

Observation and Analysis

Wendy Thompson

New Jersey City University

**Observational Notes**

Online at New York City Comi-con 2016

Thursday, 7:40 am- 8:45 am October 6, 2016

It was a cool early October morning, there I stood on line for the first day of NYC Comicon 2016. After being dropped off on the corner of 34th and 10th Ave., I followed the directions being given by the smiling blue shirted NYCC workers. Their placement at every corner from 34th street to 40th moved the growing crowd of attendees further and further away from the doors to the Jacob Javits Center. Along with me were men, women and children of all ages and nationalities walking briskly in search of their spot on the entrance line.

Walking along were people already online who had been there for what had to have been hours earlier. The sense of building excitement could be seen and heard through the subtle movements of people in line, standing or sitting, shifting forward with every inch of space that became available. The mumbles of their conversations could also be heard along the way. I passed seven Doctor Who's, five Harley Quinn's, a group of four women dressed as Wonder Woman, Batman, Superman, Spider-Man, and a host of Walking Dead Walkers. The new characters that appeared to be gaining favor were Eleven from Stranger Things and Deadpool.

There were anime fans dressed as sword wielding elves, Pikachu, and the Thunder Cats. I recognized an Ichigo from Bleach, and a few Goku from Dragonball, but the variety of characters represented far exceeded my knowledge base. The latest Star Wars characters, Kylo Ren and Rey from the franchise came in large and small, and what would a comic convention be without Star Trek fans in blue, gold and red shirts.

Finally, I found a place at the end of the line just before the corner of 34th and 12th Ave. on the Westside Highway across from the New York City Seaport after walking for fifteen

minutes. Standing in front of me were three women dressed as characters from the Walking Dead; one as the sheriff, two as generic walkers. The older woman moved off to the side of the street and started to smoke, one walker was on the phone (talking to her kids). The third who may have been the elder woman's daughter (looked very similar in appearance) was speaking with her about leaving a part of the costume. The daughter remarked that she reminded her twice. The conversation switched to the three women after the one finished her phone call. She complained of not having enough help at home. The elder woman remarked she should enjoy the day while she could.

Behind me were five men, I could hear talking. I leaned against the wall as the line wasn't moving. Three men stood directly behind me (mid-twenties to early thirties), one dressed as Dr. Who, two without costumes discussing what they were looking forward to purchasing. Two men who didn't appear to be with the first three stood looking around and using their phones. The man dressed like Dr. Who, spoke louder than anyone around him. He talked about his profession as a science teacher, considered himself the most out going in his building.

The three talked as if they have known each other for years. They reminisced on their days in college and mutual friends. Every topic that either man in the green or gold jacket would bring up, Dr. Who would interject with a story that refocused the conversation on him. The two men in line behind them didn't comment, which led me to believe the two groups weren't together. Though they couldn't seem to stop themselves from rolling their eyes at some of the more outlandish conversations between the three. One story told by Dr. Who, was how he ran outside with no clothing in a snowstorm two winters ago, as a way of demonstrating that he had been more daring than Gold jacket who had just told a story about how cold the winters were in Ithaca. At this point, the line started to move forward ending the observation.

**Analytic Section:**

The themes that developed through this observation are based on the following categories:

<b>Appearance</b>	<b>People Who Stand Out</b>	<b>Verbal Behavior and Interactions</b>
Late teens - mid-fifties/ all wearing the same blue NYCC Comi-con t-shirt	Comi- con Greeters (mix of nationalities, sex and ages)	Grouped in pairs or threes/ smiling, kind, welcoming, yet direct in defining expectation of where the line was forming and keeping people moving in that direction
Mid-forties/tan shirt/brown pants/ black shoes/ Walking Dead Zombie Rick/ heavy smoker/ overweight/ spotty skin	Female (Hispanic) Walking Dead Zombie Rick	Loud, complaining of the wait, the activities happening away from the line
Mid to late twenties/ wool coat with no buttons/ brown trousers/ and wingtips/ carrying a backpack over his shoulders	Male (Egyptian) Dr. Who	Loud, bragging, domineering conversation, and comes across as over compensating

The information gathered during this observation has led to the following assumptions;

The majority of people in attendance at New York Comicon 2016, located at the Jacob Javits Center were males of all ages, shapes, sizes, and nationalities. Women were also in attendance either in pairs, small groups, or as part of families. Though all age groups, both sex, and numerous ethnic groups were in attendance, the predominant group was white males ages 18-55. The early morning time frame and cool weather did not seem to act as a deterrent to those in attendance.

The appearance of those on line participating in cosplay suggests that they shared connections through pop-culture. The references appeared to act as a means of uniting them with others, while allowing them the opportunity to stand out. Popularity remains even within this

subculture the norm as evidence through the number of people dressed based on Marvel, DC and Star Wars characters. The willingness of the participants to be photographed by anyone who asked points to their need for acknowledgment of their attempts at individuality within the uniformity.

The most vocal participants while dressed in their costumes attempted to gain notice not only from their appearance but through their actions, as exhibited by the smoking and loud voices from the woman dressed as Walker Rick and the man dressed as Doctor Who. While waiting online, I observed few raised voices. The majority of the people on line were speaking quietly or on mobile devices. Another, point made evident through the analysis was the number of individuals who appeared to be of age and capable of employment who clearly saw this event as important enough to take a day or more off from work. This suggest that the emotional gain was worth the possible loss of wages to the participants.