a pack of wolves, finds it problematic that a body can exist in singularity.

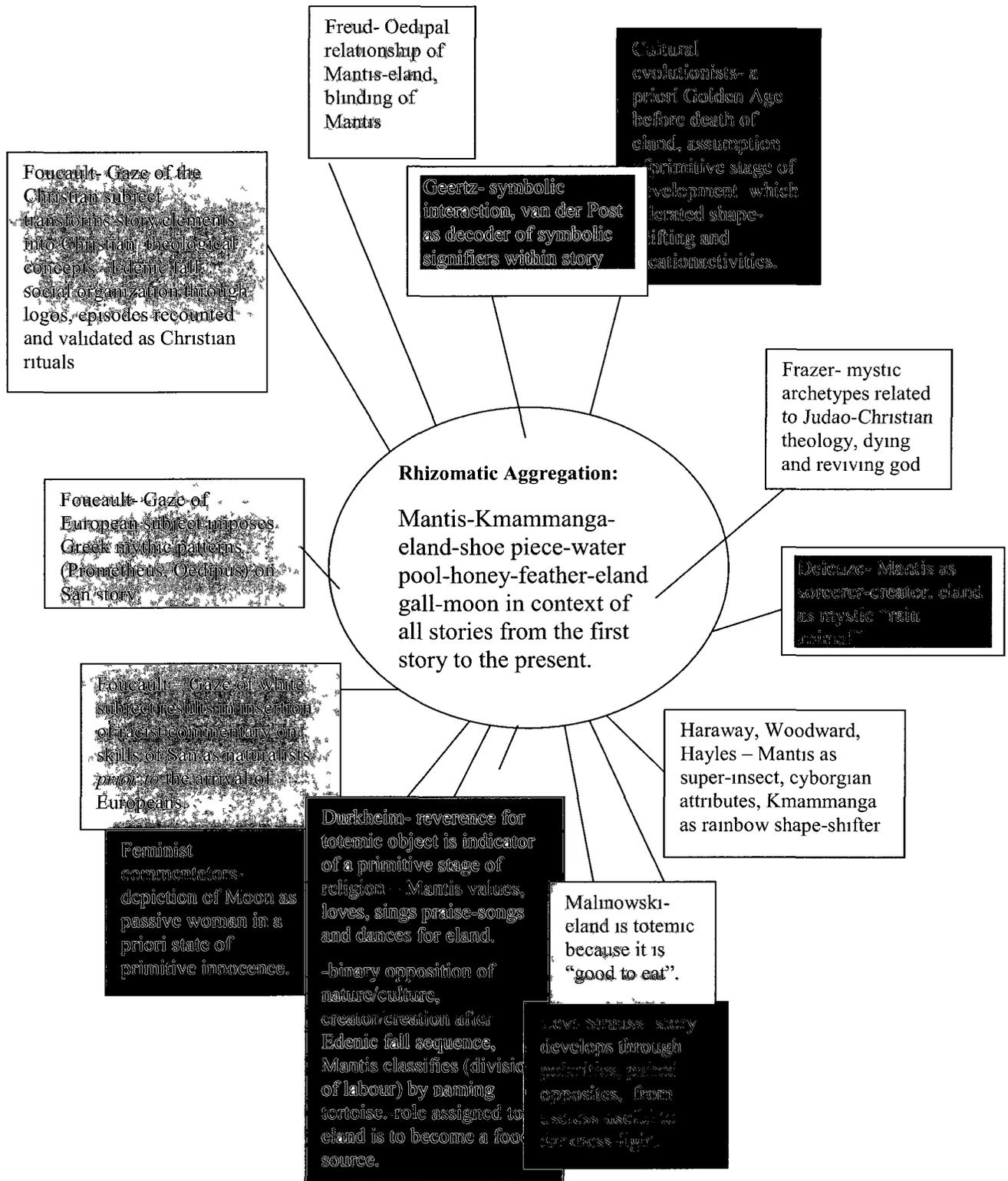
The Deleuzian Body.



Relating Concepts from Deleuze and Guattari (1987) to Some Aspects of the Virtual World of the Internet.



Rhizomatic Aggregation and "Lines of Flight" Associated with the Mantis-Eland Story.



Rhizomatic Aggregation and “Lines of Flight” Associated with the Multi-Voiced Discourses of Totemism in the Mantis-Eland Story.

Appendix 3:
“It Gives Me Thunder”

Questionnaire And Interview Script
By: Chris Seabrook

January, 2005

PREPARED LIST OF PROMPTS AND FIELD LOG OF RESPONSES:

THE ADDRESS OF THE WEB SITE ASSOCIATED WITH THIS RESEARCH PROJECT: Pending.

THE ACCESS PASSWORD FOR THE WEBSITE: Pending.

CODED DATE OF INTERVIEW:

CODED INTERVIEW SITE:

CODED IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANT:

A. INTRODUCTION:

1. Have you received a copy of the research Letter of Information, the Informed Consent Form, and the interview script?
2. Have you read the Letter of Information, the Informed Consent Form, and the interview script?
3. Do you understand the Letter of Information, and the Informed Consent Form?
4. Do you have any questions about the Letter Of Information, the Informed Consent Form, the research being conducted, the institution it is being conducted for, the faculty it is being conducted for, or myself (the researcher)?
5. Do you have any other questions at this time?
6. Would you mind briefly outlining the main points of the research project?
7. Do you feel that you are able to give consent for yourself to participate in research such as the research that I am currently conducting research (as outlined in the Letter Of Information, and the Informed Consent Form)?
8. If you are above the age of consent, do you give consent to participate in this research (as outlined in the Letter Of Information, and the Informed Consent Form)?
9. Do you understand that you may end this discussion/ interview at any time without penalty, and that you are not obligated to me in any way (including any obligation to finish a partially completed interview/questionnaire)? Do you know that you may indicate a desire to withdraw from the research project at any time by any means you chose, up to the date of publication.
10. Have you seen the contact information? Do you know that you are able to decide to withdraw form the research project at any time after this, up until the date of publication, by contacting either my supervisors or myself?
11. Phase 2: Website Access:
 - a) Do you wish to access the secure website associated with this project?
 - b) Do you know what the website address is? It can be found on the letter of information.
 - c) Do you know what the enrolment
 - d) Do you have any concerns about the security of the website that you would like to discuss?
 - e) Do you have any questions or concerns about the contents of the website that you would like to discuss?
12. Do you understand that you are not being asked to disclose any information that may be inconvenient or even dangerous to you (such as your real name, or anything else that can be used to identify you to the general public)?

13. Do you have any concerns about the security of your anonymity?
14. Do you have any objections to the proposed research?
15. Do you have any other comments that you would like to make at this time?

B. IDENTIFICATION DIALOGUE:

16. Is there anything that you would like to talk about?
17. What would you like to say?
18. Would you like to tell me who the Furrries are?
19. Would you like to tell me about the Furrries?
20. Would you like to tell me about yourself?
21. Is there anything else that you would like to talk about?

C. TYPOLOGY AND CLUSTER AFFILIATION DIALOGUE:

1. Do you associate with the Furrries?
2. Are you a Furry?
3. Did someone else introduce you to the culture?
4. Was their any type of initiation or ritual?
5. Would you call yourself a specific type of Furry? Please describe some of the attributes that you associate with this type of Furry.
6. Do you have a Fursona?
7. Is your Fursona a permanent identity?
8. Do you have more than one Fursona? How many?
9. Is/ are your Fursona(s) an independent being that is separate from yourself?
10. If the Fursona is not a separate entity: Are your Fursona(s) independent identities that are separate from a non-Furry identity?
11. Does it/ do they represent a particular animal?
12. Would you like to describe your relationship with your Fursona(s)?
13. How do you get in touch with/ channel/ embody/ polymorph into/ experience your Fursona(s)?
14. When do and where do you get in touch with/ channel/ embody/ polymorph into/ experience your Fursona(s)?
15. Is there a ritual associated with getting in touch with/ channeling/ embodying/ polymorphing into/ experiencing your Fursona(s)?
16. What are the conditions under which your Fursona manifests?
17. If the subject is wearing a costume or some other type of signifier: Would you like to tell me about your costume?
18. Do you have more than one costume? How many?
19. Does it/ do they represent a particular animal?
20. When and where do you wear your costume(s)?
21. Did you make your costume? If not, who did?
22. How was it made?
23. If the subject is not wearing a costume: Do you have a costume?
24. Would you mind discussing any ideas that have, or are aware of, relating to “race” or “ethnicity”?
25. Do you see yourself as belonging to any particular “race” or “ethnic” group?
26. Would you like to discuss your “ethnic” heritage?
27. Would you mind discussing any ideas that have relating to biological sexes?
28. Do you consider yourself to have a particular biological sex?
29. Would you mind telling me what sex you are (if not obvious)?
30. Would you mind discussing any ideas that you have of gender?
31. Would you mind describing your gender?
32. Would you mind briefly telling me about any ideas that you have about sexuality or sexual orientation?

33. Do you feel comfortable talking about your own sexuality,? Would you mind briefly describing your sexual orientation or sexuality?
34. Would you mind discussing any ideas that you have about socio-political and economic class or positioning?
35. Would you mind describing your socio-political and economic class/ positioning?

D. AFFECTIVE DIALOGUE:

1. Why are you a Furry?
2. Did you always feel that you were a Furry?
3. How did you find out that you were a Furry?
4. Did you have a particular experience that triggered your “becoming fur”?
5. Would you please describe this experience to me? Would you describe this experience as a sudden awareness that you were a Furry?
6. Did someone else play a role in your “becoming fur”? What was this role?
7. What was your relation to them then?
8. What is your current relation to them?
9. If there was an initiation or ritual: Would you like to describe the initiation or ritual that allowed you to enter the community?
10. What was it like to become a Furry?
11. How does being a Furry make you feel?
12. If the Fursona is a separate entity: Would you like to tell me about the relations between yourself and these entities?
13. If the Fursona is not a separate entity, but is a separate identity: How would you describe the relations between these identities?
14. Why do you have that particular Fursona(s)?
15. Would you like to tell me about your Fursona(s)?
16. How/ when/ where/ why did you come to have this relationship between yourself and your Fursona(s)?
17. What is it like to get in touch with/ channel/ embody/ polymorph into/ experience your Fursona?
18. How do you feel when you get in touch with/ channel/ embody/ polymorph into/ experience your Fursona? Do you feel more empowered than you would otherwise?
19. If the subject is either currently wearing a costume or some other type of signifier, or wears them/ it at other times: How do you feel when you are in costume?
20. If the subject is either currently wearing a costume or some other type of signifier, or wears them/ it at other times: How did you get the idea for it/ them and what does it/ what do they represent to you?
21. If the subject is either currently wearing a costume or some other type of signifier, or wears them/ it at other times: Could you describe your relationship to the animal that your costume(s) represents?
22. If the subject does not wear costumes; why do you prefer not to wear a costume?
23. Is there a Furry community? Would you like to describe it?
24. How would you describe Furry-to-Furry relations?
25. How would you describe platonic relations among Furies?
26. Do you have any tendencies or feelings about platonic relations that you would like to discuss?
27. How would you describe romantic/ sexual relations among Furies?
28. Do you have any tendencies or feelings about romantic/ sexual relations that you would like to discuss?
29. How do you relate to other Furies?
30. How do you relate to other Furies at gatherings like this?
31. How do you relate to other Furies on the Web?
32. Are most of your friends Furies? Are you more comfortable with Furies?
33. Do you feel that you are particularly associated with other Furies who are/ become/ embody/ channel/ etc. the same animal as you? Are your closest associates Furies, Furies who wear the same type of costume that you wear, Furies of the same sub-group (Plushies, Scalies, etc.)?
34. Are Furies your primary social group?
35. Do you see other Furies as a support group?
36. Do you see other Furies as relatives or family?
37. Would you like to describe your Furry fandom based kinships?

- 38 Do you have any genetic kin in the Furry fandom?
- 39 Do you have any non-genetic relatives (ex adopted) kin in the Furry fandom
- 40 How would you describe power relations within the Furry fandom?
- 41 Do you think there is a social hierarchy among Furies? Is one Furry dominant, another submissive? Is there a "clan" structure or "clan leader"?
- 42 Are Furry visual artists, writers or musicians particularly valued?
- 43 What are the different types of "Meetups" or conferences?
- 44 How important are "Meetups" and conferences?
- 45 Would like to describe the socio-cultural functions or particularities of any gatherings that you know of?
- 46 What is your personal feeling about the gatherings that you are/ have attended?
- 47 Do you think that there are advantages to being a Furry?
- 48 Are there times when you think that being a Furry is a drawback?
- 49 Would more people benefit from the experience of "becoming fur"?
- 50 Do Furies have a message for the world?
- 51 Could you describe what you think about hunting, firearms control, vegetarianism, animal rights issues, conservation and environmental protection, preservation of endangered species?
- 52 Are there other cultural, political, social, economic, etc issues that you feel strongly about?

C LOCATION AND LIFESTYLE DIALOGUE:

- 1 Would you like to describe where you live? House, apartment, with your parents, with other Furies?
- 2 What is your neighborhood like? Urban, rural, sub-urban, campus, etc ?
- 3 What do you do during the day? Work at your job, attend school or college, volunteer, hang out with friends, watch TV, surf the Net?
- 4 What form of media has had the most influence on you? TV, movies, books, etc ? What kind of media are you most interested in (cartoons, documentaries, comic books, research journals, etc)? How would you describe how media presentations have influenced your life as a Furry?
- 5 How would you describe your economic situation?
- 6 How would you describe your political situation?
- 7 How would you describe your social situation?
- 8 How would you describe your cultural situation?
- 9 How would you describe your environmental situation (here, at home, at work, etc)?
- 10 How would you describe your personal psychological situation?
- 11 Do you socialize exclusively with other Furies? Where do you go? Could you describe your social life?
- 12 How would you describe your "cultural" situation? Are you interested primarily, or only, in Furry culture? Are you involved in any overt cultural production (such as art)?
- 13 Do you have a Web page, or a peer-to-peer hub? Do you spend a lot of time on the Internet? What kind of sites do you visit? How frequently do you visit Furry sites? Do you participate in chat rooms? Do you subscribe to any newsgroups? Are you on any mailing lists? Are you on Furry mailing lists?

D FURRY RELATIONSHIPS

- 53 How do Furies relate to non-Furies?
- 54 How do you relate to non-Furies?
- 55 How do non-anthropomorphic animals relate to non-anthropomorphic animals?
- 56 How do Furies relate to non-anthropomorphic animals?
- 57 How do you relate to non-anthropomorphic animals?
- 58 How do non-anthropomorphic animals relate to Furies?
- 59 How do non-anthropomorphic animals relate to you?
- 60 How do non-Furry people (Hyoomans) relate to non-Furry people?
- 61 How do Furies relate to non-Furry people (Hyoomans)?
- 62 How do you relate to non-Furry people (Hyoomans)?
- 63 How do non-Furry people (Hyoomans) relate to Furies?
- 64 How do non-Furry people (Hyoomans) relate to you?
- 65 Do you think that Furies are well accepted in society in general?

Appendix 4: Portrait of the Average Fur

- considers himself part of the fandom, wants to be an anthro, is sexually attracted to anthropomorphic beings, and enjoys drawing anthropomorphic beings. Many, but not most, believe they have a spiritual connection to a particular animal.
- is between 11 and 20 years of age.
- lives in the US.
- is single (50-50 chance he's looking for one).
- (If he has one) has partner that's a furry, and he likes it.
- is male.
- prefers his biological gender.
- has a fursona whose gender is the same as his and prefers it that way.
- is heterosexual. Many others, but not most, are homosexual.
- has a fursona with the same sexual preference as his, else it is Bisexual.
- has looked at yiff artwork first for the eroticism, and second for the art. He has read it for the same reasons, but to a lesser extent.
- believes sex to be of average importance to the fandom.
- holds sex to an unimportant to average level, personally.
- believes sex to be of average importance to other furies.
- believes the general public perceives sex to be extremely important to furies.
- has never attended a furmeet.
- is not planning on attending a furmeet.
- is a member of both deviantART and Fur Affinity.
- joins an online furry chatroom daily, if ever.
- has never participated in LARP or online roleplaying.
- has never attended a furry convention (if so, it's only once a year).
- visits innocent furry websites daily or many times each week.
- visits erotic furry sites daily or many times each week.
- participates in online furry communities daily or many times each week.
- has never written innocent or erotic furry literature.
- draws innocent furry artwork many times a week, if ever.
- has never drawn erotic furry artwork.
- plays online games daily or multiple times per week, if ever.
- never LARPs.
- never role plays online.
- never attends non-furry conventions.
- never participates in non-furry online communities.
- never attended any furry conventions.
- has considered himself a furry for 3-5 years.
- has known about the fandom fo 3-5 years.
- extremely strongly considers himself a part of the furry fandom.
- is a sci-fi fan, is active in online communities, is a fan of RPGs, is a carnivore, and is a fan of anime.
- loves furry artwork.
- loves furry conventions.
- loves furry online communities.
- loves furry literature.
- thinks fursuiting is meh.

- thinks plushophilia is revolting.
- really thinks zoophilia is revolting.
- thinks artwork is extremely important to the fandom.
- thinks literature is extremely important to the fandom.
- thinks online communities are extremely important to the fandom.
- either thinks MUDs and RPGs are of utmost importance to the fandom or of medium importance.
- thinks conventions are extremely important to the fandom.
- thinks fursuited is of medium importance to the fandom.
- identifies with either a Wolf or Red Fox
- has probably chosen their fursona because they feel they share the traits of that animal.
- considers himself to be completely human, while admiring some aspects of animals.
- believes the public's perception of furies to be inaccurate.
- does not inform people of their furriness (but if he does, the informed have mixed reactions).
- thinks non-furries respond negatively to furriness.
- has not met any furies in person, but if he has, it's no more than 5.
- knows of 3-5 other furs who are friends or acquaintances, if any.
- informs furry friends, best non-furry friends, non-furry friends, best furry friends, and his significant other of his furriness.

Portrait of the Average Fur from the Ultimate Furry Survey by “Supuhstar” (“Ultimate Furry Survey”. [http://wikifur.com/wiki/Ultimate Furry Survey](http://wikifur.com/wiki/Ultimate_Furry_Survey). Accessed 09/01/10)

Visual Misrepresentation and the Construction of the “Furry Myth”.

Furry observers may well be concerned about the visual imagery of the Fandom that has been produced in magazine articles and television productions. In a 2002 press release, the BBC announced a new series, “Anna in Wonderland”, featuring “lesbian ex-nun” Anna Nolan in encounters with various scintillating sub-cultures – a female rock band and sex commune called “Rich Bitch”, a Christian fundamentalist group that specialized in “Gay Conversion”, “Clairvoyant Dating”, male prostitution in Melbourne, Australia, and an encounter with Furies: “Bear and Wabbit explain that “yiffing” is their word for petting & sex & ask Anna to join them in a group “yiff” otherwise known as a “fur pile”.

(http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2002/01_january/16/annainwonderland.shtml.

Accessed 09/11/09) The Furry community has already appeared in a number of popular television programs that will be discussed in the chapter on mass media.

The compelling visual imagery of *Vanity Fair*'s early article on the Fandom is illustrated in Figure 32. (Gurley 2001) The illustrations for this article on the Midwest FurFest, coupled with Gurley's text, may indicate the genesis of a “Furry Myth” that controls and molds the public view of the Furry sub-culture. I am not suggesting comparability with the devastating, indeed, genocidal, “Bushmen Myth”, but the role of visual representation in reducing complex cultural phenomena to a few simplistic iconographic

images cannot be ignored. Gurley's article begins with the large photograph of Fox Wolfie Galen "with his beloved stuffed animals". Galen is presented as a "plushophile" with an irresistible attraction to high-school mascots: "Fox Wolfie Galen said he does have intercourse with his stuffed animals but more often rubs himself externally on the fur....There are people who do kinkier things than me with their plush. Some people put openings in all their plush." (Gurley 2001:182), and he reinforces the "plushie" motif with comments from "Ostrich": "For a while, he concedes, he was a "plushie", which is the word for a person who has a strong-usually erotic-attachment to stuffed animals..." (Gurley 2001:176) Galen is also represented as a practitioner of bestiality: "In high school, he said, he experimented with bestiality. "Usually German shepherds, Labrador retrievers, size-comparable things", he said. "It all started because the dog started it. The dog would come and start trying to hump your leg and I'd be like, Wow, that's interesting..."(Gurley 2001: 182) Gurley goes on to describe an interview with sex researcher, Katherine Gates: "Gates' book features chapters on fat admiration, pony play, balloon fetishists, and, on the dark side, the crush freaks." (Gurley 2001:184) He includes another encounter with Galen: "When I came back to his lair, Fox Wolfie Galen was in a full-body tiger suit. He was gesturing to a rip in the costume, between his legs...Outside his house, Fox Wolfie Galen was waving good-bye to me- with a fox hand puppet." (Gurley 2001:184) The article concludes with an interview with Ostrich: "He confirms there was a fair amount of wild sex at the convention." (Gurley 2001: 196) Gurley's emphasis on the extreme character of Fox Wolfie Galen, his inclusion of Gates' remarks on "incredibly deviant sex" and his description of "crushies" suggest what may be the first element of the "Furry Myth":

1. Furies are into wild, deviant sex, sometimes with overtones of violence and bestiality, and practice it at their conventions.

Two illustrations in the *Vanity Fair* story show women at the Midwest FurFest, one of Babs Bunny, a Furry entertainer, in a fursuit, and one of author Katherine Gates (who is not a Furry), holding a handgun to the head of a stuffed animal. The remaining illustrations depict men, either in fursuits or in groups wearing partial costumes. In an interview with Ostrich, Gurley addresses the question of sexual

orientation: “He sits on the chair and says there is a low percentage of women in the fandom, and a preponderance of gay men- or seemingly gay. “I am not really sure myself that as many of them are gay as think they are. It’s just more, you like this person because of who they are rather than for their body. And we find as the number of women increases, the number of people who thought they were gay but decided otherwise increases, too. I know a couple people who thought they were gay until they met a furry girl.” (Gurley 2001: 181) In contrast, Gurley presents the 85th Army Reserve Division, also attending a “commanders’ convention” at the hotel and standing around the lobby in camouflage gear during a Furry parade:

“One square-jawed hard-ass stares at a rabbit-eared furry for a moment and, finally, says, “Yeah!” It’s sarcastic. He sounds like a high-school jock sizing up the class freak.

“Unusual,” says a Sergeant Major Jennings.

“I think it’s comical, myself,” says one of his subordinates.

“God bless America,” says the other....

A Lieutenant Colonel Flowers is taking it all in, good-naturedly. “A little unusual,” he says.

“Of course, they’d probably say the same thing about us.” (Gurley 2001: 188)

Gurley goes on to inform the reader that officers of the 85th Army Reserve Division did identify Furry activities at the convention as homosexual activity, but viewed it with a tolerant attitude. Gurley’s presentation and the preponderance of photographs of male Furies suggest a second element in the possible formation of a “Furry Myth”.



KING OF THE PLUSHIES
 Fox Wolfie Galen
 with his beloved stuffed
 animals. Photographed at
 his home in Pennsylvania
 on January 12, 2001

PLEASURES OF THE FUR

Welcome to the world of “furrries”: the thousands of Americans who’ve gotten in touch with their inner raccoon, or wolf, or fox. Judging from the Midwest FurFest, this is no hobby. It’s sex; it’s religion; it’s a whole new way of life

BY GEORGE GURLEY

A moose is loitering outside a hotel in the Chicago suburb of Arlington Heights. The moose actually a man in a full-body moose costume—is here for a convention . . . and so is the porcupine a few feet away, as well as the many foxes and wolves.

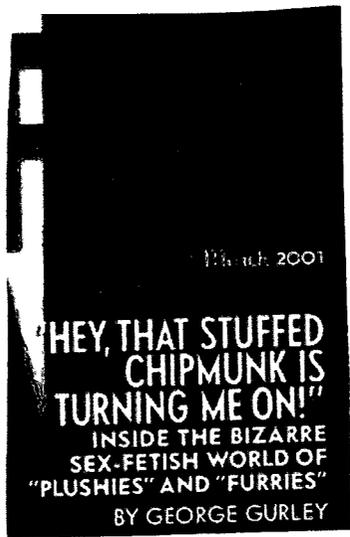
Even the people in regular clothes have

a little something (ferret hand puppet, rabbit ears) to set them apart from the ordinary hotel guests. One man in jeans and a button-down shirt gets up from a couch in the lobby and walks over to the elevator, revealing a fluffy tail dragging behind him. The elevator doors open. Inside, a fellow is kissing a man with antlers on his head.

The other hotel guests look stunned. “We’re a group of people who like things having to do with animals and cartoons,” a man in a tiger suit tells a woman. “We’re furrries.”

“So cute,” the woman says. Welcome to the Midwest FurFest. Here, a number of “furrries” people

Fox Wolfie Galen among his Plush Toys. (Gurley 2001: 174)



"I am a tiger in a human body. I am very neurotic about having my paws sticky. They have to be washed."



PLUSH NATION
 "Babs Bunny, top, sings 'Girls Just Want to Have Fun' at the Midwest FurFest Above: puppeteer Steve Plunkett with his puppet Scarlett at the FurFest Right: furry leader Christopher Roth (Tiger Cowboy) and Jeremy Normand (Simba T. Lion) at the bowling party



FURRIES' NIGHT OUT
 Clockwise from top right: Furies show some tail. From left: Scott Hubbard, Zach Taylor, Joey Rufus, Brian Moore and Chris Eheart. Jeremy Normand (Simba T. Lion) exults. Jeff Ruhnke (BJ Buttons) digs for "plush." Photographed in St. Louis at their New Year's Eve bowling party

Cover page, "Plush Nation" and "Furries' Night Out". (Gurley 2001: 174, 176, 188)

2. The Furry Fandom is largely composed of homosexuals. “Real men” don’t feel threatened by this, but do find Furrries amusing.

One of only two sociological studies of the Fandom is David Rust’s *The Sociology of Furry Fandom* (Rust 2000. In *The Darken Hollow*. <http://www.visi.com/~phantos/furrysoc.html>. Accessed 15/09/01) Rust’s study is somewhat dated and incomplete, but he confirms the observation that there is an active body of “Furry Myths” and that one of these myths is the “presupposition” that “In Furry; 90% of the men are gay.” (Rust 2000:3) From his study Rust concludes that “Truth be told, there are many more homosexual members of the fandom than in general society. However, it is not- in my research- an exact reversal. In fact, between the three classifications of homosexual, bisexual and heterosexual (with “homosexual” encompassing both gay men and lesbians), homosexuality is still in the minority. However, surprisingly, bisexuality makes up an enormous 48% of all Furrries responding to the survey.” (Rust 2000:4)

One of the strongest motifs in the Gurley article is his repetitive portrayal of Furrries as social misfits who find their true identities within the Fandom. The opening interview is with Keith Dickinson, “a self-described ‘computer geek’” who “was so depressed he could barely bring himself to go to the grocery store. And then it hit him. He started to believe that, somewhere deep down, he was actually ... a polar bear.” (Gurley 2001: 176) Gurley moves on to Dickinson’s “skinny, longhaired fedora-wearing sidekick”, an art student who, last year, brought the ashes of his dead cat to FurFest. (Gurley 2001: 176) “Ostrich” reveals himself as a failure at ballet who isolated himself in the country until he found the fandom. (Gurley 2001: 181) Gurley then generalizes about the Fandom:

Many Furrries have jobs related to science and computers. They role-play on a Web site called “FurryMUCK,” a chat room kingdom where users pretend they’re red-tailed hawks, foxes, and polar bears.

A high number of furrries are bearded and wear glasses. Many resemble the animals they identify with (especially wolves and foxes, the most popular ‘totems’). Some have googly, glazed, innocent eyes.

A few are crazy-eyed. (Gurley 2001: 181)

The discourse of this article is larded with references to “pudgy bodies” and unhappy childhoods, suggesting a third element that may be present in the “Furry Myth”.

3. Furrries are unattractive social misfits who can only find companionship in the Fandom.

In view of the large numbers of attractive and talented artists who post pictures of themselves on their websites, I find Gurley’s generalizations somewhat disturbing. He is, by no means, alone in his observations, however. In 1997, the British edition of *Marie Claire*, a popular women’s fashion magazine, published “Creature Comforts” by Emily Hohler, an article illustrated with photos that are shown in Figure 33. (Hohler 1997. Posted at <http://www.faradawn.demon.co.uk/articles/mariec.htm>. Accessed 01/09/09) Although Hohler’s presentation of her material is more restrained than Gurley’s, the text and illustrations for this story emphasize the predominant view of Furrries as social misfits. In describing “Furlup, a 28-year-old animal control officer who looks more like a wolf out of his Furry costume than it it”, she says, “Furlup, who won’t reveal his real name, says his wolf persona has taken over. ‘He is me. I am wolf,’ he intones ominously... ‘I was a loner at school and I now realize it was because those kids weren’t my kind.’ (Hohler 1997. Posted at <http://www.faradawn.demon.co.uk/articles/mariec.htm>. Accessed 01/09/09) Another Furry, Rachael Cawley reflects on Furrries as social misfits: “A large proportion of Furrries were outcasts as children. Most had some kind of problem interacting, and this is how they learn how to cope. Animals won’t backstab or do anything mean to you. By inventing this make-believe world they feel safe.” (Hohler 1997. Posted at <http://www.faradawn.demon.co.uk/articles/mariec.htm>. Accessed 01/09/09) Hohler observes that “Most Furrries relish being thought of as ‘weird’ and their sense of alienation from other people often runs deep.” (Hohler 1997. Posted at <http://www.faradawn.demon.co.uk/articles/mariec.htm>. Accessed 01/09/09)

Mark thinks
he's a
honey
badger,
Rod wants
to be an
otter and
Laurie the
lioness
likes
lapping up
cream and
walking on
ledges.
Welcome to
the weird
world of
the Furies,
the
Americans
who love
animals so
much, they



Marie Claire and the Construction of the Furry Myth. (Hohler 1997. Creature Comforts. Posted at <http://www.faradawn.demon.co.uk/articles/mariec.htm>. Accessed 01/09/09)

“I married a man who thinks he’s a wildcat”. (Hohler 1997. Creature Comforts. Posted at <http://www.faradawn.demon.co.uk/articles/mariec.htm>. Accessed 01/09/09)



“Furries Rachel and John Crawley, left, and Kishma Danielle with flatmate Ed “Horse” Kline, right.” “ ‘He is me, I am wolf’,”claims 28-year-old Furlup”, above. (Hohler 1997. Creature Comforts. Posted at <http://www.faradawn.demon.co.uk/articles/mariec.htm>. Accessed 01/09/09)



“Creature comfort: Is life better when you’re furry?” in *Weekend Financial Times*. (Flintoff 2002: Cover photo)



Furries spotted at the Anthrocon get-together in Philadelphia
clockwise from top left: Paradox the狐; Sincin the狐
Tara Emmy number one狐; Chas Leader shows off his spots



“Furries spotted at the Anthrocon get-together in Philadelphia”. (Flintoff 2002: 17-18)

U.K. *Financial Times*, in its weekend supplement in 2002, examined the Furry sub-culture as a potentially profitable market, but still retained the elements of a possible “Furry Myth”: “Some dress up for laughs; some do it for work, as mascots; while others, much like transsexuals, feel profoundly unhappy in the bodies they were born with. A few act out grim fetishistic fantasies on each other and on

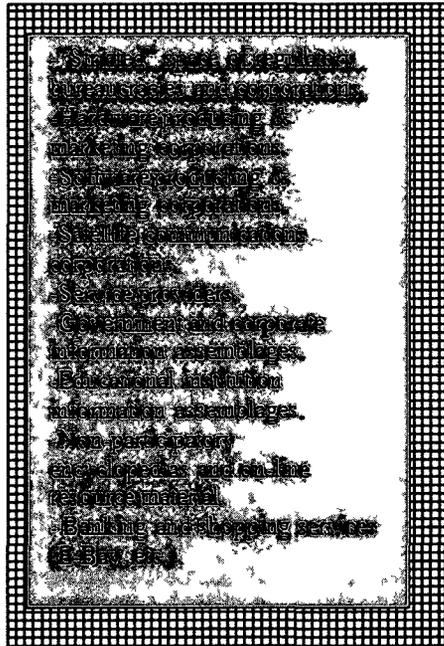
cuddly toys, but most are innocently obsessed by anthropomorphism- they have yet to outgrow the cartoon characters of Walt Disney and Hanna-Barbera.” (Flintoff 2002: 17) The illustrations for this article, seen in Figure 34 feature the usual piles of plush toys, sexy cat suits and unusual fursuits.

Appendix 5: Cyber-Wild Things

Macek's Periods of Early Internet Development (Macek 2005:10-16)

Period	Characteristics	Participants
First (c. 1959-1970's)	-specialized networks centered around universities -development of Arpanet, hypertext -technological determinism (critiques of Marshall McLuhan, <i>New Wave of Science Fiction</i>)	-small communities of hackers -students, mainframe programmers, researchers, academics -computer users characterized as specialists
Second (c. 1970-early 1980's)	-Intel's invention of the microprocessor -home-assembled computer kits -Apple II and subsequent early PCs -PC becomes a tool for entertainment, work and education.	-computer club hackers -"phone phreaks" (hacking phone systems) -hobbyists assembling computer kits -first personal computer users -computer users characterized as outside mainstream culture (saboteurs, tech "geeks")
Third (early 1980's-c. 1990)	-accelerated spread of microcomputers -development of public networks	-first subcultures of computer game players -first virtual communities -"digital avant-garde" (spokespersons for cyberpunk discourses, narratives, social views) -cyberpunk literature articulated a critical, dystopian futurism or an admiration for technological subversion of mainstream culture -hackers take on an identity of resistance
Fourth (late 1980's-mid-1990's)	-unification of software and hardware standards, price reductions, increased capacity, and transition to Graphical User Interface ("windows") make PCs accessible within mainstream culture -introduction of the World Wide Web -a "massive and final shift of cyberculture to the social and cultural mainstream"	-increased commercial use and acceptance by social scientists (Haraway) and politicians (Gore and electronic democracy) normalized cyberculture -cyberpunk spokespersons integrated into cultural industry -hackers' activities subjected to legal control

Relating Concepts from Deleuze and Guattari (1987) to Some Aspects of the Virtual World of the Internet



Molar Lines

Interfaces with the "border space" of technological change

Molecular Lines include:

- e-mail, photo sharing, phone systems,
- lifestyle support forums
- help forums.
- "friendship webs", "singles webs", shared interest webs and Chat rooms
- mutual interest webs- Furry Fandom webs and special interest sites.

Molecular Lines

A rhizomatic accretion in "smooth space"

Lines of flight occurring in "smooth space"

- Hacking, piracy, software sharing, help forums
- creative writing, design, music, etc. on the Internet.
- Chat rooms, forums, postings, blogs
- shared documents, pictures, etc
- participatory encyclopedias (Wikipedia, and resource assemblages
- idea sharing forums.

Lines of Flight

Internet rhizome includes principles of connection and heterogeneity, multiplicity, principle of asignifying rupture, principles of cartography, and decalcomania. Many facets of the Internet are anti-hierarchical, accented, suggesting a nomadic and hydraulic "bastard line" of science.

Some examples of rhizomatic accretions in the virtual world of the Internet



-links to virtual fantasy
 -links to fantasy art, film, music, games.
 -links to comics, anime
 -links to worldwide comics, films, fantasies, games.
 -links to shape-shifting, cyberborg fantasy, alternative sexuality, etc.

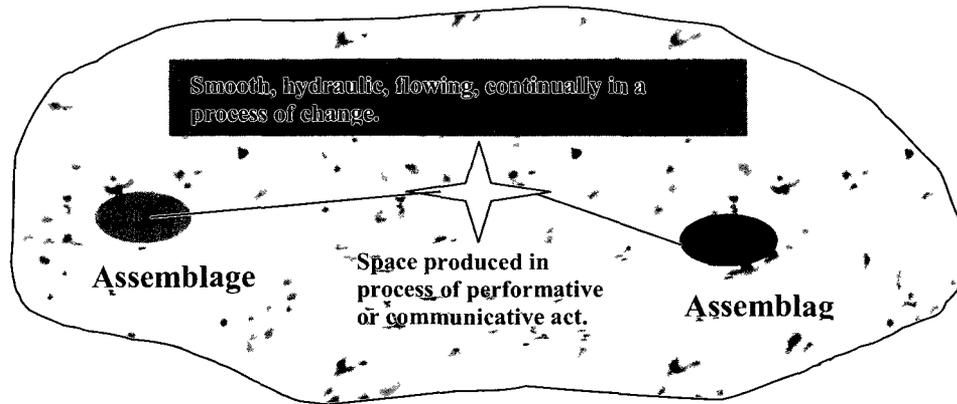
-links to virtual fantasy
 -links to fantasy art, film, music, games.
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 -links to worldwide comics, films, fantasies, games.
 -links to shape-shifting, cyberborg fantasy, alternative sexuality, etc.

Conceptualizing Cyberspace: Lefebvre's (1994) Model of Space as Process

Cartesian-Kantian Model of Space

Striated and measurable, but an empty container until it is filled with objects or bodies.

Lefebvre's Model of Space as Process



Summary of Hines' Principles of Virtual Ethnography (Hines 2000: 63-65)

Hines' Principles of Virtual Ethnography

1. Virtual ethnography requires the “sustained presence of an ethnographer in a field setting” in order to formulate and analyze Internet communications as problematic and as a field for interpretation and reinterpretation.
2. Interactive media like the Internet are best treated as both a site for study of content and a site for study of the medium itself; that is, they are both “culture and cultural artifact”.
3. Virtual ethnography “renders it unnecessary” to think of ethnography as spatially located or even multi-sited. It is, instead, a mobile ethnography.
4. The field site, in virtual ethnography, is shaped by “flow and connectivity” rather than by location and boundary.
5. Virtual ethnography “explores the making of boundaries and the making of connections”, particularly between the “virtual” and the “real”. It cannot produce a complete and definitive ethnography; indeed, the entire profile of the ethnographic object can change whenever a new link is explored. The boundaries of a study are defined by “the embodied ethnographer’s constraints in time, space and ingenuity.”
6. Virtual ethnography is also dislocated in time because immersion in the field is “only intermittently achieved.”
7. “Faithful reproduction of objective realities” is impossible. Instead, virtual ethnography, which is by nature partial and situated, must rely on an analysis of “ideas of strategic relevance.”
8. The ethnographer must be prepared for intensive engagement with mediated interaction. He/she is both informant and observer. “The shaping of interactions with informants by the technology is part of the ethnography, as are the ethnographer’s interactions with the technology.”
9. Virtual ethnography studies the “shaping of the ethnographic object as it is made possible by the available technologies”. Interactions may be transient or sustained, but “all forms of interaction are ethnographically valid”, because this type of communication is characteristic of the medium.
10. This is “an adaptive ethnography” that must be understood as “exploring the relations of mediated interaction” and cannot be construed in terms of methodological purity.

Furry Transformers, Rangers and X-Furs

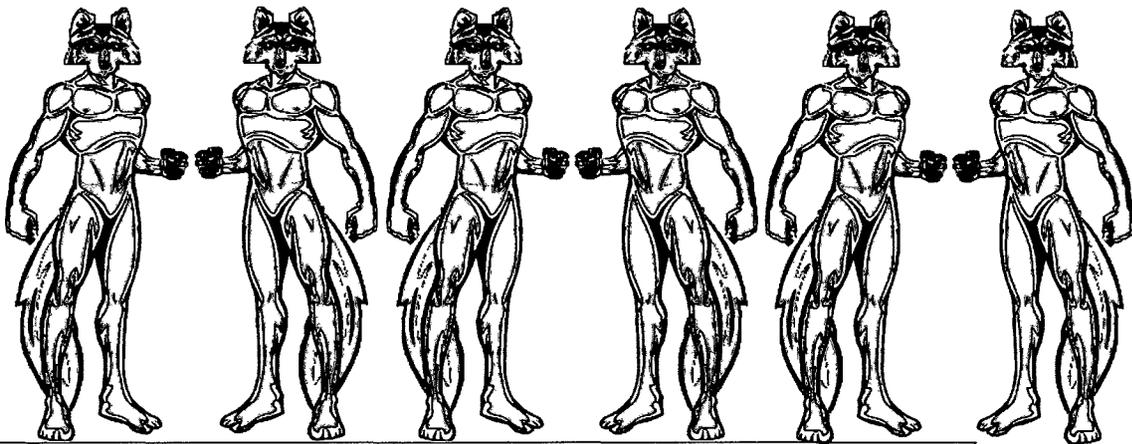


14a. Devilduk: devildk_cyb_drag.png
(<http://www.furaffinity.net/full/1327044>)



14b. _fluff_kevlar_s_ara.jpg
(<http://www.furaffinity.net/journals/fluff-Kevlar/~ibengmainee>. Accessed 10/12/08)

From Cyborg to Furry: Multiple Shape-Shifting



LIQUID SHIFTER TRICK #11- Duplication

Because of their fluid form and the lack of any need to stay in one piece, a Liquid Shifter can use this ability to be in many places at once. This ability, something so many solid beings wish to do, is extremely handy in doing a lot of work in a short amount of time; theoretically

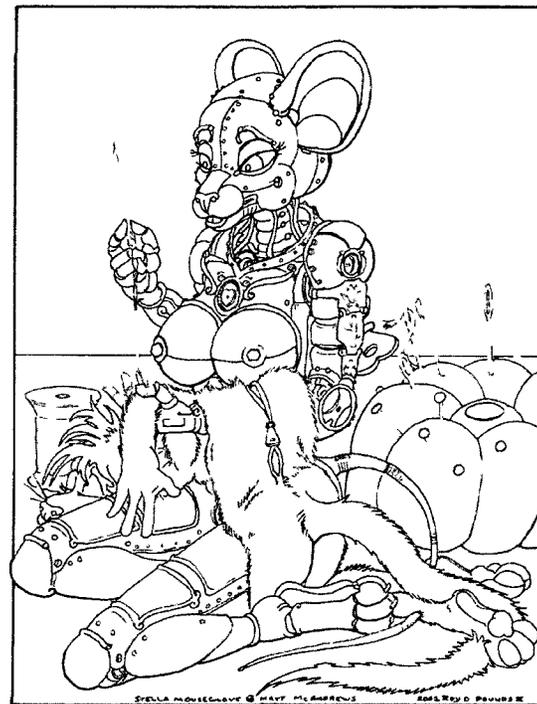
Morfox (C) Adam
Leisemann Image
Components (C) Hero
Machine

15a. Morfox_Demonstrates_LS_trick_by_AdamLeisemann.jpg.
(<http://adamleisemann.deviantart.com/art/Morfox-Demonstrates-LS-trick-645722147>.
Accessed 08/23/07)



15b.

Fursuiter.jpg. by Brian and Stuart Burke (“The Brothers Grinn”).
(<http://www.Supermegatopia.com/gallery/fursuiter.jpg>
Accessed 05/13/08)



15c. StitchInTime.gif by California Kit Fox.

(<http://www.furry.org.au/cakitfox/ArtStitchIn>
Accessed 05/13/08)

Sex and Technofurs



16a. lavavixen.jpg. (<http://us-p.vclart.net/vcl/Artists/Roux/Old%20skool/lavavixen.jpg>. Accessed 01/02/07)



16c. Fur & Metal by ZooShaman. (<http://www.us.vclart.net/vcl/Artists/ZooShaman/by-date.html>. Accessed 29/04/09)



16b. lavalavavixyvix.jpg. (<http://us-P.vclart.net/vcl/Artists/Peganthyrus/lavalavavixyvix.jpg>. Accessed 01/02/07)



16d. Female_mandala.jpg. by Spekti. (<http://us.vclart.net/vcl/Artists/Spekti/index>)

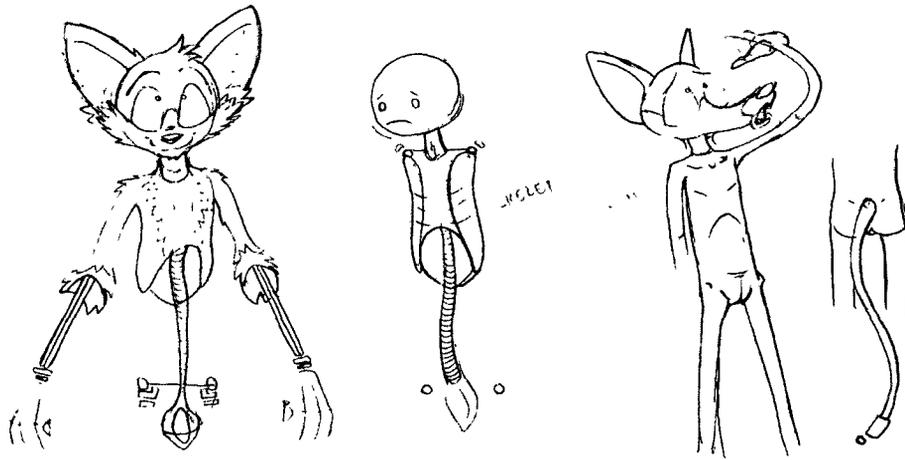
FrankenFurry- In the Lab



17a. _Robotica-Color by Rennon-the-Shaved. (<http://rennon-the-shaved.deviantart.com/art/robotica-color-69902459> Accessed 15/03/06)



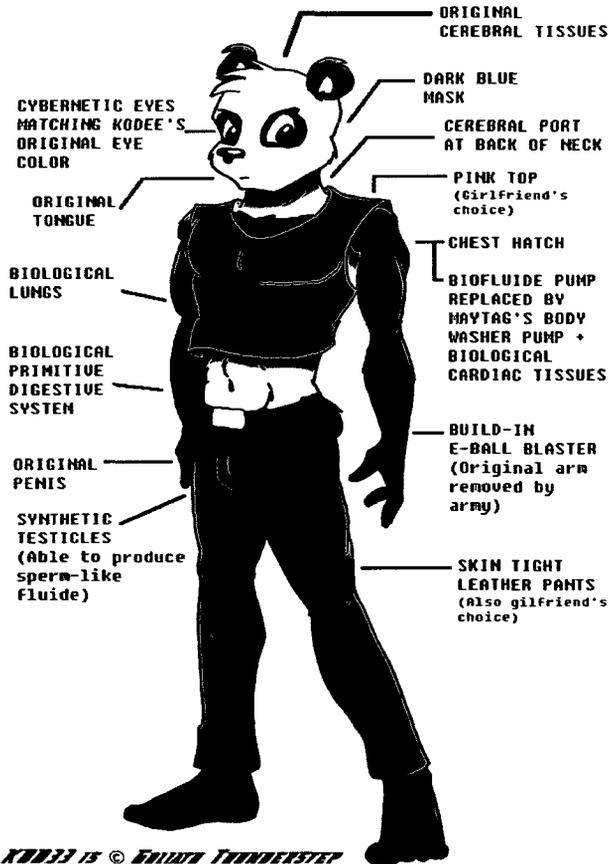
17b. Uniformvixen:
drscottyfox_1121736058_commission02
_Lurdanjo(Zardios)%20X.jpg.
(<http://www.furaffinity.net/full/3004/>
Accessed 02/06/08)



17c. How to Build a Techno: robocoon-techskeleton.gif by Techno C. Procyn

(<http://www.furaffinity.net/view/757315>. Accessed 29/04/09)

K0-D33



17d.K0-D33's Insides by Goliath Thunderstep. 1174369932.

Thunderstep_k0d33.jpg. (<http://www.furaffinity.Net/full/456906/>. Accessed 30/04/09)



17e. The Gatherer Revamp. 1175806714.ryokw7.ryoku7_newgatherer.jpg. (<http://www.furaffinity.net/full/482388/>. Accessed 30/04/09)

The Wounded Cyborg



18a. Robocoon_maintenance.png by Techno C. Procyn. (<http://www.furaffinity.net/view/459910>. Accessed 29/04/09)

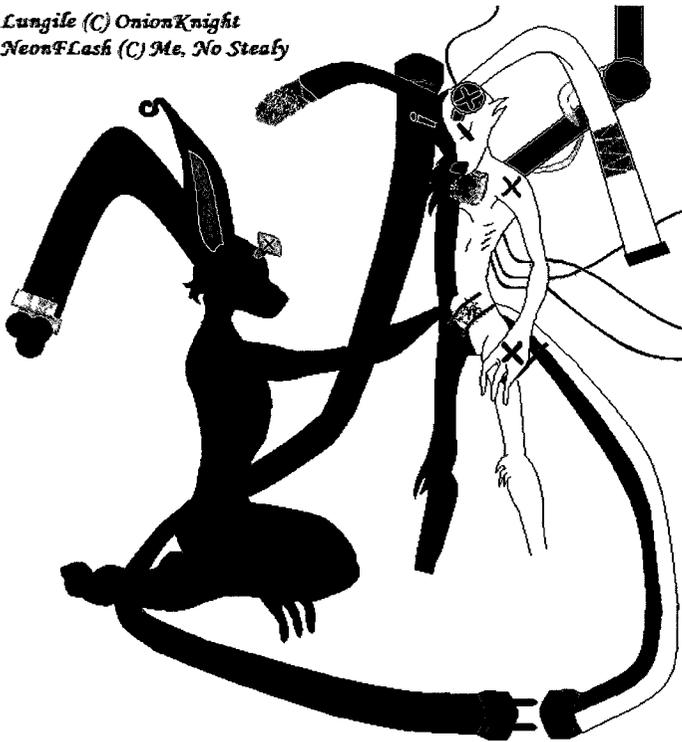


18b.Yerftech.gif by Techno C. Procyn. (<http://us.vclart.net/vcl/artists/technolinks/index01-by-date.html>. Accessed 29/04/09)



18c. Robocoon_vent_destruction by Techno C. Procyn. (Website not available as of this writing. Accessed 15/03/06)

*Lungile (C) OnionKnight
NeonFLash (C) Me, No Steafy*



*They Can Break You, Tear You, Scatter You Across The Lands..
But Nomatter What, I Shall Rebuild You, Make You Stronger..
I Can Not Do Much, I Can Do But Little With These Hands..
But I Shall Fix You, And I Shall Make You Last Longer..*



18-033 IS © BRITTA THUNDERSTEP

18e.1174537337.thunderstep-borg.jpg.
(<http://www.furaffinity.net/view/459840/>
Accessed 17/03/09)

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d. _Mags3_2.png.
(http://users.macrophile.com/Neon_Flash/. Accessed 17/03/09)

Appendix 6: Interview with a Furry

“Talmak”

- ✦ This respondent was kind enough to provide me with a very lengthy and thoughtful interview despite several interruptions and loud music in the background.
- ✦ “Talmak” is a young French-Canadian man who has several costumes. The most elaborate of these is a fursuit depicting a snowy owl. “Talmak” explains that the snowy owl has a strong spiritual connotation for him and is his Fursona. When he was a member of the Boy Scouts, the Council gave him the snowy owl as his totem because he was a “know-it-all” and had an encyclopedic knowledge that was well expressed by the association between the owl and wisdom. The snowy owl is also the provincial bird of Quebec and expresses his identity as a Quebecois.
- ✦ He came into the Fandom when a friend went to a Furry convention, told him about it, and invited him to attend a Furry gathering. He had some experience as a member of other Fandoms and had attended gaming conventions, particularly enjoying the popular *Second Life* on-line game, but found that, when he attended a Furry convention, he felt that he “had come home.” “Perhaps I may have been a Fur a long time without actually putting a name to it.” He enjoys many aspects of conventions – art, writing, costuming, animation.
- ✦ “Talmak” emphasizes the spiritual connection that he feels to his Fursona, referred to as “Owl”. He describes himself as “a pagan priest”. “Owl is an animal spirit or totem that is close to me.” He finds the spiritual aspect of the Furry community most appealing. “I have an inclination toward the spiritual.” “My Fursona is a permanent part of myself. Everyone has multiple facets....This Fursona is defining a part of me....I don’t think I’m an owl. I exteriorize that part of me in my costume.” Although “Talmak” has several costumes, he has only one Fursona. He describes it as a sort of “shape-shifter- it can shift from an owl form into a person....There is a symbiotic relationship. It is part of myself – a connection to a totem spirit.” “Talmak” explains that he has no dramatic revelations or visions, but would describe “Owl” as “a travelling companion/guiding spirit...accompanying me in my daily life.” “There is a sense of coming home. It is not life-altering, but comfortable....The owl is a companion, a trusted friend....not a god, but a wisdom-sharer. Owl helps me to develop my own wisdom.” “I embody “Owl” when I am wearing my costume.” As a shaman, the respondent practices meditation and ritual to channel the totemic spirit. “It is a quiet grounding of the self. Sometimes I create a circle; sometimes I go outside to a public park – running water helps to get me in touch with nature....The owl is present all the time, but moves forward in my consciousness....not as a vision, but simply as an empathetic presence.”
- ✦ Costuming is an important part of the Fandom experience for “Talmak”. He comments that many Furrries wear a few costume elements: “You are more part of the group if you wear a little bit of costume.” He says that there is no formal initiation procedure and people can still be part of a group without a costume, but one becomes more integrated into the group with “a shirt with an animal on it...tails, ears, paws.” Full fursuits, he observes, are quite uncomfortable. “Talmak” has several costumes – Lycra suits presenting a zebra and a Dalmatian, but he describes the construction of his “Owl” fursuit in some detail. First, he created the fan-like tail, and then made the feet with claws of shaped foam, padded and covered. He was able to find faux fur that resembled owl feathers for the main body of the suit. The head, he says, is still not quite right. Heads are very difficult because they have to provide sufficient vision and ventilation. The beak

was formed from plastic canvas and then covered. Some Furrries go to great (and expensive) lengths to create the heads for their costumes. He describes one fursuiter who has a thermal infrared camera in his costume head so that he could experience night vision similar to that of the animal he embodies. Some Furrries, he observes, can spend \$12,000 on a fursuit. One suit that he has seen has an “animatronic tail- the tail can be radio-controlled from the audience. It is a kind of co-operative experience – the fursuiter, the suit, and the audience.” “Talmak” wanted a modular suit so that it could be adapted. He was able to add some machinic elements to his costume to adapt it to the “Techno-Fur” theme of one convention. He turned his Fursona into a cyborg: “The costume changes the way you interact with others, and it influences and changes your perceptions. There is wide acceptance of variation in fursuits- you can go as far as you want.”

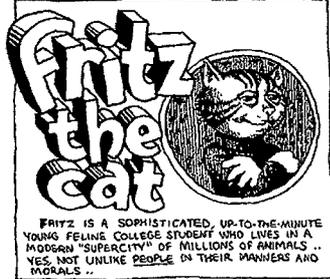
- ✦ His Fursona is rather unusual. There are very few “avians” in the Fandom, he comments. “50% of the Furrries you meet are foxes.” Every Furry experience is different, he observes. Some may be there for the spiritual aspect, others for the social interaction and others for the costuming.
- ✦ “Talmak” describes himself as a bi-sexual male in a gay committed relationship. There are quite a few gay and bi-sexual men in the Fandom, but many Furrries are non-sexual and maintain Platonic relationships. His relationship is “open” but has established “ground rules”. He belongs to the middle class, he observes, and lives in a quiet urban apartment. He is a night shift employee (like his Fursona, “Owl”) and sleeps during the day. Politically he describes himself as a socialist, supporting a strong centralized government that provides extensive social services. He is employed in providing telephone technical support for customers with computers, cell phones and other electronic devices. Although his job is demanding and, at times, quite depressing, he describes himself as “quite sane” and sees his long-term relationship as a stabilizing factor in his life. He enjoys movies, books- particularly non-fiction works on spirituality, computer games and blogging. Most of his friends know that he is a Furry, but “the Fandom is not everything in my life....I do a lot of other things....I make fursuits a bit, I do a little writing, poetry, some web design that is not specifically Furry, I use FaceBook, MySpace, and maintain two websites. I play on-line games on the Internet 45-70 hours a week, particularly “EverQuest”....I’ve been a huge ‘Net person since about 1998....I must belong to 300-400 Yahoo! groups and receive 300-1000 messages daily.”

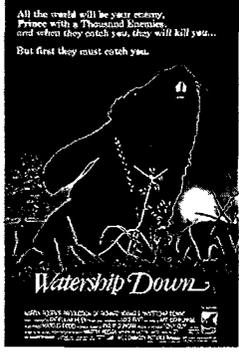
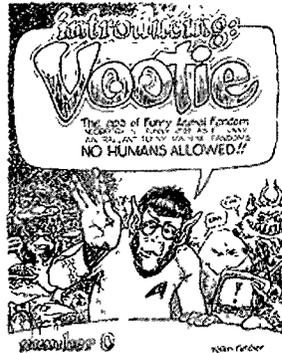
“Talmak” emphasizes the value of the Fandom to him. “Furrries are extremely accepting, but very cautious, particularly about children. Sometimes I have to try to be patient with some of them – just like with my customers. The Furry community is extremely fluid – loosely based and changeable. Furrries do a lot of charity fundraising and make donations, particularly toward the humane treatment of animals. I love animals. In the Furry world I see some closeness that I don’t find in general society where people don’t care about their neighbors and there is no sense of closeness....I think I was starving for attention....In the Fandom you are able to “skritch” and touch people....It is also liberating to be in a costume or mask.... Furrries try to be tolerant and non-threatening. They kind of fly under the radar – they’re good for us. I am a Furry because it is fun – it is a very accepting group of people. Yes, I’ve always been a Furry – I just didn’t know about it.”

Appendix 7:

Historical Chart of Influences in the Proto-Fandom Period Based on Fred Patten's *Yarf! A Chronology of Furry Fandom*. (All illustrations are taken from Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org>. Information contained in the chart is from Fred Patton's *Yarf! A Chronology of Furry Fandom*. <http://yarf.furry.com/chronology.html>.)

Proto-Fandom Period:

Date	Production	Comments	Visual Image
1966	<p><i>Kimba, the White Lion</i>, a Japanese anime series, first syndicated on U.S. television. By Osamu Tezuka. Mushi Productions.</p>	<p>Kimba searches for a way that carnivores can live in harmony with herbivores, and asks for recognition of intelligent animals as social equals of humans. Tezuka's masterful style established the conventions of the anime genre, particularly the iconic anime "eye", and may have been Disney's source for <i>The Lion King</i>.</p>	
1968-72	<p><i>Fritz the Cat</i>, an underground comic strip, drawn by Robert Crumb.</p>	<p>The first popular "funny animal" strip featuring anthropomorphic animals in "mature" situations.</p>	
1971-2	<p><i>Air Pirates Funnies</i>, 2 comic book issues by Dan O'Neil, Gary Hallgren, Bobby London, Ted Richards.</p>	<p>Counter-culture parodies of Disney comics, featuring Disney characters in "mature" situations. These comics prompted a lawsuit that cost the Walt Disney Company \$2,000,000 and resulted in the formation of the Mouse Liberation Front.</p>	

<p>1972</p> <p>1978</p>	<p><i>Watership Down</i>, novel featuring “realistic” talking rabbits. By Richard Adams</p> <p>Avco Embassy Pictures produces animated version of novel, directed by Martin Rosen.</p>	<p>Re-popularizes talking animals as subjects of serious literature.</p> <p>Very popular film uses advanced animation techniques to present anthropomorphic animals.</p>	 <p>All the world will be your enemy. Face with a thousand enemies and when they catch you, they will kill you... But first they must catch you.</p> <p><i>Watership Down</i></p>
<p>1973</p>	<p><i>Robin Hood</i>, Disney Studios animated feature using “funny animals”</p>	<p>Characters from this film are popular favorites in the representation of Fursonas. The drawing technique used here may be the most common style used in the creation of ConBadges.</p>	 <p>Trailer</p>
<p>1976</p>	<p>APA [Amateur Publishing Association] <i>Vootie</i> begun by Reed Walker and Ken Fletcher (“the fanzine of the Funny Animal Liberation Front”).</p> <p>Issue #8 published the first episode of <i>Omaha, the Cat Dancer</i>.</p>	<p>This fanzine was a semi-private publication for an underground commix artists’ club. It specialized in funny animals in “mature” situations.</p> <p><i>Omaha</i>, drawn by Reed Waller and Kate Worley became a nationally distributed comic-book series featuring a sexually explicit soap opera type of plot. The main character, Susie Jensen, is an anthropomorphic feline exotic dancer. As Waller conceived the comic, it was intended to satirize “Blue Laws” in Minnesota restricting erotic dance clubs.</p>	 <p><i>Vootie</i> The god of Funny Animal Fandom NO HUMANS ALLOWED!!</p>  <p>OMAHA</p>
<p>1976</p>	<p>Neal Barrett introduces the <i>Aldair in Albion</i>, science-fiction series.</p>	<p>These novels feature bioengineered animals who fight for freedom to control their lives.</p>	

<p>1976-1981</p>	<p>Marvel Comics produces <i>Howard the Duck</i> created by Steve Gerber and Val Mayerik.</p>	<p>Howard is a bad-tempered anthropomorphic funny animal forced from his home planet by a Cosmic Axis Shift and dropped into the Everglades where he is trapped among humans. The well-known comic book series is satirical and “mature” in content. Disney threatened to sue for copyright infringement and forced the artists to draw pants on Howard.</p>	
<p>1977</p>	<p>Dave Sim begins <i>Cerebus the Aardvark</i>, a long-running (300 issue) satirical series. He was later joined by Gerhard, the artist who produced the intricate backgrounds for which the series is noted.</p>	<p>The series began as a satire on strips like <i>Conan, the Barbarian</i>, but moved into social and political commentary on gender and censorship issues. <i>Cerebus</i> is a grey aardvark with unusually smelly fur.</p>	
<p>1980</p>	<p>This is a critical “turning point” in Patten’s opinion. Artist Steve Gallacci entered an <i>Erma Felna</i> funny animal painting featuring the main character in a high-tech military setting in the art show at NorEasCon II World Science Fiction Convention in Boston.</p>	<p>A group of SF fans gathered to look at Gallacci’s notes for a comic art series about bioengineered animal soldiers in a space war. “Gallacci groups” began gathering at SF Worldcons and Westercons to discuss anthropomorphics, comic art, and to begin the Furry practice of “sketchbook” drawing. Eventually the group coalesced around <i>Rowrbrazzle</i> and specifically Furry events. The illustration pictures <i>Erma Felna</i> on the front cover of <i>Albedo Anthropomorphics</i>, the first Furry comic book.</p>	

1981	<i>Ismet</i> , created by Greg Wadsworth (SF comic book) is produced.	The book features an oppressed funny-animal lower class rebelling against cruel human masters.	
1982	Reed Waller's <i>Omaha, the Cat Dancer</i> appears as a book-length story in <i>Bizarre Sex</i> .	This story establishes the importance of "mature content" in Furry art.	
1982	<i>Army Surplus Komikz Featuring Cutey Bunny</i> is produced by Joshua Quagmire.	<i>Cutey Bunney</i> becomes an on-going icon in Furry art and reappears in a number of comics.	
1983	The <i>Spellsinger</i> series of funny animal science-fiction stories by Alan Dean Foster begins.	A tortoise wizard, Clothahump, finds a part-time rock guitarist and janitor to create rock-music magic and defeat the Plated Folk. The story includes humor and satire in its treatment of the fantasy genre, a common Furry motif.	
1983	Ken Sample adds "The Puma's Room" to Andre Johnson's Tiger's Den SF electronic bulletin board.	By late 1983, this BB had enough Furry participants to be considered the first Furry BBS. It was operated from the Furry commune "The Prancing Skiltaire" in Los Angeles.	

1983	Marc Schirmeister forms <i>Rowrbrazzle</i> , an APA replacing <i>Vootie</i> , and invites Furry fans to submit Furry art and literature.	Patten sees <i>Rowrbrazzle</i> as “the first clear signs of an independent furry fandom”. It was inclusive, rather than an exclusive club for a few artists, as <i>Vootie</i> was.	
1983	The first major Furry role-playing game, <i>Other Suns</i> , is created by Nicolai Shapero of Los Angeles and produced by Fantasy Games Unlimited.	Art for the game was produced by Ken Sample and Fa Shimbo. It also features species such as Mark Merlino’s Skiltaires. The game was an incentive for the production of Fursonas.	

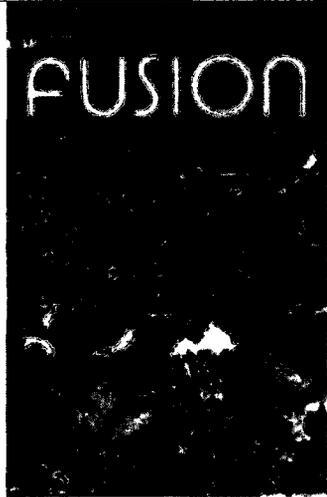
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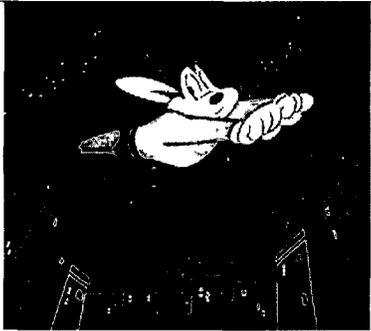
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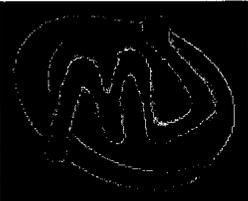
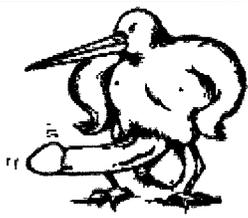
Date	Production	Comments	Visual Image
1984	First issue of <i>Rowrbrazzle</i> is published.	The magazine is open to work from amateurs as well as professional cartoonists.	
1984	<i>Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles</i> is self-published by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird.	The comic book is extremely popular and begins a trend toward self-published independent comic books, including several featuring anthropomorphic action-adventure heroes.	

1984	Steve Gallacci self-publishes the first issue of <i>Albredo</i> , featuring <i>Erma Felna of the EDF</i> .	The second issue begins Stan Sakai's <i>Usagi Yojimbo</i> , starring an anthropomorphic warrior rabbit who wanders Japan as a <i>ronin</i> . The series includes episodes from Japanese history and folklore.	
1985	Mark Merlino and Rod O'Riley host the first publicized open funny-animal fan party.	The Prancing Skiltaire, Merlino's home in California, is a commune that has been very instrumental in projects in SF, comics, anime, the Furry Fandom, <i>Dr. Who</i> , and the Pern series. (Anne McCaffrey)	
1985	Jim Groat begins GraphXpress independent comics.	The first publication is written by Groat and Richard Konkle, <i>Equine the Uncivilized</i> , a Furry parody of <i>Conan the Barbarian</i> .	
1985	Jymn Magon and Tad Stones create and produce Disney's <i>Adventures of the Gummi Bears</i> .	This is the first popular funny-animal television cartoon series produced by a major studio. This year it celebrates its 21 st birthday. The series encouraged further funny-animal productions such as <i>Talespin</i> and <i>Chip 'n' Dale Rescue Rangers</i> .	

1986	Fantagraphics launches 2 major Furry comics, <i>Critters</i> , a monthly anthology, and <i>The Adventures of Captain Jack</i> , by Mike Kazaleh.	The <i>Critters</i> anthology reflects the increasingly cross-cultural nature of the Fandom, including “Gnuff”, by Freddy Milton, a Danish story about a dragon family, “Usagi Yojimbo” by Stan Sakai, and “Duck “Bill” Platypus”, a series set in Tasmania. <i>The Adventures of Captain Jack</i> took Furies into outer space aboard the starship <i>Glass Onion</i> led by a fearless grey anthropomorphic cat.	
1986	Antarctic Press, which became a major anthropomorphic comics publisher, publishes its first Furry comic, <i>Mighty Tiny</i> by Ben Dunn.		
1986	Mark Merlino and Rod O’Riley host the first “official” Furry Party at Westercon 39 in San Diego.	Flyers for the party feature Furry pin-up art, a tradition that continues at contemporary Furry gatherings.	
1986	When <i>Rowrbrazzle</i> bans explicit sexual material, Jim Price begins <i>Q</i> “the mature Funny-Animal APA”.	Mature content, controversial even at this early stage in the development of the Fandom, continues to be a divisive issue. Ten issues of <i>Q</i> were published but no graphics are available and there is no entry in WikiFur.	

1987	This publication by Eclipse Comics introduced the SF adventures of <i>Tsunami</i> by Lex Nakashima, Steve Gallacci, Lela Dowling. It also featured <i>The Weasel Patrol</i> by Nakashima, Dowling and Macklin.	The story involved a tramp spaceship with a mixed crew of humans, bioengineered animals and furry aliens.	
1987	Jim Groats begins the anthology series <i>Morphs</i> .	<i>Morphs</i> was the first series published for beginning writers and artists working with anthropomorphic animal concepts.	
1987	Led by Mark Merlino, the annual Baycon SF convention in San Jose is adopted as a Furry convention.	Active hostility from non-Furry fans led to the establishment of separate Furry conventions.	
1987	Karl Maurer begins <i>Furversion</i> as a newsletter and address list.	This magazine grew into the Fandom's first independent fiction and art magazine, running until 1990.	
1987	Richard Chandler, Mitch Marmel, John DeWeese and Seth Grenald begin "The Electric Holt", the first Furry East Coast Bulletin Board.		
1987	Mark Merlino <i>et al.</i> host a Furry party at Conspiracy '87, a SF convention in Brighton, England.	This party introduced British fans to American Furry comic books and fanzines, eventually leading to the formation of the British Fandom c.	

		1992-3.	
1987	<i>Mighty Mouse: The New Adventures</i> by Ralph Bakshi and John Kricfalusi aired on CBS from 1987-1988.	Kricfalusi described the program as a “Creator-Driven revolution” and as “witty, satirical and wildly imaginative”. The program featured a large anthropomorphic animal cast and was a starting point in the careers of many cartoonists and animators who later became famous for such programs and strips and films as <i>Ren and Stimpy</i> , <i>The Simpsons</i> , <i>Finding Nemo</i> and <i>Wall-E</i> . It ran into some issues with religious censorship as a result of content interpreted as favorable to drug use.	
1987	<i>Amazing Heroes</i> (Issue 129 from Fantagraphics) featured a special funny-animal issue of independent Furry comics.	<i>Rowbrazzle</i> and <i>Mighty Mouse: The New Adventures</i> were included. This issue was the introduction to the Fandom for many Furies.	
1988	Vicky Wyman begins <i>Xanadu</i> featuring Furry swashbuckling romantic fantasy.	This publication continues to appear in independent comic books and a fanzine, <i>The Ever-Changing Palace</i> .	
1989	Mark Merlino, Rod O'Reilly and others organize ConFurence Zero, the first all-Furry convention in Costa Mesa, CA.	Membership at this ConFurence was about 90, attendance was 65.	

1989	Self-published by Martin Wagner, <i>Hepcats</i> treated mature themes such as suicide and child abuse.		
1989	<i>Morty the Dog</i> is the first anthropomorphic comic published by MU Press.	MU Press became a major publisher of anthro. comics	
1989	<i>FURtherance</i> , published by Ray Rooney was the first of several new fanzines publishing Furry literature and art.		
1989	FurNet is started by Nicolai Shapero as a network of Furry Bulletin Boards.	By 1996 it included over 20 North American BBSs.	
1989	Robert and Brenda Daverin start <i>FurNography</i> , the first public fanzine for Furry erotica.	No WikiFur article on this publication appears, but the fanzine is discussed in <i>The Encyclopaedia of Unusual Sex Practices</i> by Brenda Love (http://www.odd-sex.com). The well-endowed bird is from this web-site.	
1989	Richard Chandler begins <i>Gallery</i> , an artist and writers' APA as well as a commercial magazine for fans.	This long-lived fanzine lasted until 2004 and published many amateur Furry artists.	
1990	ConFurence 1, the first official Furry convention, is held in California. <i>Yarf!</i> , issue 1 debuts at this conference.	Membership registered is 145; 130 fans attend.	

1990	<i>Yarf!</i> produced by Jeff Ferris, Kris Kreutzman begins.	This is the Fandom's most reliable magazine and the source of this chronology.	
1990	<i>Rhudiprrt, Prince of Fur</i> , MU Press' first original anthropomorphic series, appears.	The series is produced by Dwight R. Decker and Teri S. Wood (now replaced by Will Faust).	
1990	Bill Biersdorf and Watts Martin begin publication of <i>Mythagoras</i> , a literary Furry fanzine of good quality.	The magazine is unable to overcome production problems and high costs.	
1990	From 1990-1994 the Furry Home at Squirrel Hill in Pittsburgh, PA, functions as a Furry commune for students at Carnegie-Mellon University.	FurryMUCK is built as the first Furry MU* by the Squirrel Hill group, Centaur, Ashtreth, Drew Maxwell, Shaterri, and Claire Benedikt. By 1996 the game had over 2000 participants.	 Logo from "West Corner of the Park" a web comic based on FurryMUCK. (http://www.graphxpress.com/cgi-bin/wcotp.cgi)
1990	Gary Sutton begins the <i>Furry Press Network</i> , the Fandom's second major APA.		
1990	Peter da Silva begins the first Furry Usenet newsgroup.		
1991	ConFurence 2 is held in Anaheim, CA.	More than 200 fans attend.	

1991	The <i>Tai-Pan Project</i> , a shared-writers' and artists' project from a group of Seattle fans begins.	This long-lived project continues today as <i>Tales of the Tai-Pan Universe</i> . Stories are set on a Furry-crewed tramp spaceship. The illustration is the cover of the latest issue.	
1991	Mark Merlino and the ConFurence group publish a fanzine, <i>Touch</i> .		
1991	Charles Melvill and Edd Vick of MU Press begin <i>The Furkindred: A Shared World</i> , as a writers' and artists' project.	Stories describe an alternative Furry world where Furies develop magical powers. The illustration is the cover art from a novel, <i>Let Sleeping Gods Lie</i> , developed from the comic strips.	
1991	Antarctic Press begins <i>Furrilough</i> , a Furry monthly comic anthology.	This anthology began with a military emphasis and then became an adventure series. It is one of the longest-running anthology publications in U.S. comic history, but, after 51 issues Antarctic Press dropped the series and the editors took over publishing it under the Radio Comix imprint.	
1992	"The First British Furry Micro-Con" is held in Surrey, England.	About 6 English Fans partied with 6 Americans.	
1992	Dwight D. Dutton turns <i>Huzzah!</i> (an Albedo fanzine) into an invitational Furry artists' APA.		

1992	Mike Curtis produces <i>Shanda the Panda</i> for MU Press.	This is a “slice of life” comic series, like <i>Omaha, the Cat Dancer</i> featuring Shanda, her Cajun raccoon lover, Richard, and her lesbian cricket bartender lover, Terri, shown in the illustration on the cover of the 12 th . Issue.	
1992	Paul Groulx (Growl) of Frankford, Ontario, begins the <i>FURthest North Crew</i> as an APA for Canadian Furrries.	This is the Fandom’s 3 rd . strongest APA. Groulx moved on to <i>North American Furs</i> , and then returned to fursuiting.	 
1993	Antarctic Press begins <i>Genus</i> .	This is an anthology for mature Furry erotic humor. Antarctic Press dropped the publication, along with <i>Furlough</i> , and it was picked up by Radio Comix. It is currently published by the adults-only imprint, Sin Factory.	
1993	Darrell Benvenuto starts <i>The American Journal of Anthropomorphics</i> .	This is an annual coffee-table sized collection of Furry art.	

1993	Damien Gugley publishes the first British fanzine, <i>Furry Furry</i> .	2 issues only.	
1993	Kevin Charlesworth publishes the more successful British fanzine, <i>AnthropoMORPHINE</i> .		
1994	ConFurence V draws more than 600 fans to the Airporter Garden Hotel in California, the first "home" of Furry ConFurences.		
1994	The first annual UK Fur CON is organized through FurryMUCK and held in Colchester. About 15 fans attend.		
1994	Martin Dudman launches <i>Fur Scene: The Anthropomorphic Newsletter</i> , the first major UK fanzine, and a mail-order service to import U.S. Furry merchandise.		
1994	Furtasticon 1, the first East coast all-Furry convention, is held in Philadelphia with about 230 fans attending.		
1995	UK Fur CON 2 organized by Ian Stradling is held in Bristol. About 20		

	fans attend.		
1995	EuroFurence 1 is organized by Gerritt Heitsch and Tobias Kohler and held near Hamburg, Germany. 19 fans attend.	EuroFurence 15 held in 2009 attracted 911 registrants. The largest contingent was 390 Furrries from Denmark.	
1995	The first major Australian fanzine, <i>South Fur Lands</i> , is produced by Jason Gaffney, Somon Raboczi, and Marko Laine; now it is produced by Chakat's Den (Bernard Doove).	The fanzine split into 2 publications- <i>South Fur Lands</i> , with M-rated anthropomorphic content, and a <i>Sex and Violence</i> adults-only annual.	
1995	Furtasticon becomes ConFurence East and attracts 449 Furrries to Elizabeth, NJ.	795 pieces of Furry art were exhibited and art sales were close to \$11,000.	
1996	ConFurence VII attracts 875 Furrries to Irvine, CA.	Disney animator Jymn Magon (<i>Talespin</i> , <i>A Goofy Movie</i>) receives the first Golden Sydney award for a person in mainstream media who helps to create a more "furry-friendly" atmosphere. Art sales reach nearly \$30,000.	
1996	Mike and Carole Conway release <i>Giant Shanda Animal</i> (annual), <i>Katmandu: Velites and Hoplites</i> , and <i>New Horizons</i> (comic books).		

1996	Vision Comics, a specialty Furry comics line, produces <i>Savage Funnies</i> and <i>The Hollow Earth</i> in addition to <i>Shanda the Panda</i> and <i>Katmandu</i> (acquired from Antarctic Press.)	<i>Savage Funnies</i> is Vision Comics' adults-only series, featuring "an over-sexed vigilante, Savage Squirrel".	
1996	UK Fur Con 3 is held in Coventry. About 15 Furrries attend.		
1996	EuroFurence 2 is held in Linköping, Sweden. About 30 fans attend.		
1996	The L.A. con III Would Science Fiction Convention in Anaheim, CA. features a Furry Fandom Lounge.	This feature becomes part of the Worldcom schedule and includes a History of Furry Fandom exhibit.	
1996	ConFurence East 1996 is held in Cleveland, OH with an attendance of about 500 Furrries.	The art show brings in about \$12,400. A third annual Furry convention, Anthrocon, is announced, to be held in Albany, NY.	
1996	<i>The New York Times Magazine</i> (October 27, 1996) reports "a growing subculture of furry-suit hobbyists who don pelts, whiskers and tails year-round."		

Summary of Simo's An Informal History of Furry Fandom
(<http://www.furrydolphin.net/>)

Period 1: The Early Years: Alternative Comics and Furry Parties.

Date	Event	Significance
1968	Publication of <i>Fritz the Cat</i>	"an underground, counter-culture, comic art serial.... "heaping helpings of sex and drugs"....spawned a whole series of these counter-culture 'Comix'."

1971	<i>Air Pirates Funnies, Dan O'Neill's Comics & Stories, The Tortoise and the Hare</i>	"...pornographic parodies of Disney comic books"
1976	Reed Waller and Ken Fletcher begin an APA called <i>Vootie</i> .	"...an underground association for professional cartoonists looking to expand their horizons, and indulge non-corporate-approved fantasies." The most famous title was <i>Omaha, the Cat Dancer</i> .
1976	Marvel Comics introduces <i>Howard the Duck</i> .	"This comic series demonstrated that the "funny animal" character could also feature in a more literary and dramatic role than just the "sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll", stoner, squick the chicks, counter-culture paradigm." "...keeping alive the idea that "funny animals" could be more than cartoon comedians for kids."
1977	David Sim publishes <i>Cerebus the Aardvark</i> .	"...a sophisticated , literary drama featuring a strong Furry hero interacting with a cast of humans."
1980	Steve Gallacci enters a <i>Erma Felina</i> painting in the NorEastCon II sci-fi convention art exhibit and "proposes a comic art serial about genetically engineered intelligent animals fighting an interstellar war."	... "established a common interest between the science fiction and anthro genres". ... "led to the formation of 'Gallacci Groups' at sci-fi WorldCons and WesterCons to discuss anthros in sci-fi, comic art serials, and animation...also showed off each others' art for critiques, art exchanges, commissions..."
1981	Greg Wadsworth publishes <i>Ismet</i> .	"...a science fiction series about an underclass of anthros fighting for liberation from their human oppressors."
1983	Roy Thomas and Scott Shaw publish <i>Captain Carrot and His Amazing Zoo Crew</i> . <i>Vootie</i> collapses and is replaced by <i>Rowrbrazzle</i> . Fantasy Games Unlimited introduces <i>Other Suns</i> , a role-playing board game.	"...the last of the comic art serials featuring anthro super heroes..." "... <i>Vootie</i> was more of a good ol' boys club for professional cartoonists." <i>Rowrbrazzle</i> featured non-professional artists if they met quality standards. <i>Other Suns</i> "features Furry art by Ken Sample and Fa Shimbo and included the Skilltaires by Mark Merlino...This game was play tested by a sizable following of future Furry Fans."
1984	Steve Gallacci publishes <i>Albedo</i> . Mark Merlino establishes a gaming "commune" at his home, the <i>Prancing</i>	<i>Albedo</i> introduces some early Furry classics – <i>Erma Felna of the EDF</i> , and Stan Sakai's <i>Usagi Yojimbo</i> . This group of gaming fans experimented with several Fandoms, set up the Tiger's Den BBS server, and, eventually, became the location for Furry house parties. "These, in turn, would lead up to the first of the Furry cons: Confurence 0

	<i>Skilltaire.</i>	(1989).”
1985	<p>“Gallacci Groups” broke away from sci-fi conventions and “coalesce around <i>Rowrbrazzle.</i>”</p> <p>Merlino and O’Riley host the first anthro fan party at WesterCon 38.</p>	First anthro meets and parties.
1986	The first “official” Furry party is announced at WesterCon.	“...the first occasion of the use of the term “Furry” as a recognizable identifier for anthropomorphic fans.” Fliers posted featuring “Furry pin-up art” ... “led to the identification of the attendees of these parties as the “Furry fandom”.
1987	Merlino establishes BayCon as a center for Furry activity.	“Non-furry guests grew increasingly hostile at this “take over”...Someone whose name is long since lost to history, defaced some of the Furry party flyers, crossed out the word “Furry” and substituted an epithet that lives on to this very day: ‘Skunkfuckers’.”
1989	<p>ConFurence 0 in Costa Mesa, CA.</p> <p>Martin Wagner publishes <i>Hepcats.</i></p> <p>Mu Press releases <i>Morty the Dog.</i></p> <p><i>FURtherance</i> , from Ray Rooney, the first Furry fanzine, was published.</p> <p><i>FurNography</i> from Robert and Brenda Daverin.</p> <p><i>Gallery</i> from Richard Chandler.</p>	<p>The “dry run” for the first Furry convention featured guest artists and an art auction.</p> <p>This comic “explored serious themes such as child abuse and suicide.”</p> <p>Mu Press “became one of the largest mainstream publishers of anthro comic art serials in the next few years.”</p> <p>“A fanzine/art folio dedicated to Furry erotica.”</p> <p>“a cross between an artists’ and writers’ APA and a commercial magazine.” The “Six Shallow Graves” editorial in</p>

		this magazine was a factor in the later Furry Flame War.
1990	<p>Confurence 1 in Costa Mesa, CA, attended by 130 Furrries.</p> <p>Ferris, Kreutzman and others introduce <i>Yarf!</i></p>	<p>This convention established the pattern of Furry conventions – a guest of honor, and a set of awards for costuming and art work.</p> <p><i>“Yarf!”</i> would become Furry-dom’s most successful and enduring fanzine.”</p>

Period 2: Furrries and the Internet:

Year	Event	Significance
1989	<p>Nikolai Shapiro begins FurNet – a network of Furry bulletin board sites.</p>	<p>“The beginning of Furry-dom’s ‘Net presence ...”</p>
1990	<p>Simo characterizes this period as “The Invasion of the Unix Hackers”.</p> <p>The Carnegie-Mellon University “commune” shared by the Hackers was established in 1990 and was called “The Furry Home.” Hackers role-played Furry characters on the general sci-fi MUD, Islandia.</p> <p>When Islandia shut down, Claire Benedikt and Drew Maxwell created FurryMUCK.</p> <p>Peter DaSilva begins the Usenet group alt. fan. albedo, renamed one month later, alt.fan.furry, a major Furry site for Internet communication.</p>	<p>The Unix Hackers who were instrumental in developing operating systems, programming languages, and the Arpanet (the forerunner of the Internet and WorldWideWeb), also initiated a number of on-line Fandoms, including Trekkies, “Tolkein-ites”, and Furrries. Simo suggests that the Unix Hackers’ love of word play was also instrumental in forming a Furry language, introducing such Furry/Hacker terms as “mundane”, and “Furrfu”.</p> <p>“Thus, Furry-dom’s presence as an Internet community began.”</p>
1992-3	<p>The Unix Hackers moved west to Silicon Valley and took FurryMUCK with them, a move that “gave the UNIX Hackers more access to Furry-dom.”</p>	<p>This game became and remains one of the largest role-playing games on the Internet. Some Furrries consider it a kind of “initiation” into the Fandom.</p>

During the period following the key events of 1990-3, the Fandom grew rapidly both as a real-life and an on-line presence. The period is marked by some conflict and disagreement as the Fandom took shape and became the large and loosely-bounded community that it is today.

Following his delineation of the growth of the Fandom as an Internet sub-culture, Simo turns to the history of the Fandom as an “intentional subculture”, noting a growing dissonance between “Fans” and “Lifestylers”: “The older Furrries, who saw themselves in the more common mould of “fan” would eventually clash with this intentional subculture.” (Simo 2009) Although Simo is a biased informant, in that he strongly opposed the movement to return to a fan-only subculture along the lines of the *Star Trek* Fandom, he is the principal historian of the period of flame wars when Furrries, ostensibly opposed over issues of pornographic representation, flamed each other’s websites and engaged in battles on the Internet. Simo’s analysis of the causes of the Great Furry Flame War is discussed in more detail in Chapter 10 on Furry visual representation because the issues involved are relevant to opposing views on what constitutes pornography in the visual arts. The following table shows Simo’s chronology of the events that he perceives as key elements in the ensuing flame wars, a period of conflict principally centered on the “Burned Furs’ *Manifesto*. A more complete table of Furry opposition movements within and outside the Fandom, drawn from Simo (Simo 2009) and WikiFur (<http://en.wikifur.com>) , appears in Chapter 10. The “Great Internet Furry Flame Wars” loom rather large in this account, but actually involved only a small group of dissenters and, perhaps, had the effect of popularizing the Fandom and drawing it to the attention of the mass media.

Period 3: Internal Dissent: 1996-1998 and the Great Internet Furry Flame Wars

Although the flame wars ostensibly centered on issues of overt displays of alternative sexuality and on the growing trend toward erotic artwork, Simo observes that an underlying issue was one of power and control within the sub-culture. Its roots in the alternative comics of the 1980s suggested a “fan” community of those who admired and purchased the art and writing of a group of professionals. On the other hand, the expansion of the Fandom on the Internet led to a proliferation of amateur art, crafts, and writing – a participatory sub-culture centered on an interest in anthropomorphic animals, rather than on the work of specific cartoonists or a specific storyline. As Simo observes:

The dictionary definition of “fandom” implies a passive, spectator, consumer. Fans, generally, do not participated in the activities of which they are fans. This is how Furry fandom started out: passive aficionados of the comic art serials. Like Trekkies, they had no expectation that they would ever participate in the creative process that drove the Furry genres. Furry could very well have remained just such a passive

fandom for years, except for three factors: the Internet, the meta-genre nature of Furry, and the UNIX Hackers who were already familiar with intentional subcultures. (Simo 2009. Electronic Document)

The Internet provided a convenient forum, quite different from the typical *Star Trek* convention with its controlled programming. The nature of the Fandom as a “meta-genre” meant that it had no single focus on a series of novels, films, or television programs, and the UNIX Hackers provided the “means of production” and placed them in the hands of Furrries by creating games such as FurryMUCK, which encouraged the creation of anthropomorphic avatars, and sites such as alt.fan.furry, which provided channels for the dissemination of fan creations. Inspired by “indie comics”, mainstream cartoons, and popular novels, and uninhibited by corporate controls, the creativity of the Fandom exploded in the proliferation of art, crafts, and writing that we see today. Not surprisingly, the challenges that this large and growing sub-culture posed to conventional notions of binary sexuality and machine-human-animal boundaries resulted in dissension both within the Fandom and outside it.

An early indication of this dissent is found in the SOF (Save Our Fandom) group: “This was primarily a group that wanted all the erotic aspects of Furry art removed from the fandom. It also included a strong element of gay-bashing, in that a lot of these people said that SOF meant : “Shove Off, Faggots”. Needless to say, this was not acceptable to very many mainstream fans.” (Simo 2009. Electronic Document). The First Great Internet Furry Flame War dates from Richard Chandler’s “declaration of war” in an editorial called “Six Shallow Graves” published in Issue 25 of his magazine, *Gallery*. The “six shallow graves” are intended for “scam artists” who just want to make money from Furrries, “Dilletantes [*sic*] who are “people who came to furry fandom through the net”, “people who used the fandom as some sort of stepping stone for promoting their own...agenda”, people who have turned the fandom into “their own private sexual playground”, “customer-driven” fans who ask artists to transcribe their “wet dreams” to paper, people who perceive the Fandom as having a “horrible” reputation: “some kind of sexual free-for-all, and join up in order to get laid.” (Chandler 1996 alt.fan.furry as quoted in Simo 2009. Electronic Document) The twin themes of power and sexual challenge are quite evident in Chandler’s posting which now exists only as quoted by Simo. (One of the problems in re-creating on-line history is the ephemeral nature of Internet postings. Simo notes that “portions of our history has [*sic*] been blown away with the click of a mouse.”(Simo 2009. Electronic Document.) Simo observes that the Chandler editorial is exclusionary in nature: “...he excludes the new Furry art forms that the Lifestylers were pioneering: costuming and on-line role playing. He also excludes any form of Furry Spirituality and philosophy....since they were not directly related to the comic art serials, [they] were considered

“irrelevant” to the fandom.” (Simo 2009. Electronic Document). The conflict, as Simo expresses it, is an interesting example of a struggle to limit the role of the fandom to that of audience, a role that would be quite consistent with the introduction of earlier forms of mass media such as the newspaper, the radio, the television. The Internet presence of the Fandom as it developed, however, encouraged participation at the level of performance. Simo particularly notes the “elitism” of Chandler’s exclusions, but does not observe that at least part of the issue in the First Internet Furry Flame War could be construed as a struggle to control the means of production, an omission that would be consistent with Simo’s conservative political stance.

“After the publication of his editorial in *Gallery*, a nasty flame war broke out. Tempers and rhetoric ran high on both sides.... This earned alt.fan.furry the dubious reputation as the most inflammable spot on the ‘Net. Indeed, for years to come, it would be referred to as : “alt.flame.furry” (Simo 2009. Electronic Document).The First Internet Furry Flame War was resolved by the formation of a new web forum in August, 1996 – alt.lifestyle.furry. “Philosophical and social topics for ‘furries’.” The “Charter” for the new forum described it as a place for “the discussion and exploration of spiritual/lifestyle related furry issues, as distinct from fandom topics...” (Simo 2009: Electronic Document) The “lifestyle” forum was intended to focus on fursuiting, plush toys, theriomorphosis, and spiritual beliefs about animals as totemic or spirit guides.

The establishment of the alt.lifestyle.furry forum brought about a short-lived period of peace, with many Furrries moving back and forth between alt.fan.furry and alt.lifestyle.furry. In September 1998, however, this peace was shattered and the Second Internet Furry Flame War erupted. “In September, 1998, Charla “Squee Rat” Trotman uploaded a document entitled *This Sordid Little Business* onto her personal web site....once a name became attached to this document, that [indifference] would change, and change with a vengeance. That name was “Burned Fur”.” (Simo 2009. Electronic Document) In several publications, including *A Modest Proposal* and *Statement of Purpose* by Trotman, *Who Dealt This Mess?* by Peter Schorn, and *Furry’s Image Problem Explained* by Mike “StukaFox” Beebe, Trotman and the Burned Furs discussed the impetus for the formation of “Burned Fur” and their personal objections to the current direction of the Fandom. (<http://members.tripod.com/~burnedfur/>) The group attracted about fifty active members, among whom Peter Schorn, Eric Blumrich, Matt Sheridan, and Michael Campbell and Charla Trotman were considered “founders”. The Burned Fur movement was as loosely organized as the Furry community itself and espoused several directions – a “get rid of the Lifestylers” faction, a “kick out the

furverts” movement (Simo 2009. Electronic Document), a campaign to change public and media perceptions of the Fandom, a “movement to encourage greater discretion among Furs”. (Simo 2009. Electronic Document) At the same time, as Trotman’s publications illustrate, the Burned Furs lamented the demise of their potential careers as mainstream artists, careers destroyed, in their opinions, by sexual indiscretion and erotic art in the Fandom. GothTiger, for example, responding to a question about the purpose of Burned Furs, on alt.lifestyle.furry on Jan. 16, 1999, writes: “The Burned Fur Movement is a loosely organized group of furry writers, artists, and enthusiasts who have one thing in common: They have all had their professional or personal reputations ‘burned’ in some way because of their association with furrydom, and it’s [sic] current reputation.” Simo, rather unkindly, observes that the founding membership of Burned Furs was a group of failed cartoonists and artists at the best of times. (Simo 2009. Electronic Document) “Myra”, Webmaster of SimbasPride.net, posted quite a different definition on March 29, 1999: “The Burned Fur movement...is a movement against bestiality, fursuiting and plushophilia in the furry fandom.” We can see from these two opposing statements of purpose the same lack of central tendency that is evident in the Fandom itself – even groups formed in opposition may be described as Deleuzian rhizomatic accretions. There were, of course, many responses to the initial Burned Fur manifestoes. Among them Simo mentions the Freezing Fur movement, devoted to stopping “the thought police ...who would destroy our dreams” (freezingfurs@mail.furcen.org), and Sarah “Manawolf” Wheeler’s thoughtful and balanced response, *This Judgmental Little Business* (Wheeler 2004).

The Second Great Internet Furry Flame War ended with the dismantling of the Freezing Fur website in 1999, the reduction of flaming on Usenet, and, on 7 December, 2000, the Burned Fur website “went dark”. (Simo 2009. Electronic Document) It returned briefly in 2001, but became the victim of a bitter quarrel between Peter Schorn and Eric Blumrich, both founding members, and resurfaced again in 2005 as “Third Rail Furs”, a short-lived but vehement group threatening to rid the Fandom of “furverts” by “turning the glare of publicity upon them.” Simo concludes his observations on the Great Internet Furry Flame Wars by saying:

Most of the Burned Furs simply returned to being just plain Furs. The die-hards of the leadership either dropped out of Furry altogether, or became dedicated Fur-bashers under new handles on the Fur-bash web sites. Hangdog [Peter Schorn] put in a brief appearance on the Fur Central forums to complain that the pervs “won”.../

If there was any good to come out of this whole episode, that would be that Furdome emerged as a stronger fandom. The distinction between “fans” and “lifestylers” is gone and forgotten. Except for the occasional

die-hard who would like to revive this particular controversy, it's a dead issue. (Simo 2009. Electronic Document)

Below are some of the key events of the Great Internet Furry Flame Wars presented in chart form:

Early to mid-1990s. Disbanded by 1995.	SOF (Save Our Fandom)	First group advocating a conservative ideology. Sought the exclusion of lifestylers and gays from the Fandom. Protested "mature content" art displays at conventions. Also known as "Shove Off, Faggots". Advocated return to "Golden Age of Fandom".
1996-1998	TBOF (Take Back Our Fandom)	Coalesced around "Six Shallow Graves" editorial by Richard Chandler in <i>Gallery #25</i> . Platform was similar to SOF above. The first Internet Flame War involved this group.
1998-2001	 Burned Furs	Co-founded by Squee Rat and Eric Blumrich. Coalesced with an article by Squee Rat – <i>This Sordid Little Business (The Furry Manifesto)</i> . The group was, perhaps, the largest and most successful conservative protest group. Complained about negative public image produced by fursuiters, plushophilia, bestiality, overt sexual displays at conventions, erotic art. Ridiculed Lifestylers, Animal Spirituality and vegans. Some extremist members threatened, harassed, and flamed opponents of the group. Burned Furs was opposed by groups such as Freezing Furs, Nonaligned Furs and Furry Peace. Essayist, Simo, suggested that the real agenda of Burned Furs was an elitist quest for acceptance of Burned Fur artists in the mainstream art world, with a return to domination of the Fandom by "professional artists".
1999	The opposition group, Freezing Furs, takes down its website.	
2000	The official Burned Furs' website is taken down.	
2005	Third Rail Furs stage a brief revival.	

The Great Internet Furry Flame Wars Based on Simo's *An Informal History of Furry Fandom*. (<http://www.furrydolphin.net/>)

Period 4: Furry Interaction on the Internet and with the Mass Media:

Simo's final period in his version of Furry history charts the aftermath of the flame wars. One effect was to draw much more attention to Furies, both on the Internet and in the mainstream media. On the Internet, anti-Furry websites briefly appeared and disappeared, while larger, more general on-line communities, such as 4chan,

Something Awful, and Portal of Evil, carried out, and continue to carry out trolling and flaming expeditions against Furry websites. The chart below summarizes opposition groups following the period of flame wars:

Date	Name	Observations
2000-2001	The Antifur Collective	The purpose of this group was stated as “screwing with the minds of people who call themselves furry”. The group posted false information and used flaming as a tactic in the hope of restoring the Fandom to a previous “Golden Age”.
2003 to present	 4chan	An on-line art community, largely anime. Furry posts were discouraged but the site is noted for April Furs’ Day, 2005, when a Furry art board was created and flooded with non-Furry art. The site was involved in hacking into Wikipedia and other sites. Furry artists continue to try to post material at this site.
n.d.	 Anonymous	A large and amorphous group noted for raids, harassment and “trolling” on Furry websites. Members are committed to “lulz”, ridiculing and disrupting other Internet sub-cultures for personal amusement. Also committed to opposing Scientology and will accept Furry assistance in “Project Chanology”.
Late 1990s	 Calumny	A waterfront tavern inserted into FurryMUCK as a center for artists and critics of the Fandom.
1998-2003	AWFR (Anti-Were and Furry Resource movement)	Founded by “TiggyBot” . The first movement opposed to spiritualism and lifestylers within the Were, Furry, and Dragon Fandoms. Opposed spiritual therianthropes. Allowed group to lapse when Second Internet Flame War (Burned Furs) became intense.
2003-2004	 Eat All Furies	This anti-Furry forum began as a web page and became a journal and ezboard forum under Singing Circus Dog. It harassed and threatened Furies, particularly gay members of the Fandom, and was locked down in 2004 by the administrators of LiveJournal.
1999	FAASA (Furries Against Animal Sexual Abuse)	This was a short-lived group protesting bestialists and zoophiles in the Fandom. It was vigorously attacked by Furies and quickly ceased operations.
c. 2006	 Furs Against	This UK-based group was the European equivalent of Burned Furs. It opposed perceived excessive sexual activity at conventions and the public display of fursuits and costume elements such as ears and tails.

	Furs	The group attempted to host small alternative furmeets, but disintegrated as a result of internal political dissent.
2004-c.2005	Gayfaggotinc	This was an IRC channel on Anthrochat created by Joshua Woulf, Kasai and Auddwaggin, a zombie grey dragon. It was created to ridicule and troll the fandom, with some emphasis on the gay members of the community. Since its dispersal, a number of LiveJournal sites have claimed to be new “incarnations” of the channel.
2006	Suferd	This short –lived group, founded by Darqueskunk, featured front page news, media coverage and editorial opinion on the Fandom.
2006-present	 LOLFurries	This controversial webforum denies involvement in trolling, hacking and electronic vandalism, but has been accused of hacking and taking down the Furtopia site. A splinter group, The Infurgency, is dedicated to trolling and raiding furry websites.
2002-present	 Crush!Yiff!Destroy!	This group is dedicated to discussion of the more absurd and bizarre manifestations of the Fandom from a conservative point of view. It can be highly critical, flaming and trolling Furry websites and discussion groups.
2006-2009	 Furfags.com	This site was originally a photo gallery but also hosted a message board with some anti-furry activity posted on it.
1999 to present.	 Something Awful	This large and active website, the property of Richard “Lowtax” Kyanka, hosts parodies, pranks, reviews, opinion pieces, and is home to the SA “goons” who troll and vandalize other web forums. They have vandalized WikiFur on several occasions. One of their traditions is ridiculing and harassing the Fandom, although trolling Furries often fight back. SA “goons” have invaded Furry conventions and the “Awful Link of the Day” frequently features Furry web pages. Following a 2003 Furry effort to spam an internal SA forum with Furry pornography, SA created a “Furry Concentration Camp” and exiled Furry spammers to this location. Furries took it over and posted more pornography; whereupon, SA deleted the forum.
n.d.	Portal of Evil	This website catalogues strange, amusing or shocking web pages, and is called “the Yahoo! of the weird”. Flamewars occur at times between Furry posters at this site and other PoE users.

Table of Anti-Furry Groups after the Great Internet Furry Flame Wars. (Information for this table is taken from WikiFur, the Furry Encyclopedia, <http://en.wikifur.com>)

Although trolling and flaming attacks from some of these websites are common on the Internet, one group even went so far as to attack Furries at a convention:

At first, the center of Internet furbashing was the Portal of Evil. This is the site which held up the Burned Fur site for ridicule. Many more would follow over the years. They were later joined by the “goons” of Something Awful. Something Awful organized both on-line forum trolling raids, and even trolling at furcons. They did this at the Texas Fur Con, held the weekend of 19 March, 2004. In a Fur Central post (long gone from the ‘Net) it was claimed that these “goons” had befriended some of the con’s guests, then turned on them as they made a hasty retreat from the con. (Simo 2009 Electronic Document)

The “goons” of Something Awful posted furbashing fliers at Morphicon 2005, but have not been active at Furry conventions since that date. Simo also outlines a number of attacks and negative reports on Furry events in the mass media. The essayist notes, however, that “The slow motion demise of Internet furbashing is also a consequence of the maturation of the fandom and its affiliates. Furies have become a good deal more resistant to dramastorms.” (Simo 2009 Electronic Document) He does observe, however, that, as of June 2009, there were two extant news stories linking Furies to soliciting sex with a minor and sex with dogs. Neither of the stories have provoked flame reactions against the Fandom, however, and Simo notes that “Furdom is finally coming of age.” (Simo 2009 Electronic Document)

Appendix 8: "Primal", A Furry "Conlang"

PRIMAL

SECTION I: PRONUNCIATION

Section 1: Pronunciation

Primal has 47 phonemes (called letters for simplicity) each with its own unique sound. Some of these sounds are simple consonants or vowels while others are vowel slurs.

Some letters may have two pronunciations listed in the descriptions below. In this case, either pronunciation is acceptable but the first one is generally preferred.

1-1 Vowels

There are nine simple vowels in Primal:

- a Pronounced as the *a* in *cat*
- c The *oo* in *foot*
- e The *e* in *pet*
- i The *i* in *dolphin*
- o The *o* in *dog*. May also be pronounced as the *a* in *stall*.
- r The *u* in *fur*. Preferably rolled or trilled like a cat purring or a dog growling.
- u The *u* in *circus*. May also be pronounced as the *u* in *pup*. Under special circumstances, *u* may be silent; see [Section 2.2](#).
- w The *oo* in *roo*
- y The *ea* in *cage*

1-2 Diphthongs

Primal has fifteen diphthongs or vowel slurs. Pronounce them as one smooth sound.

The pidgin forms of these letters are written using two English letters to facilitate instruction. Even so, each slur below is considered just one letter in Primal. Each diphthong has its own script letter in the written form of the language ([Appendix A](#)).

- m The *m* in *mouse*
- n The *n* in *plant*
- N The *ng* in *sting*. Avoid ending this phoneme in an English *g* or *k* sound.
- p The *p* in *pelican*. It is preferably aspirated (pronounced with a pop of air).
- q The *th* in *thorax*
- Q The *th* in *slither*
- R The *r* in *rabbit*. Preferably rolled or trilled.
- s The *s* in *insect*
- T The *ts* in *bats*. This is one sudden sound, not just English *t* and *s* run together.
- v The *v* in *dove* but produced in a manner similar to *f*.
- W The *w* in *wolf*
- x The *sh* in *fish*
- X The *s* in *pleasure*
- Y The *y* in *yak*
- z The *z* in *zebra*

1-4 Speed and Stress

Primal conversation speed is slow like English. Beginners should speak very slowly and clearly until they are comfortable with the language.

Stress in Primal is used to denote emphasis on a particular word or word element. Stress is often used to precede pauses or end interrogative statements, much as it is used in English speech.

The subject noun usually receives stress in imperative statements. Affixes and prepositions are stressed when their appearance is key to the meaning of a sentence. Any word may receive stress when the speaker wants to draw attention to it.

- al Pronounced as the *oul* in *houl*. May also be pronounced as the *al* in *Hal*.
- aw The *ow* in *cow*
- el The *cl* in *pelt*
- er The *are* in *mare*. Preferably rolled or trilled.
- ey The *eigh* in *neigh*
- gl The *ole* in *stole*
- gr The *oar* in *rouer*. Preferably rolled or trilled.
- gw The *oc* in *doe*
- gy The *oi* in *oink*
- il The *ill* in *quill*
- ir The *eer* in *deer*. Preferably rolled or trilled.
- ol The *all* in *swallow*
- or The *oi* in *arf*. Preferably rolled or trilled.
- oy The *i* in *tiger*
- ul The *ull* in *gull*

1-3 Consonants

Primal uses twenty-three consonant sounds:

- D Pronounced as the *ds* in *kids*. This is one sudden sound, not just English *d* and *s* run together.
- f The *f* in *fox*, only with the lips in *W* position. The teeth do not touch the lower lip. Instead, the lips close to make the sound, which is similar to the English version but quieter and more airy sounding.
- h The *h* in *halibut*
- H Pronounced similar to the *H* in *Hugo*. This is a voiceless soft sound formed in the back of the throat.
- j The *ch* in *chetchah*. This is one sound.
- J The *j* in *jackalope*. This is one sound.
- k The *c* in *unicorn*. It is preferably aspirated (pronounced with a pop of air).
- l The *ll* in *llama*

A Pronunciation Guide to Primal. ("Trickster" 2001:8-10)

Section 6: Unary Suffixes

The unary suffixes may follow nouns or pronouns (after all noun suffixes) verbs (before verb suffixes) verb suffixes themselves and prepositions

A unary suffix describes the magnitude of the concept represented by the word it modifies. Only one unary suffix may modify (and thus follow) a given word.

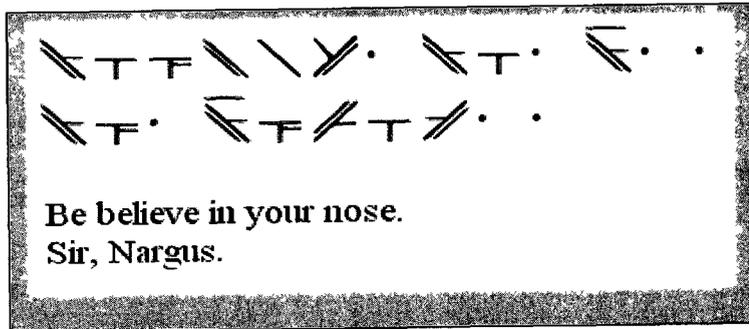
Suffix	Meaning	Description
kel	beyond	something which surpasses the concept
Jy	maximal	absolute perfection or purity of the concept
Xy	extreme	an incredible amount of the concept
Ty	great	a large amount of the concept
ma	moderate (no suffix)	a specifically normative amount of concept some of concept (not specifically moderate)
Hy	poor	a small amount of the concept
sy	slight	a minimum or bare amount of the concept
Xr	lacking	lack of the concept neither it nor opposite
Hr	not	lack of the concept but not specific
Wul	sort-of	similar to the concept
Jw	anti	opposite of the concept
ky	cute	endearing adorable version of the concept

6-1 Unary Suffix Definitions

Let's discuss each of these in detail using a noun, a verb, and a preposition as examples. (Note that examples in this section that use nouns are depicted as complete sentences because in Primal a noun by itself is a complete sentence.)

kel	beyond	beyond or surpassing the concept
jxkel	Skin beyond	Beyond skin (maybe scales)
fimkel	jump beyond	jumping beyond (perhaps flying)
hrkel	before beyond	before time began

Sample Page Illustrating Primal Syntax and Grammar ("Trickster" 2001: 59)



Sample Raptorian Script in ClaWrite. (<http://www.dragon-realms.com/index.php?board=4;action=display;threadid=384>)

Appendix B: Common Expressions

Here are some common expressions in Primal, with pronunciation guides for each. These examples are designed to give the new user some useful things to say, as well as to illuminate a few of Primal's quirks of grammar and sentence structure.

English Expression	Primal Equivalent	Approximate Pronunciation
'Yes (ok) No Maybe'	<i>Wr RuH Qun</i>	wurr, ruH, THuh-nurr
'Hello What's happening?'	<i>QuQix Ww su kr</i>	THuh-THicks, woo skurr
'Good morning How are you?'	<i>ziTy Yw su kr</i>	zih-tsee, yoo skurr
'I love you Goodbye'	<i>Wy su Yul pw Yw QuYawz</i>	wee syul poo yoo, THuh-yOWz
'Excuse me (I apologize)'	<i>Qufoiq</i>	THuh-farth
'I'm sorry (my condolences)'	<i>QuXorz</i>	THuh-ZHarz
'Please help me'	<i>zu kam su Wy hwj k</i>	z'kam swee hooch kurr
'I don't understand'	<i>Wy jerfXr</i>	wee chairf-ZHurr
'Thank you You're welcome'	<i>Quqw Wy Qix</i>	THuh-thoo, wee THish
'My fault Correction'	<i>Wy muq hglv</i>	wee muth, hOlV
'I am a cat (a feline)'	<i>Wy suj mav</i>	wee such mOW
'I am very happy!'	<i>Wy su mNTy</i>	wee smrNG-tsee
'Wow She/he is *gorgeous*!'	<i>jevH Rufr su fglXy</i>	chAYH, r'furr sfOHl-ZIlee
'It happened three days ago'	<i>Ww ly hi hlc qy</i>	woo lee hurr lillz thee
'It happened recently'	<i>Ww puly Wl Quh Hy</i>	woo plee wih THuh-hurr-Hee
'I'll do it an hour from now'	<i>Wy fuly hrj Quz</i>	wee flec hurrch TH'zurr
'What is the date and time?'	<i>hrp ly mu zr Xusu k</i>	leerplec m'zr ZH'skurr
'June 27 th , 2001'	<i>m p kwpul fam kwkulkulRw</i>	noop koo-pull, fam kookulkulroo
'The time is 4 14 PM (16 14)'	<i>zr RwgwxYr puX</i>	zurr roo-thoosh-yurr puhZH
'That costs \$3 38'	<i>RuDdu su peyz qyYr qykwI</i>	r'dzuh spAyz theeYurr theekoots
'I kneel Now I am kneeling'	<i>Wy Wer su koyp Wy su koyp</i>	wee wair sklp, wee sklp
'I move it away'	<i>Wy pwx su Du pw mgw</i>	wee poosh s'dzuh poo mOH
'I walk home'	<i>Wy Wer su qulQ pw mgyp</i>	wee wair sthulTH poo mOlP
'I hear that she/he is tired'	<i>Wy Ti su Yy Rufr su zgwD</i>	wee tsurr syec. ruhfurr su zOHdz
'I hear I'm tired'	<i>Wy Ti su YyJy Wy su zgwD</i>	wee tsurr syeegee, wee su zOHdz
'I heard a sloshing sound'	<i>Wy puTr su Yy silx</i>	wee puh-tsurr syec, silsh
'He/she is crying Why?'	<i>Rufr su vukorz k</i>	ruh-furr s'vuh-karrz, kurr
'Where is the bathroom?'	<i>neym RiJy kr</i>	nAm rih-dgee kurr
'I jumped, accidentally'	<i>Wy pufim Wl Huj</i>	wee p'fim wih Huch
'Most of us enjoy it'	<i>vuWy su nulTy qolN</i>	vwee snul-tsee thalNG
'I didn't like it, or dislike it'	<i>Wy puqolNhr pumgwjHr</i>	wee p'tholNG-Hurr p'mOch-Hrr
'Apparently, I can't move!'	<i>Wy WermYXr Wl samma</i>	wee wair-me-ZHrr wI saam-maa
'Obviously, it is possible'	<i>Ww lynr Wl sam</i>	woo lee-nurr wih saam
'It is above me by three feet'	<i>Du xy Wy Xusu Reln qy su lils</i>	dzuh shee wee ZH'sreln thee shls
'Someday, but not yet'	<i>nuzoyn QuquyHr</i>	nuh-zln, THu-thu-cheeHur
'I've never tried that'	<i>Wy pulyRul Wl luqe su Du</i>	wee plee rul wih luh-theh s'dzuh
'I've tried it occasionally'	<i>Wy plyRul Wl Tuxma</i>	wee plee rul wih tsush-maa
'I'm late!'	<i>Wy ly hrj fej</i>	wee lee hurrch fuuch
'Cons make the fandom fun'	<i>xrJ fw ngwx xusu QuqolN</i>	shecrg-foo nOwsh sh's'TH'tholN
'I only collect er yiffy art'	<i>Wy Nyq joyJ su mgi spy</i>	wee NGeeth chldg smORspee
'I love speaking in Primal'	<i>Wy qolNTy lr Wl kululf</i>	wee thalNG-tsee lurr wih k'lulf
'Don't worry—be furry!'	<i>zu jelvXi zu suj frx</i>	zuh cheiv-ZHurr, zuh such furrsh

Common Expressions Used in Primal ("Trickster" 2001: 154)

Appendix A: Written Primal

Write from left to right. The beginning of each letter is the left-most line segment, and the end of each letter is the right-most line segment. (I is a slash between letters.) When letters follow word-breaks, the initial bit of the letter may be dropped. When letters precede them, the trailing bit may be dropped.

a	e	i	o	u	c
w	r	y	gw	gr	gy
aw	er	ey	ir	oy	or
al	el	il	ol	ul	gl
Y	R	W	p	f	v
T	D	q	Q	x	X
j	J	s	z	k	H
h	m	n	N	l	.

Primal Script (“Trickster” 2001: 153)

Appendix 9:

Portrait of a Furry Artist – Amy Pronovost

Amy Pronovost, in her on-line gallery, AmaraVisions, is one of a minority of artists who produce works of Furry art that uses the term “fine art” to categorize one aspect of her work. Art objects in her gallery are catalogued as new art, fantasy & dragons, non fantasy, fine & life art, sketchbook, ‘self’ portraits, fox-shark, tributes & requests, and star wars. As can be seen in the reproductions of her web pages, she includes a biography indicating that she has formal training in Graphic Arts. Her collection of “Arty Farty Arty Stuff” is described as “the fine art gallery of Amaravisions”. The art works included in this section of her gallery are categorized as “Drawings & Sketches”, including works done with pencil, pencil crayon, Conte, pen and ink, charcoal, and “Paintings”, done with acrylics, watercolors, oils, or with Painter Classic software.

A selection of these pictures appears following this section of her web gallery. Pictures that appear as “fine art” in the AmaraVisions gallery tend to be very skillfully executed works that either originate in formal art classes or use the drawing and painting techniques taught in life drawing and formal painting classes. Perhaps her academic background and training have familiarized the artist with the values and conventions of the art world so that she sees these types of pictures as “naturally” falling within the category of “fine art”.

In the Self Portraits section of the AmaraVisions gallery appear a number of pictures of a character created for an Internet MUCK. As the artist indicates, Amara the Fox became “the definitive caricature (*sic*)” of herself. These pictures, which the artist does not characterize as “fine art”, are done in various media such as pencil, marker, or Adobe Illustrator software. Several of these pictures are collected on the page following the Self Portrait section of this gallery. Fox-Shark Drawings and Comics is a section of the AmaraVisions gallery that features a derivative of the artist’s Furry character, Amara the Fox. Like the pictures in the Self Portraits section these are usually done in marker, pen and ink, or pencil, with the exception of “Velvet Fox-Shark”, a witty commentary on the pop-art genre produced in oil pastels on black velvet. A selection of Fox-Shark pictures appears following this section of the gallery.

To generalize a little about how the term “fine art” appears in the AmaraVisions gallery, this artist tends to select rather academic life drawings, *plein air* sketches and still life treatments as “fine art”, perhaps reflecting the background and training she has received at Georgian College. She sees a clear distinction between this type of work and cartoons and pop-art renditions of her Furry characters. These pictures are often lively, colorful, funny, ironic and reflexive commentaries. Notable among them is “Velvet Fox-Shark”, an ironic commentary on the art world’s perception of “kitsch” and works that fall short of the elite category of “fine art”. Perhaps one could speculate that this artist pays tribute to the training that the fine art tradition afforded her, yet does not see the fine art tradition as particularly powerful or dominant in her experience.



Home Art Gallery
 new art
 fantasy & dragons
 non fantasy
 fine & life art
 sketchbook
 self' portraits
 fox-shark
 tributes & requests

star wars
Graphic Design
Photography
About Me
FAQ
links
The list
Contact!

Everything you wanted to know about Amy but were afraid to ask!

[See my Photo Gallery!](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)



If you'd like to find out about me, you've come to the right place! My name is Amy Pronovost although I am known to many as 'Amara'. Amara started out as one of my character names (the fox that you can see scattered about) but the name became associated with me and Amara became less of a character and more as a way to draw myself without having to worry about getting my human features right.

[Here is a self portrait of Amy the Human... super deformed.](#) This was for my bio on the Star Wars Fanboy Association web page, but I thought I'd put a link to it here.

I am currently working as a Graphic Designer in Thunder Bay and I am a graduate of Georgian College's Graphic Design course. I love typography! I also do some freelance artwork and have done some in the past for the official Star Wars Kids magazine. I'm so happy to have the opportunity to do Star Wars stuff, if you've ever been to [Amara's Cantina](#) you'd probably get the idea that I am a big Star Wars nut.

I travel a lot and I have lived in many places.. Here are the places that I have lived: Sudbury, Ontario; New York, New York (twice! Nice place to visit..); Perth, Western Australia; Townsville, Queensland; North Bay, Ontario; Fort McMurray, Alberta, Thunder Bay and Barrie. I was in Australia for about 9 years. I left because I like Canada better, it feels more like home to me and I love the changing seasons. That's not to say I won't return

to Australia, I'd love to go back and spend some time there!

So, what kinds of things do I like? Well, I'm a big Star Wars nut as you might have guessed but I also like a little bit of Anime, mostly Miyazaki stuff and I have developed an unnatural fondness for several online comic strips including PVP, Sluggy Freelance (look for the election 'balls' strip. Funny!), Argon Zark and Sinfest (Viewer discretion advised. Can be tasteless).

As far as music goes, I like most stuff but my love is They Might be Giants. I have most of their CDs and my favourite songs are 'It's not my Birthday' and 'Meet James Ensor' although I like pretty much all of their songs. I've also discovered that I like some Nine Inch Nails, although I don't own one of their albums and I'll admit that Marilyn Manson isn't that bad. Other music I totally dig includes classics like The Beatles, Rolling Stones, Queen and David Bowie (Ziggy Stardust era, especially). Sting and the Police also rock my world!

I used to read a lot of comic books, but I don't any more. I still have all of my comic books and I really should finish my New Mutants collection one of these days. I have a bunch of cheezy superhero comics, and a decent run of Sandman books as well.

Incidentally, the New Mutants comic is where I borrowed the name Amara from. The original Amara Fox character was actually just that.. a character, quite unlike myself but as the fox became synonymous with Amy, I dropped the roleplaying and Amara merely became an extension of myself. I do still roleplay online, but mainly on Star Wars based worlds.

Of course, no 'About me' section on a web page would be complete without mentioning my cats. I used to have 2 cats.. Missy and Fidge. Missy was given away to a great friend of mine and Fidge is living with my parents until I graduate from school. You can see photos of them on my photo page! Enjoy!



All contents on this web page including art and text are © 1993-2002 A. Pronovost unless otherwise stated. Amara Fox, Fox-Shark and Mr. Skull characters are © A. Pronovost. Art and original characters are not to be used without permission. Send email to amara@flyingarmadillo.com with any questions or comments! We must eat Michigan's brain

**“About Me” (by Amy Pronovost. AmaraVisions Gallery.
<http://www.flyingarmadillo.com/supersilly/aboutme.shtml>)**



Home Art Gallery

[new art](#)

[fantasy & dragons](#)

[non fantasy](#)

[fine & life art](#)

[sketchbook](#)

[self portraits](#)

[fox-shark](#)

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[star wars](#)

Graphic Design Photography

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Gallery of Arty Stuff

Arty Farty Arty Stuff

This is the fine art gallery of Amaravisions. There are paintings and drawings in this area, most have been drawn from life and some are drawn from photographs. The subject matter varies from still life to artistic nudes and my cats. Enjoy!

Drawings & Sketches

Funky Tree A sketch of a neat looking tree. Muskoka. Pencil

Bird on Elm stump A very quick study of a bird on an elm stump. Pencil.

Wild Flower Study of a Muskoka wildflower, Dog-Tooth Violet, I believe. Pencil.

Scratchboard Bear This is a sketch for a larger scratchboard piece for my class B&W

Tools and Trees And a bug for good measure. Drawn at the cottage. B&W

Missy A pencil crayon sketch of one of my cats, sleeping soundly. Monochrome.

Fragile in Death A sketch of a battered bird skeleton with matted feathers. Drawn from life. Pen & ink.

Claire Monochrome colour pencil sketch of a friend of mine from university in medieval colthing. From a photograph.

Artistic Nude - Arm and Back Study Shading exercise. I love the arm on this one. Charcoal and Conte on newsprint.

Artistic Nude - Angel Artistic nude male with some shading that gives the illusion of wings

Four Fingered hand and 5 toed foot A sketch of my hand morphed into Amara Fox's hand (One finger nuked) and a drawing of my foot. From Life (Well, with some improv on the hand). Greyscale.

Artistic Nude 5 A really neat figure study. I had to scan this in 4 parts. Conte on grey paper.

Artistic Nude 6 Really cool ink on paper effect. B&W

Artistic Nude 7 A semi abstract study of the female figure with ink on paper. I love this effect. B&W

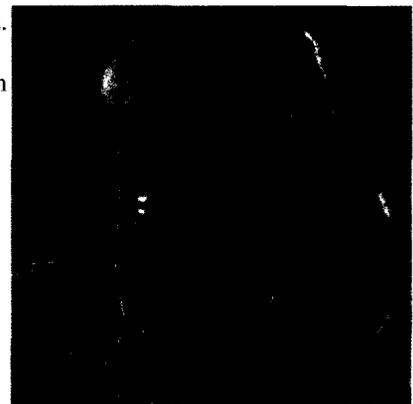
Artistic Nude 1 This was a study of light and shadow. Drawn from life in a figure drawing class. Charcoal and conte on paper

Artistic Nude 2 A figure study with light and dark. Conte on paper.

Artistic Nude 3 Yet another artistic nude. Conte on Grey paper.

Artistic Nude 4 More of a line study, with some crosshatching and highlights. Conte on paper.

Female Face Drawn from life at my figure drawing class. Greyscale



Lizard Hunting A digital sketch of my hand. I added the lizard just for kicks! B&W
Gimme a Hand - Some hand studies. No, the Sistine Chapel look wasn't intentional. Colour.
Rocks pen and ink sketch from life.
Dandelion and Grass Drawn from life.
Sleeping Fidge A series of life sketches of my cat, Fidge. Greyscale.
Bird Foot A bird foot, drawn from life B&W
Serval A serval grooming itself. Digital sketch with photo reference. B&W
Fidge looking inquisitive - A crosshatching sketch of my cat fidge. From life I can't believe he actually stayed still long enough for this. B&W
Sleeping Fidge - my cat sleeping, drawn from life Greyscale.
Snoozing Fidge - Yes, he sleeps alot. From life. Greyscale
Dragon Bird - A skeletal study of a bird sized dragon.
Cat Skull A Biological illustration of a cat skull. B&W
Yawning Cougar A yawning cougar
Running Cougar A cougar running through the snow
Shire Stallion A pencil sketch of a real horse. Grayscale.
Raccoon with Baby Pencil Sketch.
Bobcat face. Pen and Ink.
Female Portrait A portrait of a nameless woman
Another Female Portrait Another portrait of a different nameless woman

Paintings etc.

Weeds - Painter.

Slate in Payne's Grey An acrylic painting of rocks, based on a photo by my friend, and kick-butt photographer, Trina Turl. Colour.

Fruit and Candles Watercolour painting of a still life.

Realistic Fox Face A digital painting of a fox face. Colour. I used photo reference for this.

Eye See You Digital painting of an eye surrounded by firey red fur. Colour, Painter Classic

Blue Lizard - Digital Painting of a stylized Blue Lizard

Still Life A still life setup of some rather funky looking fruit. Watercolour.

Ram Skull This was an experiment in warm colours that I painted in high school. Everyone else painted something like a bowl of fruit or a bunch of flowers... I thought the Ram Skull was much more fun. Oil Painting.

Ratty Digital painting of a rat.

Horse Head A horse head created in painter Classic. Colour.

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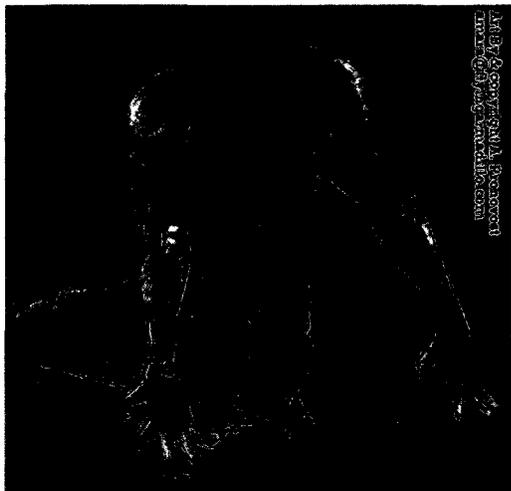


www.flyingarmadillo.com

Fine, Fantasy, SF & Toon Artwork by Amy Pronovost

and many sleepier nights!

“Fine & Life Art” (by Amy Pronovost. AmaraVisions Gallery
(<http://www.flyingarmadillo.com/supersilly/artystuff/arty.shtml>))



Artistic Nude 5: Conte on grey paper.

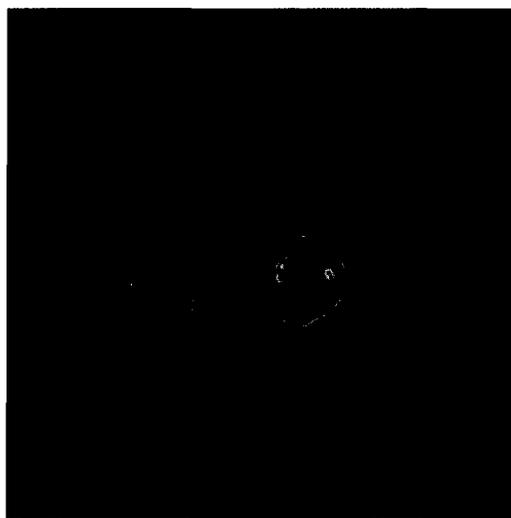


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Shire Stallion: Grayscale



Fruit and Candles: Watercolor



Eye See You: Painter Classic Software

Selections from “Fine & Life Art” (by Amy Pronovost. AmaraVisions Gallery.
(<http://www.flyingarmadillo.com/supersilly/artystuff/arty.shtml>.)

A banner for AmaraVisions featuring the text "AmaraVisions" in a large, stylized font, with "The art of Amy Pronovost" underneath. To the right is a small, dark image of a person's face.



Self Portraits

You may be wondering why I draw myself as a fox. Well, there's nothing really special, I like foxes and I took up a character on a MUCK a while ago, drew it and, well, Amara the Fox became the definitive caricature of myself. People recognise it as being me, and so I've stuck with it. Amara is also a fun character to draw, especially with the Fox Shark character becoming popular. ([Fox Shark has her own gallery.](#)) The other moniker I go by is ArtyEwok, although she hasn't been drawn as often as Amara has. Enjoy. I also draw fangy human Amy a lot now. Rawr!

[The artist as a chicken.](#) Pencil.

[Evil kitten of doom](#) - Lyosha's cat attacked my arm. Graphite.

[Real Amara Vs Cartoon Amara](#) A fun poke at Pseudo realism. The realistic Amara threatens to bite off the cartoony one's fingers. Marker

[Amara the Monkey Fox and Lyosha](#) - Created in Adobe Illustrator.

[Crazy Amara Fox](#) Character study of Amara Fox. Pencil.

[Amara in Frame](#) A sketch of Amara coloured in painter.

[The dark side of music.](#) Some popular music drives me insane if it isn't played in moderation.

[Amara Fox with snowball](#) I'm trying out a new design for amara, some new markers and some new paper. Colour.

[Amara Fox and Poppo](#) I got a popple for Christmas this year, it's very cute. A marker study on marker paper. Colour.

[It's Me!](#) A self portrait from class. i took a good 10 or so years off my face. The funny guy in the background is Matt. He was making faces in my mirror, so I thought I'd get some artistic revenge *grin*. Greyscale

[Amara and autumn leaves](#) A Marker study of Amara Fox jumping with exuberance into some leaves. Colour.

[Amara the Wizard](#) A sorting hat web site (Harry Potter) put me into Slytherin. Must be the evil streak :) B&W.

[%^@% Mosquitos!](#) Amara Fox foolishly venturing into a swamp without repellent. Greyscale.

[Amara the Padawan](#) A nice little change from Amara the Dark Jedi. Colour.

[Sitting Amara](#) Amara Fox, sitting and slouching and looking happy. Colour.

[Funky Amara](#) I may as well get trough the funky stage before I'm too old to pull it off. These are the most comfortable pants I've worn, I don't care how silly they might look. :). Watercolour.

[Poor Visor!](#) My Visor screen broke, but I am getting a new one. Yay handspring, your customer care rocks. B&W.

[Bathing Beauty](#) Amara Fox in a bathing suit, on a diving board. B&W.

[You might be too canadian if...](#) Kudos to whoever did this list originally! Amara Fox is too Canadian.. B&W

[Amara with Sketchbook](#) Amara Fox - Coloured by hand! Colour

[Me and Fidge](#) An anthro version of my cat and Amara Fox building a snowman.

[Super Deformed Amy](#) A self portrait of Amy the Human... super deformed. This was for my bio on the Star Wars Fanboy Association web page. Colour.

[Amara Maul](#) At last we will reveal our pants to the jedi :) B&W

[Vampire Fox](#) The vampire Amara that was on my home page



for Hallowe'en.

Amara in recline A reclining pose of Amara Fox, the cartoon representation of myself. Colour.

Amara at the beach Amara Fox making sand castles! Colour.

Crunchy Goodness! The cover for AmaraVisions 4: Crunchy Goodness. If you'd like to buy a copy, send me some email!

Amy the Punk I have been informed that nobody should be caught dead dressed in yellow, but hey.. I'd make a happy punk. Colour.

Where's the Cat? When I moved into my house, the cat kept hiding! Colour.

Hole in the Wall Amara the Dark climbs through a hole in the wall I rarely cross over with Star Wars and fur. This is a recent version of one of my first net aliases (Fox the dark jedi) Nasty nasty - Amara the Dark Jedi looking most displeased.

Yeeeeesss! My reaction to getting work for Star Wars Kids magazine! Colour

Oh Crud! Amy goes skiing and finds a drop off. Colour

Aren't you a little tall for an ewok? I have an ewok costume, here's a drawing of it! No, I don't have a tail or sharp teeth in real life. Colour.

Albany Anthrocon.. the virtual way! I couldn't go in person, so I chatted with IRC! Colour.

Amara goes to Philcon I went to Philcon in November. Colour

I only have eyes for you Comic strip that accompanies the 'new Eyes!' idea. B&W

Breakfast of Champions Coca Cola: Energy supply of students and computer geeks everywhere.

File This! Amy files her tax return. B&W

Walking Amy Cartoon style Amara. Blue pencil.

Amara and Squee Rat Squee rat getting bunny ears. Squee rat ♦ Charla Trotman. Colour.

Catscan Self Explanatory. :) Colour.

What Squadron? Who do we love? Rogue Squadron! B&W

Amara's Desk The artist at her desk. Colour.

Amara The Dark Jedi Drawn in Scotty Arsenault's Movie Sketchbook. Colour.

Snow! Ah, it's snowing in Canada. So here are my cat, myself and the white stuff. B&W.

Ooh, tropical. Amy draws with Tropical Crayola Markers :) Colour.

Poor Book. The fourth in a series of AAC sketchbook sketches, Fox-shark chasing Gordon McVey's sketchbook home. Grayscale.

More World Domination ideas... Another installment in the World Domination thing.. we all have costumes! B&W.

Time to Take over the World! I plan to take over the world! :) One of those silly in-joke things :) B&W.

JFoxGlov and I JFox asked me to draw him, so I drew myself drawing him. B&W

Amara the Biologist! Amara goes frog hunting on a field trip. Pencil.

The original Amara! Me being a silly person, my first Self-Portrait. B&W.

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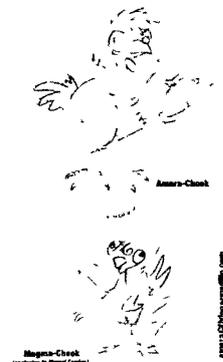
Fine, Fantasy, SF & Toon Artwork by Amy Pronovost

and many sleepless nights!



Token geekism button.

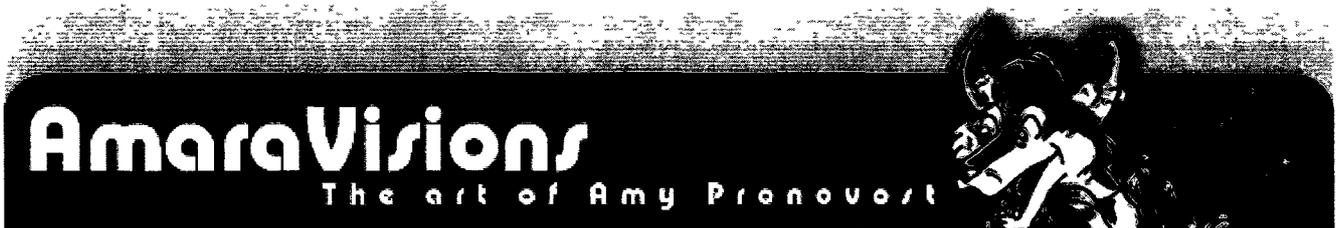
Chicken Character Concepts



The Artist as a Chicken

Amara and Autumn Leaves

“Self Portraits” by Amy Pronovost. AmaraVisions Gallery.
(<http://www.flyingarmadillo.com/supersilly/artystuff/me.shtml>)



Home Art Gallery

- new art
- fantasy & dragons
- non fantasy
- line & life art
- sketchbook
- self portraits
- fox-shark
- tributes & requests

star wars

- Graphic Design**
- Photography**
- About Me**
- FAQ**
- links**
- The list**
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Gallery of Arty Stuff

Fox-Shark Drawings and Comics

Fox-Shark is one of those ideas that popped into my head at about midnight. She's basically my Amara Fox character with a shark fin on her back and a love of fast food. I've had a couple of Fox-Shark comic strips and pictures printed. There is only one Fox-Shark, no more. There's no indepth story behind Fox-Shark, she's just, well, fox-shark.

Comic Strips:

I have drawn a few comic strips featuring Fox-Shark. Some of them have actually been published! As with much of my older art, the comics are buried... somewhere! If you're looking for Fox-Shark comics, I have one page comic strips in the following comics:
Castle Hassle This Comic strip was published in Hit the Beach, by Radio Comix.
Hit the Beach #5 by Radio Comix
Katmandu #14 by Vision comics



Fox Shark Art

Fox shark triumphant!! She has found a hot dog. Colour.
Saucy Fox-Shark - Keeping with my surf vixen theme of 2003. Marker.

Fox Shark eats a hot dog - What more can be said? Graphite.
Velvet Fox-Shark An Iron Artist piece! I am iron Artist cute. Oil pastels on black velvet.

Surf Bobcat Ceri Bobcat is ♠ Mike Russell. She's surfing with Fox-shark, who looks terrified. Marker.

Fox-Shark goes on a Diet Fox-Shark dines on some sentient vegetables. Yummy. Colour.

Fox Shark 2002 Fox Shark for a new age, with less garish clothing. Colour.

Foxshark Vs 6 Part of a draw off I did with another artist. Greyscale.

Table Tennis - Foxshark style An olympic themed commission for Michael Russell. Colour.

Weenie on a stick! Disgustingly Cute fox-shark piece.

Never Tease a Fox-Shark Waving a french fry at a fox shark is a bad thing (tm). Colour.

Super Deformed Fox-Shark a Kawaii fox shark done in super deformed anime style. Colour.

Fox Shark num nums Fox Shark has lunch. B&W

Roasted Ringtail on-a-stick A playful poke at this darn medicine shield trend that some funny animal artists seem to overdo. Fox-Shark.. gnar! B&W.

Beware of Fox-Shark Hand coloured version of the original Fox-Shark piece. Gnar!

Fox-Sharks Play Hockey. Drawn in a Sketchbook at a convention. Grayscale

Hysteria meets Fox-shark Hysteria Drew me, but she forgot one form of mine... fox-shark. :) Hysteria ♠ Julie Miyamoto B&W

Millie: Fox-Shark in Training. Mille (c) Rain Simpson. B&W

2 Minute Fox-Shark An itty bitty fox-shark drawn in under two minutes. B&W

Fox-Sharks like Icecream! Gnar! Fox-Shark pauses for some ice-cream! Yummy! B&W.

Beware of Fox-Shark! This is what happens when I draw at midnight. This is the ORIGINAL Fox-Shark piece. B&W

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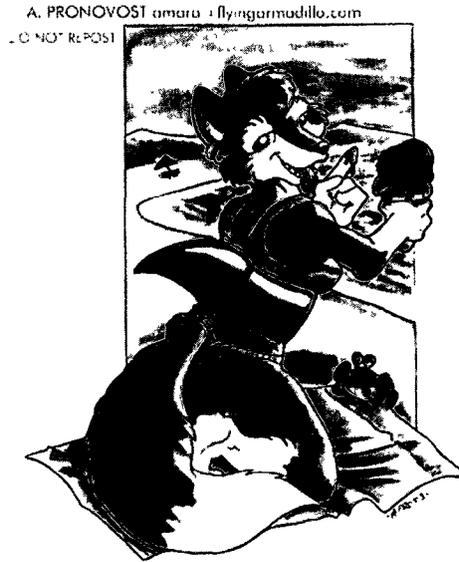
Fine, Fantasy, SF & Toon Artwork by Amy Pronovost

and many sleepless nights!

“Fox-Shark Drawings and Comics” by Amy Pronovost
(<http://www.flyingarmadillo.com/supersilly/artystuff/foxshark.shtml>)



Fox Shark Triumphant: Colour



Saucy Fox-Shark: Marker

Selections from “Fox-Shark Drawings and Comics” by Amy Pronovost
(<http://www.flyingarmadillo.com/supersilly/artystuff/foxshark.shtml>)



© A. Pronovost amara@flyingarmadillo.com. mmm black velvet

Velvet Fox-Shark

(Selection from Fox-Shark Drawings and Comics by Amy Pronovost. AmaraVisions Gallery.
<http://www.flyingarmadillo.com/supersilly/artystuff/foxshark.shtml>)

Portrait of a Furry Artist – Ever Achen or Ever Ashen

Ever Achen or Ever Ashen was a major organizer and facilitator in the Ottawa Fandom when I began this research. Her works in the Deviantart cyber-gallery (<http://www.deviantart.com>) are accessible by searching the name “Ever Ashen”, although she used the name “Ever Achen” during our interviews. Ever’s friend, Indref Achen, came to Ottawa from Australia in 2005 to be with his “mate”. Indref has created the persona of a large anthropomorphic winged rabbit and endowed it with an elaborate narrative. Ever first entered the Fandom in 2003, “dragged into” it, she said, by an old boyfriend who was into “giant furs”. She then created the cat-woman Fursona called Ever using it for role-playing games. In her own words, Ever observes:

I got started in the Furry Fandom in 2003 when I started dating Andy aka. Cheater. He introduced me to the website Lofty Bearings. It seemed a good creative outlet and I gravitated to the art and role-play aspects. I always enjoyed the idea of jumping into a different mindset. This just gave me the opportunity for it. A little later on I decided I’d like to meet some of these people I had met online in person. I initially joined a group advertising a meet for Furies; however, it had been defunct for some time. So I took it over on a whim and this is how I ended up running the Furry meets. It started small, with only one person showing up to the first meet and eventually grew to 10 or 15 showing up. Having to contact so many people spawned the forum Unleashed into existence so everyone could keep in touch. Since I ran the meets, I ran the forum. (Electronic communication: 22/03/09)

Ever’s “totem animal”, as she describes it, is a cat. In response to my questions, she was, perhaps, somewhat offended that I would ask a simplistic question like “Do you believe that you are your totemic animal?” She responded that she did not believe, in any way, that she was her totemic animal, although she did at times experience a “phantom tail”. She sometimes “meows” or “purrs” for effect, she said. Ever’s perception of the transformational experience reflects her reflexivity and her appreciation of the “leaky boundaries” of species differentiation. Species, she commented, has very little to do with anything. She perceives the distinction between “real life” and the Furry community as being blended. “The point of Furry MUCK”, she comments when asked about Furry role-playing games, “is the creative process. It involves creating creatures and their environments with just descriptive texts.” (Personal interview/2005) At this time, Ever did not see the Furry Fandom as just a game but as an opportunity to develop a

character that could do things that ordinary people may not be able to do and to expand her own horizons. “People,” she commented, “usually start off as what they want to be, and then move on to being what they *are*.”[my italics] (Personal interview/2005)

Ever’s art is clearly an important aspect of her life. In her own words, she described her initiation into the art world and her background in art:

I was mainly encouraged from a very young age by my Grandfather, who was a cartoonist and painter, to do art and it just came naturally from my own imagination. My family wasn’t particularly cultured. The only time I visited the art museum was with my grade six class and I can’t say I remember anything standing out to me. So my art was always just mine. I started to buy some instructional books to veer into more realistic humans. My main focus was female faces. They were aesthetically pleasing to me. But that only took me so far before I started to branch out doing other things, still life, nature, animals.... My art started out aiming for realism and ended up being more cartoon-like. People have described it as a very ‘soft’ style. Muted colors and smooth lines. I like to portray characters of my own creation. (Electronic communication: 22/03-09)

When I questioned her about influences on her art, she emphasized the unique nature of her work, a response that I frequently encountered in interviewing Furry artists. Although she has little formal experience with “high art”, Ever has clearly internalized the Western art world’s emphasis on the unique creative vision of the artist. When I asked her about Furry and non-Furry artists that may have influenced her work, she responded:

I can’t say I recall any [non-Furry artists] in particular. When I was on Deviant Art I remember seeing a lot of excellent fantasy artists that probably gave some influence to my work. The mythical and the far out. Just interesting concepts that kept me trying new ideas....I admire a lot of Furry artists. How much influence they had over my own work I’m not sure. I never wanted to emulate anyone in particular. But in the end I suppose [I] took bits and pieces from each and tried to create my own style. (Electronic communication: 22/03/09)

When asked about the impact of the Disney studio and Warner cartoon animals on her work, Ever responded: “I’m sure Disney is a background influence considering how often I watched the movies as children. I mean you can’t help but take things from your childhood. But it’s not something I consciously try to bring into my art.” (Electronic communication: 22/03/09)

Ever devoted a great deal of time and energy, not only to her art, but also to the establishment of a Furry community and Internet forum in the Ottawa area, a forum widely used across Ontario. In this role she might be regarded as a shamanic or, perhaps, matriarchal presence in the local Furry Fandom, using her artistic, social and communication skills to unite the Fandom and represent the Furry sub-culture to the outside world. Much had changed between my first contact with Ever and my communication with her in 2009:

I drifted away from the fandom and my forum mostly because of the immaturity displayed there. Basic common sense seemed far too scarce. I just got tired of being the person having to deal with the aftermath of bad behavior. We lost our spot to have meets; one of the members brought a weapon to a meet and was showing it off in a mall....it was just too much stupidity. I still enjoyed some aspects of the fandom. The art is something I kept doing long after. Sometimes I still do art or put on a Furry avatar in Second Life [a very large Internet role-playing game]. But I've cut myself off from the local community almost totally. A few close friends are all that remain. It hasn't been a difficult transition out really. I just stopped participating and that was it. (Electronic communication: 22/03/09)

Ever's withdrawal from the Fandom may indicate some variation in the application of Keane's "hazard theory" (1997 Keane) to sub-cultures with a strong cyber-component. In the small-scale society describe in *Signs of Recognition: Power and Hazards of Representation in an Indonesian Society* the shaman's oratorical arts are accompanied by a number of risks or hazards, one of which is the potential disgrace faced by the individual shaman in the event of failure or inefficacy. In the Furry sub-culture, however, hazard is much more likely to take the form of an attack on the alleged "perverted" sexuality of the sub-culture in general or segments of it, such as Plushies, from outside or inside the Furry community. This attack may be focused on works of Furry art in general, or it may be focused on Furry lifestyles or reported sexual practices. It is unlikely that individual works of art will be targeted; most of the discourse surrounding a posted work of art is very positive. For example, Ever Achen has a number of pictures posted at <http://www.deviantart.com/#order=98q=Ever+Ashen>, pictures created both by herself and by other artists. Of 54 comments, 38 were positive and the remainder of the remarks were not on the topic of the pictures. No comments were negative. Hazard, in this cyber-culture, appears to apply more frequently to the sub-culture at large rather than to individual artists or shamanic figures. Perhaps we may find an

explanation for this in Ever's description of her departure from the Fandom. It is very easy to leave a cyber-culture when a potential risk to oneself is perceived- one need only cease to respond to e-mail and stop posting new material. When Ever perceived hazard to her well-being and potential embarrassment in the behavior of other Furies, she was able to fade out of the sub-culture, thus reducing risk to herself. The Ottawa area Fandom, however, faced the loss of a powerful shamanic figure who had done much to organize Furry meets and an online forum.



EverSmall.jpg. Accessed 09/05/08



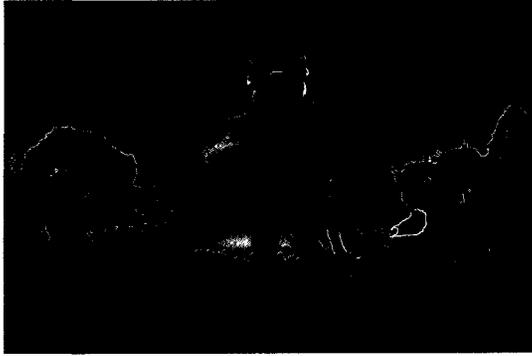
Me_Wave.jpg. Accessed 08/29/08



IndyandEver.jpg. Accessed 09/05/08



Snapshot_0. PNG Image. Accessed 10/21/08



Taini at Sunset.jpg Accessed 04/08/09



Kitty Kitty.jpg Accessed 04/08/09



Smokin.jpg Accessed 04/08/09



Moonlight n'Whiskey.png Accessed 04/08/09



All Alone.jpg Accessed 04/08/09



Bubbles!.jpg Accessed 04/08/09

Portrait of a Furry Artist – Tamidareal

TaniDaReal is a 29 year old German artist and media designer who includes website design, logo production and print and digital product design in her job description. She maintains a well-organized Internet site linked to several large Furry galleries and art site listings. In her biographical information, she states that her interest in the Fandom stems from her childhood love of her pets and her fascination with anthropomorphic animals in television and movie productions. Tani indicates that drawing is not her profession, but is her favorite hobby.

As a Furry artist, Tani seems very well organized and professional, maintaining an on-line gallery, an on-line shop where fans may purchase her work, a site with order forms for mood badges and commissions, and on-line tutorials and patterns for fursuits and plush toys. As a child she began drawing and, fascinated by animation and cartoon art, found inspiration in several television shows such as “The Animals of Farthing Wood”, “The Jungle Book” and “The Lion King”. She moved from Lion King fan art to the Furry Fandom in 1999. She notes a progression in her work from art depicting Disney characters to the creation of her own characters, feral animals and anthros. Her affinity with the Fandom extends to the production of fursuits, performances in them, and a collection of over 200 plush animals. Tani indicates that, as a member of the “Pawpet Show” team, she is responsible for the design of backdrops and is a major puppeteer during Eurofurence, the largest European Furry convention, usually held in Germany. “Nowadays I’m participating in several projects, both private and public ones, as well as in Art Shows at conventions. I also offer commissions.” (TaniDaReal “Inspiration”).

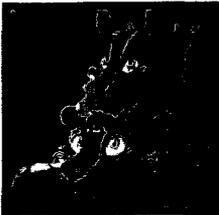
<http://www.tanidareal.com/content/02hartwork.htm>. Accessed 24/08/09) Figure 23 below gives an indication of the scope of her art work as presented in her on-line gallery. Each image is actually an album containing many pictures related to the cover illustration.

TaniDaReal’s Fursona, or “alter ego” as she describes it, is a grey snow leopardess with a black dorsal stripe, created in 1999. The Fursona began as a grey European lioness, but in 2002 she was

changed to a snow leopard. TaniDaReal observes: “I chose a snow leopard because I always loved those noble animals, not only because of their grey fur color. Tani represents me, it is not just a roleplaying character. She is a kind of a mirror. The monochrome design is a part of me, as I always had an extraordinary affinity for the color grey.” (TaniDaReal “My Alter Ego”).

Gallery Art of TaniDaReal Login

Art of TaniDaReal

		
Album: Traditional Art	Album: Digital Art	Album: Sketches
		
Album: Personal Characters	Album: WeuUkoo Wolves	Album: Fursuits

TaniDaReal’s On-Line Gallery of Furry Art. (<http://www.tanidareal.com>. Accessed 27/08/09)
<http://www.tanidareal.com/content/02hartwork.htm>. Accessed 24/08/09)

In addition to the snow leopardess, Tani, the artist also depicts her totemic animal, a wolf. In her own words, TaniDaReal describes her relationship with the wolf and with a snow leopard-wolf hybrid that she developed:

I always had a very strong influence by my totem animal, the wolf. The wolf has been present and guiding me for a long time (long before the snow leopard). That's also a reason why my WeuUkoo Wolves (where Tani appears as normal wolf) mean that much to me.

Sometimes I also show this spiritual connection physically – by illustrating my character as “Schnolf” – the snow leopard-wolf hybrid. This form combines both my inner soul (wolf) and the snow leopard as my physical appearance.

I love that hybrid character, but it also means more to me than just a funny creature. I like to be shown/drawn in both forms – you could say, I chose the snow leopard, but the wolf chose me. (TaniDaReal. “The inner wolf (“Schnolf”)” <http://www.tanidareal.com/content/02hartwork.htm>. Accessed 24/08/09)

Figure 24 includes three versions of her snow leopardess Fursona by various artists, and three versions of “Schnolf”, her snow leopard-wolf hybrid.

Snow Leopard – since 2003



Artwork by Evana



Artwork by Olven



Artwork by Kacey Miyagami

“Schnolf” (snow leopard-wolf hybrid)



Artwork by Olven



Artwork by TaniDaReal



Artwork by DarkNatasha

Three Versions of the Snow Leopardess Fursona: Three Versions of “Schnolf”.
(<http://www.tamidareal.com>. Accessed 27/08/09)

In addition to her paintings and drawings, TamiDaReal also produces badges, including the innovative “mood badges” (See Figure 22 above) and makes fursuits and plush toys. The four fursuits that she has made are shown in Figure 25 below. She indicates that she also enjoys performing in fursuits and has some theatre background from school:

I like entertaining people, and I enjoy “being somebody else” in that suit. And of course, this is probably the closest way for me to really “be” and look like my character. That’s also the reason why I probably could only wear a fursuit character that I identify with.

Adult people wearing costumes may sound strange to people, but instead of just assuming weird fetishes – why don’t you just ask them about it? There are a lot of harmless, comprehensible reasons for it. For most people – the main reason is simply: fun!” (TaniDaReal “Why do you do that?” <http://www.tanidareal.com>. Accessed 27/08/09)

As this portrait of Furry artist, TaniDaReal, indicates, a Functionalist explanation describes many aspects of her work and her somewhat shamanistic role in supporting and maintaining the Furry community. Her comments on her relationship to fursuits and her totemic animal, however, may indicate that Deleuze’s suggestion of the presence of “magic” in the experience of “becoming animal” is

not without merit.



Daiquiri: Transylvanian Wild Dog (2008)

<http://fursuit.tanidareal.com>



2006

<http://tansuit.tanida.com>



2004)

<http://tansuit.tanida.com>



2007

Fursuits by TaniDaReal (<http://www.tanidareal.com>. Accessed 27/08/08

Portrait of a Furry Artist – Frank Gembeck

Furry artist, Frank Gembeck, a 42 year old fan of the *Dungeons and Dragons* and *Elfquest* series, began at an early age as a cartoonist and moved on to fantasy art which he describes as “a main passion”. Gembeck maintains websites for both his fantasy and his Furry art; his artwork in the fantasy genre and designs for cards, comic series, and role-playing games may be seen at <http://www.twogargs.com/Frank/>. Gembeck obtained a Bachelor’s Degree in Fine Art from Northern Illinois University, an experience that he felt advanced his art particularly through figure drawing classes. In 1995 Gembeck became involved in the Furry Fandom, attracted by the anthropomorphic characters in Furry art works and role-playing game, as well as by the social life of Furrries and the fun of Furry gatherings. He now lives in the Bay Area of San Francisco with his partner. Gembeck includes a long list of artists in the fantasy, comic and “funny animals” genre who have inspired his work. He also lists artists of the Disney Studios, Warner Brothers, Marvel and D.C. Comics, Japanese artist Hayao Miyazaki, fantasy writers J.R.R. Tolkien and Anne

McCaffrey, as well as cartoonist Charles Schulz (“Peanuts”) and Muppeteer Jim Henson as “not necessarily direct influences” but “huge inspirations”. (Gembeck . “Background”).

http://www.furnation.com/frank_gembeck/bio.htm. Accessed 29/08/09)

Gembeck lists his interests and hobbies as, first, super-hero comic books, particularly the Fantastic Four, Avengers, X-Men, Elfquest, Legion of Super-Heroes among others, super-hero films and TV programs such as Spider-Man, Batman, X-Men, Superman, Justice League, Legion of Super-Heroes, animated features from Disney and Warner Brothers, the Simpsons and a wide variety of programs, among them Battlestar Galactica and Doctor Who, as well as many favorite films. Manga and anime were favorites even before they were translated into English. He observes that his interest in these Japanese genres was originally “all about enjoying the art and trying kind of sort of to piece the story together.” (Gembeck . “Interests”. http://www.furnation.com/frank_gembeck/bio.htm. Accessed 29/08/09) He enjoys visiting Disney theme parks and lists mythology, folklore, fantasy novels and a wide variety of pop and electronic music as interests. Gembeck is an avid collector of Star Wars and Micronauts action figures, and artifacts of the “Tiki Culture” of the ‘50’s. Both of these interests can be seen in his Furry artwork.

Gembeck is typical of Furry artists in that he includes a page of encouraging advice for beginners in Furry art. He points out that turning out good Furry drawings is difficult: “Furries are not easy to draw. At least, they weren’t for me at first. My background is mostly fantasy art, and when I started doing furries, it was a lot tougher than I thought. Trying to get the right head shape and proportion is tough. Expression can be hard to achieve. Fur texture can be tricky. Paw/hand/foot shape/style and tail placement didn’t come easy....” (Gembeck . “Art Tips”).

http://www.furnation.com/frank_gembeck/advice.htm. Accessed 29/08/09)

As is the case with most Furry artist’s on-line galleries, Gembeck separates his “G-Rated” rated Furry artwork from “Adult Furry” and includes a disclaimer prior to access to his adult site. His Furry art

is grouped in a gallery called “Lanthris: The Furry Lands. The Furry Art of Frank Gembeck, Jr.” (http://www.furnation.com/frank_gembeck) Figure 27 below illustrates, in the first row, three of Gembeck’s pictures from his G-Rated Furry Gallery. “Island Boy” illustrates Gembeck’s interest in 1950’s Tiki-ware, while both “Island Boy” and “Exotic Dancer-Rabbit” gently mock the stereotypical female “pin-up” girl. “Poseidon” represents another interest of the artist’s, mythological and fantasy themes, expressed here in Furry art.



“Island Boy”



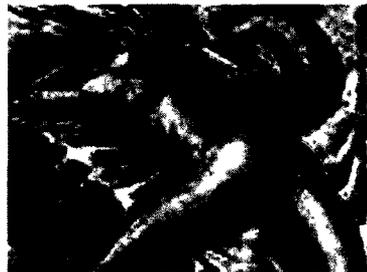
“Exotic Dancer: Rabbit”



“Poseidon”



“Deer Call”



“Need”



“4 Way”

The Furry Art of Frank Gembeck.

(http://www.furnation.com/frank_gembeck. Accessed 29/08/09)

The three pictures in the bottom row are from Gembeck’s “Adult Gallery” (<http://www.furnation.com?frank-gembeck/adltfr.htm>. Accessed 29/08/09). “Deer Call” and “4 Way” are executed in a cartoon style similar to that shown in “Runtt”, but “Need” indicates a sophisticated technique and mastery of texture and draping that is favorably comparable to the technique used in the Vargas airbrushed work, “Temptation”, shown above. In the introduction to his Adult Furry gallery, Gembeck is very open and explicit about his sexual preferences: “I like naked guys. I like drawing naked

guys. I like drawing naked guys doing.... Well, see for yourself if you think it may be up your alley. If not, go back and look at the other pictures.” (http://www.furnation.com/frank_gembeck/adltfr.htm.

Accessed 29/08/09)

Artist on the Boundary – “Klar”

Klar, a former Furry, is a talented Ottawa artist with a degree in Fine Arts. Examples of her Furry art work can be seen in Figure 39 below. Although she no longer maintains a Furry web presence, she continues to accept commissions for character portraits from Furrries if she feels that the character is interesting and carefully considered. As she receives a number of commissions and is building a career as an artist outside the Fandom, she no longer thinks of herself as a Furry or a Furry artist. In a lengthy and detailed interview, she outlined her involvement with the Furry community in Ottawa and discussed her reasons for leaving it. From the occasional rather sarcastic remark, I gathered that she felt a certain amount of frustration and cynicism about her Furry involvement.

Klar became involved in the Furry sub-culture as a teenager. As she remarks: “I was involved with these people in role-playing games....They are people who identify strongly with animals, and people who are sucked into the whole culture.” Klar was chiefly involved in Internet discussions and playing with other Furrries – creating stories and theoretical situations involving three characters that she developed – a fluffy lynx that she considered her principal avatar, a unicorn-boy, and a cougar-boy. For her, these characters were “like puppets” or “like playing with dolls”, characters to be drawn and manipulated rather than aspects of the self. She remarks that she had no interest in bringing her lynx avatar to life: “I was happy to leave it in my head.” Klar found it much easier to relate to Furrries on the Internet. Although she attended one convention, she notes that she did not enjoy it and was too shy to participate. In retrospect, she characterizes Furrries as “those who have an urgent need for people to be interested in them”, and uses adjectives such as “clingy”, “tenacious” and “creepy” to describe Furrries she encountered in situations outside the Internet. “Furrries”, she remarks, “can be overly dramatic- this

nebulous crazy drama thing.” Klar is rather critical of the Furry sub-culture in general. It is, she says, “a weird closet thing”, “a hobby”, all right “if you like cute fluffy animal people”, something to “shy away from as you get older”. Their main message, she remarks, is “Pay attention to me.”

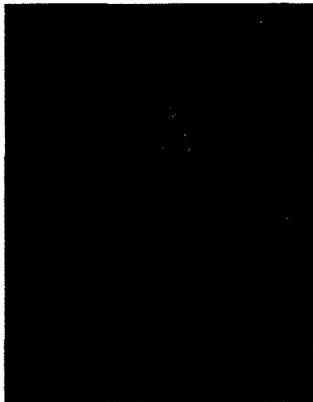
As a keen observer of social interaction in the sub-culture, Klar remarks on Furry power relations. People who are the most active participants, she observes, accrue the most power and are able to shun and marginalize others. Furry artists play a very significant, even shamanistic role, in the community, she says, because Furies “depend on artists to help them visualize all that crazy shit that goes on in their heads.” “Art plays a key part in helping them visualize their happy little world or their scary little world,” she observes. She agreed that, through artistic depictions of their Fursonas, Furies are initiated into the sub-culture. “Once your character is drawn, you are a Furry.” A skilled artist can change the social status of a Furry through the creation of a skilful character representation. There is, however, risk or hazard involved in the role of the artist within the Furry sub-culture, according to Klar. She found that Furies who had given her a commission to create a drawing of their characters were very demanding and intolerant of pictures that did not meet their expectations. The problem, Klar felt, was that some Furies have little concept of the details that are important in the depiction of the character and expect the artist to “be mind-readers”. She points out that Furry “character concept art” is a restrictive style, requiring clean professional line art and the use of bright colors. Tufts of fur must be placed appropriately and within accepted conventions; for example, women’s breasts are pictured as naked and without fur tufts. Backgrounds are not usually included because they require a lot of additional drawing and coloring, and the normal fees for character drawings would not cover the time expended on providing an adequate setting for the character. Her observations are surprisingly close to those of John Berger (1972) in describing the impact of painting with oils on Renaissance art. With the advent of oil painting, fabrics, fur, metal objects, and, indeed, most consumer goods, took on an enhanced visual and tactile qualities, creating desire and envy in the viewer and aggrandizing the subject of the painting who was clothed in or

owned the objects depicted. Klar observes that Furry character art requires fluffy, touchable treatment of furry surfaces and large shiny eyes.

Although Klar continues to accept a few Furry commissions, she feels that the Furry art world has “bad vibes” and “wasn’t working out” for her because it is too limited and restrictive to allow her to grow as an artist.



1. Klar's Gallery Lynx Icon



2. Hart by Klar



3. Owlets by Klar



4. Moby by Klar



5. Kael'thas Sunstrider by Klar



6. Iseii by Klar



7. Pussy by Klar



8. Smellabees by Klar



9. I'm not Perfect by Klar



10. For the Forsaken by Klar

Selections from Klar's Gallery.

(http://www.klar.deviantart.com/gallery/#_featured--3)

Elements of Manga Style and their Reflection in Furry Art.

the **Basic Elements** of **manga style**

Individual manga can vary wildly in style and technique. Each manga is as unique as the individual who created it. There is no stereotypical manga style, but there are some standard conventions that have developed over the years.

Hair is long and flowing, reflecting popular styles and revealing the nature of the character.

Noses are often less prominent and simply drawn as a small checkmark.

Mouths are small when closed and very large when open. Avoid details like lips—keep it simple.



Eyes are large and bigger, sometimes taking up one-third of the character's face.



The Eyes Have It

The first thing people notice about manga characters is the size of the eyes. Huge eyes make the characters appear young and innocent, and provide a dynamic means of expression. Another reason for characters with large eyes has its origin in Japanese theatrical makeup. To depict ideal beauty actors often shave their eyebrows and paint them higher on the forehead. The eyes then look huge from the audience's perspective.

Some Characteristic Elements of Manga Drawing. (Okum 2004:10)

Manga "Good Guys"



Manga Eyes



The Dashing Hero is the focus of the story, often going against authority when necessary in order to save the day.



The Magical Girl often has royal connections or is a princess who proves herself to be quite capable, even rescuing the Dashing Hero from time to time.



The Rebellious Hero usually is much more powerful than the Dashing Hero, but his pride or rebellious nature stops him from rising to the heights of the true hero.



The Big Guy is a giant with a soft heart who seems to be simply mindless muscle, but often is the technical wizard of the group.



The Kid not only relates young readers to the story, but provides a character who is typically in need of rescuing or training. Many of the problems the heroes face result from something the Kid has done or that has happened to him.



The Mascot provides the comic relief in the story and adds an element of cuteness. Sometimes the Mascot saves the day, much to the delight and disbelief of the other heroes.

Manga "Bad Guys"



The Big Bad is usually the leader of the villains. He can appear as a raging fool for comic relief, but he is usually much more than that. The best Big Bads are much more powerful than the heroes, using their brains to develop plans that just might work. The Big Bad is an honorable opponent who secretly respects the bravery of heroes who stand up against seemingly overwhelming odds.



The Evil Queen is sometimes cast as the Big Bad, but more often is the one who gives the Big Bad his orders. She usually has powerful technology or magic and seeks something belonging to the heroes or something that they have taken from her.



The Fallen Hero is often presented as a warning to heroes of what could happen to them if they make the wrong choices in life. The Fallen Hero has taken the easy way out and joined the dark side, tempting the heroes with power and riches if they would just do as he did.



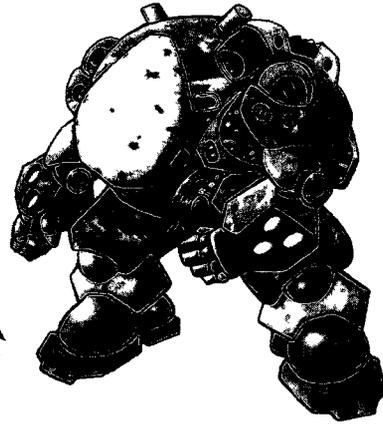
Mindless Goons are generally just there to get in the way or to present a generic threat to the heroes. Every now and again, however, it is fun to mix things up and present some Goons as individual characters who are a challenge for the heroes to defeat.



Cat-girl



Mascot



Mecha

Typical Characters and Characteristics in Manga Representation. (Okum 2004)

Unique Features commonly found in manga

There are some things that readers find in manga that they may not find anywhere else. Use these unique characteristics in your own work to add some flavor, but don't overdo. Here are a few samples of elements that show up again and again in manga.

Speed Lines

Speed lines are not used in real life. They are used in manga to indicate motion to the action of the characters and make them look more dynamic. The lines usually radiate from the character's head.



Speedy Feet

It's a common trope in manga that a character will talk very fast. A loud, fast-talking character is usually shown with a large, open mouth and a wide-eyed expression. The character must be moving. Used primarily in comedies or Super Deformed manga, this convention is used as a visual pun.



Akanbee

Akanbee is a common trope in manga. It is a character who is very fast and has a large, open mouth. It is often used as a visual pun on the character's speed.



The Stunned Fall-Over

When a character is stunned or shocked, they often fall over. This is a common trope in manga. The character is usually shown with a large, open mouth and a wide-eyed expression. The character is often shown falling over in a comical way.

The Transdimensional Mallet

The Transdimensional Mallet is a common trope in manga. It is a character who is very strong and has a large, open mouth. It is often used as a visual pun on the character's strength.

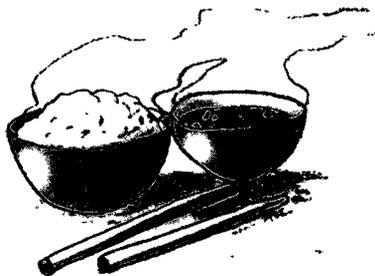


◉ Falling Cherry Blossoms

The sakura or cherry blossom, is a national symbol of Japan. It is often used in a patriotic fashion as a sign of confidence or victory. It is sometimes combined with other national symbols such as the Japanese flag or Mount Fuji. An alternate meaning for this symbol in shoujo manga is to reinforce a sense of longing or sadness. Falling snow also can be used to represent melancholy or nostalgia of a panel.

Food ◉

In manga, you might see a martial artist trying to fight off an attacker while eating a sandwich, a girl friend who is embarrassed about a disastrous meal she has prepared for a boy, and many shoujo heroines eat huge amounts of food or are tempted by treats to the point that they often ignore the Big Bad. Sometimes food is used as a peace offering or a gift to break the ice.



Childishness ◉

Manga characters often display a goofy immaturity. This may be to reinforce their innocence to lighten a serious scene, or simply to add a sense of cuteness to the story. Childish antics can include pulling faces, throwing a temper tantrum, sneezing when everyone's trying to be quiet, or generally acting like a brat. The ultimate example of this childishness is when the characters turn super-deformed and run around.



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◉ The Cool Stare

Some heroes don't even need to physically attack their opponents, they can win just by staring them down. This is the ultimate "if looks could kill" glare.



◉ The Big Head Yell

The head of an enraged or outraged character may expand to fill the entire panel and dwarf the target. The eyes of the person yelling are usually fierce and the teeth are bared and often pointy.



Moriah by Kylene-Christine-Miles



Amaterasu/Twilight Princess by Arania



Hakufox from Okami by Arania



Happy Halloween by Mariano



Koopa's Super Thief Bros. by Mariano

Furry Visual Representations Derived from Manga, Anime and Anime-Based Video Games.

Derrida and the Sign

...the entire history of the concept of structure, before the rupture of which we are speaking, must be thought of as a series of substitutions of centre for centre, as a linked chain of determinations of the centre. Successively, and in a regulated fashion, the centre receives different forms or names. The history of metaphysics, like the history of the West, is the history of these metaphors and metonymies. Its matrix... is the determination of Being as *presence* in all senses of this word."

(Derrida[1966] 1978 "Structure, Sign and Play". *In Writing and Difference*: 353)

Derrida's comments on "presence" in his 1966 lecture at Johns Hopkins University and the publication of his famous essay, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences", marked what one might call the "deconstruction" of the Structural/Functional paradigm. Levi-Strauss and the Structuralist movement relied heavily on Saussure's (1977[1916] linguistic analyses to provide an epistemological and ontological basis for the rational and reductivist theoretical approach of

Structuralism. Derrida's re-examination of Saussure led him to believe that a "systems" approach was not an accurate representation of Saussure's position on the relationship of signified and signifier in the analysis of signs. Structuralism posited a fairly straightforward identification between that which is signified and the word or other representation that constitutes the signifier. Because this relationship was construed to be "real" or "rational", the sign, itself, could reasonably be extrapolated from its particular context and be used in the construction of wider theories, principally Levi-Strauss' claim that binary opposition was the principle that lay behind rational thought and its discourse. This assumption, that the signified was "Being as *presence*", was questioned in Derrida's re-examination of Saussure; Saussure, Derrida protested, was not as arbitrary about the "real" nature of the signified or even the requirement for the presence of a signified at the center of a linguistic transaction as Structuralists believe. If, in fact, the signified was absent or was complex and multi-voiced, the signifying signs used to represent it drift farther and farther away from the signified. The signs, themselves are also multi-voiced, containing "traces" of other words quite unrelated to the signified. The "grams" and "traces" found within the presumed signified-signifier relationship constitute "difference", the drift away from the possibility of any "real" representation of a signified. Derrida's analysis is, in fact, a devastating attack on the premises of Western rationalism. If, for example, a scientist describes the results of a series of experiments, each linguistic transaction of his description and all the subsequent linguistic transactions that erect his findings into "science knowledge" drift further and further from the signified; in the "difference" we find the active participation of the reader(s), the cultural constructs of the science community, the social construct within which science knowledge exists and is disseminated, and the entire structure of Western thought. Likewise, an artist's visual representation or an anthropologist's observation is not, in any way, the object represented, but is a construct formulated by a vast multiplicity of discourses. Although it is always difficult, and, indeed, quite impossible, to simplify Derrida's concepts, perhaps the diagram below (which would, no doubt, be totally repudiated by Derrida) could illustrate, at least tentatively, Derrida's deconstruction of the relationship between signified and signifier, as construed by the Structuralist school.

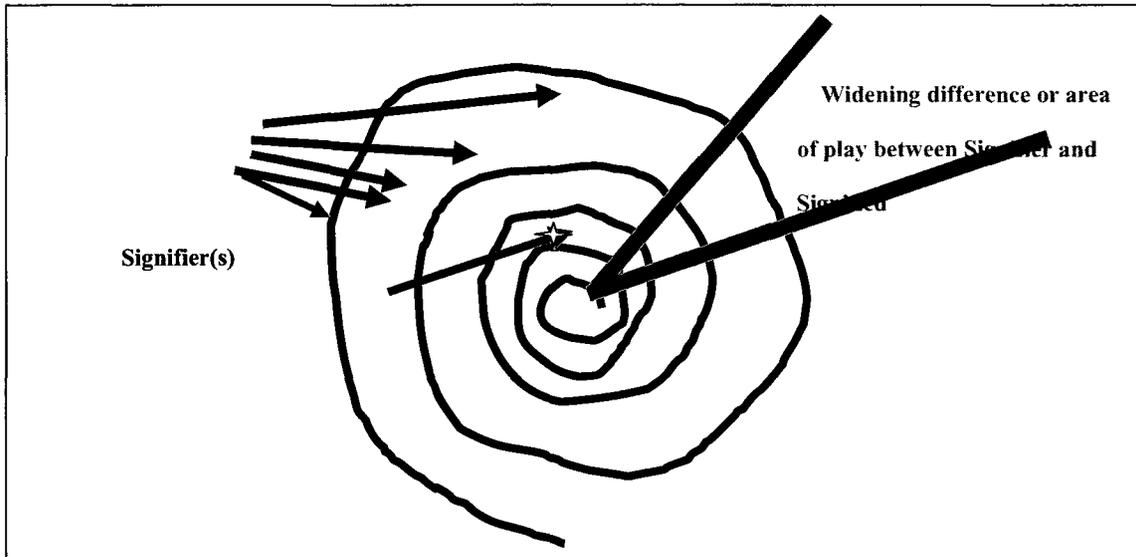


Figure 19: Possible Diagrammatic Representation of “Difference” and “Play” in Derrida’s Discussion of Representational Transactions.

The signified may be the object in the process of representation, or it may, possibly, be nothing at all, in which case the signifying signs negate “nothingness” and create presence where nothingness was the signified. Within the widening vector of “difference” or “play” exists a creative ferment of transactions between the signified and its eventual audience.

Derrida’s re-examination of the Structuralist linguistic model, coupled with Foucault’s observations on power, dominance and the authority associated with the “Gaze” (Foucault 1980) may be said to have created ferment in the academic community, the ferment that continues as practitioners in both the “hard” and the social sciences attempt to deal with the relativism encouraged by Derrida’s observations and the increasing authority of what Foucault called “subjugated knowledges” (Foucault 1973) in academic discourse.

Anthropologists have attempted to deal with the postmodern “rupture” in a wide variety of ways. For symbolic anthropologists like Geertz and Turner, Derrida’s ontological critique of the Structuralist analysis of Saussure’s linguistic systems may have been of less interest than returning anthropological praxis to its roots in detailed participant-observation. Geertz strongly attacks Levi-Strauss, but on the

grounds that forcing cultural phenomena into a pre-determined set of binary oppositions argues, not only bad anthropological practice, but also a deficient view of culture:

For what Levi-Strauss has made for himself is an infernal culture machine. It annuls history, reduces sentiment to a shadow of the intellect, and replaces the particular minds of particular savages in particular jungles with the Savage Mind immanent in all of us....The High Science of *La Pensee Sauvage* and the Heroic Quest of *Tristes Tropiques* are, at base, but “very simple transformations” of one another. They are variant expressions of the same deep underlying structure: the universal rationalism of the French Enlightenment. (Geertz 1973a: 355-6)

For Geertz and the “Chicago School”, Derrida’s enquiry into the Being of the signified within a sign system does not lie within the true provenance of the anthropologist. Culture, “an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes toward life”(Geertz 1973b:87) , is expressed in the external symbols used by a society. The anthropological enterprise, for Geertz, is to investigate “how symbols shape the ways that social actors see, feel, and think about the world.” (Ortner 1983: 129) An appreciation of the operation of symbols within cultures can be achieved, according to Geertz, by the careful field-work and “thick description” of the trained anthropologist. (Geertz 1973c) Turner (1967) shows less interest in the operation of symbols as vehicles of culture, but emphasizes the investigation of symbols as “operators in the social process.” (Ortner 1983:131) How symbols actually function in society rather than how they become vehicles of culture became Turner’s principal focus, but he certainly retains the emphasis on careful field-work that marks symbolist anthropology and ties it back to the Boasian school rather than to the late Structuralism of Levi-Strauss.

Appendix 10: Theatre

Yiff! A Furry Musical:

Yiff! is a more ambitious musical created by composer/lyricists Tim Seward, Darren Wayte, and assisted by Vahn Fox. This production was first performed in a showcase-concert format in 2007 and in a longer version in 2008 in London. Now renamed *furReality*, the full musical is scheduled for production by the theatre company, "The Scenic Route" in London in the summer of 2010. Videos of the first two productions are available on YouTube. The basic plot and sexual orientation of the main character was determined by polls taken on the show's website. The story, as reported by Seward on his blog, is as follows:

The story is about Russ, a young English guy of 19, who is a fur. His mother worries about his apparent internet addiction, but he can't tell her what it's all about; she'd never understand.

Russ goes online and starts to mix with the furry community, in particular with a mentor figure from the States called AzurePhoenix, under whose tutelage he establishes his own fursona, RedFox, and first hears of the concept of yiff - which in his mind becomes a holy grail - the thing that he wants most. He also starts an online romance with JadeVixen, the fursona of a girl in the States, but his mother is worried about the wolves of the world, and fears that Russ is too innocent and inexperienced not to be harmed.

Russ and Jade continue to roleplay and yiff online and Russ quickly starts falling in love with her. After Primrose realises that Russ's sexuality is all bound up with his furriness, she takes action to make sure he can't express his furry side again by cutting off his internet connection.

Driven by his mother's actions, Russ steals her credit card and flies to the United States to attend FurCon - a generic furry convention parodying Anthrocon. Here he spends days in the presence of other furs, loving every moment of it. He meets Gr1z, who makes Russ a conbadge to wear:

Later on into the convention Russ learns that JadeVixen is present at the convention and goes to hunt her down; eventually finding her in fursuit, they begin a duet together, ending with him removing her fursuit head only to find that JadeVixen is actually a gay man who is already in a relationship with someone else attending the convention.

Downhearted, Russ decides to leave the convention, only finding out that his mother's credit card has been blocked when he tries to pay. His mother contacts him telling how she's paid for a plane ticket home and that a taxi is waiting for him. Unable to return to his furry-devoid life back home, Gr1z offers to pay for his convention and invites Russ to live with him. He accepts, and goes on to live his new furry life.

Other sections are planned to follow this plot, which will deal with the Russ/Gr1z relationship, as it enters darker territory.

The following characters have been listed as part of the show:

Russ/RedFox

Russ is a 19-year-old fur from somewhere in England. He's wanted to be a fox since his childhood, and thinks he can realize it somehow some day. He's naive, but charming.

RedFox is everything that Russ wants to be, and who he can be online. He's a dashing, handsome fox who can move at speed and hunt with tremendous cunning. He also knows how to seduce.

Primrose Bacon

Russ' mum is worried about her boy spending all his time on the internet in the company of people who seem weird. She worries about predators and wants to protect Russ because she's not sure he's ready for the world. She's a member of the Army of the Light - a conservative Christian group.

Gr1z/AzurePhoenix

Gr1z is a more experienced fur than Russ, aged 26, from the States. He's tried to realise his furry dreams, but life hasn't yet let that happen. He's a graphic designer by profession, originally named Griff, but he changed it in his script kiddie days.

His fursona is a wise old bird of the furry community, more than once burned by it. Azure stands apart from other furs these days, but has useful words of advice, and occasional words of cynicism for newbies.

Eric/Xanthinus

Eric, a Geography student at De Montfort, got into furry a little before Russ/RedFox, also comes from the UK, and he's there to advise Russ and help him induct a little into the real life furry community.

His fursona is an American yellow ferret with the power of invisibility, whom he roleplays in detailed RPGs based on the universe of a TV show.

Jeannie/Malvina

She wanted to be a librarian, but ended up having kids. She looks out for Russ/RedFox as he makes his journey into the darker, riskier parts of the furry world.

Her fursona, a cat called Malvina, is a smart, glamorous librarian.

JadeVixen

Jade is like Russ - young, romantic and naive. She loves playing in character online. As a character, JadeVixen is a royal vixen in a future world. Confident and assured, she knows how to prowl, how to hunt and how to seduce. Yet holds a certain secret...

Vernon

Vernon sits at his computer through the day and late into the night, being someone he isn't. He leaves his computer to go to conventions.

CanusWolf

CanusWolf is hidden. He's the wolf on the path to grandmother's house; the hunter, the loner and the outsider. Beware. (<http://en.wikifur.com/wiki/Yiff!>)

Cos-Play and Pet-Play:

Cosplay is a Japanese sub-culture focusing on dressing as characters from manga, anime, video games and aspects of Japanese popular culture such as live action television programs, fantasy movies, pop music bands, Visual Kei (a musical genre), and novels. Cosplayers wear elaborate costumes, often in public venues, such as the bridge of Harajuku in Tokyo or in Tokyo's Akihabara district, known for its cosplay cafes and waitresses costumed as maids or anime characters. Cosplay in Japan is not limited to established characters, but may also include original costumes, such as "Gothic Lolita", and characters from popular films such as the *Harry Potter* movies. Cosplaying characters of the opposite sex is called "crossplay" and cosplaying characters who dress as the opposite sex is called "cross-dressing". "In the Japanese sex industry, sex clubs that specialize in sexual cosplay are known as image clubs. In addition to standard fetishistic standbys...an increasing number...cater to otaku with staff dressing up as anime characters." (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cosplay>) Cosplay is also common in the U.S., England, and Canada where it often takes the form of historical re-enactment or science fiction representation. In Mexico and other Latin American countries cosplay is gaining a foothold, particularly as an opportunity for group photographs. Australian cosplayers may travel from city to city attending conventions, and in some parts of Asia and the Philippines cosplay events may be elaborate sponsored conventions where professional commissioned costume players compete. One cosplay element, the masquerade or skit contest, has entered the Furry convention circuit and is part of the program at MegaPlex conventions.

PetPlay or human-animal roleplay will be discussed more fully in the chapter on Furry sexuality, but it should be noted that costume elements are frequently involved. PonyPlay costuming may be very elaborate with PonyGirls or Boys dressed in plumed headdresses, leather corsets, boots, pony boots to transform hands into hooves, butt plugs with tails, bridles, blinkers, bits, collars and saddles. Likewise puppy or cat PetPlayers may wear accessories peculiar to the species they are representing. This type of costumed representation gained widespread exposure when Madonna and her entourage simulated ponyplay in a 2006 tour.

Guidelines for Fursuit Performance:

Basic Fursuit Performance: Expressing Emotions and Thoughts

Assembled by Santa Fox – ©2007

See <http://santafox.home.comcast.net/guides/> for licensing and use information

Use of the Head

- Yes and No (yes: nod head up & down ; no: shake head left & right)
- Disbelief (cock head)
- Mope (droop head and sway) [e.g. accepting disappointment]
- Simple Snub (quick head/nose up)
- Laugh (no need for noise – just do bouncy fast and short nods of the head while raising & lowering shoulders)

Use of the Arms

- Wave (side to side hand movement works best & is most visible wave)
- Get Someone's Attention (wave and point)
- Clap (simple but very effective)
- Invite (point and beckon)
- Adoring Something [e.g. you see a baby] (clasp hands beside head; tilt head towards hands)
- Flattered (touch hand to cheek daintily, then a brief forward wave of hand like you're waving off the praise)
- Surprised (paws to cheeks and then away and up in big open arm gesture)
- Cuteness (cup your chin in your hands and/or blow a kiss)
- "Hug Me" (hold arms open like you want an embrace - pretend to embrace invisible person in front of you.)

Use of the Head and Arms

- Embarrassed ("facepaw": hands over face and tilt head downward; shake head slightly in 'no' fashion)
- Giddy (hand covering mouth and laugh wildly [remember to use good shoulder movement too])
- Tease (point at someone and laugh [be gentle with this, though – don't want to hurt feelings])
- Argue (flail arms around above head and shake head randomly; point at other person/character often)
- Insulted (hands on hips and cock head; might also add 'Snub' afterwards for effect)
- Scolding (cock head, shake head 'no', and wag finger)

Use of the Legs and Knees

- Note: Always try to keep your knees slightly bent as you entertain – give you more range of movement
- Note: Squat down for smaller kids, then pop up bouncily for adults and older kids
- Happiness (bounce up and down)
- Mad/Angry (stomp around)
- Nervous (shift from foot to foot)
- Jumps: try whatever fits your character: leaps, jumps, hops, bouncing, skipping, etc.
- Balance: try different ways of balancing on one leg – great concept for bird characters

Use of the Whole Body

- Sad (sobbing: cover eyes, droop head, sharply rock head and upper body up/down for effect)
- Scared 1 (clasp chest and shake whole body or jump back a step [be careful of anyone behind you])
- Fear (paws up, palms facing outward and back away slowly; shake whole body slightly)
- Cheerful (jump up and down and wave)
- Snub/Bah! (wave off person with single hand movement, then turn and walk away without looking back)
- Exhausted (droop and sag entire body, arms hanging loosely in front of you; mop brow repeatedly and shake off the invisible moisture with sharp snap of the wrist)
- Prat falls (pretend to fall, but control yourself so that you don't get hurt)
- Twirl (jump into air and spin 360 degrees)
- Dance (don't be afraid to just 'boogie down', especially where there's music available)

Basic Pursuit Performance Techniques

Assembled by Santa Fox – ©2007

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Performance Guidelines

- Enthusiasm, Enthusiasm, Enthusiasm !!!
 - If you don't **want** to be out in costume, having all the wonderful fun, but also putting up with all the difficulties of being in costume and performing for an audience of mostly children, then think twice about doing costume character work.
 - If you love the idea, then by all means go out there and have a blast!
- Physical Abilities
 - Strength
 - You should keep your body in good physical shape – eating healthy and working out regularly can be a big help.
 - You don't necessarily need to be able to lift huge amounts, but you want to be able to run and jump around a lot without getting winded quickly
 - Stamina
 - You have to get used to putting up with the heat, the sweating, the lack of fresh air, and the physical exertion – start slowly and build up your tolerance over time
 - Gymnastics
 - It's good to have a flexible body, both to keep from pulling muscles and tendons, and also to be able to do fun tricks with your characters (flips, cartwheels, handstands, etc.). If you are already good at gymnastic tricks, be sure to work them into your character performances. If not, start slowly and get assistance to minimize the chance for injury as you learn.
- Theatrical Abilities
 - Puppetry Skills
 - A costume is just a really large puppet with the puppeteer inside
 - Puppetry techniques really help to making a costume character lifelike
 - Focus on projecting your character through your costume Remember: puppetry is movement, so never, ever stand completely still
 - Mime Skills
 - Learn to talk without your voice – using only your hands and your body
 - Learn to express your feelings and emotions visually
 - Check out a book on mime and try some of the exercises and scenarios, first while dressed normally, then later try them again while wearing your character costume
 - Acting Skills
 - You don't necessarily have to be a trained actor, but it doesn't hurt to have some acting skills and background.
- Believe in Your Character; Believe in Yourself
 - Character
 - Your character should always believe in him/herself! If anyone asks you "Are you real", you should always give an affirmative response (shake head up and down, give a thumbs up, whatever). Even though you know the character isn't real, remember that any response you give is coming from the character, not you, and the character has got to believe in him/herself to be a good character.
 - Self Confidence
 - If you're not sure of yourself, it's going to show. Try to become as comfortable in costume as possible, and don't be afraid to go out on a limb and try new things.
- Maintain the Illusion!
 - It all starts with a well fitting costume. If any of your skin or clothes are showing, that very quickly reminds your audience that the character is just a person in a costume.
 - If you're designing and building the costume, leave six inches of seam overlap at every join (joins are typically at wrists, ankles, and neck)

- If your costume is too small, try fashioning “cuffs” of fabric to keep your skin from showing at wrists and ankles
 - If your costume is too large, pin up the arms and legs with safety pins (not straight pins!)
 - Likewise, don’t let anyone see you getting into or out of the costume. Find a private area to get dressed in and never remove any part of the costume while in public unless you get into an emergency situation (you fall ill, get injured, questioned by authorities, etc.)
 - Before you go out, figure out where your character’s ears, eyes, and mouth are, especially if they are in unusual locations. If you want to cover your character’s eyes when pretending to cry, you want to make sure you put your hands in the right place.
 - You will inevitably develop a unique style of walking and gesturing for your character, especially one that you play again and again. Don’t drop out of this personality while you are in sight of the public. These techniques can really build up the personality of the character, but if you suddenly stop and begin acting ‘human’, that will be a jolting reminder that your character isn’t real.
 - If your character is silent, stay silent; if it has a voice, stay with the character voice and don’t speak in your normal to anyone while in costume. Avoid using a voice if your character does not have an articulable (movable) lower jaw, as talking without the mouth moving looks rather odd.
 - Be discrete when communicating with your spotter/assistant – get really close and whisper anything that you can’t communicate in a visual sense.
 - Eventually someone will attempt to address you directly, even with the simple statement “it must be hot in there”. It doesn’t hurt to answer these questions, but try to do so “in character” as much as possible, to encourage the person to treat you as your character.
- **Be Big, Bold, and Beautiful**
 - **Be Big**
 - You have to project your character’s personality through the costume. A character that just stands around doing nothing is not interesting.
 - Use wide, friendly motions and gestures; small ones won’t be visible to others
 - Overdo your emotional responses for effect. Even if this feels silly, it really does work.
 - **Be Brave**
 - Develop your character’s unique personality traits.
 - Get out there and mingle – you can’t be shy in this business
 - Don’t be afraid of trying goofy and silly things – people (especially kids) will love you if you are goofy and silly in a sweet way.
 - Being fallible also helps to make you endearing – be willing to make some innocent mistakes, like purposely falling or bumping into an obstacle.
 - Make friends with as many people as you can – if anyone hassles you, your friends (even kids) will often help you out.
 - **Be Beautiful**
 - Always treat everyone with respect and kindness
 - Be polite and courteous – let others go first and lend a hand whenever you can
 - If people ask you for directions or information, help them as much as you can, and take them to someone who can help if you can’t
- **Keep it Safe For You and the Audience**
 - Whenever possible, have a guide / spotter / wrangler / assistant
 - For communication with others
 - For assistance and guidance
 - For crowd control and as a bodyguard
 - Don’t enter tight spaces, keep away from merchandise displays and anything fragile.
 - Don’t go into any store unless invited by store management
 - When posing for photos with guests, keep your hands in sight and at shoulder level
 - Be cautious in touching anyone – your own senses of touch and sight will be hampered, so it can be difficult to know exactly what you are touching or how it will come across to the other person. For more on this, look up the recent Disneyland “Tigger” lawsuit

Basic Pursuit Performance Techniques

- Don't pick up or hold anyone, child or adult. When wearing costume arms, you can't be sure of your grip, and there's too much risk of accidentally dropping the person, leading to possible injury and possible lawsuit
- Be careful what you autograph – don't ever sign money or body parts.
- Know when you've had enough and don't be afraid to take breaks, especially if you're not being paid. In other words, take a break before you reach your breaking point!
 - Don't let yourself get overheated! Heat stroke is a very bad thing!
 - Make many short appearances rather than a few longer ones.
 - When you take a break, get out of the entire suit. Both you and the costume will cool off faster that way.
 - While on break – use the restroom and drink plenty of fluids (in that order).
- If you are injured or fall ill while performing:
 - Try to get back to your dressing room. If this is not possible, try to get to any secluded area. If you are simply unable to move from where you are at, then go ahead and get the head off (and anything else that you feel needs to be removed) and deal with your situation. Above all else, try to get the head off as quickly as possible if you think you are going to throw up.
 - If you make it back to your dressing area, strongly consider not going out again. Aggravating an injury or illness by continuing to perform is only going to make you worse.
- If it starts to rain, sleet, snow, etc:
 - Strongly consider going in until the bad weather passes. Not only do you risk damaging your suit by letting it get wet, but with wet weather there is an increased risk of you slipping and falling, hurting yourself or others in the process. If you really want to keep performing, look for some kind of a sheltered area that you can get under until the bad weather passes.
- Don't Forget to Have Fun!!
 - If you're not having fun with your character, no one else will either: you're not being entertaining if you're not being entertained by what you're doing.
 - Don't worry about what others think of you, and remember that no one knows who you are under the costume, so don't be afraid to do things that you would never do as yourself
 - When you see people watching you or taking pictures of you, ham it up! Strike silly poses, do crazy things. Look for things around you to use as props. The more entertaining that you are, the more people will like you
- Advice for Dealing with the General Public
 - Don't initiate touch – offer a hand or open your arms and let the other person come up to you for a handshake or hug. Once the other person has initiated touch, then you can do a handshake or hug.
 - If a child starts crying, back away, and do something visual to show that you recognize what has happened. Putting your hands up, palms forward is a good start, and pretending to cry (cover eyes and nod head), shows that you understand and weren't trying to scare the child. This usually diffuses the situation very quickly.
 - If a guest gets a little rowdy with you, try play along up the point that you feel threatened. If you don't feel comfortable, get the heck out of there, even if you have to leave the event space or return to your dressing room. Do try to find someone on event security and report the situation, even if you have to speak through the costume.
 - If anyone tries to pull off parts of your costume, try to gently dissuade them first (waggle a finger), while making an attempt to hold the parts on. For gloves, just curl your fingers into a fist to keep anyone from pulling off a glove. If the situation gets too bad, get out of there and get help.
- When You are First Getting Started
 - Put on your suit and get in front of a mirror to try out your act – get comfortable with your character and comfortable with being in the costume before you go out in public.
 - Invite a good friend or two over to work with you. Get your friends to watch what you're doing and give you on-the-spot critiques. You can also practice interacting with them, getting used to doing greetings and poses for pictures and such.
 - It's also good to film yourself while you practice in order to get the best view of your character's appearance
 - And finally, practice, practice, practice

Costume Maintenance

- Hygiene
 - Avoid sharing costume parts with other people if possible
 - If you must share – clean and disinfect first – costumes can transmit bacteria and skin diseases – There are some good horror stories about this in some of the mascot forums
 - You WILL get HOT and SWEATY – this is your body's natural way of cooling itself
 - Never coat yourself in antiperspirant – you want to sweat (a little deodorant is okay, and in some cases very preferable, thank you very much)
- Cleaning your costume
 - You need to consider cleaning both the inside and the outside of your costume – especially if you are doing walk-around meet-and-greet in public with lots of kids hugging you and touching you
 - Products and methods – EnBac, 91% / 70% Rubbing Alcohol, any kind of anti-bacterial spray
 - If most of your padding is removable, wash shell in washing machine – cold water, gentle cycle, hang up to dry.
- Storage and Transport of costume
 - Pack parts carefully and securely
 - Keep a checklist and go over it before you leave for each performance
 - Wrap constantly dirty parts, like feet and tails that drag the ground, in separate bags to keep them from contaminating other parts of the costume
 - Put parts in plastic trash bags, and then set those into other containers. When the trash bags become soiled, replace them and use the old ones in your trashcans. The good container(s) stay cleaner and last longer this way.
- Repairing your costume
 - Keep spare fabric on hand – one of the best reasons for making your own costume if you can.
 - It never hurts to have a small sewing kit on hand at each performance – you'll be glad you have it if you ever need it. Also good to keep a supply of safety pins on hand.
 - Consider making an extra pair of gloves & feet – these parts get the most wear and tear, and are most likely to get damaged during a performance

Making a Fursuit

The Complex Process of Making a Foam Mask for a Furry Costume.

(<http://www.stripedsmiles.com/The Mask.html>)

The process requires Roma Plastilina clay in two softer levels, UltraCal 30 thermal plaster, burlap, paintbrushes, sculpting tools, rubbing alcohol, mask latex, a two part cold foam kit, a postal scale for measuring chemicals, and a paint-mixer attachment on a power drill.



The Sculpture: A life-cast of the wearer's head is made. The Furry head is sculpted on the life-cast in front of the ears and at the hairline. The sculpture is very detailed and the wig that will be used is tested on it. The mouth is partially open so that the lower jaw may be moved in the final mask.



Casting the Mould: A clay dike is built around the sculpture and three coats of thermal plaster followed by plaster soaked burlap strips are applied.

The Pull: When the mould has set, the mould is separated and cleaned. Latex is poured into the negative mould and drained. When dry, the latex mould is removed.



The Blow: The life-cast and negative mould are fitted together and key lines are drawn. The foam kit is mixed and the negative mould is filled with foam. The life-cast is quickly inserted into the foam matching the keys.



The Blow is covered with a fabric hood with Velcro strips for attaching a wig. The eye holes are trimmed and after a meticulous process of painting, make-up application, and polishing, the wig is attached, teeth are added, and the mask is completed.

Make Your Own Fursuit: Web Instructions from “Tioh K’Trah”

http://www.fursuit.de/cms/index.php/En:Fursuit_building

En:Fursuit building

Hi, I'm Markus G. Nowak (AKA Tioh). I've written several german tutorials on how to make fursuits on my website (<http://www.tioh.de/>). Some english speaking friends constantly reminded me of the fact that the english translation is missing. I can't translate them all - sorry, got to much else to do -, so I decided to mend all the useful information into one document. Keep in mind that the pictures shown belong to different fursuits.

There are several ways to build a fursuit. The following is my favourite - somebody else might like other construcion-techniques better.

How to build a fursuit

I always start with the head. Most of the time without sketches and without an idea what it's going to be. I decide the species and what fake-fur is to be used after the muzzle has been build.

Materials for the head

50x50cm plastic mesh (it's used to filter leaves out of rainwater - it's sold under the name PolyNet LeafGuard)

A foam rubber mat (30x20cm)

A 3mm diameter aluminum staff (50cm)

An aluminum profile 20x3mm (30cm)

A bungee cord (50cm)

Very flexible plastic-mesh (50x10cm)

Cable support-clips (50cm)

A role strong linen thread

A role wire or fishing line

Isolation-foam for waterpipes (50cm)

Window colors (Transparent, peel-off paint, water based for glass) in black, white and eyecolor

Black duct-tape

FIMO in black and white

Materials for the body

Fake-fur (minimum 3 x 1.4 meters in total)

4 roles linen thread in the color of the fur (I use a overlock-sewing-machine)

Stretching fabric, preferable the same color then the fur (or you can buy a unitard - I prefer to build it myself)

Several zippers (front, legs,...)

Sew-on-snaps

Gloves

Foam mat for the paddings

Where to get the materials

I get most of the material (excluding the fake-fur) from shops selling craftsman-supplies und decoration-material. Can't go into detail, because I do not know how these Shops are named in english.

Building the Head

Planning

I only do some sketches of the head and the fur-patterns if I want to build a certain character. I did it for Spotty (version 2), Wolfy and Tioh. Anchyubee and Fussel were made without them.



Wolfy

Spotty v2

Basic Structure

For my first fursuits I used a wire-mesh to make the head. It took lots of time.

Following method is much faster:



TEON

Bending the basic structure



Drilling holes and sewing the plastic mesh with wire (or fishing line) to it



Adding a second aluminium profile to make it more stable



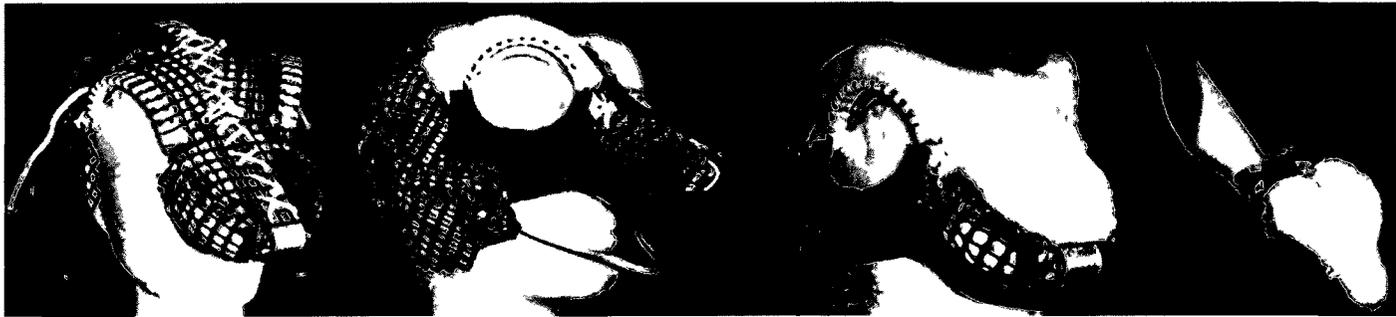
Adding eyeholes



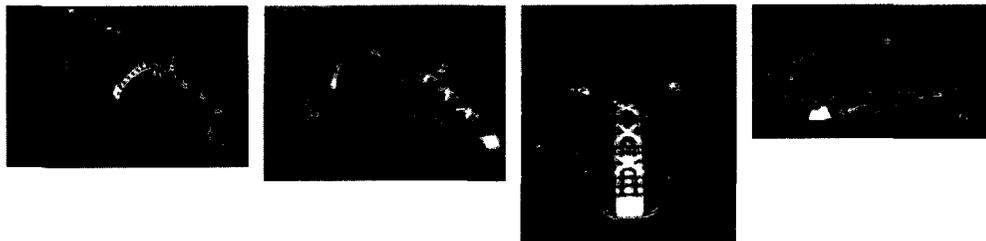
The finished basic structure (without the jaw)

More examples:

Hare



Polar bear



Muzzle

I always make the lower jaw moveable. Some of my suits can snarl too.



Added FIMO to the

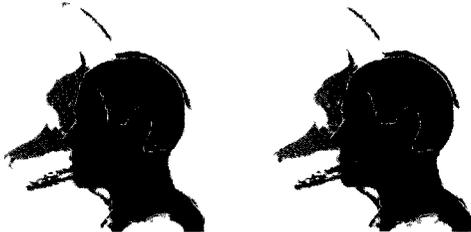
Upper jaw - a bungee-cord forms the lips

The upper jaw has to be flexible, some parts are made of rubber - If you don't need this you can build these parts out of plastic-mesh too

Bending the lower jaw

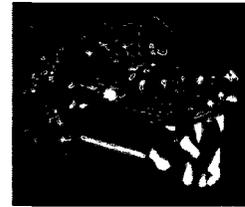
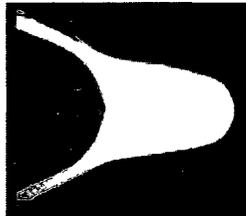
lower jaw as a platform for the teeth

How to move the jaw - two options:



In front of your own jaw Under your chin

Example: Head with moving jaw and detachable fur-cover:



Make a paper-temple for the jaw and bend a aluminum rod like it Attach teeth and sew-on-snaps

Teeth



Making a template for the teeth based on the upper and lower jaw



Basic shape made of aluminum (for more stability), covered with FIMO - the baseplate for the teeth

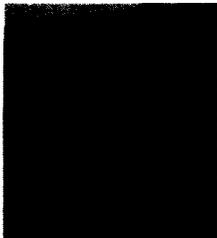


Fussel's teeth sculpted with FIMO



Finished lower jaw

Nose



Nose made of FIMO (Anchyubee)



Nose made of FIMO, covered with lycra (Fussel)



Nose made of FIMO, covered with window color (Wolfy)



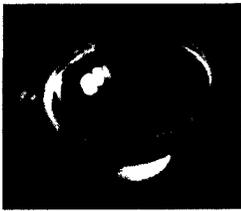
Textured nose made of FIMO (Erios)



Nose made of wire-mesh, covered with window color (Spotty)

Eyes

The eyes consist of transparent plastic hemispheres (sold as christmas ornaments). A transparent plastic foil is glued into them with window color and the sides are painted with it.



Plastic hemispheres with transparent plastic foil



Glued in plastic foil and painted sides



View inside the eye



How to fit glasses

Eyelids (movable)

The eyelids consist of two parts. In the front is an aluminum handle that has been bend to semicircular - larger than the diameter of the eye - and felt.



Softened felt - dried over the eye



Colored felt (with not water soluble paint)



Aluminum handle with holes in the centre of rotation



Felt and Aluminum handle glued together

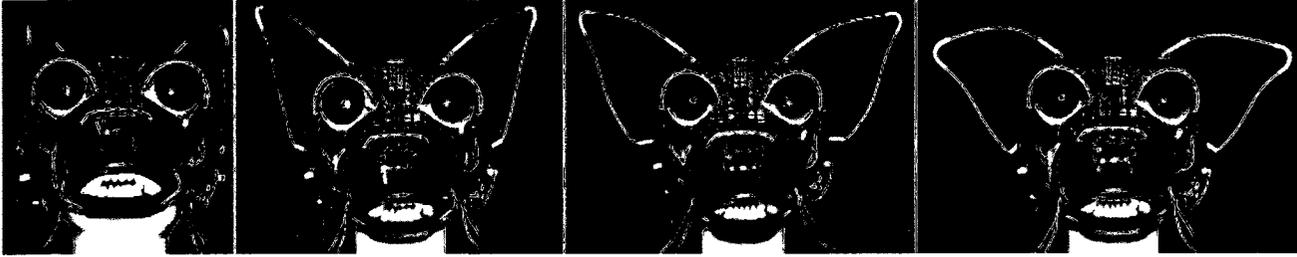
Animatronics

Example for an ear, that can be bend in the middle

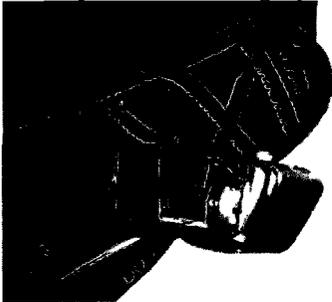


Cut a 4-6mm thin bungee cord or a drive belt in the length for the outer rim of the ear. Three aluminum pipes - inside diameter suitably the diameter of the rubber - form the base and the tip of the ear. The tip has to be bent with the rubber inside. A hot-glue-stick can be used to stabilize the structure till it's strengthened with a rubber-mat at the back of the ear. The hot-glue-stick can be removed afterwards. A hauling cable goes to the tip of the ear. The ear can be bend by pulling on it (manually, thru a motor or servo).

Example for ear, eyelid and eyebrow movement:



Example for snarling by lifting a section of the muzzle with the nose:



A motor and the flexible part of the muzzle



Example for snarling by pulling on felxible libs:

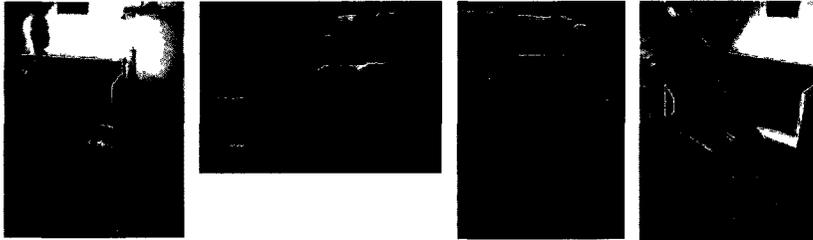
Fur-covering





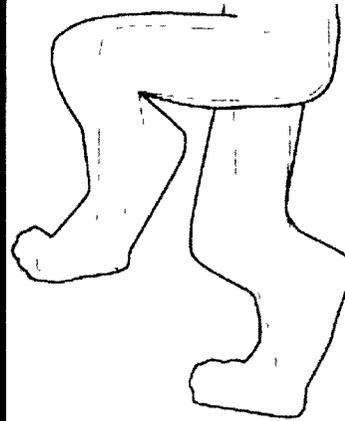
Building the body

Self-build dress-dummy



Self-build dress-dummy with moveable joints wearing the unitard

Paddings



Shoulder-padding

Leg-padding

Leg-padding

Tail

For my first suits I used a flexible tube as the base and made it more stable by wrapping with foam, cloth and wire. These tails can be bend and they hold the pose.

My first animatronic-tail has a flexible tube in the middle with 4 strings going throu small glued on tubes. The opposing strings are attached to a servo.



Animatronic tail

The idea for Fussels tail started with a flat tire on my bicycle. I had a tube that was only damaged in one tiny spot. So I cut it in two parts and used one half to make a tail.



One half of a bicycle tube

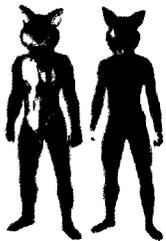


Elastic bands added

Valve

Glued one side airtight and in the other a valve. I attached elastic bands to keep the tail curved. That tail is light, can be deflated and is even comfortable to sit upon.

Sewing the fur



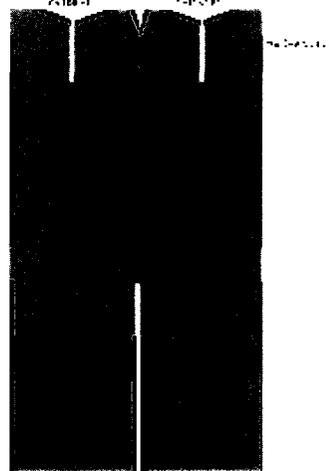
Planning the fur-pattern for Wolfy



Full-body sketch (one of three views)



Planning the fur-pattern for Erios



Cutting pattern for the fur (if it's one color)



Fur cutted



Fake-fur pinned on my

Shoes

I use the same materials a shoemaker uses. The material from which heels are made of is available in larger plates (I asked a local shoemaker and bought it from him: 1cm thick 45x60cm, 20Euro). I cut the soles with a very sharp carpet-knife, round off the edges, glue pads on and a rubber-mat (5mm thick) on the underside to protect the soles even more.



Template for shoesole



How to make a shoesole



Paddings for the toes



Removeable fur-cover (machine washable)

Gloves



Fussel's linen gloves



Self-build hands with joints make it easier to sew the fur on

Some pictures of the finished fursuits



Fussel



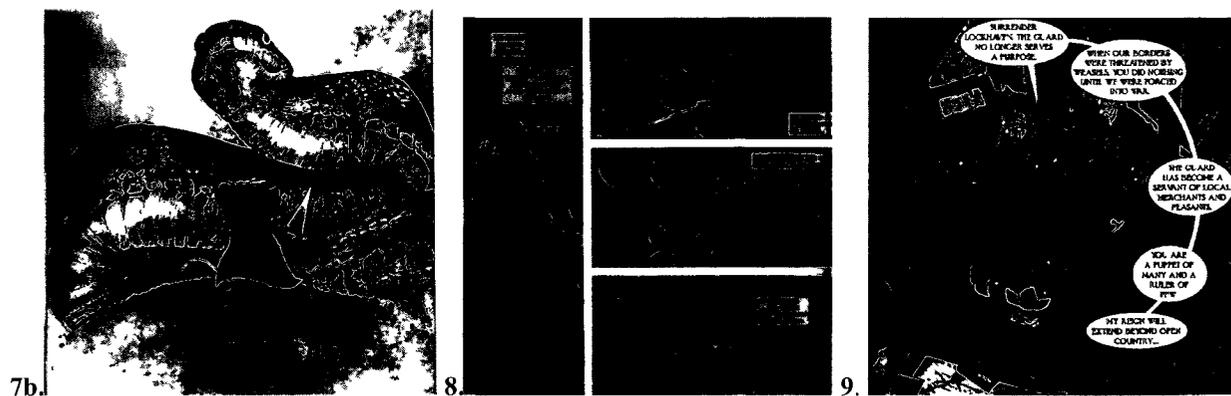
Tioh



Erios

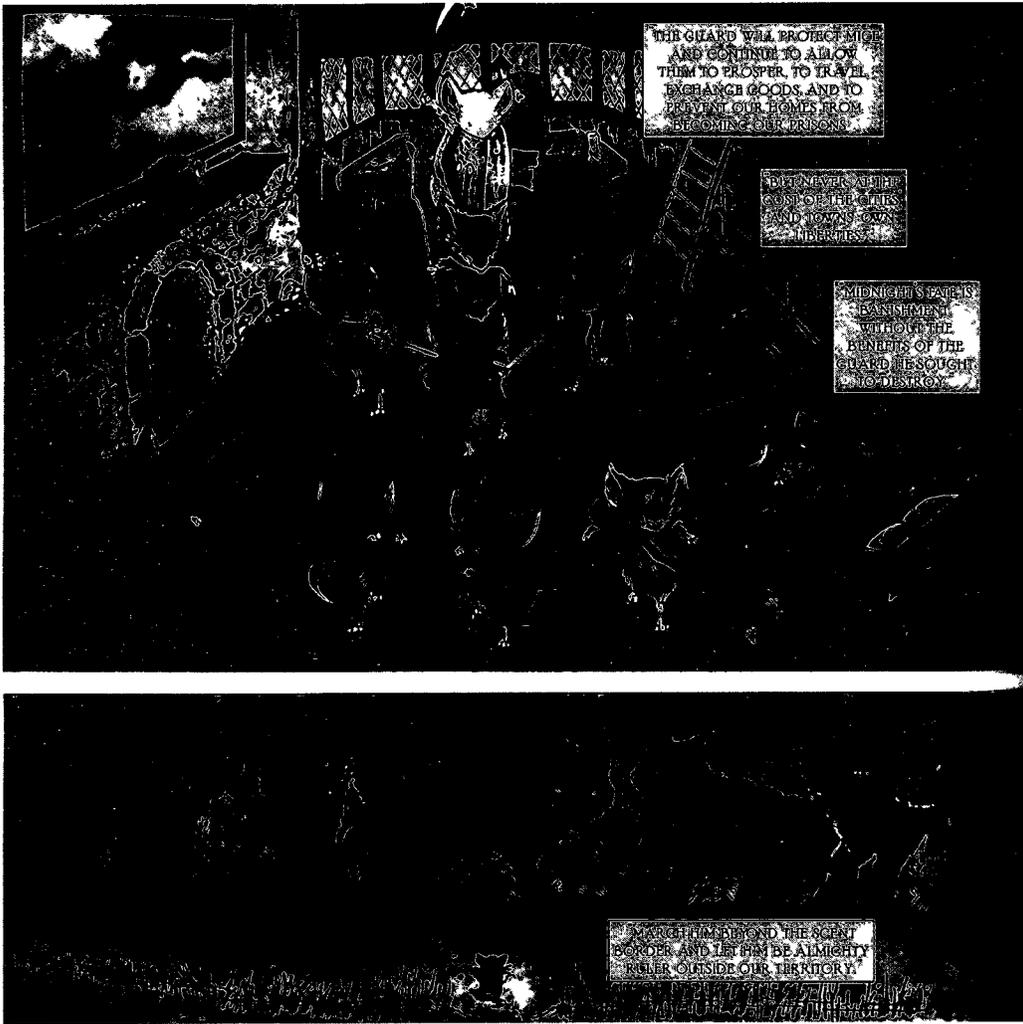


Make Your Own Fursuit: Web Instructions from "Tioh K'Trah"
(http://www.fursuit.de/cms/index.php/En:Fursuit_building)



As seen in Panel 1, Sadie, a shoreline Guard Mouse, has been sent by Gwendolyn, Head of the Mouse Guard, to make contact with Conrad, a crusty old former pirate, now a coastal Guard. As is frequently the case in *Mouse Guard*, the author includes only the beautifully executed painting of Sadie to indicate that she is making her way to the North Shore in a leaf boat. In the meantime, our three heroes, Saxon, Kenzie, and Rand, Guards from the mouse town of Lockhaven, have been sent to determine the fate of an “oldfur” grain merchant mouse, gone missing on his way to Barkstone, a large center hidden in a hollow tree. The three Guards, scaling a tree in Frame 6, find that the grain merchant was caught and eaten by an evil serpent, revealed in all his mythological glory in the tilt-up in Frame 7b. The reckless Kenzie leaps into the serpent’s jaws, and, in Frame 7a, drives his sword into the beast’s brain – an act that merit the lines of dashes, a comic book convention to show vivid action (and blood spatters). The three Guards slit open the Beast and find the remains of the grain merchant and a map of Lockhaven, intended to betray its defenses to an opposing force. Pressing on to Barkstone, the three mice enter the medieval town. Peterson has used several methods in order to establish the historical period of the story. Frame 2 shows us, again without words, the activities in the town, including the shop of a glassblower. Frame 3 is an example of Peterson’s frequent separation of verbal representation from visuals. He briefly outlines the narrative and offers a short poem at the end of the page, illustrated with a mouse reading the story that he is writing. Frame 4 again illustrates the importance of lettering in graphic novels and comic books. This intricately illuminated page establishes the medieval venue immediately. At the end of the story, Peterson includes several explanatory pages discussing the material possessions and activities of these medieval mice. One

of these pages is seen in Frame 6. As the story unfolds and the treachery of Midnight, the Guards' weaponsmith who has raised an army against Gwendolyn, is revealed, the amount of dialogue appearing in boxes or balloons increases. Frame 9 shows an interesting use of speech balloons; as Midnight delivers his ultimatum and his threat to extend his power "under the authority of the Black Axe", speech balloons surround the beleaguered Guard and their matriarch, Gwendolyn. When the evil Midnight is defeated by the "oldfur" who originally forged the Black Axe, Gwendolyn pronounces his fate in Frame 10, a symmetrical representation of the disposition of power in *Mouse Guard*. In three neatly squared text boxes, she delivers the political message of the book – trade and commerce will be protected, the autonomy of cities and towns will not be usurped by a strong Federal government, and only chaos, terror and death await dissidents. The long panel at the foot of the page juxtaposes the tiny unprotected Midnight, outside the pale, with the shadowy forms of the alien Other, in the guise of wolves, awaiting him.



10.