

## **The Hero's Labors: Active Craft vs. Busy Commerce**

Keith Wayne Brown  
Center for the Study of Interdisciplinarity  
Department of Philosophy & Religion Studies  
University of North Texas-Denton

The key distinction between anime stories of the powerful hero and American stories of the powerful hero is that the latter rarely demonstrates the need for the hero to train. This is because the anime shows the hero adopting the craft path. The American hero journey often shows the person suddenly falling into the good fortune of power. This distinction between rigorously trained skill and fortunately received power is the distinction between the craftsman and the merchant, the engaged actor and the active mercenary. Animes in their comical elements make fun of the mercenary while in their more serious elements they elevate the need for knowledge to zen craft. While this is not something one finds regularly in contemporary American storytelling, the absence comes from ignoring Western traditions rather than developing from them.

