

# MANGA VISION

CULTURAL AND COMMUNICATIVE PERSPECTIVES



WITH MANGA ARTIST  
**QUEENIE  
CHAN**

EDITED BY SARAH PASFIELD-NEOFITOU AND CATHY SELL

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**MONASH** University  
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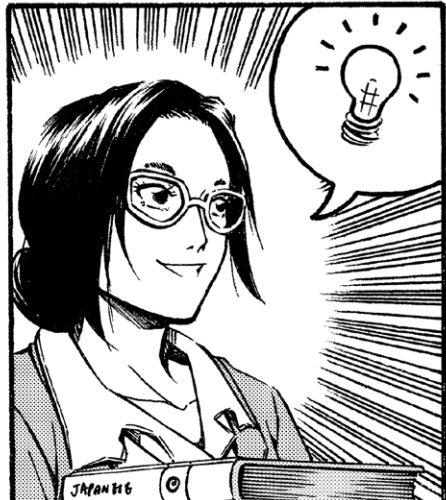
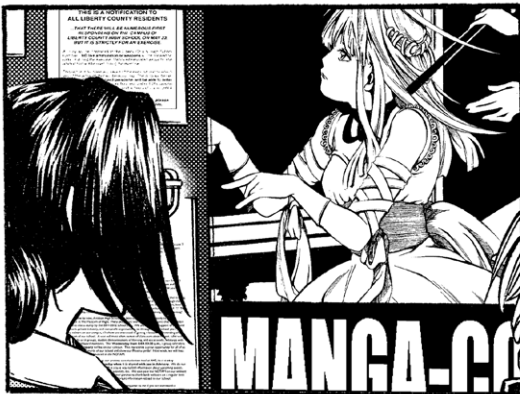
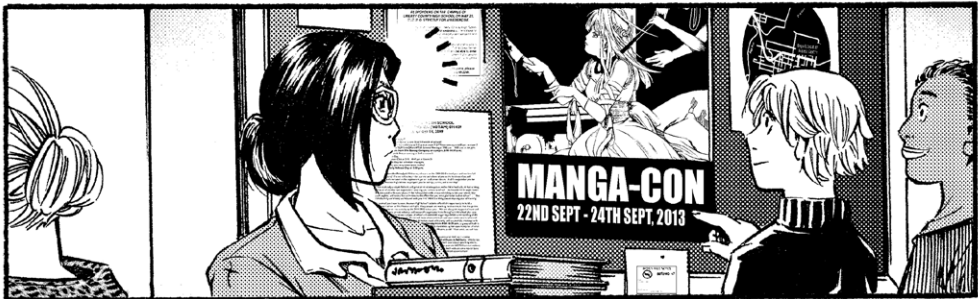
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# Tuning in to Manga



# INTRODUCTION

## TUNING IN TO MANGA

### Cultural and Communicative Perspectives

SARAH PASFIELD-NEOFITOU

#### Glancing at Manga's Past

Manga [漫画], or Japanese comics, are today a globally recognised art form, but they have a rather complex history. Some manga historians emphasise the cultural influence that the USA had on the form, particularly the impact of Disney cartoons and American comics and newspaper strips during the post-war occupation of Japan (see Fusanosuke, 2003; Ōtsuka & LaMarre, 2008). Other historians give more weight to the continuity of Japanese cultural and aesthetic traditions that may be observed in manga (see Schodt, 1986): we may glimpse, for example, the influence of the caricatured drawings featured in an eighth-century temple (Horyuji Temple), or in Toga's twelfth-century 'Animal Scrolls' (Ito, 2005).

As Ito notes (2005), the art of the Tokugawa or Edo period (1603–1868) made for a particularly rich legacy for Japanese comic art, with the emergence of the popular and accessible *otsu-e* (folk-art pictures, sometimes religious and sometimes satirical in nature), and *toba-e* (comical scroll pictures from the Kyoto region) and the publication of early *akabon*, or 'red books', which were precursors to modern manga. According to Schodt (1991), manga may be considered a direct descendent of two other forms popularised during this period: *kibyoshi*, or 'yellow-jacket books', which grew out of children's picture books, and *ukiyo-e*, or 'pictures of the floating world', a genre of popular folk pictures.

Katsushika Hokusai, a famous *ukiyo-e* artist, is credited with coining the term ‘manga’, which he used for a series of his sketchbooks, published as instructional manuals for artists in the first half of the nineteenth century. Hokusai is particularly well known for his woodblock prints depicting Mount Fuji. In 2013, one of these works, *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*, was reimagined for the cover of Ian Condry’s book *The Soul of Anime*, with Unit-01 – a cyborg from *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, a manga and later an animated series – striding through the great wave. Thus this image depicts a link not only between *ukiyo-e* and manga, but also between manga and anime. As Condry notes, around 60 per cent of anime is derived from manga. The relationship between the two forms is a theme that Rivera Rusca expands upon in chapter three of this book.

Regardless of how far back we trace manga’s roots, the medium exploded in popularity in the post-war period, largely thanks to the work of prolific manga artists, such as Tezuka Osamu, who created the manga series *Astro Boy*, which later became the first popular anime series, and Hasegawa Machiko, who created *Sazae-san*, which would also become one of the most popular animated series on Japanese television (Schodt, 1986). Manga would go on to influence animation, video games, film, the music industry, ‘character goods’, the emoji we use every day on our smart phones, and indeed, much of what belongs to the global phenomenon we now know as Cool Japan.

## Viewing Manga in Japan

Manga continues to be an extremely popular medium in Japan, and is read by millions of people of all ages worldwide. A broad array of thematic genres exist, including action/adventure, comedy, history, horror, mystery, romance, science fiction, sport, suspense and even business/commerce (Gravett, 2004). Manga biographies of successful investors Warren Buffett and George Soros, by Ayano Morio (2005) and Kaoru Kurotani (2005) respectively, have been published in English. Dan Pink’s *The Adventures of Johnny Bunko: The Last Career Guide You’ll Ever Need* (2008) has been described as ‘America’s first business book in the Japanese comic format known as manga’ (Pink, 2014) and has been translated into Japanese, among other languages. Even the works of Shakespeare have been given new life in the *Manga Shakespeare* series published in association

with Historic Royal Palaces in England and in the *Manga de dokuba* literary classics series in Japan.

In addition to these thematic genres, there are also broad categories based on the age groups and genders of the target audience. In the 1950s and 1960s, the manga scene solidified into two major marketing genres (Toku, 2005), *shōnen*, aimed at boys, and *shōjo*, aimed at girls, which in part drew on Hasegawa's focus on the daily lives and experiences of women depicted in *Sazae-san* (Lee, 2000; Gravett, 2004).

### Manga Genres and Audiences

*Shōnen* manga are ostensibly aimed at boys aged ten and above, and an additional category, *seinen*, targets men of university age or older. However, pinning down manga audience demographics is notoriously difficult and distinctions are often blurred. *Shōjo* represents a more 'female-focused' alternative to *shōnen* and is generally marketed towards girls aged ten and above, but *shōnen* manga also has a substantial female readership. *Shōjo* manga, like *shōnen*, has an adult counterpart: *josei*, or ladies' manga, is typically read by women aged fifteen to forty-four (Ito, 2003). Yet the most popular *seinen* manga magazine, *Young Magazine*, with an approximate circulation of 725,000 copies, while still not as popular as the bestselling *shōnen* magazine, sells approximately five times as many copies as the most popular *josei* manga magazines (three *josei* magazines claim circulation of approximately 150,000 copies) (JMPA, 2012). Sales of the top *shōnen* (*Weekly Jump* at 2,890,000 copies) and *shōjo* magazines (*Ciao* at 654,584 copies) also considerably outstrip any of the *josei* magazines, as outlined in Sell and Pasfield-Neofitou (see chapter fourteen).

Finally, we have *kodomo* manga, which is aimed at young children (often below the age of ten). It represents another important genre alongside *shōnen* and *shōjo*. Two of the most prestigious manga awards include specific awards for *kodomo*. The Kodansha Manga Award distributes awards according to the categories of children, *shōnen*, *shōjo* and 'general'. Similarly, the Shogakukan Manga Award uses the categories children [*jido*], boys [*shōnen*], girls [*shōjo*] and general [*ippan*]. The *ippan* award was originally called the *seinen* award. A separate *josei* award appears not to have existed.

The late 1960s saw the first major group of female *mangaka* [manga artists] enter the Japanese comics scene. These artists became known as the Year 24 Group (for the group's most common year of birth according to the Japanese calendar). Its artists include Yamagishi Ryoko (*Arabesque*), Ikeda Riyoko (*The Rose of Versailles*), Hagio Moto (*The Poe Family*) and Takemiya Keiko (*Kaze to Ki no Uta*) – the 'founding mothers' of the 'boys' love' genre – and Oshima Yumiko (*The Star of Cottonland*), who is credited with popularising the 'catgirl' character type, a human female character with feline traits, such as a cat's tail and ears.

### **Manga in the Japanese Media Landscape**

Most manga are published initially in manga magazines that contain instalments from several series, alongside one-shot and four-panel comic strips (*yonkoma*). Manga magazines normally consist of a large stack of low-quality paper with monochrome printing, their hundreds of pages better resemble a bulky phonebook than a glossy magazine. After a popular series has run for a while, these stories are often collected into dedicated book-sized volumes known as *tankōbon*, similar to trade paperbacks or graphic novels in the USA and elsewhere. Most manga published outside of Japan take a similar format to *tankōbon*, although they are occasionally published in a slightly larger size.

The influence of manga can be seen not only in bookshops, but also in other institutions in Japan. The most common form of Japanese cultural institution dedicated to manga is the manga library and, of course, general libraries in Japan also frequently incorporate manga into their collections (Toshokan Mondai Kenkyūkai, 1999, as cited in Ito, Tanigawa, Murata, & Yamanaka, 2013c). Private manga libraries are accessible in *manga kissa*, or manga cafés, which serve as a space for fans to read manga. Proprietors charge customers for the amount of time they spend in the café and may offer snack vending machines, beverages, Internet access and even reclining chairs and shower facilities for those who want to stay overnight. Similar establishments can be found in Korea's *manhwabang* and have recently opened in Europe. In Australia, Monash University's JSC Manga Library, modelled on the *manga kissa* concept, caters for both educational and entertainment needs (Taiyaki, 2007), and celebrated ten years of operation in 2012 (Sell, 2012).

A number of other cultural and scholarly institutions in Japan pay homage to manga. It is estimated that some fifty to sixty manga museums exist in Japan (Tanigawa, 2013). The Takarazuka City Osamu Tezuka Manga Museum, which opened in Takarazuka city in 1994, was a pioneer in the field. A number of cities followed its lead and established museums honouring their own homegrown talents (Tanigawa, 2013). Tanigawa identifies a second boom, which concerns expectations surrounding the notion of Cool Japan and government initiatives to further promote and enhance Japan's soft power. The Kyoto International Manga Museum is one example of a prominent institution intended to incorporate the dual functions of library and museum, and conceived of as a facility to collect, manage and organise manga for research purposes (Ito, Tanigawa, Murata, & Yamanaka, 2013a). There are a multitude of institutions relating to manga in Japan and they deal with the medium in various ways. Some are galleries that treat manga as original artworks; some are museums that treat manga and related materials as historical artefacts; 'manga artist memorial halls' celebrate a particular local figure (Ito, Tanigawa, Murata, & Yamanaka, 2013a). Surveys of visitors to the Tezuka museum revealed that the museum is viewed as both a social educational facility and as a theme park of sorts (Ito, Tanigawa, Murata, & Yamanaka, 2013b).

Manga exhibitions have been staged in galleries, manga museums and even department stores in Japan. These events were more or less well established by the early 2000s, but it was perhaps not until Inoue Takehiko's work was exhibited in the Ueno Royal Museum in Tokyo in 2008 that contemporary artists and their works were prominently featured (Tanigawa, 2013). In recent years, this specialised interest in manga has spread out from Japan (Tanigawa, 2013). In 2009, European museums featured manga in two large-scale events. London's British Museum hosted 'Manga: Professor Munakata's British Museum Adventure' (Sell and Pasfield-Neofitou elaborate on this in chapter fourteen), and Paris's Musée de Louvre hosted 'Cartoons: The Louvre Invites Comic-Strip Art'. To exhibit comics – viewed by many as a diversion meant for children – in such revered venues as the British Museum and the Louvre is to challenge the distinction between 'high' and 'low' culture (Tanigawa, 2013) and it demonstrates the value manga has come to hold, not only in Japan, but around the world.

## Spotting Manga on a Global Scale

Over the past few decades, manga's popularity has spread throughout Asia and to the West. Companies like MadMan Media and Viz Media distribute both translated Japanese manga and Original English Language (OEL) manga in mainstream bookstores. In Japan, the market for manga is estimated to be worth US\$5.5 billion annually (Syed, 2011), and significant markets are emerging in Europe and the Middle East (combined, worth around \$250 million annually), and the USA (valued at US\$120 million) (Davidson, 2012). A surge of Asian interest in red wine from Bordeaux has been attributed by the *New York Times* international edition to a Chinese translation of *The Drops of God*, a Japanese manga series about the son of a famous wine critic (Vorndick, 2014). A vast manga fan culture – expressed in costume play (cosplay) events, conventions, fan fiction, fan art (including *dōjinshi*) and unauthorised sharing practices – has contributed to a transnational manga culture and language.

The artistic style of manga has been a significant influence on Western comic books and cartoons in recent years. American comics giant Marvel, for example, has looked at giving more creative control to local artists in Asia in recent years, given manga's stranglehold on the medium (Syed, 2011). Hakuhodo market research cited by Syed (2011) shows that more than 60 per cent of comic books sold in Taiwan are manga, while sales of Western comics make up about 10 per cent. A recent survey of children's programming on Australian broadcast television showed that three out of the six half-hour timeslots on one popular free-to-air channel were held by Japanese animations – *Beyblade*, *Bakugan* and *Pokémon* – while a fourth slot featured *Redakai*, a seemingly Japanese-inspired production (Pasfield-Neofitou, 2013).

According to Hyoe Narita, the president of Viz Media, the top manga titles in Europe include *One Piece*, *Naruto*, *Detective Conan*, *Fairy Tail*, *Dragon Ball* and *Ranma ½*, all similarly popular in Japan and the USA according to a CNN blog (Davidson, 2012). As the blog observes, these manga are all *shōnen*, or boys' manga. While *shōjo*, or girls' manga, has not been as popular as *shōnen* with Japanese or Western audiences, recent exhibitions such as *Shōjo Manga! Girl Power!* in the USA and Canada, in 2007, and *The World of Girls' Manga* in Australia, in 2012, have highlighted the 'unique richness' of *shōjo* manga art

(Iwashita, 2011). Japanese manga's focus on a female audience is often viewed as filling a gap in comics in Western countries (particularly in the USA). In recent years, a number of female-oriented 'boys' love' titles achieved popularity in the West (see Davidson, 2012) (see also chapter five and chapter seven). Around the time of the *Shojo Manga! Girl Power!* exhibition, *shōjo* manga was described as one of the 'fastest growing segments of publishing in the US' (Toku, 2008, p. 15).

Comics influenced by manga exist in various parts of the world, including Taiwan, China and Hong Kong's *manhua* and South Korea's *manhwa* (see Zulawnik in chapter thirteen of this book). In France, *La nouvelle manga* has developed as a form of French *bande dessinée* comic (Boilet, 2010).

Manga's influence as an art form has been described as a great contributor to Japan's soft power or 'gross national cool' (McGray, 2002), and is even viewed as a major contributor to many students' desire to study the Japanese language (The Japan Foundation, 2011; see also Lee & Armour in chapter ten of this book). As a result, manga has begun to receive academic attention in recent years. However, much exploration of the links between image and language, comics and manga, 'Japanese' and 'non-Japanese' manga remains to be undertaken.

### **Manga under the Scholarly Microscope**

In addition to our ability to appreciate manga through the library, the museum, the manga café, fan practices, translations and reinterpretations, we can also view it from an academic perspective: Manga Studies is rapidly becoming an established area of scholarly enquiry. In 2006, Kyoto Seika University established its Faculty of Manga, where many of the professors are established *mangaka*, or comic book artists. One of their major projects is the Genga' (Dash) project, in collaboration with the University's International Manga Research Centre. The artists made use of computerised fine colour adjustment and printing to create detailed reproductions of original manga artwork for public display (Takemiya, 2011). The resulting reproductions were exhibited in Shinjuku, Tokyo, in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the project in 2011, and in Melbourne, Australia, at Monash University's JSC Manga Library in celebration of library's tenth anniversary in 2012 (with the support



of the Japanese Studies Association of Australia, The Japan Foundation and the Kyoto International Manga Museum).

In museums, galleries and universities, manga is being studied for its cultural and artistic properties. The study of manga provides a valuable context for the contemplation of fan practices (see chapters one, three and five), the nature of 'Japaneseness' (see chapter two), morality (see chapter four) and readers' relationships with the manga medium (see chapters six and seven). One recent volume examines manga's hybrid culture through a special focus on the popular manga franchise *Naruto* (Berndt & Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2013).

Scholars have also turned their attention to the linguistic properties of manga, including manga literacy among native speakers of Japanese (Nakazawa, 2002; 2004; 2005) and among learners (see chapter ten). As previously mentioned, the ability to better understand manga and anime in their original Japanese is a motivation frequently cited by students of Japanese. Indeed, manga is actively used as a tool for Japanese language acquisition, an idea pioneered by the journal *Mangajin* (Simmons, 1988–1998), and adopted by a number of subsequent books (Bernabe, 2004; Lammers, 2004). It is also used to teach English. In chapter eleven of this book, Promnitz-Hayashi examines of the use of manga to teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL), in an innovative approach that locates manga firmly in the global sphere and explores international and linguistic boundaries. Similarly, Aoyama and Kennett, in chapter eight, and Robertson, in chapter nine, explore linguistic and typographic depictions of foreign languages and foreign-language speakers in manga.

Language in manga has been the subject of two other foci: the translation of manga (see chapters seven, thirteen and fourteen) and the use of manga as a source for linguistic data (see chapter twelve for an introduction, see also chapters eight and fourteen). Given manga's globalisation, it is ideal for researching translation, and as chapter twelve demonstrates, its meticulous depiction of dialogue makes manga a potential source of language data in difficult to research circumstances like conflict. These examples demonstrate the ways in which research on manga not only contributes to our understanding of the medium, but also enriches our understanding of communication in general.

## The Many Lenses of *Manga Vision*

*Manga Vision* is divided into two main themes: cultural perspectives and communicative perspectives. However, each chapter deals with both of these themes to some extent. The first section explores manga as an expansive medium through which personal identities and group cultures are expressed and developed. The section explores appropriations of Japanese manga aesthetic for personal uses by both individuals and reader fan groups, and in turn, the ownership and expansion of manga culture internationally. The chapters in section two examine linguistic expression and communication in manga, treating manga as a multi-modal medium through which to understand, learn and interact. It examines how Japanese and other languages are depicted in manga, the interplay between language and visuals, and the use of manga as a resource for teaching and research.

As well as presenting readers of this book with the perspectives of its contributing authors, a mix of international scholars and emerging researchers, on the under-explored field of manga, *Manga Vision* also provides readers with a unique multimedia experience. The hyperlinks and QR codes (quick response 3D printed barcodes) used throughout the volume invite you to explore a number of online components. Readers can view photographs of manga fans' actual cosplay practices, see examples of original manga artwork commissioned especially for this volume, listen to musical compositions inspired by the popular 'boys' love' genre of manga and access an extensive database of manga sound effects. Manga is a deeply intertextual medium, combining language and visuals, and *Manga Vision* aims to be the same.

*Manga Vision* is a highly international collection of scholarship, comprising chapters from authors based in Japan, Australia and Europe. The foci of the chapters are equally diverse. Several authors look at the influence of manga in Japan, while others examine its influence on Japan-Korea relations and interactions between Japanese and Western cultures (particularly Australia and North America). The international impact of manga via translation and OEL manga is another areas of focus, as is the use of manga in language learning. The authors of *Manga Vision* also take a number of approaches in addressing their subjects: theoretical/background (Bell; Moreno Acosta; Rivera Rusca), methodological (Aoyama & Kennett; Promnitz-Hayashi; Tanaka), empirical

(Baudinette; Langsford; Turner), as well as professional and practice-based (Lee & Armour; Sell & Pasfield-Neofitou; Smith; Zulawnik;). Together, we invite you to view manga through the lenses of sociology, literary studies, journalism, ethics, ethnography, queer studies, musical composition, linguistics, education and translation.

### Online Multimedia Component

*Manga Vision* is enhanced with a variety of online multimedia components via the Manga Studies website, including a gallery of cosplay photos, music files, teaching resources, and a sound effects glossary.

Visit <http://mangastudies.com/mangavision/> or scan the below QR code. Relevant chapters with accompanying online materials will all have a QR code provided.



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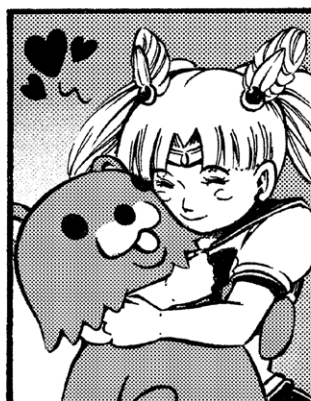
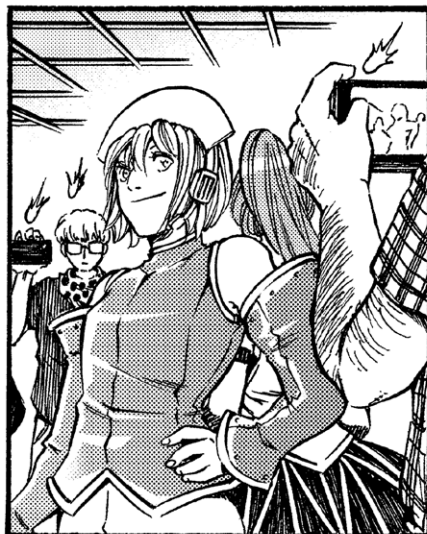
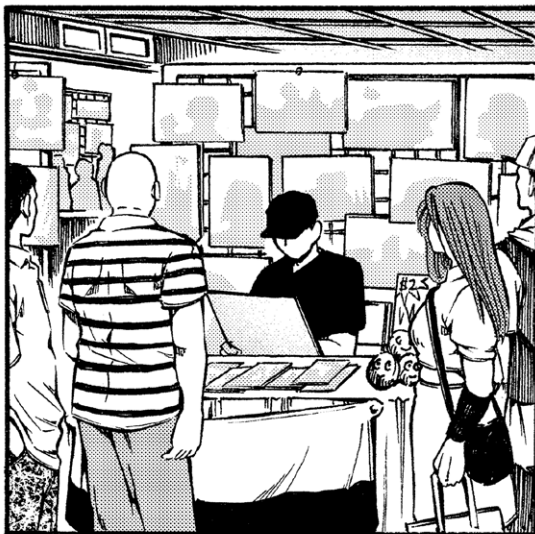
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# SECTION ONE: Appropriation and Expansion *Cultural Expression*



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## CHAPTER ONE

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# IMAGE TO OBJECT, ILLUSTRATION TO COSTUME

## Australian Cosplayers and Cosplay 'Ways of Seeing' Manga

CLAIRE LANGSFORD

### Introduction

That manga are read, interpreted and used differently by different cultural groups is a point that has long been established within Manga Studies. Within this school it is widely understood that the meanings, uses and roles of this particular medium vary considerably in different cultural contexts, not only in the ways that manga are experienced by readers across different geographic locations and language groups, but also on a more micro level in the varied positions that manga occupy in different communities of practice. Manga are valued, used, seen and understood in unique ways within professional communities, communities of readers and consumers, academic communities or fan communities (the focus of this chapter), which may be localised or operate on a national or global level.

### Character Design and Cosplay

Character designs from popular manga are a key source of inspiration for cosplay, a fan practice centred upon constructing and wearing character costumes. The term cosplay is believed to be Japanese in origin, a portmanteau word combining the English words 'costume' and 'play' (Lunning, 2011). Driven by an affinity for the character or its source text, an admiration for

the aesthetics of the character design or by the desire to create a costume that is valued by the cosplay community, cosplayers can spend considerable time, effort and money in attempting to re-create manga character designs in the form of wearable costumes (Lunning, 2011; Okabe, 2012).

Drawing upon the author's ethnographic field work among Australian cosplayers, this chapter explores the (re-)creation processes of manga cosplays, charting the cosplayer's transformation of an illustration into a costume. It will examine the particular ways cosplayers 'see' manga during cosplay construction: as a source of creative inspiration, as 'research' materials and as a style guide for achieving accuracy for both costumes and the cosplayer's performance of a character. With manga characters' clothing and weapon designs frequently reflecting bizarre and gravity-defying dimensions, cosplayers struggle to re-create fantastical illustrations using physical, often mundane materials such as cardboard and packing foam. With the development of particular cosplay visual skills, cosplayers learn to see costume objects in manga illustrations and potential clothing and accessories for manga characters in everyday items.

Furthermore, the chapter demonstrates how, in the contexts of conventions, competitions and photo shoots, the costumed cosplayer attempts to re-create the manga character through performance, be it physical and/or verbal. Cosplayers may draw more heavily upon the narrative or the written text of the manga, as well as the visual, as scenarios, poses and catchphrases (translated or in Japanese) may be incorporated into their interpretation of the character to create an 'accurate' and entertaining performance. Through an examination of the different roles of manga in the community, 'cosplay vision' is revealed to be a way of seeing that is both skillful and playful.

### **'Cosplay' as a Community of Practice**

Data for this chapter derives from ethnographic field work that I conducted among members of cosplay communities in Australia between 2010 and 2012 for the creation of a doctoral thesis in anthropology. This multi-sited field work involved: participant observation at numerous cosplay events throughout the country, including thirteen Australian convention events, parties and social gatherings; personal participation as a cosplayer; in-depth, semi-structured interviews with twenty key informants; and the production, collection and



analysis of cosplay-related texts, including photographs, videos, magazines and websites. In the tradition of anthropological studies of communities of practice (e.g. Grasseni, 2007; Lave, 1996), ethnographic methods were used in order to best explore both the everyday, lived experiences of cosplayers as practitioners, and the material, digital and textual works they produce.

My field work was carried out in accordance with the ‘follow the thing’ ethnographic approach advocated by Marcus (1998) and it traced the many contexts in which cosplayers in Australia participate in the cosplay practice: as individuals, in friendship groups and circles, as part of official associations and guilds, in competition circuits and through online forums and websites. Exact numbers of participants in the Australian community are difficult to estimate. According to survey data collected by the organising committees of individual convention events (sites where cosplay is commonly practiced), they have attracted over ten thousand attendees, the majority of whom are aged between 16 and 35.<sup>1</sup> However, the number of those attendees who participate in costume is unrecorded.

Studies of cosplay in Japan and the USA have argued that cosplay communities are predominantly comprised of female participants (Lunning, 2011; Okabe, 2012). While statistical data concerning the gender ratio of participants in Australian cosplay is not currently available, observations conducted during field work suggest that the gender ratio of participation may be similar to those in international communities.<sup>2</sup>

As this chapter will discuss, cosplay practices are partly focused around events: anime, manga, and general pop culture conventions, competitions, parties and meet-ups, which are typically held in major capital cities. Australian cosplayers also engage heavily in online activities, including participating in forums and sharing photographs, videos and tutorials on cosplay websites and social networks.

Drawing on the concept developed by Lave and Wenger (1991), the Australian cosplay scene can be described as a *community* or as *communities of practice* – they are social groups centred upon shared participation in a particular practice, a practice with its own values, structures, body of knowledge and

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1 Interview with Dustin Wilson, AVCon Promotions Co-ordinator, 2010.

2 At competitions, the number of female entrants often doubled or tripled those of male entrants. However, these figures do not represent cosplayers who do not enter competitions, or the male cosplayers who attend competitions as teachers, judges and finalists.

skill set (Okabe, 2012). Recent sociological and anthropological expansions of the concept have highlighted the importance of examining the materials in practice communities – objects, texts and resources – and the roles they play: they are a crucial element in both the continuance and transformation of these communities (see Shove, Pantzar, & Watson, 2012). For particular practices to occur, community members must use and interact with materials. Knowing how to ‘correctly’ interpret and use these materials are important skills that practitioners must learn; skilled practitioners are those capable of fully participating within the community (Shove, Pantzar, & Watson, 2012). Manga are important materials within Australian cosplay communities and exploring their role in this context can reveal insights into both community values and the diverse ways in which manga are experienced.

### **The Global Consumption and Remixing of Manga**

The idea that different uses and understandings of manga are produced within different cultural contexts is evident in a growing body of literature exploring the localised readings and consumption of globalised manga. Their subjects include readerships in the United States (Goldberg, 2010), Europe (Bouissou, Pellitteri, Dolle-Weinkauff, & Beldi, 2010) and South East Asia (Wong, 2010). Studies have also explored the ways that more specific sub-groups of readers experience manga, such as localised groups of LGBT readers (Brenner & Wildsmith, 2011), students living abroad (Sunaoshi, 2006) and fan communities (Kinsella, 1998; Okabe & Ishida, 2012). These studies reflect the diverse ways that manga can be used, understood and enjoyed within cultural contexts. For example, homesick students might read them as a form of nostalgia (Sunaoshi, 2006) and LGBT readers in the United States might read them for pleasure, fantasy and personal identification (Brenner & Wildsmith, 2011).

Fan theorists have long argued that fan engagements with media texts such as manga are distinctive in that they are frequently participatory and productive (Hills, 2002; Jenkins, 1992; Kelly, 2004). Fans read and use texts in specialised ways, especially in their ‘poaching’ (Jenkins, 1992) and ‘remixing’ of textual elements (narratives, characters, settings, imagery, film footage) into new forms: websites, wikis, *dōjinshi*, fan art, slash fiction or Anime Music Videos. By re-creating and materialising character designs from manga and

other textual sources, cosplayers certainly engage in a very participatory form of reading.

Different communities of manga fans see and use manga in particular ways, possessing different bodies of knowledge and producing highly differentiated fan works. The visual skill set required to produce a *dōjinshi*, for example, may be quite different to that required to produce an English-language scanlation. These practice-specific skill sets are an aspect of manga fan communities that have been seldom addressed by Manga Studies or by more general fan literature. Reading and interpreting manga has been identified as a visual skill, an ability to decode the layout of manga panels, establish the reading order, understand genre characteristics and symbolism as well as text features, such as onomatopoeia (Drazen, 2011; Sell, 2011). As studies of readers of manga and other graphic novel demonstrate cross-culturally, this skill does not come naturally, but must be acquired. Producers of *dōjinshi*, fan art and cosplay must learn to view manga in specialised ways – identifying different visual features, foregrounding some and backgrounding others – which differ from other modes of manga readership.

### **‘Skilled Vision’**

Grasseni and other visual anthropologists and sociologists (e.g. Goodwin, 1997; Gowland 2009) have argued that ways of seeing, observing and reading are culturally specific to particular groups and communities. Decoding and interpreting manga illustrations – noticing and recognising particular visual or textual features and disregarding others – is a form of ability that Grasseni (2007) might term ‘skilled vision’: a culturally specific way of seeing things that is acquired and learnt by newcomers to a community of practice and which must be acquired in order to participate fully or correctly in that community. Drawing on the situated learning theories of Lave and Wenger (1991), Grasseni argues that this type of learning is primarily a social activity and one that is tied to the formation of a person’s identity as a member of a community of practice. This development can take place in highly formalised learning environments such as lectures and classes, and in the everyday lives and experiences of community members (Grasseni, 2007). This chapter will explore the ways that cosplayers develop and practice a very particular way of viewing and using manga and

how this practice of skilled cosplay vision defines the roles of manga within Australian cosplay communities of practice.

### **Manga as a Source of Inspiration for Cosplay**

The first role of manga to be explored in this chapter will be manga as a source of inspiration for cosplay. To use manga as the starting point for a costume requires cosplayers to learn and practice a community-specific form of skilled vision. To outsiders, designing and planning a cosplay costume may initially appear to be a straightforward affair: the cosplayer creates a costume that simply copies a pre-existing design, originally produced by another author or authors. However, a closer analysis of the planning activities involved in this re-creation reveals that cosplayers employ a number of skills in redefining and reassembling the appearance of the chosen character from an array of pre-existing images. These activities require problem-solving and creative choices on the part of the cosplayer, who must decide how *their* re-creation of the character is going to look. To accurately re-create the details of the chosen character's visual appearance, the cosplayer must also demonstrate competency in a cosplay 'way of seeing' – being able to view films, anime, manga and video games as potential sources of useful information, to be able to focus on specific details of the character's appearance that may be unnoticed by a viewer in most contexts.

Australian cosplayers do not privilege manga as their sole inspiration for cosplay, instead they view manga as part of a group of text types that are considered appropriate source material. Different cosplay circles and communities have differing rules as to what is acceptable inspiration, some cosplay circles or clubs like to focus on particular media or types of characters and certain events or competitions may have specific themes. Within the wider Australian cosplay scene, anime, manga, live-action films, video games (Japanese or otherwise), webcomics and even fan art are all tolerated as legitimate sources of cosplay inspiration.

Convention organising committees and other structuring organisations play a limited role in influencing the kinds of cosplay performed at events. Competitions at more broadly themed conventions, such as Supanova, Armageddon and OzComic Con have few restrictions on the inspiration sources for cosplays worn by their competitors. In these contexts, costumes from Western

films, television programs, comics and video games are regularly seen alongside those inspired by anime and manga. At conventions that specifically focus on anime, manga and video games there can be more exclusive criteria. For example, the competition rules at Melbourne's Manifest convention specify that costumes must derive from 'a Japanese/East Asian anime/manga/video game series'; costumes inspired by *dōjinshi*, J-Rock/Pop, Visual Kei or FRUiTS are explicitly excluded (Madman Entertainment, 2012).

In practice – despite these restrictions on competition entry – non-anime, manga or Japanese video game cosplays are frequently worn to these more specific conventions and paraded around informal, non-competition spaces. Indeed, cosplaying informants dressed as characters from *Doctor Who* received far more attention and requests to pose for photos from convention attendees at AVCon, Adelaide's anime and video games convention, than I did dressed as Juri Arisugawa from the anime *Revolutionary Girl Utena*. Even the judges of cosplay competitions, elders, gatekeepers and experienced members of the cosplay community, dressed as characters from Western-originated franchises such as *Iron Man* and *Harry Potter*.

Based on these observations and others during my field work, the level of debate that appears to be present in some other fan communities – for example, over authenticity, originality, a defined canon, dubbing and subbing in translated anime (Cubbison, 2005) – is less pronounced in the Australian cosplayer community, which seemed less concerned with discussions over which version of the text, anime or manga were original or superior. In interviews, panels, tutorials and casual conversations, the Australian cosplayers I encountered were more concerned with alternative measures of value. The ability to create spectacular, technically challenging and highly detailed costumes was regularly mentioned by interview participants, cosplay judges and hosts as the hallmark of a master cosplayer. While cosplayers did perceive self-created costumes as more 'authentic' than store-bought items (see also Norris & Bainbridge, 2009), they also considered these handcrafted costumes superior because they were perceived to be more accurate and detailed.

In place of *authenticity*, perhaps, the value that most concerns Australian cosplayers is the value of *accuracy* – the re-created costume's ability to mimic the visual appearance of a single chosen character design, regardless of whether that design was sourced from a manga, anime, live-action film or video game.

## Costume Construction

Cosplay construction activities usually begin by the cosplayer deciding to re-create a particular character, such as Sebastian Michaelis of *Kuroshitsuji* (Toboso, 2006) or Yuki Kuran of *Vampire Knight* (Hino, 2005). Australian cosplayers tend to focus on the character as an entity that can be extracted from particular narratives or mediums in a similar manner to the practices of Azuma's database *otaku* (2012). The reasons cosplayers reported for choosing a particular character were varied, and included a personal identification with or admiration of the character, the character's aesthetic appeal and the technical challenges provided by the construction of the character's outfit.

## Characters and Costumes in Manga, Anime and Other Sources

Just the act of choosing a character requires cosplayers to find, scrutinise and analyse visual images, and compare the multiple versions of characters that appear in multimedia franchises. During field work activities, it was observed that the most popular manga characters chosen by cosplayers were characters from titles that had been officially licensed by Western publishers or distributors and translated into English. The most common were those belonging to locally popular media franchises with easily accessible anime-adaptations, such as *Naruto* (Kishimoto, 1997), *Bleach* (Kubo, 2002), *Attack on Titan* (Isayama 1991) (see Figure 1.1) and the works of CLAMP.

The characters that are the most likely choices for cosplay re-creation by Australian cosplayers do not exist as a singular version. Instead, these characters have been visually interpreted a number of times across media franchises or across a range of interconnected texts. The cosplayer may, therefore, be faced with an overwhelming array of different visual looks and styles for the same character. For example, the character Himura Kenshin, who originated in Nobuhiro Watsuki's (1994) manga *Rurōni Kenshin*, has featured in multiple anime and video game adaptations and, recently, a live-action film adaptation. Each media interpretation of the character presents subtle visual differences. In Watsuki's depictions of Kenshin, the character wears a kimono that is usually coloured red in cover illustrations, and his long, bright orange hair is depicted in a loose ponytail. In Studio Deen's (1999) OVA adaptation, the character's hairstyle is softer and a darker colour and he is usually depicted wearing a

deep blue kimono. Finally, in the recent film adaptation (Warner Bros, 2012), the actor Satō Takeru, who plays Kenshin, wears a wig of a more naturalistic reddish-brown colour and a red kimono, referencing the robe worn in Nobuhiro Watsuki's manga. For a cosplayer, these differences have serious implications for the creation of a Kenshin costume. Will the wig be orange, red or reddish-brown? What colour will his kimono be? His *hakama*?



Figure 1.1. *Titan Eren*.

Photograph by Patrick Korb. Cosplay by Daniel.

The visual appearances of characters may differ even within one form of media. The protagonist Usage Tsukino from *Pretty Guardian Sailor Moon* (Tekeuchi, 1991), for example, is depicted in numerous visual forms throughout the manga series as she adopts different roles and gains abilities. Indeed, transformation sequences can be considered a staple trope of many manga and anime genres (Brown, 2006; Kinsella, 2006; Napier, 2001). While a character's appearance may be fluid and constantly changing, cosplayers are limited in their ability to represent that character's appearances in cosplay: they are creating, typically, one physical outfit. For the purposes of assembling a cosplay, the cosplayer has to decide on a single visual look. The planning stage of re-creation, therefore, poses a conundrum to cosplayers.

Creative approaches to addressing this problem are regularly used by cosplayers. They may choose to focus on exclusively re-creating one particular version of the character, such as the manga representation of Queen Esther Blanchett from *Trinity Blood* (Yoshida & Kujo, 2004), as opposed to other depictions of the Queen in anime or light novels. Alternatively, some choose to create a costume that combines elements of different versions of their chosen character's visual appearance. In the 2011 Madman National Championship Final, South Australian finalist Miss Ollie did just that for her entry, creating a costume that featured design elements from both manga and anime depictions of a dress worn by the character Kuranosuke from *Kuragehime* (Higashimura, 2008). The accuracy practiced and valued within the cosplay community does not necessarily, therefore, involve straightforward mimicry, but rather a creative form of hybridisation. Cosplayers blend elements from different versions of character designs, perhaps borrowing colourings from anime and details from manga.

### Cosplay research

Once cosplayers have assembled a version of the character for re-creation, they embark on an activity that is typically referred to by practitioners as 'research'. This involved looking at images or, in the words of Australian cosplayers, 'reference pictures', and researching information about their chosen character. In essence, research activities are focused on answering two questions: what does the character look like – front, back, sides, proportions, details, colours – and what materials can be used to re-create this visual look? In this stage of the process, manga illustrations fulfil their second role in cosplay communities as they are viewed by cosplayers as potentially wearable, created objects and are used to provide a guide or pattern for construction activities.

The materials and technologies used by cosplayers during the research stage can be extensive. Research is undertaken both online and offline, and it utilises digital and material resources. Cosplayers undertaking research must sift through large quantities of reference materials. Manga illustrations are an important source of 'reference pictures' and they are accessed both via files of images scanned by fans, including licensed and unlicensed online digital versions, and in physical magazine or *tankōbon* form (*tankōbon* are book-sized publications similar to graphic novels). Cosplayers gather these images and



store them as digital files and/or printed copies that they can easily refer to throughout costume construction process. Reference images are deemed necessary tools as they provide models of the design's component parts, which can assist the cosplayer in their creation of an accurate and detailed costume. The idea that manga illustrations can be used in this manner is promoted in online cosplay tutorials and convention panels.

### **'Breaking Down' the Image**

Once a cosplayer has gathered a selection of images, they then examine them in a particular way, a process described by one experienced cosplayer as 'breaking down' the image, whereby all the different elements of a character design are viewed as potential costume parts, things that will have to be physically rendered by the cosplayer. The way that clothing is depicted in an illustration indicates the type of material from which it could be constructed, as a member of an Australia Costumers Guild (ACG) panel described:

When you see an image and it's close fitting it's more than likely that it's going to be a stretch fabric. And also look at the way it hangs. Looking again when someone's moving, if they're moving slow it's likely to be a heavyweight fabric. If it's following out behind it's likely to be a lightweight fabric. Little hints like that will give you an idea of what the fabric type might be. (Liz, AVCon, July 23, 2011)

The importance of a cosplayer being able to recognise details and distinguish between the important and the less important is emphasised in many contexts of cosplay practice: in panels, in online tutorials, in competition interview narratives and in informal conversations between cosplayers. The accurate recreation of details such as belt buckles, earrings or armour patterns is viewed as a hallmark of excellence in a cosplay and evidence of the cosplayer's skill and dedication. The gaze of the cosplayer must be so attentive that they can distinguish between subtle variations in the colours of manga illustrations. For example, they would need to perceive that Naruto's forehead protector, as it is depicted on the covers of a *tankōbon*, is not merely 'blue'; it is a particular shade of blue that needs to be distinguished from other shades of that colour. The limitations of human visual memory usually prevent readers from remembering the more minute details of a manga character's appearance. In most contexts,

the reader does not need to notice how many buttons are on a character's tunic or on which side the character's hair is parted. To achieve this level of accuracy, cosplayers need to locate and scrutinise illustrations that prominently feature these particular details, to find those panels that depict a sword handle or a buckle, for example. Finding these particular images may require the cosplayer to spend considerable time searching through images online or, alternatively, sifting through *tankōbon* volumes page by page.

### The Learning of 'Cosplay Vision'

As a form of skilled vision, cosplayers' ability to 'break down' manga illustrations is not intrinsic but learnt. The ability to notice and engage in colour differentiation, for example, is a skill that is valued, and thus acquired, within particular situational contexts (Goodwin, 1997). By learning to break down illustrations, cosplayers are learning to see manga as a *cosplayer*. Sometimes this form of looking is taught by experienced cosplayers in formal contexts, such as panels and workshops held at conventions. In these forums, the panellist will verbally and visually explain to an audience how to break down an image. These instructional sessions often involves the panellists proposing questions for the audience members to ask themselves when participating in their cosplay activities. For example, an ACG panellist suggested to his audience at AVCon that the following questions be asked:

Consider the type of texture of the material – the shine, the drape, transparency, the type of garment it is. Is it tight or loose fitting on the body? How easy it is to make it or source it? (Ben, AVCon, July 23, 2011)

In Goodwin's exploration of the ways that specialised forms of vision are taught and discussed in professional settings, he describes how a member of a community of practice may draw attention to particular features of an image or physical thing in order to identify for an audience aspects that may not appear relevant to an untrained eye, an activity that he terms 'highlighting' (1994). Cosplay panelists, using speech and visual examples, highlight the features that make a costume accurate and cosplayers are expected to internalise this value for accuracy that when turn to creating their own costumes.

The learning of cosplay vision can also occur in less formal settings, especially in informal conversations between cosplayers, both online and offline, about the level of detail in character designs or whether, say, a character's dress is green or blue. However this cosplay 'way of seeing' is acquired, it can sometimes be difficult for the cosplayer to switch it off – to read a manga without a view to potential construction activities. As cosplayer Julia said to me during an interview:

I can't look at things these days without thinking, 'Oh, how could I make that as a costume?' (Julia, interview, February 27, 2012)

Cosplayers train their bodies and the bodies of others to see manga in a distinctive and skilled way that enables them to create detailed and accurate costumes that are valued within the community.

Cosplay vision involves cosplayers reading manga images as components of potential costumes, but it also allows cosplayers to view objects – craft materials, everyday items (including toilet rolls) and pre-made garments – as potential means of physically re-creating the look of manga characters. This is particularly apparent during online and offline cosplay shopping activities. When shopping, cosplayers, particularly experienced cosplayers, will usually have reference images to hand in digital or physical forms. On shopping expeditions, Julia would bring her smart phone with her and would use it to display her reference pictures, placing the phone against fabric to check for accurate colour matches. Again, this way of seeing is explicitly taught and promoted to newcomers to the cosplay community as form of creativity. As with the act of assembling a single character model, the cosplayer is required to see the potential for things to be reused, reformed and reassembled into something new. In this case, the things in question are not illustrations, but material objects. At conventions, cosplay panellists often describe how they have transformed various everyday objects, including items from hard-rubbish collections, into costume parts, and urge newcomers to do the same, as did one ACG panellist at AVCon in 2012:

Never underestimate anything as being able to be used in a costume. Eventually you'll get to the point where you'll view anything and everything as costume parts. (Cassandra, AVCon, July 28, 2012)

## Reading Manga Illustrations

Creativity and problem-solving skills are required by cosplayers attempting to re-create illustrations as material objects. Reading manga illustrations as patterns for cosplay construction can prove a challenging activity, as some character designs have features that are difficult for cosplayers to translate into a material form and require considerable interpretative efforts on the part of the cosplayer. A particular challenge posed by some manga illustrations is an absence of colour. While main characters may appear in coloured images on the covers of *tankōbon* or magazines, secondary characters may only be depicted in black and white. Cosplayers rarely re-create an uncoloured manga illustration with a black and white costume<sup>3</sup>, so cosplayers often choose to guess or interpret a colour scheme for the character. One female cosplayer proudly remarked to me that she cosplayed a character from *Bleach* before the character had ever appeared in colour. She told me she was pleased when she finally saw the character on the cover of a *tankōbon* volume and discovered that she had been able to guess the colours with a high degree of accuracy. Cosplayers may also derive colour information for their costumes from anime adaptations of the manga or from art book illustrations, both of which may interpret the character's colouring differently. For example, the hair of the Ame-warashi character from the CLAMP manga *XXXholic* is depicted as an unshaded white space in the manga, as red in the anime and as blue in the CLAMP art book illustrations. These differences in interpretation may not be problematic for readers or viewers of the texts in other contexts, but for a cosplayer wondering what colour wig to purchase from a Hong Kong wig seller on eBay, these small details become significant.

While the artwork of manga, particularly the visual appearances of manga characters, is heavily used and referenced by cosplayers in costume construction, written textual elements such as dialogue, characterisation and narrative arcs are also used, reimagined and re-created in cosplay performance. While cosplay practices have distinctive craft components, they are also highly performative, with the costume often being created and the character performed by the same individual (Lunning, 2011; Norris & Bainbridge, 2009). This final section will discuss how other elements of characterisation and narratives from manga are

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3 I observed one instance of a deliberately 'black and white' costume styled to resemble a manga illustration.

used and explored by cosplayers in two forms of cosplay performance: cosplay photography and cosplay skits.

### Cosplay Photography

Cosplay photography is a popular storytelling practice in which cosplayers and photographers work together to visually represent the character's bodily stances and perceived personality (figures 1.2 and 1.3). Australian cosplay photography exists broadly in two forms: event photography – images captured during convention activities – and staged photography, which is created during organised photo shoots. As with the costume assembly process, research for an in-character performance often involves re-reading the text or searching specially for further references online to identify and collect the character's well-known physical poses and spoken phrases.



**Figure 1.2.** *L with Strawberry.*

Photograph by Patrick Korbel. Cosplay by Alice.



**Figure 1.3.** *Juri Arisugawa.*

Photograph by Patrick Korb. Cosplay by author.

Cosplay photography panels and tutorials advise cosplayers to re-create trademark poses or gestures performed by manga characters, facial expressions, postures and martial arts stances. Again, the community value of authenticity is promoted here, as one panellist pointed out, in relation to CLAMP characters, accurate re-creation can be almost physically impossible due to the exaggerated physicality of some characters. Authenticity can be improved by incorporating other elements of manga texts; settings can be referenced, for example, through the use of backdrops and *mise-en-scène* elements. Cosplay photography may even be displayed in a sequential order in fan-produced booklets with photographs conveying a visual narrative in the manner of manga panels.

### **Cosplay Skits**

Another storytelling practice performed by cosplayers is the cosplay skit. Cosplay skits are short, two or three-minute acts that are performed in the agonistic context of cosplay competitions. They may feature all kinds of performative arts, including singing, dancing, acting, playing a musical instrument and acrobatics. Cosplay skits incorporate elements of manga narrative, characterisation and dialogue (typically translated) in many different ways. For Miss Ollie's skit in the 2011 Madman National Cosplay Championship Final, the South Australian finalist incorporated excerpts of translated text from Higashimura Akiko's manga *Kuragehime* (2008) to tell a short version of the manga's narrative from the perspectives of central characters Tsukimi and Kuranosuke. The dialogue was pre-recorded with Miss Ollie providing the voice of Tsukimi and her boyfriend providing the voice of Kuranosuke. Onstage, the characters were visually represented by Miss Ollie, dressed as Kuranosuke, and by video footage of Tsukimi from the anime adaptation of the original manga.

The success of a cosplay skit relies heavily on both the cosplayers' abilities to create visually identifiable representations of the character through costume and embodied performance, and on spectators possessing an understanding of the narrative of the text and of characters' personalities, trademark poses and phrases, and relationships to other characters. The performers must be skilled enough to create a visually identifiable performance and the spectators must be knowledgeable enough to understand and interpret the performance. To assist with this visual identification, many competitions reinforce the cosplay's

relationship to its 'original' by projecting images of the manga illustrations on a screen behind the performing cosplayers.

Cosplay performances of manga characters may attempt to re-create a canonical interpretation of the characters and narratives, as in the aforementioned example of Miss Ollie, or they may make take a more playful approach. One example of the second approach was encountered at a competition at Perth's WaiCon. A group of seven cosplayers from Blue Tongue Cosplay performed a skit called 'The seven days of *Naruto*', a version of the traditional Christmas carol 'The twelve days of Christmas', that referenced characters from the manga *Naruto*. The skit, which received an enthusiastic response from the audience, featured references to romantic links between characters in the manga, some of which were deemed canonical by the audience and some of which referenced popular fan interpretations of the characters' relationships, including an implied homosexual desire on the part of the villainous Orochimaru for the character Sasuke. Another element of the skit included characters breaking the 'fourth wall'; at one stage, Orochimaru threatened to attack the competition host.

The success of the 'The seven days of *Naruto*' skit was due to the humour it derived from the audience's understandings of the characters and narratives of the manga and from the juxtaposition of the canonical appearances of the costumed cosplayers with non-canonical actions and dialogue. However, this creative mash-up was still perceived as accurate in some sense, as its non-canonical representations of characters referenced the way they have been portrayed within other fan communities. This example demonstrates, again, the interesting relationship to accuracy and creativity found in these communities of practice.

## Conclusion

An exploration of the roles that manga occupies in Australian cosplay communities of practice yields important insights into the unique ways that manga can be seen in different cultural contexts. It also reveals how the positioning of manga within a community of practice reflects key skills that are celebrated by that community. Within Australian cosplay communities of practice, manga images are frequently seen as material that can be used, as tools to assist in the



production of their own artistic work, which may include costumes, photographs and performances. In order to use these tools successfully, cosplayers must be able to skillfully read and interpret manga imagery in the cosplay way: to identify and re-create tiny details in illustrations, to recognise the cosplay potential of everyday objects to materialise manga designs and to re-create the postures and gestures of manga characters in embodied performances. These visual skills must be learnt by newcomers to the community and are taught and promoted by experienced practitioners in a range of different settings including convention panels. In this manner, a cosplay ‘way of seeing’ manga is valued and reproduced within these communities.

The ways that manga is seen and used by cosplayers within Australia reflects some of the shared values of its communities, especially the values of ‘accuracy’ and ‘creativity’. Cosplayers aim to accurately re-create character designs in their costumes, but accuracy is achieved through creative hybridisation, not mimicry. Character costumes can be based on a fusion of design elements from both manga and an anime adaptation. Narratives, dialogue and elements of characterisation can be extracted from manga texts and reconstituted as cosplay skits. Cosplayers must be both skillful in their attention to and recognition of visual details and playful enough to envision illustrations as potential objects and objects as manga illustrations. The term cosplay is a combination of the words ‘costume’ and ‘play’, and ‘play’ is indeed often what Australian cosplayers seem to do with manga.



#### Online Multimedia Component

A gallery of high-quality full-colour cosplay photographs from this research can be accessed online at <http://mangastudies.com/mangavision/cosplayphotos.php> or scan the above QR code.

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## BEYOND ‘JAPANESENESS’

### Representative Possibilities of Original English Language Manga in Svetlana Chmakova’s *Dramacon*

ANGELA MORENO ACOSTA

#### Introduction

Initially regarded as ‘pseudo-manga’, Original English Language (OEL) manga has been accused by some of simply mimicking Japanese manga without contributing to the form creatively (Jüngst, 2006, p. 251). Artists who started out writing and drawing OEL during the manga boom in the West (2002–2008) imitated what they perceived to be manga aesthetics – using monochrome shading, arranging panels in the Japanese reading direction or utilising Japanese scripts for onomatopoeia and sound effects – regardless of whether they or their readers possessed a working knowledge of the Japanese language. This was done with the intention of creating original works to be consumed in the same manner as imported Japanese manga, but this approach led to it being viewed by the public as an inferior and unoriginal imitation, and ultimately it became stigmatised in the American comics industry and anime/manga communities.

In 2006, Tokyopop, the best-known translated manga and OEL manga publisher in the United States, announced that they would be ‘relabeling’ their original manga, calling it ‘global’ manga instead of OEL or ‘world’ manga, the other often-used label for the genre (Anime News Network, 2006). The intention was to move away from the reputation of OEL and expand beyond the stereotypes born from those early examples of grassroots professional

manga. For a genre to be regarded as pseudo *anything* is not very helpful in understanding the ways in which it is creative. However, changing its name did not deter some from continuing to define OEL manga (or world manga, global manga etc.) by inabilities, problems and mistakes. Such an attempt may also lead to an oversimplification of the medium and obscuration of its potential.

While this chapter retains the term 'OEL' for practical reasons, it will outline several pitfalls that come from adhering to certain beliefs about the medium and discuss how they can be overcome. The chapter suggests a shift in perspective, from focusing on defects to focusing on strengths, and delineates several strong, creative characteristics of OEL using *Dramacon* as an example of an OEL manga that shows potential for creative content and style using an evolving medium.

### **'Japaneseness' as OEL Manga's Identity**

As Internet use became more widespread in the late 1990s, online exposure allowed greater numbers of fans to encounter the original sources of the manga and anime they had been consuming in translated and adapted editions. It also enabled them to connect with each other on a massive scale in online forums, anime circles and art communities (such as DeviantArt), in which critical discussion of the work was quite usual and spawned an interest in Japanese culture, the source culture of manga and anime. Fans' sensibilities shifted towards a preference for works that were closer to their source material and had fewer modifications. Up until the early 2000s, American publishers and distributors of anime and manga (such as Viz and Mixx Entertainment, Tokyopop's previous incarnation) had 'utilized the "culturally odorless" principle in their manga and animation-related products (Iwabuchi, 2002, pp. 94–95), toning down their 'Japaneseness' (Wong, 2006, p. 36). This was a move that, according to Wong, had been previously applied to Asian markets with relative success. Regarding manga specifically, this toning down of 'Japaneseness' basically consisted of adapting the work to fit local tastes: colouring manga pages that are normally monochrome, flipping artwork and panels so they will read left to right, translating and rewriting large amounts of text and dialogue, if necessary, to fit the language and cultural expectations of the target audience (Brienza, 2009, pp.103, 113; Matsui, 2009, pp. 4, 10; Wong, 2006). However,

to satisfy the new preferences of their fans, publishers and distributors began to market anime and manga with minimal alterations (e.g. subtitles, rather than dubbing, were now favoured).

Part of this shift in marketing strategy was the '100% authentic manga' campaign that American publisher and distributor Tokyopop launched in 2002. This campaign focused on supplying 'authentic' Japanese manga, i.e. manga that is uncoloured, unflipped and still uses Japanese script to depict onomatopoeia and sound effects. Tokyopop published this '100% authentic manga' in the same format as Japanese *tankōbon* (small book-sized volumes in which manga is published after magazine serialisation) and it is sold at an affordable price (no more than \$10 a book). Besides satisfying readers' demands, it also proved cost-effective, as publishing with minimal alterations meant a lot of saved time and money (Thorn, 2011).

Tokyopop also encouraged local artists by means of a talent-seeking contest, 'Rising Stars of Manga', which started in 2002 as part of the '100% authentic manga' campaign. The winners were granted a book deal – the possible start to a career as a professional *mangaka* (the Japanese word means 'comic artist,' but is used here to specify 'manga' making in contrast to making 'comics'). Fans eager to pursue manga creation as a profession submitted their stories, created on the basis of their understanding of manga as readers. This unfortunately led to the criticism that such works are merely 'simulating' manga (Jüngst, 2006, 2008). There appears to be a loss of awareness that happens when fans shift from readers to creators. Since their knowledge of manga is sourced from their experience reading translations, they may sometimes unknowingly re-create them stylistically. The same desire for 'Japaneseness' that fans feel towards '100% authentic' manga plays itself out when these fans turn to creating OEL manga, resulting in frustration and, consequently, rejection by readers who do not consider the manga sufficiently 'Japanese'.

As it is obvious that translated manga has to be somewhat adapted and modified for consumption by local readers (in this case, American readers), the manga resulting from the '100% authentic manga' campaign, despite efforts to create less modified comics, could not be considered, in truth, '100% authentic'. The text was translated linguistically and puns, slang and wordplay were localised. The visuals were also altered: the artwork follows the Japanese reading direction (right to left), since the pages stay unflipped, but

the text naturally follows the Western reading direction (left to right). In order to remind readers (and educate new ones) that manga should be read in the Japanese reading direction, publishers placed small arrows on page corners or markedly labelled the back and front of the book. Such attempts to mitigate the inherent impossibility of translations being ‘100% authentic’ may have led to certain beliefs about what rules OEL manga must adhere to.

### **Characteristics of ‘Japaneseness’ in OEL Manga**

Initially, in an attempt to have their works professionally published, many OEL manga artists created their manga according to the OEL ‘rules’. This gave rise to several issues that resulted in an overgeneralised understanding of OEL manga as definable by a perceived attempt at ‘Japaneseness.’

When drawing comics and/or manga, the page design depends greatly upon the reading direction. It is imperative for good storytelling to create a smooth flow of panels for the gaze to follow, so that the narrative can proceed unimpaired (Cohn, 2011). As we know, OEL manga artists tended to adopt the conventions of the manga translations they read, disregarding the fact that they were looking at unflipped, yet altered, pages. Although some expect ‘authentic’ manga to be laid out in the Japanese reading direction, many do not notice that their understanding involves discrepancies with regards to the visual ‘flow.’ The disparity in macro (artwork) and micro (text) reading directions is compounded by the need to accommodate horizontal text in what is, by design, a vertical page layout. This results in a slightly mismatched narrative flow. Most publishers leave the word bubbles (also known as speech balloons) untouched visually, and translate only the text inside the balloons. However, in Japanese manga, the text is written vertically instead of horizontally, and to accommodate vertical script, word bubbles tend to be very thin and tall. Manga artists take typographic requirements into design consideration, so the bubbles do not obstruct the underlying artwork and vice versa. However, in translations, publishers often insert horizontal English script into the bubbles without altering their vertical shape. Consequently, word bubbles in translated manga contain English text with too much blank space on the bubble’s top or bottom. Despite this problem, OEL manga artists started to design their word bubbles in the same vertical fashion.

Some other motifs of Japanese manga adopted by OEL artists include the application of Japanese manga-style screen tones and the use of speed lines and impact lines to achieve aesthetic goals. Depictions of characters may include sweat drops to convey embarrassment or exasperation, nosebleeds to express sexual arousal, the 'bulging nerve' to indicate anger or frustration and 'dropping lines' to signify fear or anxiety. This technique of physicalising emotion is called 'Super Deformation', or 'SD'. Smaller, chubbier versions of a certain character may be drawn whenever something funny happens to them (a tool typical of *shōjo* manga, but not exclusive to it), or exaggerated, 'bulging eyes' may be drawn in to express rage or surprise. Stylised backgrounds are also used to express a character's inner feelings. Within the so-called 'grammar of manga' (see Cohn, 2010), the backgrounds in frames not only signify a characters' spatial position, they also foreground characters' emotions: their nervousness, fear or anger. These tools facilitate the reader's empathy and immersion.

### ***Dramacon: Possibilities beyond 'Japaneseness'***

OEL manga's attempt at 'Japaneseness' has been, to a large degree, the primary reason for it being labelling 'bad' manga; for some, it is an endeavor best left unpursued. For many aspiring manga artists in the West, to be recognised as a *mangaka* has become undesirable, for the word is inextricably linked to lack of professionalism and originality. Consequently, many emerging artists are staying away from the OEL label and from publishers that wish to promote their work as such, preferring to self-publish and use the word 'manga' very loosely to describe their work. This does not mean they have abandoned making manga, just that goals are being redefined according to the artist's ability to avoid said negative stereotypes. Making original manga in English that can sell may ultimately lead beyond this 'Japaneseness' and towards connecting to readers on a deeper, perhaps more subjective, level. Apparently, fans of Japanese manga culture are uncomfortable with emotional content being expressed in a Japanese-like manner in original work that is a product of an Anglophone culture (Wong, 2006, p. 39). This could suggest OEL manga cannot achieve 'authenticity' though adherence to a Japanese manga style or through other modes of reference to Japanese culture and context, but through references to the emotional reality of readers through the 'familiar'. When it speaks to the



emotional reality of the reader through familiar expressions, words, images, content and so on, rather than trying to master the art of portraying Japanese manga references ‘correctly’, OEL manga can be enjoyable and ‘good’ and it can feel ‘authentic’.

*Dramacon* can be seen as an example of an OEL manga that achieves this authenticity: an OEL manga that tries to reference characters’ emotional responses in a way that is relevant to its source culture. This is made interesting by the fact that its creator, Svetlana Chmakova, is not originally from North America: she was born in the Soviet Union in 1979 and immigrated to Canada when she was sixteen years old. Her relocation to Canada exposed her to North American culture and it also granted her access to Japanese media through broadcast anime, fansubs and imported Japanese manga of the time (Shiina, 2012). It provided opportunities to engage in anime and manga-specific communities in her local area, and in activities such as cosplay, anime circles and conventions (where the inspiration for *Dramacon* came). Inspired to pursue a career in sequential art, Chmakova started making manga and publishing it online. Shortly afterwards, Chmakova was approached by Mark Paniccia (her initial editorial contact at Tokyopop) who was impressed by the talent in one of her online comics, ‘Chasing Rainbows’ (Lau, 2009), and signed her with Tokyopop to create *Dramacon*. Chmakova ‘figured the book might at least interest a few con-goers and romance lovers’ (Chmakova, 2008, p. 612). Working closely with her editor, she developed characters, storylines and panel layouts that appealed to readers’ tastes in content, style and form (Chmakova, p. 607). Although *Dramacon* was released annually (2005–2007) in book form and readers therefore had to wait a comparatively long time between volumes, it gained a reputation as a successful product and helped cement Chmakova’s career as a professional artist.

### **Localising Narrative and Genre**

*Dramacon* is about a high-schooler named Christie, who is a newcomer to anime/manga conventions. She attends one with her boyfriend, with whom she has created an OEL manga. They hope to sell their manga at the convention and they also hope to be noticed as a writer/artist team. However, her boyfriend, Derek, seems more interested in flirting with other girls at the con

than representing their manga. Overwhelmed by the convention and frustrated by Derek, Christie storms off crying and inadvertently bumps into Matt, a handsome and mysterious cosplayer. The love story that then develops, filled with drama and obstacles, is a typical subject of *shōjo* [girls'] comics. This may show that Chmakova was inspired by the influx of *shōjo* manga imported to the USA and Canada in the early 2000s.

*Dramacon* addresses the need to connect to the target audience by re-interpreting *shōjo* manga tropes and localising them in a scenario familiar to North American female readers. The specific characteristics of the characters' psyches (the nerdy/quirky manga fangirl, the sarcastic and jaded 'bad boy', the abusive boyfriend) reference the readers' shared realities, for they themselves are most likely nerdy/quirky manga fangirls and they may have come across boys like Derek and Matt. The locations and, more importantly, the situations these characters face are particular to their experience as North American high-school-aged anime/manga fans. *Shōjo* manga emphasises the emotional aspect of a story and this emphasis is crucial to those who enjoy this kind of manga. Whereas OEL manga about love that takes its emotional cues from the Japanese context would fail to connect to Western readers and 'bring them inside' the story (McCloud, 2006, pp. 216–220), *Dramacon* portrays characters who are emotionally comprehensible to their readers because they mirror them. Readers easily understand the characters' experiences because they are similar to their own; they are from the same cultural/social background as the characters. For example, in the Figure 2.1, we see Matt and Christie becoming very physically close prior to establishing a formal relationship with each other. While not unusual in the West, it may be seen as culturally out of context in Japan, where a developing love between characters would often be internalised first before reaching physical expression.

Another way *Dramacon* locates itself in its source culture is in its representation of ethnically diverse characters. Beth, who is African-American, replaces Derek as Christie's manga artist in volume two. Two other 'non-white' characters, Hyu-Jeong (Korean-American) and Raj (Indian-American), are introduced at the same time and become friends of Christie and Beth. Rather than treat them as agents of exoticism or focus on their superficial difference, the text focuses on the characters' relationships and on the internal characteristics of their personality, mostly via dialogue.

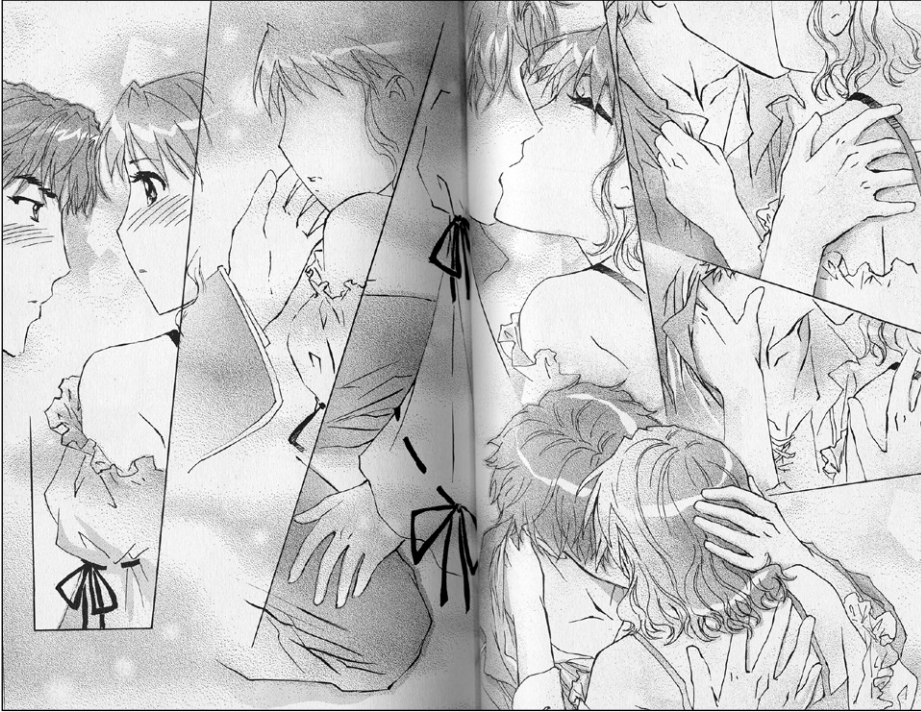


Figure 2.1. Example of Matt and Christie kissing.

*Dramacon*, pp. 552–523 © 2008 Svetlana Chmakova. Courtesy of Tokyopop.

## Meta-Referencing

As a manga that reflects on North American manga practices, *Dramacon* addresses the problem of ‘Japaneseness’ in OEL manga and manga-related activities within North American fandoms. It does so implicitly and also explicitly within the plot itself as a heated debate about whether ‘OEL’ manga should be called ‘manga’. Throughout her story, Chmakova comments how few fans encourage creators to reinterpret the medium, which results in artistic stagnation and a greater focus on fan art than the publication of their own original work. The resistance of manga fans to OEL manga creates great obstacles for aspiring manga artists who would like industry jobs. She uses a scene early in the second volume of the story to bring awareness to this problem: While Christie and Beth are waiting for customers at a conference, some kids stop at their table and look at their comic (Chmakova, 2008, p. 234). They like

it, but one girl comments that it is 'not real manga'. The others disagree, but do not end up buying it either. Christie is frustrated at this situation and Raj, sitting nearby, overhears and explains that he and his team make *dōjinshi* [fan comics] and fan art of popular Japanese titles instead, as they sell better. When Beth asks if they have ever created original characters, Raj replies 'Ha ha, no – we tried once, and we bombed so bad!' (Chmakova, 2008, p. 236).

Later, as people are praising Christie and Beth's manga, a young boy approaches the table and yells out that their comic is not manga. He aggressively disagrees when other fans challenge him by pointing out their comic 'looks like manga'. Lida, a professional OEL manga artist, walks over and tries to calm things down and is recognised by fans as 'Lida-san, the manga artist'. This angers the young boy even further, replying that she is not a manga artist and that her work 'isn't manga either' (Chmakova, 2008, p. 251). After Lida's fans insist her work really is manga, the boy screams that she is not Japanese and only Japanese people can make manga. When this view is challenged further by Lida, applying the 'pizza counter-argument' (that by the same logic, a pizza can only be pizza if made by an Italian in Italy), the boy insists that Lida cannot make manga because she is not Japanese, and neither can Beth, because not only is she not Japanese, 'she's not even white' (Chmakova, 2008, p. 254).

This scene raises another issue of importance which is that of the OEL *mangaka's* acknowledgement as a manga artist. The boy classifies Lida as inferior to a Japanese person in regards to her ability to be a *mangaka*. Furthermore, racism is added when he places Beth even lower down the scale because she is black. These prejudiced and racial slurs may indicate underlying sentiments within manga fandoms in North America. Chmakova is not unaware of manga's ability to hide such a loaded subject, and chooses how to discuss this issue through the story, knowing that the style is insufficient to drive the point. The scene also reflects the power that OEL manga can have in changing mindsets that are based on prejudice, encouraging fellow artists and addressing further exploration of issues of importance to fandom and the industry.

### Re-imagining Femininity in Shōjo

Throughout *Dramacon*, Christie repeatedly admires Beth for having a 'strong work ethic' (Chmakova, 2008, p. 528) and pursuing her dream in spite of

adversity (Chmakova, 2008, pp. 276, 332, 377, 531–532). Beth is appreciated as a talented artist and as a person capable of holding any kind of position in society, rather than judged according to stereotypes about her gender or race.

Christie, in turn, is encouraged to find her own strengths rather than seeking a ‘strong, male presence’ in her life. Only when Christie is able to assert herself independently of Matt in her professional and personal life do they come together as a couple. Christie, Beth and the rest of the female cast exist without the need of male presence or power. The opposition they face is not some external force that causes them suffering or destroys their world, as is common in magical *shōjo* genres; rather, it is something they need in order to grow beyond personal expectations. This addresses the audience’s reality in regards to the empowerment of women, especially women in love. With a cultural background that involves the revolution of women’s rights, North American fans of anime and manga are familiar with women like Christie and Beth. That is, those who do not take their identity from their relationships with men and who can assert themselves. From a Western perspective, it may appear that within Japanese entertainment media, the role of women is still very submissive. Usually, female characters are depicted as being in need of saving and this is reinforced as an attractive trait, and not just in the *shōjo* genre. Some exception to this can be seen in *Sailor Moon*, where female characters have power of their own and are allies of men and of each other, instead of competitors for their attention/power. This could be why *Sailor Moon* gained so many fans in the West (cf. the popularity of ‘girl power’ in the early 2000s, as seen in the emergence of girl bands, such as the Spice Girls, and girl-centred animated shows, like *The Powerpuff Girls*). However, in *Sailor Moon*, ‘girl power’ and strength comes from ‘femininity’: their magic comes from artefacts that resemble makeup tools. Although they are warriors, whose goal is saving the world, ‘ultimate success’ is still considered beauty, marriage and children. In counter-examples of role-reinterpretation such as *Revolutionary Girl Utena* (which was also hugely popular in North America), the lead is a female character who asserts herself as equal to men, but in order to do so, casts away her femininity as weakness.

In *Dramacon*, traditional female roles and counter-roles are reinterpreted by having women who pursue professional success over romantic relationships without the need to act ‘male’ as a definition of strength; when Christie is

upset, for example, she allows herself to cry and feel sad without feeling inferior for doing so (Chmakova, 2008, p. 235). They also show no particular interest in being 'pretty' (Chmakova, 2008, pp. 542–543). Furthermore, by having male characters that support, admire and are attracted to them for these traits (Chmakova, 2008, pp. 270, 554–555, 593–594), the women in *Dramacon* take on multiple levels of female identity that reflect women's roles within their communities and ultimately reinterpret what it means to be strong, beautiful and lovable in manga.

### Culture-Specific References in Pictograms and Gags

The artwork and style of *Dramacon* supports the emotional focus of the story via the use of abundant page spreads with floating panels, expressively patterned backgrounds and facial close-ups, in the spirit of typical Japanese *shōjo* manga (see Figure 2.2; see also Chmakova, 2008, pp. 119–120, 218–219, 307–308).



Figure 2.2. Examples of patterned background depicting an emotional state.

*Dramacon*, pp. 102–103 © 2008 Svetlana Chmakova. Courtesy of Tokyopop.

Other pictograms, such as sweat drops, crosshatches and speed and impact lines, can be found very frequently. Chmakova uses mini-panels inside larger ones and these are filled with *chibi* [mini] versions of characters, which depict Christie's feelings towards people and events in her life. We also see a background of lightning bolts expressing Christie's mortification at being outed as a con 'noob' [newcomer] (Chmakova, 2008, pp. 16–17). On the other hand, early in the first volume, Christie gives Matt a nudge on his shoulder with her fist, to jokingly get him to stop teasing her, a gesture that may come across as more 'American' than 'Japanese' (Chmakova, 2008, p. 19). A more culturally specific example can be observed in a scene where Christie is drawn with jagged teeth and a split tongue, to resemble a snake. Although a crosshatch is used, the more widely known 'snake tongue' gag specifies that Christie's retort is 'venomous,' as such reactions are sometimes described in English (Chmakova, 2008, p. 31).

### **'Flow'/Reading Direction**

As stated previously, manga should bring together all visual elements (artwork, dialogue, speech bubbles and landscapes) in the same direction to ensure seamless 'flow' of the reader's gaze across pages. This allows for the delivery of a comfortable reading/consuming experience. Avoiding OEL manga's pitfalls of copying 'flipped' and 'mirrored' aesthetics of translated manga and observing the English reading direction from left to right allows Chmakova's artwork and layout to be 'scanned' seamlessly. In the example in Figure 2.3, she has used a dynamic forty-five-degree angle from top-left to bottom-right panels, creating a 'slope' that the reader can visually 'ride' as they read the text. To relieve the tension created by such a strong diagonal line, she places a close-up of Christie facing up and right in the bottom-left corner panel. The angle of Christie's hand and gaze match that of Matt's on the top-right corner of the spread. This creates an opposite-angled imaginary line that holds the artwork in balance like an invisible 'x' (Chmakova, 2008, pp. 20–21).

Of course, reading direction is not just an issue of character placement, since floating agents such as word bubbles must enhance page-flow as well. As is typical in most OEL manga, Chmakova draws randomly shaped bubbles, sometimes referencing the light and flowing ones seen in *shōjo*. Nonetheless, she draws them for the most part horizontally instead of vertically, to better

accommodate English script, and refrains from inserting too much dialogue into each bubble (Chmakova, 2008, pp. 62–63). That being said, the manga is not without inconsistencies, such as a scene in which the dialogue between Matt and Christie in the third panel is supposed to read: 'you're soaked', followed by, 'so are you' (Chmakova, 2008, p. 355). The bubble containing the second phrase is drawn a little higher than the first and so the eye registers it first, therefore mixing up the order of the dialogue.



Figure 2.3. Example of an OEL manga page spread.

*Dramacon*, pp. 20–21 © 2008 Svetlana Chmakova. Courtesy of Tokyopop.

### Onomatopoeia and Mimesis

Cathy Sell suggests that while OEL manga artists do not need to use a lot of onomatopoeia and mimesis (also known as sound effects) in their work, when they are used well they can add 'powerfully to the aesthetic of the artwork' (2011, p. 99). Sound effects are a rich part of Japanese manga tradition and an inextricable part of the visual identity of manga. Therefore, in order to adhere to this characteristic of manga's aesthetics, one method that OEL



artists utilise to increase their use of onomatopoeia is to employ Japanese script or romanisations of Japanese terms (Sell, 2011, p. 100). *Dramacon* is full of references to manga-specific emotional expressions (e.g. Chmakova, 2008, pp. 17, 54–55, 84, 483). However, it does try to include references to English-language slang. For example, Christie and Beth are once drawn as animated rugs to visually represent the phrase ‘lying like rugs’ (Chmakova, 2008, p. 333). With specific regard to onomatopoeia and mimesis, many sounds used are typical of English, such as the use of ‘tromp’ to symbolise trampling and ‘hahaha’, laughter (Chmakova, 2008, pp. 50–51), but many words are also used as mimesis, such as ‘squish’, ‘push’ and ‘shove’. Using word and sound references specific to the source language, while staying away from using Japanese script and romanisations of Japanese onomatopoeia, may help position the work more closely within the target audience’s emotional comfort zone.

### Character Design

Chmakova writes the character of Matt as an aloof, sarcastic college guy who is handsome, but difficult to get along with. By drawing Matt as always wearing sunglasses, Chmakova emphasises his emotional detachment. While there is a back story that explains this, the visual prop provides immediate insight into his personality. Christie, on the other hand, is drawn in a way that clearly shows her profound sensitivity: she has large eyes and a very wide range of facial expressions (the *chibi*-versions of herself also show this). Chmakova draws attention to Christie’s practical and assertive side by dressing her in baggy jeans and t-shirts rather than girly, elaborate outfits. The characters are multi-layered: Matt is not always interested in ‘doing the right thing’ and Christie appears more concerned with pursuing a career than a boyfriend. These choices in physical attributes, fashion style and moral traits may challenge stereotypes regarding the traditional hero/heroine figures in a romantic manga story, but may bring the characters ‘closer to home’ for North American readers.

Further, the only distinguishing characteristic between white and non-white characters is in the use of darker tone for their skin. Nothing in the way their face is drawn suggests racial differences. In an interaction between Raj and Beth late into the third volume, there is nothing in the drawing style that points to their realities as people of different ethnicities (Chmakova, 2008, p. 553) (see Figure 2.4). The same intensity of screen tone is used for both

Raj and Beth, and no other distinguishing characteristics (their clothing, for example) are made to tell the reader that these characters are different from each other physically in any way other than in their gender.



Figure 2.4. Depiction of characters who are people of colour in *Dramacon*.

*Dramacon*, pp. 552–553 © 2008 Svetlana Chmakova. Courtesy of Tokyopop.

## Conclusion

Wendy Wong argues that ultimately ‘less “Japaneseness”’ in OEL results in better ‘transnational circulation’ of the forms of manga and anime. Regarding the American audience, she suggests that ‘they might have found a “mixture of familiarity” in Japanese manga from their imaginations and the collective memories *within their own cultural context*’ [emphasis mine] (Wong, 2006, p. 40).

This ‘mixture of familiarity’ requires striking a delicate balance between utilising elements of Japanese manga and referencing what is familiar for the audience. This could explain how OEL manga’s attempts at ‘Japaneseness’ may be what is generating criticism and driving readers away, even in works that

have been awarded for their superiority in technique. It is well known that OEL manga tends to be set in fantastic make-believe worlds, where references to culturally specific issues are not particularly important to the story and, in some cases, even undesirable (see Gan, 2011). But this need not mean that the default cultural context for original characters should always be Japanese, especially after it has become apparent that most fans dislike this tendency in OEL.

If the intention were to make a Japanese manga, then it would not be an issue for a work to be as 'Japanese' as possible. However, OEL manga seeks to tell original stories in English, using manga as the medium. It is obvious that certain rules must be obeyed regarding language, and in the case of the artwork, manga style may sometimes need to be negotiated aesthetically to fit a language it was not conceived for. Perhaps it is not just through original handling of manga style, but in its referencing of the familiar and the emotional reality of its source culture, that OEL manga may be capable of offering novel perspectives on traditional manga genres and tropes, as well as allowing for a hybrid form of expression to emerge through the sampling and remixing of media content. Whatever label we choose to apply to it, OEL manga is opening doors for manga and comics in general with its potential to make personal experiences and perspectives known on a global scale, no matter where they originally came from.

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## CHAPTER THREE

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# THE CHANGING ROLE OF MANGA AND ANIME MAGAZINES IN THE JAPANESE ANIMATION INDUSTRY

RENATO RIVERA RUSCA

### Introduction

Recent years have seen a global growth in Manga Studies – both in Japan, with the establishment of the Kyoto International Manga Museum and the Kyoto Seika University International Manga Research Center, and overseas, with publications such as the University of Minnesota’s *Mechademia*, which partly spurred on the development of anime studies. Furthering Lamarre’s (2009) theories regarding anime in terms of its characteristic exploitation of Tezuka’s limited animation process, Condry’s *The Soul of Anime* (2013) has attempted to bring a new perspective forward – that of a collaborative culture of creativity, connecting fans and creators of animation. Condry’s research shows that around 60 per cent of anime is derived from manga. It also suggests that the ‘sharing’ of manga content within fan circles is an important factor in it receiving critical acclaim. This fan culture is allowed to thrive independently of industry involvement, in a process he calls ‘democratic capitalism’ (2013, pp. 106–107). As this chapter demonstrates, the same process seemed to form in anime fandom during the early anime boom, but this has recently entered a decline, for reasons that will be discussed throughout the chapter.

In terms of manga, this collaborative culture is most apparent in the fan activities surrounding so-called *ni-ji-sōsaku* [derivative works], such as *dōjinshi*.

*Dōjinshi* are fan-produced publications, predominantly (but not necessarily) derivative of an existing official work. The production process – *dōjinshi* are usually produced by ‘circles’ of fans – is key. Through collaboration based on a keen shared interest in an anime series or a particular subject, circles publish books to sell through channels such as Comic Market and other ‘*sokubaikai*’ sales events. In most cases, these *dōjinshi* are fan-produced manga that parody or build upon existing intellectual property (IP) and provide an opportunity for artists to build a portfolio that may help them to become professionals. Here, we can see a cyclical pattern begin to emerge between creators and fan circles, and their co-existent, nearly interdependent nature. Professional artists and manga publishers could, in theory, shut down the *dōjinshi* operations under the claim of copyright infringement, but clearly choose not to, prioritising the relationship between fans and pros. Furthermore, not all *dōjinshi* are manga; some are text-only, commonly referred to as *shiryō-kei dōjinshi*. Mandarake, the largest-scale second-hand retailer of subculture items in Japan, holds annual events dedicated to the exclusive sale of this type of niche *hyōron/kenkyū/shiryō-kei dōjinshi* [critique/research material *dōjinshi*] (Mandarake, 2014). Echoes of the fan–pro mutual relationship with manga can be seen in the case of anime too, with the producers of manga publications going on to effectively establish the market for anime magazines.

This chapter aims to provide insights for further development of the study of the culture of creativity surrounding manga, anime and fandom via a historic overview of anime magazines. Such an examination gives us hints as to the past, present and future of this culture of fans and creators, and of the relationship between manga and anime.

## From Manga to the Anime Magazine

Social change and public opinion may be partially gauged through the vocabulary of the era. ‘Japanese animation’, or ‘anime’ today, was once known as ‘*terebi manga*’ [TV manga], or ‘*manga eiga*’ [manga film]. The first generation of televised animation viewers in Japan, in the 1960s, watched animated versions of characters such as Tetsuwan Atom, Tetsujin 28-gō and Eightman, already well known from manga. The implication that these are ‘comic book images on television’ is clear in the terminology and overlap between genres,

where anime is seen as almost a high-tech version of *kami-shibai* (traditional storytelling using placards to illustrate key points). Despite the success of *Atom* as an animated serial, the phrase '*terebi manga*' indicates a vague understanding of the concept of animation and points to a movement still struggling to gain momentum.

Reading material for the young viewers of *terebi manga* (apart from the manga upon which those shows were based) consisted of a number of magazines – *Terebi-land*, *Terebi Magazine* and *Terebi-kun*. These were similar in format to children's manga magazines such as *Korokoro Comic*, complete with the busy and colourful collage-style covers. Their tendency to feature *tokusatsu* [special effects] and robot shows like *Kamen Rider* or *Mazinger Z* makes it clear that these were squarely aimed at boys. Invariably, they would include a free gift [*furoku*] as an incentive, often stickers of characters or papercraft games and toys. This practice continues today in manga magazines (including those aimed at teenagers and older readers, such as *Newtype Ace*<sup>1</sup> – a magazine full of serialised manga based on anime works, reversing the usual trend).

Over a decade after *Atom*, in 1974, *Space Cruiser Yamato* made its first appearance on television. Unlike *Atom* and most other shows at the time, *Yamato* was an original planned-for TV project with no basis in manga.<sup>2</sup> It was no coincidence that it came at a time when the first generation truly brought up on television were coming of age and were exposed to heavy messages borne from latent post-war social and psychological effects. Kelts (2006) also picks up on these themes, citing the trauma of the atomic bomb and its repeated echoes in popular culture, where apocalyptic scenarios are played out (2006, pp. 39–40). The animated *Atom* and *Tetsujin* also contain references to weapons and nuclear technology, but are more figurative and open to interpretation than the literal radiation bombing of Earth, subsequent intergalactic war and concepts such as the pride and honour of soldiers that we see in *Yamato*. Needless to say, *Yamato* was a gateway to the interpretative possibilities of Japanese animation for many adults and children, and so it gave rise to many fan circles across Japan.

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1 *Newtype Ace* is 'in hiatus' (defunct) as of July 2013.

2 Matsumoto Reiji later penned a manga version for Akita Shoten starting in 1975.

Despite this, *Yamato* did not fare well in the ratings battle against its time-slot rival, *Heidi, Girl of the Alps*, and eventually succumbed to a truncation of twenty-six episodes from a planned thirty-nine (see Hasebe & Ito, 2012, p. 2). Desperate to get the word out, numerous fans – the now-prolific anime critic Hikawa Ryūsuke among them – organised events and publications to try to revive the show, and catalogued the production process in order to save as many pieces of memorabilia and information as possible, thus expanding the in-world history, physics, characters and locations.

After the shaky performance of the TV show, it was the movie edition that really made an impact in the mainstream. In 1977, science fiction returned to centre stage, with the anticipation of *Star Wars*<sup>3</sup> and the *Yamato* movie, and animation came of age. However, there was no mainstream press outlet for fan discussion.

In the late 1970s, in the pages of *Manga Shōnen*, a manga magazine in which Takemiya Keiko's science fiction masterpiece *Toward the Terra* was serialised (it became an animated feature in 1980 and a TV series in 2007) alongside work by other manga revolutionaries, such as Matsumoto Reiji and Azuma Hideo, there ran a brief collection of columns and articles related to non-manga media, such as science fiction movies. A section entitled 'Animation world' ran in the 1977 October issue, featuring the 'best' anime series as voted by readers (*Yamato* came out on top). *Yamato*'s animation director, Ishiguro Noboru, was interviewed alongside now-legendary voice actor Kamiya Akira in a roundtable discussion format, setting up the template for anime journalism to follow. The November issue followed with 'Animation world part 2', which introduced 'All about Ishinomori anime'<sup>4</sup> (Hirose, 1977).

These manga magazine sections, though small, proved very popular with fans, leading to the offshoot publication, *TV Anime no Sekai*. This early 'mook' (magazine and book) studied animation from all angles. Writer Oguro Yui-chirō, as part of his regular column for the *Web Anime Style* site, recalls his youth reading this mook, and describes how the sheer volume of content (film comics, scripts, manga, reports and many more articles) was overwhelming

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3 *Star Wars* was released in Japan in 1978, but hardcore science fiction fans knew that it was causing quite an uproar in the United States, where it opened the previous year. In the interim, Japan was producing its own similar fare, such as *Uchū Kara no Messeji* [Message from space].

4 Ishinomori Shōtarō was the creator of *Cyborg 009*, which was number two on the 'best anime' list in the previous issue.



even by today's standards (Oguro, 2008). While magazines such as *Terebi-kun* provided information on new episodes and toys being released, they lacked the insider, 'making-of' aspects that older viewers appreciated.

Other publications appeared almost simultaneously in 1977, with *Yamato* featured on most covers. *Fantoché* was an avant-garde fanzine dealing with science fiction and fantasy, which also ran a *Yamato* special in 1977. This increased exposure for both the work and animation as a medium, but the fanzine remained rather underground: 'for fans, by fans'.

*Out* was a magazine focused mostly on Hollywood B-grade movies and science fiction. It included original illustrations by Japanese artists depicting cutaway views of the biological innards of the aliens from the 1953 *War of the Worlds* movie adaptation, for example, and science fiction manga, with clear Western influences. Hikawa Ryūsuke and other members of *Yamato* fan clubs across the country collaborated to bring about a special *Out* issue on *Yamato*, which would serve as an encyclopaedia of sorts to the series. *Yamato* fan-club members handled all the diagrams, photographs, writing and editing. The feature was a surprise hit, selling so many copies that there were not enough for the contributors themselves. The 'Yamato world' feature returned in September 1977, containing interviews with director Ishiguro Noboru and producer Nishizaki Yoshinobu, original pre-production character sketches and *dōjinshi*-style parody illustrations, for example, 'Yabu's run', a send-up of the movie *Logan's Run*, with the titular character replaced by the cowardly Yabu from *Yamato* (*Out*, 1977, pp. 131–132). This issue also contained much variety, such as a feature entitled 'How we learned to stop worrying and love SF movies', and another about the protests surrounding the historic Spanish general election that year. Eventually, *Out* dropped the B-grade movie and non-anime content and became a magazine entirely devoted to Japanese animation.

Next, a publication titled *Animage* appeared in 1978, marking the 'official' start of anime magazines. *Animage* was technically the first real animation magazine, as other magazines that featured anime content had been broader subculture publications or manga magazines (as mentioned, *Out* eventually became anime-specific, but did not make that transition until later). At this point, it was unclear whether Japanese society was witnessing a *Yamato* boom or a fully fledged animation boom. Thus, it was seen as risky to launch a

regular magazine on the back of a still nascent trend. Nevertheless, publisher Tokuma Shoten's first issue of *Animage*, coinciding with the theatrical release of *Farewell, Space Cruiser Yamato*, and having the advantage of Yamato's iconic silhouette on the cover, sold wildly. However, manga continued to play a role and possibly the most important element in *Animage* was the serialisation of Miyazaki Hayao's *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*. This would lead to Tokuma Shoten's funding of the 1984 movie and the film's subsequent success led to the establishment of the now-ubiquitous Studio Ghibli.

The arrival of these magazines indicated the coming of what is now known as the 'Anime Boom', where the generation raised on television in the 1960s 'came of age', ready to dissect, analyse and critique animation content.

### The 'Anime Boom' and the Decline of Anime in Manga

As publishers realised that animation magazines were a viable market, more and more standalone magazines appeared, each with its own interesting niche. Examples not introduced thus far include *Animedia* (Gakken), which targeted younger readers and was more focused on illustrations and visuals than deep, thought-provoking articles. Gakken is recognised as a provider of educational material for children, largely via the manga format and so parents may have been convinced by the company logo that *Animedia* would provide the most wholesome content, suitable for their children as a reward for their hard work at school (Gakken, 2016). Another example is *Animec* (Rapport), which started as the eponymous shop's own publication and ended up with nationwide circulation. The magazine was *otaku*-centric, catering to hardcore fans, and refrained from explaining basic concepts, preferring to hold discussions with creators and producers. *Animec* made bold attempts at critique, pondered the viability of a theory of animation as a genre and discussed media influences. Other publications, like *My Anime* and *The Anime*, appeared soon after these were established.

Combined, these anime magazines painted a fairly accurate cross-section of animation viewership, with most subgroups serviced. Manga magazines still featured anime-related content within their pages, even though *Manga Shōnen* ended and was replaced by *Duo* in 1981. The soaring popularity of animators themselves led to the publication of magazines such as *Manga Animec*, a spin-off

of *Animec*, featuring comics by Yūki Masami (*Mobile Police Patlabor*) and others, and *The Motion Comic*, which serialised manga by animators with celebrity status, such as Mikimoto Haruhiko (*Super Dimension Fortress Macross*), Itano Ichirō (*Mobile Suit Gundam*), Hirano Toshihiro (*Iczer-1*), who is now known as Hirano Toshiki, and Kanada Yoshinori (whose *Birth* comic series ran in these pages before its release as an OVA/feature film in 1984). *The Motion Comic*, in particular, due to its roster of artists mostly working for animation studio Artland, often featured columns on what was happening in the studio, with comical anecdotes by the president Ishiguro Noboru and other staff members (*The Motion Comic*, 1984).

During these boom years, anime magazines played several roles, which may be summarised in three categories: ‘world-building’, ‘critique’ and ‘community’. World-building refers to the use of magazines to present information that fills in gaps in the anime work, while critique refers to the critical and sometimes controversial content of anime magazines in relation to individual works, or the media itself and its position within society. The category of community, which intimately ties manga and anime fandom, will be discussed below.

### Manga, Anime, and ‘Community’

The use of magazines to foster a sense of community refers to a framework of relationships between fans (readers), creators and writers, as illustrated in Figure 3.1.

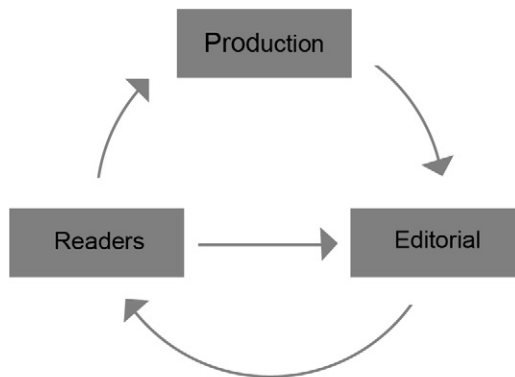


Figure 3.1. The flow of ‘fans’ in the 1977–1986 period.

One of the aims of magazines such as *Out* and *Animec* was to cultivate links between viewers/readers (fans), editors and production staff. Readers of these magazines could appreciate the content because of the synergy between the fans and the writers. That is not to say that all fans made the transition to becoming producers, but their relationship was very much reciprocal. For instance, out of necessity, the editorial departments of early anime magazines were made up of fans. Higher management were of a different generation. During the 1977–1983 boom, fans worked within the anime industry itself, since they too were from the *Terebi-kun* generation, having been influenced as children by television and anime, while the producers of the anime shows they grew up with only had manga.

Kawamori Shōji, the creator of *Super Dimension Fortress Macross*, and Izubuchi Yutaka, the director of *Space Cruiser Yamato 2199* (the 2012 remake of the original series), were often seen on the pages of *Animec* describing what they enjoyed about science fiction or other such topics, before most people even knew who they were (both have become industry icons) (*Animec*, 1981, pp. 36–37). Kawamori, Izubuchi and others, such as Mikimoto Haruhiko, knew the readership intimately, since they themselves had been part of fan circles and had produced amateur fanzines. There was a reciprocal sense of appreciation: a very ‘inclusive’ environment for all involved (Tsuji, 2012, p. 389).

As well as the aforementioned columns by animators and producers themselves, the participatory nature of this framework also led to readers having many opportunities to contribute to magazines. *Animec*, once again, led the field by sometimes publishing entire interviews of staff members conducted by readers, some of them high-school aged.

The ‘lighter’ magazines, such as *The Anime*, had community pages with sections where readers would post ‘wanted’ and ‘for trade’ messages or invite other readers to their fan clubs. This community concept was further emphasised in later magazines, such as *Animec*’s sister magazine, *Fanroad*, which was predominantly made up of fan-produced artwork, parodying anime and manga works, much like a collection of *dōjinshi*. In fact, as a testament to the importance of community in the world of anime and manga, this *Fanroad* formula has survived through the decades and outlived its parent publication.

*Break Time* was a short-lived, self-styled ‘industry magazine’, which provided insights into the workings of animation studios and acted as an

educational resource for anime fans looking to find their way into the industry. The second issue published a large feature on employment opportunities within the animation industry. A photograph shows a young visitor to an animation studio, clutching a paper envelope with a semi-comical speech bubble reading ‘*ano... sumimasen*’ (‘excuse me, may I come in?’ [lit. ‘um... excuse me’]). The caption alongside it reads: ‘Now, the path to the anime industry. Anime industry career information’. The photograph illustrates a common trend of the time – young and inexperienced fans wanted to become professionals and were literally knocking on doors, hoping for their portfolio to get a look (Break Time, 1984, p. 17). The very existence of such a magazine serves to highlight the relationship between fans and producers shown in Figure 3.1.

### **Manga-Based Anime and Anime’s Turning Point**

The anime boom carried magazine publications into the 1980s, but in the middle of the decade, a definite decline began. Anime magazines and science fiction/robot anime were clearly great partners – the magazines could fill in the blanks that the anime sometimes truncated and left out, and carry advertisements for merchandising, largely toys and model kits. The companies producing these toys and kits were invariably the main sponsors of the most popular shows at the time.

Because these science fiction/robot shows were original television projects, there was little conflict of interest in the content the magazines selected. While producers of original anime were often willing to give permission for their series to be featured in magazines, manga-based anime series were often owned by rival publishing companies and thus required copyright clearance.

Although anime itself was seemingly more popular than ever, the ‘coming of age’ of anime fans proved a double-edged sword. Creators took advantage of the medium to tell ever more mature stories and were increasingly unable to meet the demands of their sponsors, which were focused largely on toy production. Essentially, there was a generational gap between the animation industry and its partner industry, toy companies. Although *Yamato* was cancelled because of low ratings, the demise of *Gundam* came when its partnership with the toy manufacturer Clover ended. Director Tomino Yoshiyuki’s vision differed to that of the more traditional, hero-style image that Clover was trying to push in order to market its line of *Gundam* toys. As a result, toy sales were poor

and Clover pulled out of the partnership, leaving the show with no funds and no choice but to end (Condry 2013, pp. 124–125). Eventually, the brand was revived through a movie adaptation (and Bandai marketed a range of scale model kits to a higher age group), but it had set a precedent: the needs of the sponsors and the demands of the creators were beginning to diverge. In the middle were the magazine publishers. Some, like *Animec*, tried their best to support the underdogs. In his memoirs of his time as *Animec*'s editor-in-chief, Komaki expounds his theories regarding the anime boom, a period which seemed rather puzzling for those outside of anime fandom (Komaki, 2009). Anime TV shows needed to target an age group of no older than twelve to enjoy the support of the merchandise industry. Yet it was attracting an older audience with the growing trend for content like that of *Gundam*, with its talk of space colonies based on real-life NASA physicist Gerard O'Neill's conceptual designs (Animec, 1986, pp. 54–63). In contrast, *Animec*'s own fan-oriented readership was made up of middle-schoolers and high-schoolers. Komaki recalls meeting Imai Makoto, the Nagoya TV producer, who was at the time struggling with *Gundam*'s low ratings, and reassuring him not to worry, insisting that 'ten years from now, *Gundam* will be an invaluable asset to Nagoya TV' (Komaki, 2009, p. 87). Komaki reasoned that popularity could no longer be measured by ratings alone and he showed Imai all the letters and fan-art he had received from the readers of *Animec*. In a way, *Animec* was a haven for these supporters, and though *Animec* covered *Gundam* heavily from the start, other magazines followed after autumn because, ultimately, 'their editing teams were simply *Gundam* fans' (Komaki, 2009, pp. 86–87).

The period of 1985 to 1986 represented a turning point in the history of the anime magazine to rival the milestone year of 1977. Reasons for this turning point include the rise of 'slice-of-life' manga-based anime, original video anime (OVA) and the introduction of production committees. The following sub-section will focus on the rise of slice-of-life, manga-based anime before summarising the associated issues of OVA and production committees.

### **Slice-of-Life/Manga-Based Anime on the Rise**

Anime based on slice-of-life manga increased in popularity around the mid-1980s – that is to say, anime without fantastical aspects, which takes place in a recognisable, everyday setting, such as a suburban high school, and which

focuses on human relationships that are often romantic in nature. While their audiences grew larger, this type of anime received limited coverage in anime magazines, compared to science fiction anime. The settings of slice-of-life anime do not need explanation, which limited magazine commentary and analysis to character profiles and perhaps some staff interviews. When they covered slice-of-life anime, magazines were unable to maintain their traditional role of world building, one of the reasons for their existence. In addition, magazines had to get permission from the copyright holders of the relevant IP in order to run pieces on them – this was simple enough in the case of science fiction/robot anime, which were usually planned as original works, but most slice-of-life series tended to be based on previously published manga and copyright was owned more often than not by rival publishers. Therefore, despite the increasing popularity of shows such as *Touch* and *Maison Ikkoku* – both Shōgakukan properties – most anime magazines tended to scale back their coverage of them, so as not to promote a competitors' product, while they maintained a focus on science fiction animations, like Takahashi Ryōsuke's *Blue Comet SPT Layzner* (eventually axed) and the feature-length OVA science fiction parody *Project A-ko*.

At the same time, Betamax and VHS, affordable home video media, were becoming increasingly popular and this was a major game changer for the animation industry. Televised anime remained a mainstay on the airwaves, but the development of 'anime subculture' led to content unsuitable for children, which could not air on television. A divergence in anime media came to be seen between the two formats: OVA for the hardcore fans and TV for more family-friendly content. Coinciding with this divergence, a shift from sponsor-driven production to a committee style of production occurred. In the traditional system of production (illustrated in Figure 3.2) the creative agencies sought sponsorship from a company, which would produce toys or other such merchandise based on the designs seen in the show. Under the new model, the 'product' became the animation itself, rather than the spin-off goods.

As a result, the magazines that emerged from the ashes of those that folded in the mid-1980s were rather different from their predecessors. They included: *Anime V* (Gakken) which featured the latest in OVA news and regular advice columns for buying hardware for VHS, Laserdisc (LD) and Video High Density (VHD) formats; *Newtype* (Kadokawa), a 'gravure' anime magazine,

with exclusively-commissioned artwork for their colour spreads; and *Globian* (Hiro Media), which was owned by an OVA distributor and primarily used to plug Hiro Media's own products, but which still featured a wide variety of content, including fandom abroad and non-anime-related stories.

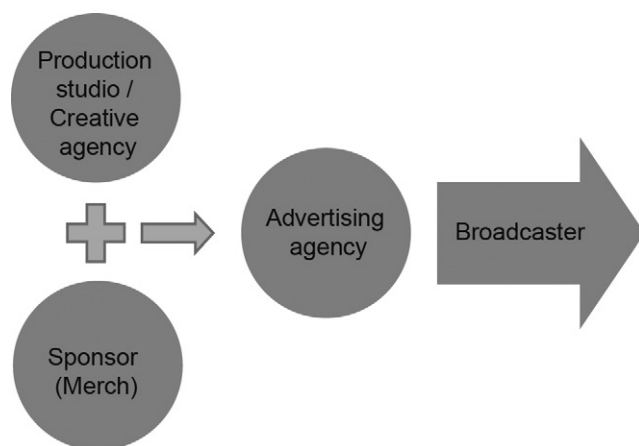


Figure 3.2. The pre-production process for anime series – before production committees were established.

With the arrival of the OVA-centric *Anime V*, *Newtype* and *Globian* – which essentially had the main goal of pushing sales of anime videos and LDs – the ‘community’ became more hierarchically structured, with editors bonding with the anime companies, essentially acting as their marketing division. Readers would still receive posters and exclusive spreads, but the writing became less ‘inclusive’. It focused less on sharing information and exchanging ideas with like-minded individuals and more on promoting the latest product news direct from the source. This naturally led to decreased room for ‘critique’. Critique can only truly occur when there is freedom to discuss ideas, but production committees were now in control of most of outlets for discussion. This left the *dōjinshi* peripheral subculture to develop thoughts and theories. This change of affairs appears to point to a regression in what Henry Jenkins calls ‘participatory culture’ (2006), which seemed to exist in anime’s boom years:

The term *participatory culture* contrasts with older notions of passive media spectatorship ... Rather than talking about media producers and consumers as occupying separate roles, we might now see them



as participants who interact with each other according to a new set of rules that none of us fully understands. (Jenkins, 2006, p. 3)

Jenkins warns that ‘not all participants are created equal’, even within a culture that exhibits participatory qualities: ‘Corporations – and even individuals within corporate media – still exert greater power than any individual consumer or even the aggregate of consumers’ (2006, p. 3). We can therefore infer from the history of early anime magazines that the participatory culture surrounding anime developed through *dōjinshi* activities. When fans eventually held professional editorial positions, the traditional makeup of producers and consumers was disturbed. However, the fandom was too feverish to sustain this nebulous framework in business and a new model had to be implemented, which once again positioned the corporations at its heart and re-established the linear ‘provider and receiver’ relationship, illustrated in Figure 3.3, at the expense of ‘community’.

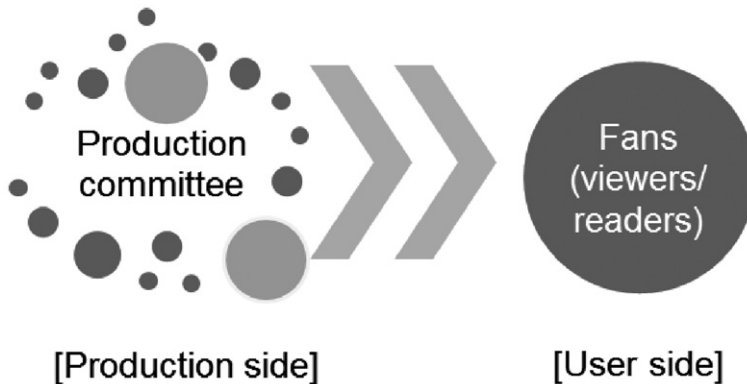


Figure 3.3. The breakdown of relations between production, magazine publishers and readers after the introduction of the production committee system.

### ‘Anime Journalism’ and Manga Today

Today, critique has little place in anime magazines. There are very few active writers with a working understanding of the history of the animation industry. However, those with such an understanding are making efforts to spread that knowledge via a variety of formats and to stimulate discourse on relevant issues. For example, the aforementioned Hikawa Ryūsuke has contributed a number

of detailed histories for DVD and Blu-ray booklets and self-publishing critical pieces for sale at *dōjinshi* events. He also teaches a course on anime critique at Ikebukuro Community College and recently started an anime course for postgraduate students at Meiji University.

In a bizarre twist of fate, the fan culture that created the anime boom and kickstarted the anime magazine industry ultimately led to the downfall of anime magazines as a space for discussing the mainstream value and acceptance of anime. There are writers willing to produce critical content, but anime magazines are the domain of powerful multimedia corporations and fan culture remains active only within the *dōjinshi* circles that research, share and discuss a wide range of ideas – not in the pages of the magazines on the bookstore shelf. Several magazines, such as *Animage Original* and *Anime Style*, have attempted to fill this critical gap, some more successfully than others. *Animage Original* is an offshoot of *Animage* and caters to the older generation of anime fans interested in production techniques and behind-the-scenes commentary on old and new anime, with rough production sketches featured on the covers as opposed to commissioned artworks like regular magazines. However, the publication ended in its seventh volume. *Anime Style*, in its incarnation as *Gekkan (Monthly) Anime Style*, was a similar magazine in tone, but each issue devoted almost its entire content to one seminal work of animation. *Gekkan Anime Style* was able to select ‘old’ titles with no new sequels or spin-offs as its main special features, because it was not actually marketed as a serialised publication. Instead, each issue came with a small ‘Nendoroid Petit’, a smaller version of Good Smile Company’s Nendoroid figures, which are deformed versions of popular characters spanning a wide range of anime, old and new. The figure was marketed as the main product, with the accompanying magazine, despite having over a 150 pages, being the ‘bonus’ included.

Strictly speaking, prior to becoming a monthly in 2011, *Anime Style* (under Oguro Yuichirō’s direction) attempted to promote critique, though its life as a print magazine was short and ended in the same year as its inception (2000). *Web Anime Style*, the online version that followed, provided information on animation production and history through exclusive interviews and its return to print as a monthly through the Nendoroid marketing venture proved successful. However, it was clear that the figures were the major pull and after a hiatus upon its sixth volume in February 2012, it became a quarterly until April 2014 after

which it released issues sporadically; however it recently succeeded in a 2015 crowd-funding campaign to turn it back into a quarterly. Having dropped the Nendoroid gift, the latest issues focused on recent big-name anime movies such as Hosoda Mamoru's *Wolf Children* and Kenji Kamiyama's *009: Re:Cyborg*, and hit series like *Shirobako* and *Sound! Euphonium* – demonstrating the belief that anime magazines indeed need to deal with current works to be relevant.

In terms of manga, the committee system of animation production has allowed for publishers to have more control over IP, and multimedia diffusion of IP has become the norm. The four-pronged strategy combining manga, OVA, TV and theatrical animation releases was revolutionary for the *Patlabor* franchise in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Now that such cross-platform media is commonplace, anime-based manga has increased and, in some cases, manga based on video games have kickstarted spin-off anime productions. As mentioned above, animators drawing manga was a novel concept in the 1980s and formed the basis for *The Motion Comic* and other such manga magazines. In 2011, Kadokawa Shoten led the field with *Newtype Ace*, a 600-page monthly manga magazine running serialised comic adaptations of major Bandai Visual anime properties such as *Macross*, *Yamato* and *Tiger & Bunny*. The magazine was established after the relatively short life span of *Macross Ace*, a spin-off of *Gundam Ace* (in turn, a spin-off of *Shonen Ace*), which were manga magazines collecting stories set in the *Macross* and *Gundam* worlds, respectively, thus expanding the scope of the anime shows and, in a sense, serving the fan base by providing 'world building' aspects in a way that marked them as different from the old anime magazines. However, *Newtype Ace* also folded very quickly in 2013, after only twenty-three monthly issues. Many of the series it hosted have moved over to other Kadokawa publications and some have re-launched on their new Comic Walker online service, viewable free of charge.<sup>5</sup> Numerous publishing houses launched similar online manga services in 2014 and at time of this writing one can sense a new paradigm on the horizon for the Japanese comics industry and its now symbiotic relationship with other media.

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5 Mikimoto Haruhiko's *Macross the First* is one such example: a new adaptation of the 1982 anime in the style of Yasuhiko Yoshikazu's *Gundam the Origin*, the latter having been greenlit as a new anime series in 2015, coming full circle from anime to manga back to anime.

## Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, it took around fifteen years from the advent of *'terebi manga'* in 1963 for Japanese animation to be recognised in as a viable subject for magazines in its own right. Once anime magazines were established separately from the manga magazines in which they originated, anime steadily developed from a minor subculture to a major one. Many hurdles still remain for the further development of anime journalism. Today, manga critique and studies is making commendable headway, but it seems that the analysis of the history and evolution of animation, its techniques and its position within society, is undergoing stagnation.

These days, hardcore fans get their behind-the-scenes information from Internet sites and discussion boards, negating the need for animation magazines to provide scoops. Yet, the illustrative aspects of magazines remain intact, where the goal is to run manga serials and produce commissioned illustrations the reader can own and keep. This gives further justification to the notion of a magazine as a predominantly visual medium and recent years have seen a resurgence of anime-based manga in many anime magazines. It would seem that serious analysis and critique has little place within the visually dominant magazine format. Even if an anime journalist wants to stimulate discourse, the production committee system poses many obstacles: editorial control and unreasonable conditions for interviews result in neutral, 'safe' articles. Thus, simple visual illustrations are favoured.

Fans originally established the market for anime magazines at a grassroots level, working in tandem with writers and creators, when publishers had little knowledge of the subject. Today, anime magazines interact with writers and creators much less. This activity has largely been taken on by *dōjinshi*. These trends are seen in the evolution of the formats of the magazines themselves. They do not simply reflect trends in animation style and content, they also reflect the changing relationship between the readers and publishers. While aspiring manga and anime professionals may have once made impromptu visits to studios (see *Break Time*, 1984, p. 17) or become involved through personal acquaintance, the proliferation of animation schools and academies is establishing a structure for entry into the industry. It remains to be seen if software like *MikuMikuDance* will provide budding animators with their

big breaks.<sup>6</sup> Even if this were to happen, the independent nature of such productions would relegate most (if not all) discussion and critique to online forums and blogs rather than the pages of an anime magazine.

There do appear to be other avenues for anime critique and journalism, such as the courses previously mentioned and *dōjinshi* by writers like Hikawa Ryūsuke and Fujitsu Ryōta, some of who are also involved in government-sponsored oral history archives currently in development (Media Geijutsu, 2015). Already, there is a wealth of information stored in these publications in need of proper cataloguing and recording. The continued analysis of anime magazines can provide a clearer image of the make-up of the animation subculture, the industry itself and its relation to society on the whole; it can also draw many comparisons between the growing fields of anime and manga studies.

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6 *Straight title robot anime*, an animated show that aired in 2013 on Japanese terrestrial television, was produced solely using MikuMikuDance, so there is some precedent.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

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# FROM VICTIM TO KIRA

## *Death Note* and the Misplaced Agencies of Cosmic Justice

COREY BELL

### Introduction

*Death Note* [デスノート], originally a manga by Ohba Tsugumi, has seen incarnations as an anime and a live-action two-movie series released in Japan between 2003 and 2006. The story revolves around a young genius named Light Yagami, who uses the ‘death note’, the book of a god of death, to rid the world of criminals. ‘L’, a brilliant but quirky freelance detective, tries to stop him. *Death Note* shares elements and archetypes with a common subgenre of detective fiction wherein the intellect of the misfit detective is seen as the ideal instrument to unearth the deviant machinations hidden beneath the debonair facade of the seemingly upstanding criminal. Yet *Death Note* by no means portrays a conventional crime narrative. Rather than exposing depravity as a hidden complement of our struggle to conform, it reveals some of the values that society exemplifies as depraved through the clever use of the occult plotline. Rather than merely delving into the deeper psychology of deviance, *Death Note* addresses the ways in which texts can become objects of mistaken authority, and ultimately be given a misplaced currency in society.

### *Death Note* and the Occult

The ‘occult’ dimension, which *Death Note* manipulates, is manifest in the figures of the grotesque gods of death, the *shinigami*, and also their instrument of death – the death note, which can be used by a mortal human to kill anybody whose

name they write down in its pages. Napier (2010) asserts that the *shinigami* is a symbol of the omnipotence of thought, revealing the hidden pathologies in contemporary urban society. I would argue that *Death Note*'s underlying moral message is symbolised by the book that is its namesake.

The mortal Light, alias Kira (a Japanese transliteration of 'killer'), is able to exact his vision of divine justice by merely writing the name of his victim (his 'judgements') in the *shinigami*'s death book. However, through killing, he ultimately lengthens the *shinigami*'s lifespan. This symbolism links to Judeo-Christian ideas of true god(s) as eternal and demonic forces as able to sustain a worldly presence only through human collaboration and supernatural instruments. While the *shinigami* symbolises dark power, the intermediary facility – the book – can be said to symbolise discourses. Thus, via the death note – and in reference to Napier's observation about omnipotence – words indeed give form to thoughts. Moreover, as with the case of religious and other texts, it is the divinised medium ('text') that empowers these thoughts to produce an effect in the real world. The moral danger in the act of reading is thus related to the misplaced sanctification of texts and their authorship, manifest in *Death Note* when the 'enlightened' language of 'cosmic justice' is shown as not divinely inspired, but co-opted in the service of our/the author's demonic morbidities.

### **Death, Justice and Victimhood**

Napier (2010, p. 358) finds in *Death Note* a social commentary that addresses many issues in contemporary Japan such as bullying, sensationalist reporting, the judicial system's apparent impotence and the danger of cult leaders. While one cannot deny the multidimensionality of *Death Note*'s morals, many of these issues intersect through a relationship to 'victimhood'. This concept brings to the fore the intersection between 'justice' as cosmic moral principle, and 'death' in the sense of our preoccupation with mortality.

Victimhood can act as a powerful instigator of moral indignation, yet it also marks the terror of facing unprepared the imminence of our own mortality. The juxtaposition of the godly and demonic reminds us that the latter can often disfigure the former and that uncritical faith in the moral sanctity of our indignation can have grave consequences. This is particularly true, as the symbol of the 'notebook' cleverly intimates, when the private machinations of



the victimised are received more widely. This is often seen in detective dramas when proof of guilt is presented and the perpetrator speaks of their own victimisation. Sympathising with, but ultimately rejecting, these discourses, we are given grounds to counterbalance our ongoing fear of being victimised and our condemnation of the perpetrator with the view that society should share in the moral burden. However, when the discursive power to popularise victimhood empowers us all to share a claim to victimhood and an entitlement to retribution, evil is given its ultimate absolution. In such a world, justice serves the desire to bring death to that which threatens to intensify the propinquity of our own mortality. When the measure of justice is that killers are ultimately destined to become victims, the collective victim is destined to empower and bring into the world our own inner kiras.

Attending to the above themes, this chapter examines *Death Note's* commentaries on the ramifications of the public empowerment of 'victimhood' and its surreptitious role in sanctifying misplaced authorities (especially in Japan's mainstream media) in regard to both 'voice' and 'discourse' in contemporary Japanese discussions on crime and punishment. While this chapter does not take a cultural studies approach in the narrow sense, it is concerned with the intersection of social commentary and religio-moral discourse, addressed through an investigation focused on the cinematic adaption of the *Death Note* manga.

### **Crime Reporting and Criminal Justice**

Prior to protagonist Light (Yagami Raito) using the *shinigami* Ryuku's (i.e., Luke = Lucifer?) death note to administer what he regards as divine justice, he is a law student disillusioned by what he sees as the impotence of the justice system. As Napier points out, much of *Death Note* is dedicated to depictions of Light and other death note users' extra-judicial killings of criminals (2010, p. 356). Many of the deaths are the subjects of live media coverage, commented on sympathetically by the media and receiving support online. Despite being condemned by law enforcement, Kira garners significant support from the broader public.

In many ways, these themes reflect overtly what Hamai and Ellis (2006) and other scholars (i.e., Miyazawa, 2008; Leonardsen, 2010) have observed to

be a rapid rise in public fear of crime, together with a growth of the sentiment that the justice system is failing and that a more punitive approach to criminals is required. It has been asserted in Japan that one of the key causes for such sentiments is sensationalist reporting of crime and judicial incompetence in the mainstream media. This has been expressed most overtly in a rare journalistic mea culpa, published in early 2007 (just after the release of *Death Note*), by *Japan Times* writer Debito Arudou, who stated that his profession was largely to blame for what had become a 'disturbing gap between actual crime in Japan and public worry over it' (Arudou, 2007). This narrative of the media as the site of ethical abatement combined with undeserved potency in swaying public opinion forms a key theme in *Death Note's* social commentary, revealed most directly in Napier's statement that media figures such as 'television moguls' are depicted as 'probably the least attractive characters in the whole series' (2010, p. 158) on account of their self-serving and unprincipled manipulation of public sentiments surrounding the Kira phenomenon.

Though perhaps the product of earnest professional self-reflection, Arudou's mea culpa was partly inspired by Hamai and Ellis' 2006 article, which found that while Japan had one of the lowest crime victimisation rates, surveys indicated that public fear of crime was particularly high, a mismatch larger than in any comparable nation. Hamai and Ellis conclude that much of the blame for this mismatch lay in the presentation of a partial, inaccurate picture of crime trends in the media, including most prominently homicide and violent crimes with high 'news value'. They assert that because people 'rely more on media sources for opinions on crime than they do on official statistics' media panic has had a very real effect on public perception (Hamai & Ellis, 2006, p. 169).

Hamai and Ellis's research strongly resonates with *Death Note* in that the 'moral panic', which they attribute to this heightened fear, fed on the perception of the media's portrayal of an incompetent police and judiciary and the sharp change in crime statistics that policy response to these earlier perceptions resulted in. They note that in the late 1990s the coverage of police scandals provoked policy reactions 'that ensured that more "trivial" offenses were reported, boosting overall crime figures' (Hamai & Ellis, 2006, p. 206). However, rather than a rise in trivial crimes, the media focused on violent crimes, resulting in the general rise in recorded crime being linked to a

heightened likelihood of becoming a victim of serious crime and lowered chances of it being investigated and solved. This vicious cycle led to a loss of confidence in the criminal justice system, morphing into the legitimisation of the ‘myth of the collapse of secure society’ (Hamai & Ellis, 2006, p. 169). Hamai and Ellis drew attention to anecdotal evidence that this perspective has become institutionalised, manifest in what they call ‘popular punitivism’, similar to that seen in the UK and USA and evident in policy changes, which include higher rates and longer durations of incarceration for increasingly trivial transgressions.

*Death Note* reflects the focus placed on the roles of the media and the justice system; it is noteworthy that the majority of the characters are either employed as journalists or police. When the narrative introduces two other characters who have become kiras – Misa and Kiyomi – they are in fact media personalities. *Death Note* also uses an abundance of cuts to sensationalist headings in papers, vox pops and exploitative television coverage of the kira phenomena – the most striking example being a producer’s excited reaction to the ratings gained by exclusive live coverage of the killings of innocent people orchestrated by the second kira, Misa. While the media is denigrated as narcissistic and self-serving in its coverage, the police – in spite of *Death Note*’s sober appreciation of their limitations – are dealt with more sympathetically. While it is arguable that they are the story’s ‘heroes’, the group that assists L are depicted generally as earnest, courageous and self-sacrificing people that make the best use of their limited abilities to try to protect society, while maintaining respect for legal procedure and due process. This principle is exemplified by L’s sacrifice of his own life to ‘prove’ beyond doubt what he already knew intuitively to be Light’s guilt.

In relation to the perceived incompetence of the police and judiciary, Light, the son of a high ranking detective, is able to get access to records of non-prosecuted cases. He reveals early on that he had lost faith in the effectiveness of the police and courts. This inspires him to seek out the criminal Takuo Shibuimaru – which leads to his acquiring the Death Note and becoming ‘Kira.’ This theme is strengthened by interviews and cuts to social media where Kira is praised for moving beyond the criminal justice system to reduce crime. Furthermore, in several scenes, Kira kills criminals after what are unambiguously depicted as their false exoneration in court. On top of this there

is a symbolic expression of the antagonism between the media and the police: each of the three 'kiras' (two of whom are media personalities) use death notes at various times to 'sacrifice' innocent officers acting in the course of duty without any expression of remorse.

This parallels between the actions of media figures and those of the kiras directly symbolises the ramifications of the improper bestowal or acquisition of textual/discursive authority – in the case of the media, this occurs when its duty to protect the 'common' good is hijacked by base intentions for advancing self-interest through manipulation. The most overt expression of this is Kiyomi's use of a death note to further her journalistic career: she kills a rival newsreader and organises 'timely' deaths at her own interview locations. She tells herself that her actions are justified as they bring retribution and reduce crime.

At a deeper level, *Death Note's* drawing together of the kiras and the media could also be read as emphasising the ability of textual authority to 'weaponise' language, and in the absence of proper self-examination, to give effect to our darker instincts. In *Death Note* there is arguably an inherent call for those who exert influence on public discourse to reflect on the gravity of their responsibility. This is made more explicit in its manga version, in which L's prodigy 'Near' tells Light that a normal person would be shocked on learning the destructive power of the death note and would be reticent about using it again. However, part of the allure of the death note is the disassociation it creates between its use and the gruesome violence of 'killing.' As the newsreader-come-kira Kiyomi says, she did not *actually* kill anyone – all she did was 'write names' in a book. When text is an intermediary between dark thoughts and their realisation in the world, there is a temptation to consider that the text has a moral immunity with regards to its consequences on account of the absolute right to freedom and impunity associated with the act of writing. This may be compared with the notion that freedom of speech does not imply freedom from consequences.

### **Victim Status and the Cycle of Abuse**

*Death Note* contains an alluring flipside to the media campaign for punitivism and 'judicial imprudence' manifested primarily in sympathy for and valorisation of 'victims'. Hamai and Ellis (2006) note in their research that 'victims and

advocates' constitute one constituent – the media, police/politicians and experts being the others – of what they call an 'iron quadrangle', which institutionalises concern about crime and the idea that Japanese society is in constant danger. According to their report, the press has largely facilitated the rising influence of victims and advocates. As they note, the print media is now more interested in representing the victim's perspective and 'victims and/or bereaved family members are far more visible to the public' as a result (2006, p. 171).

Hamai and Ellis's (2006) research implies that the Japanese media has gone beyond valorising and bringing attention to victims. The moral panic it has invoked has caused 'a collapse of the pre-existing psychological boundary dividing the ordinary world where crime is rare, and another world where crime is common' (Hamai & Ellis, 2006, p.170). Through the frequent, sensationalist reporting of grotesquely violent crimes, the media may be said to have 'collectivised' crime-induced trauma, proliferating a sanctified victim identity as the prerogative of non-victims of the non-criminal mainstream.

*Death Note* pays significant attention to the dangers inherent in the widespread valorisation and appropriation of victim status. This is realised because the links it makes between the media and kiras can be regarded as a symbolic commentary on the psychology of 'victim identity' and its discursive legitimisation. A pop-psychology interpretation of the theory of the cyclic transformation of those who strongly identify as victims – wherein, on account of this identity, victims become perpetrators or abusers – forms a central theoretical tool. As a medium for realising the omnipotence of thought, the *shinigami* notebooks reveal how the victim identity, prompted by a heightened reactive narcissism and facilitated by the principle of 'cosmic justice', causes the 'victim' to be transformed into kira. This is symbolised by the arrival of the *shinigami* and consummated by patterns of killing that move from being narrowly targeted and retributive to increasingly indiscriminate and self-serving.

### **The Psychology of Victimhood**

The term 'victim identity' in psychology refers to the state in which a person identifies strongly with their status as a victim, whether they have experienced abuse or imagined abuse. It is one response to victimisation and not an inevitable one. Victim identity denotes not only a sense of seeing oneself as a passive,

innocent victim, it is also an identity that is often imbued with retaliatory impulses. Violent criminals, similarly, are assumed to have, and justify their crimes on account of, a victim identity. Victim identity, in this sense, is a source of abusive behavior – the key instigator of a cycle in which victims become abusers.

*Death Note* focuses its moral discourse on how the sanctification of victimhood empowers those that appropriate it to visit abuse on their abusers, and ultimately on others, with self-claimed impunity. Zur offers a succinct description of the basis and general constitution of this phenomenon:

In claiming the status of victim ... a person can achieve moral superiority while simultaneously disowning any responsibility for one's behavior and its outcome. The victims 'merely' seek justice and fairness. If they become violent, it is only as a last resort, in self-defence. The victim stance is a powerful one. The victim is always morally right, neither responsible nor accountable, and forever entitled to sympathy. (1994, n.p.)

### **The Birth of Kira in *Death Note***

How is this theory of the cyclic transformation from victim to abuser manifest in *Death Note*? Firstly, we may note that despite *Death Note* talking about public opinion regarding the notion of judicial punitivism, there appears to be an omission regarding the characters of criminals. No questions are asked about what led them to their crimes, or whether criminals can be rehabilitated. Other than the kiras, no criminal characters are developed beyond the crudest archetypes – the most common being the deranged, cold-blooded and often relatively young psychopaths of the type Hamai and Ellis (2006) identify as the subjects of sensationalist reporting (a rare exception being corrupt officials and businessmen). Criminals are presented not as people, but as demonised caricatures of the type portrayed in popular media, perceived through the eyes of society as the collective victim. In a Jungian sense, these characters are merely the psychological projection or 'shadow' of the victim identity (1966), themes elaborated on by von Franz (1964) – they are anonymous, evil perpetrators contrasted with innocent, upstanding victims. They are, in a sense, the ultimate rationalisation for the empowerment of Kira.

In *Death Note*, we are shown innocent victims of crime, several of whom are seen to be supportive of Kira, rejoicing when Kira brings them vengeance. In one early scene, a phone is shown with a message stating that since Kira's killings, the writer has not been the victim of bullying at school. In another, a boy holding a picture of his sister rejoices in the 'gift' he receives when Kira kills his sister's murderer. More importantly, one of the central characters – the television personality Misa – is a victim of a deranged young criminal who killed her entire family. Misa's life is reinvigorated, and she falls in love with Kira, after he kills this criminal. Misa was also 'saved' by a *shinigami* herself when on the verge of being murdered by a crazed fan.

In her identification as a victim, Misa is not alone amongst the kiras. Each of the death note users – Light, Kiyomi and Misa – are shown at various times to have been victims of abuse and each came to use the death note to exact revenge. More importantly, while each claims justice and the promise of a better world as their motivation, victimisation is revealed as a key instigator of the symbolic process through which each of the protagonists come into possession of death notes and are shown the *shinigami*. In the case of Misa, the death note appears when she is on the verge of being murdered and she first uses it to kill her attacker. Similarly, Kiyomi is the victim of bullying at her workplace and it is when her desire for retribution is at its most intense that the death note drops before her.

The most richly symbolic juxtaposition of the pursuit of divine justice and the retaliatory impulse brought about by victimisation occurs with the acquisition and early use of the death note by Light. His ideals and belief in the efficacy the legal system are shaken when he uses his detective father's (Yagami Soichiro) access to view secret files, wherein he finds that many of society's worst criminals escape justice. Light seeks to investigate one of these cases himself and is almost killed by one of these criminals, the young psychopath Shibuimaru Takuo. Immediately afterward, Light throws his law textbook away and at this very moment notices the notebook, which had apparently fallen from the sky, mysteriously untouched by the rain that fell around it. As in the case of the other two kiras, the notebook was soon after used by Light to retaliate against the person who threatened him. Before this act of retribution, he uses it to kill a deviant who preyed on schoolgirls – just before a scene where Light expressed his fear for the safety of his schoolgirl sister.

Of the three kiras, Light's acquisition of the death note emphasises most emphatically the blurred line between the idealistic pursuit of realising cosmic justice (an ideal he espouses to his girlfriend Shiori) and the darker retributive impulses prompted by victimisation. This is closely intertwined with another form of corruption, between the desire to shape the world to conform to an ideal (justice) and the drive to reshape it to mitigate the fragility of one's own mortality (death). A contrast exists between Light's discussion with Shiori about his desire to save the world and his more private desire to become immortal. Such conflict is arguably symbolised by the divine image of the death note when Light first encounters it. Confusion between the divinity and the demonic power of the death note can be read as mirroring the confusion between the 'divine' mission which Light ostensibly commits his use of the death note to realising and the baser intentions that actually drive him.

The gap between Light's discovery of the death note and the arrival of the *shinigami* relates to the confusion between a preoccupation with mortality and the rationalisation of 'divine' justice. In the cases of Misa and Kiyomi, the *shinigami* arrived almost immediately after they touch the death note. The order in which the death note arrives before the *shinigami* is important. Kiras are empowered ultimately on account of the 'discourses' (i.e., the 'book') that 'victims' have formulated to legitimise or bring authority to their right to visit retribution upon perpetrators. Only then are they capable of overcoming the initial shock of first confronting the demonic grotesqueness (i.e. the *shinigami*) of the impulse to kill. In the case of the first kira, Light, Ryuku does not arrive until after he has confirmed the power of the death note and Light's shock at Ryuku's form (bat-like wings, sharp teeth, grey skin and gothic adornments replete with skull symbols) is much more subdued (in fact, in the original manga it is minimal). This may represent the notion that Light has meticulously built the ideological infrastructure for accepting the role of Kira on the foundations of his former idealistic yet naïve commitment to use himself and the law as an agent of cosmic justice. Having already discarded the law, when the *shinigami* arrives Light is able to bear both his grotesque form and the grave consequences the *shinigami* warns him of (in fact, Ryuku wryly notes that it seems these consequences will not trouble Light). Light is, in fact, keen to bring the *shinigami* and his powers (or demonic impulses) into the service of his grander ideals.



### Narcissism and Kiras' Consumption of Conscience

As the story unfolds, it becomes apparent that the death note cannot bring Light immortality or godhood. Befitting his mortal status, he is ultimately used by the *shinigami* to write his own 'judgment.' Light is similarly never able to control the *shinigami* and is instead ultimately manipulated into the service of Ryuku's inane whims. Ryuku sees Light as a toy for avoiding 'boredom' and extending his lifespan, which grows every time Light uses the death note to kill someone. The ultimate immunity of Ryuku from the fetters of his book's master, and the human world in general, matches the growing liberation of the kiras, as both Light and Kiyomi in particular succumb to their narcissistic impulses, becoming more random, malicious and self-serving in their dispensation of death. In one of the last scenes, Light yells uncontrollably at Ryuku to kill the Kira special investigation squad, which includes his own father.

The acquisition of the death note can be said to represent the birth of kira from the shadow of the victim. However, much of the movie deals with the ramifications of kira's subsequent empowerment and influence over consciousness. This point constitutes perhaps the key dimension of the social and moral commentary in *Death Note*. This theme can be seen as reflecting theories on victim-induced narcissism, in particular the 'popular psychology' writings of Vaknin. Vaknin considers narcissism as the process by which a person creates a 'false self' that they intend to shield them from hurt 'by self-imputing omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence' (n.d.). Vaknin talks specifically about the transformation from victim to abuser, identifying 'professional victims' as 'people whose existence and very identity rests solely on their victimhood' and who can become 'more cruel, vengeful, vitriolic, lacking in compassion and violent than their abusers' (2003, pp. 349, 350). Vaknin goes on (describing, in many ways, the transformation of Light and Kiyomi):

The affected entertain the (false) notion that they can compartmentalize their narcissistic behavior and direct it only at the narcissist ... they trust in their ability to segregate their conduct ... to act with malice where the narcissist is concerned and with Christian charity towards all others ... This, of course, is untrue ... To their horror, these victims discover that they have been transmuted and transformed into their worst nightmare: into a narcissist. (2003, p. 349)

Reflecting this theory, Kiyomi and Misa – self-absorbed media personalities – indeed show narcissist inclinations. Light is a classic cerebral narcissist, which L is quick to pick up on, who sees in Kira a mirror image ('shadow') of himself. Light's narcissism is reinforced by his arrogance, his oft-stated confidence in his intellectual abilities and his desire to assume god-like status. As this narcissism grows, so does the range of his victims, which includes FBI officers, L's assistant, the team of investigators he infiltrates and befriends, his own girlfriend and even his father. In the last, ultimately unsuccessful examples, Light – bloodied and out of control – resembles the depraved young psychopath we see depictions of throughout the movie series. It is a transformation where through his narcissism the victim ultimately becomes not a kira or a *shinigami*, but a 'killer.' This is perhaps most fully captured by the anime ending in appraisal of Light's downfall by L's protégé, Near:

You're just a murderer, Light Yagami. And this notebook is the deadliest weapon of mass murder in the history of mankind. You yielded to the power of the *shinigami* and the notebook and you have confused yourself with a god. In the end, you're nothing more than a crazy serial killer. (2006, episode 37)

The end of the movie features a more sympathetic treatment of Light, adopting elements associated with a classic tragedy. This offers a key for understanding the movie's particular emphases in terms of moral discourse and social commentary. When Light dies, he justifies his actions by referring to the 'powerlessness' of law enforcement and the judiciary, and notes how crime rates plummeted due to his influence. Adopting the subjectivity of the collective victim, Light rants about his legitimacy as a 'god' in bringing justice to the 'worthless scum' who prey on innocents and who, in his eyes, do not deserve to live. After Ryuku writes his name in the death note, Light is embraced by his saddened father and begs him to agree that his intentions were, in fact, noble – that all he wanted was 'real justice' – leading his father to lament his misguided stupidity. It is later decided that the official explanation for Light's death is his murder by Kira. The film ends a year after his death, with Light's mother and sister still mourning the loss of a 'model' son and brother (contrasting with the subdued reaction to L's death). Light's sister says to her father that since Kira

left, crime has increased – but when asked whether she wanted Kira to return, she does not, as he had taken ‘their Light’. Soichiro consoles his daughter by saying that Light fought Kira to the very end.

Soichiro’s comment seems to convey that as long as we identify with our vulnerability to become victims, we are all in a perpetual battle against kira. The seemingly misplaced and belated valorisation of Light in this sense appears to be an attempt to invoke an archetype that straddles the boundaries of the tragic hero and antihero, to blend critical social commentary with an exhortative moral story. The point about Kira taking away their ‘Light’ could be a symbolic reference to the social ramifications of empowering kira at a broader level. However, the moral fall of Light shows at a more personal level that good people with high ideals can be misguided and become consumed by kira. This ‘fight’ with kira, Soichiro appears to imply, is that Light never completely abandoned his originally upstanding ideals (in spite of their corruption almost rendering them beyond recognition). In this sympathetic reading, we are led to re-apportion blame to the persuasive power of the death note – the discursive divinisation of the victim as infallible triggers narcissism, legitimising his right to remotely, and with impunity, formulate ‘judgments’.

### **Justice, Morality and Mortality**

*Death Note* can be seen to show the inherent danger of viewing oneself as the voice, or sole agent, of cosmic or universal justice. As Soichiro points out in his censure of his son, Light, it must be accepted that the law is not perfect because the humans who devise it are not. As we are ultimately not ‘gods’, the foundation of this architecture must be built on our personal struggles with the immutability of our mortality. Unless we reflect on and abate our inner cravings for what we regard as justice, we cannot hope to extract it from vices concomitant with our deeper narcissistic impulses.

*Death Note* makes numerous references to cultism and religious deviance in depictions of Kira’s supporters, some of who demand ‘faith’ in him. Frohlich (2012) feels that this depiction could be seen to encourage participation in apocalyptic cults (see also Thomas, 2012). However, in the movie version, at least, cultism is neither a major theme, nor is it portrayed sympathetically. The portrayal of ‘faith’ in Kira makes sense if we compare the rational proposition

that law is a product of imperfect human society, as put by Soichiro (the detective Near, similarly, implies there is no universal right and wrong), with the idealistic, naïve and empirically unsupported proposition that the architecture of justice is the product of an infallible cosmic principle, as advanced by Light. ‘Faith’ in the case of the latter, can be regarded as a willing or religiously mandated ignorance of the flawed subjectivity that is the actual architect of what are self-serving discourses of retributive justice (the sanctification of media and especially ‘victim’ perspectives). Cult membership is in this sense also about affirming the better place in the dyad of killers that become victims and victims that become willing and protected accomplices to Kira’s retribution.

While the serious issue of cultism and false divinity in public discourse weaves into this meta-theme of victimhood and justice, there are other dimensions of religiosity pertinent to the social commentary of *Death Note*. One that may be understated in popular critiques is *Death Note*’s observation that popular dialogues of justice have particular ramifications for a ‘post-religious’ secular society (religion is meant here in the sense of conventional/world religions). *Death Note* reveals that what Light calls ‘real’ justice is not to be found in law or in death – the latter is just a plaything for the *shinigami* Ryuku. Religiosity matters in public discourses on law, justice and victimisation in society, because widespread reactions to flaws in judicial justice and the injustices of ‘good’ people dying as victims can be de-radicalised when there is a belief in an overarching and infallible mechanism of moral causation that transcends the temporal boundaries of our mortal existence. Living in a post-religious world thus presents an intense conundrum for those who would devoutly believe in the sanctity and supposed infallibility of ‘justice’. Inevitably, as we see in the ideology of Light, when belief in the justice system waivers beyond restitution, there is a perceived need that justice be played out in this world – humans must somehow be the infallible agents of cosmic justice. This would explain the juxtaposition of Ryuku’s statement that there is no ‘heaven or hell’ for the user of the death note, with the presence of judgment-themed cults and Light’s desire to become a new god of *this* world.

It should be noted that Ryuku’s belated revelation to Light before he dies – that the death note user will neither go to heaven nor hell and will experience ‘nothingness’ – has another related, and perhaps more integral, implication for

our reading of *Death Note's* religio-moral messages. Namely, that a causal link between a belief in the potential of an infallible agency of human law and the wavering of religious morality operates in reverse order. If the consequences of all moral behaviour play out without fail in the human world, it can be argued that actions are no longer likely to be precipitated on moral grounds, but ultimately on cynical or rational ones. In such a world – as perhaps pointed out by Shiori in her reference to ‘freedom of choice’ – society will not become more moral, but is essentially fated to be *amoral*. This is perhaps the key point underlying Ryuku’s statement that the user of the death note will enter neither heaven nor hell – a symbolic abrogation of the moral impetuses associated with a belief in the eternal soul. Rather than bringing Light his coveted ‘godly’ immortality, a theme more explicit and fully developed in the manga series, such a severing of the links between moral causation and the notion of the eternal soul is more likely to serve to increase one’s identification with, and bind oneself further to, the mundane shackles of corporeal existence (hence, Ryuku talks about the user of the death note disappearing into ‘nothingness’). Under the new orthodoxy of this moral discourse, moral observance is ultimately fated to cease to be an expression of freedom of will and instead become an instrument of self-preservation. Killers will lose their unjust triumph over victims and ultimately ‘become victims’ – one of the ideals stated explicitly by Light. Yet Light failed to see that in such a world, victims will ultimately be given the prerogative to themselves assume the narcissistic triumph of being ‘kira’. Victim and kira would, in such a society, be essentially undifferentiated, with the lingering fear of persecution for victimising and the promised empowerment of the ennobled victim in this dyad becoming the new primary impetus of (a)moral action.

### **Manga/Anime and Social Commentary/Moral Discourse**

Several themes dominate academic appraisals of the moral discourse/social commentary of manga and anime (and in this case, the manga/anime-inspired film), the most notable being Shinto-informed discourses of environmentalism, the perceived propensity of humanity for self-destruction (often with apocalyptic themes resonating with Japan’s experience of the atom bomb) and the ethical and social repercussions of the movement towards a closer interface between humans and technology. Through *Death Note*, this chapter emphasises

the more pronounced thematic diversity, intellectual depth and methodological creativity and flexibility that can imbue social commentary and moral discourse in manga/anime genres.

Various manga have made unconventional reflections upon, or contributions to, dimensions of contemporary Japanese culture and society, as examined throughout this book (c.f. Zulawnik, Baudinette, Aoyama & Kennett, Promnitz-Hayashi, Tanaka). Focusing on the medium's capacity for critical social commentary and moral discourse, here we have seen that *Death Note* focuses on the critical appraisal of a currently prominent, but not conventional manga theme – the valorisation of victims and media/popular discourse on law enforcement and judicial reform. However, the emphasis is not on crime, the justice system, or problematic judicial reforms in modern Japan, but on its psychological wellspring and religio-moral ramifications. Despite these heterodox confluences in discourse and methodology, its plot is not disjointed and its message is compelling. *Death Note* exemplifies the strengths of the pictorial/cinematic medium to present creative commentary and moral/philosophical reflections that enable different 'discourses' to coalesce around a thematic unity. This is a quality that requires a more open, flexible and multi-disciplinary approach to academic reading and interpretation.

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# EXPLORING YAOI FANS' ONLINE PRACTICES IN AN ONLINE COMMUNITY

SIMON TURNER

## Introduction

In recent years, there has been an increase in research concerning *yaoi* both within Japan (Nagaike, 2003; Suzuki, 1998) and outside of Japan (Levi, McHarry, & Pagliassotti, 2010; McHarry, 2003; McLelland, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2005). Gender and sexuality has represented a major focus of this research, with previous studies emphasising the sexualities and gendered identities of characters and fans. Studies focus upon the liberating aspects of *yaoi*; specifically, how readers feel that the feminised male character represents a 'safe body' for them to explore their own sexualities (Kee, 2008; McHarry, 2003, 2008; McLelland, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c; Suzuki, 1998). These studies draw heavily upon Mulvey's 'female gaze' (1975), Butler's theories of performativity (1990) and Radway's work on female audiences (1991), suggesting that, through *yaoi*, fans construct and explore gendered identities.

This chapter moves away from past scholarship to focus upon interaction with Japanese culture through *yaoi*. Napier (2000, 2007) and Newitz (1994) have claimed that there is no direct link to Japanese culture to be found in forms of Japanese popular culture such as anime and manga. Napier claims that fans of anime and manga focus on the 'difference' of manga and anime, one that is disarticulated from 'Japaneseness'. However, by separating 'difference' from



Japan, Napier risks losing many fans' identification with and understanding of Japanese culture.

Discussions in *yaoi* fan communities do not always focus on identification with characters or sexuality, either the characters' or their own. As Lunsing (2006) has pointed out, a homogenous view of *yaoi* fans and their relation to the text is unsatisfactory. Such homogenising approaches have pathologised *yaoi* fans as females obsessed with 'boys bonking' (McLelland, 2006). This chapter calls for more focus on the ways that fans engage with one another, thus displacing a focus on the interactions between readers and texts and looking at readers' interactions with one another. It is suggested that *yaoi* fans experience Japanese culture through community participation involving discussions amongst fans on website message boards. By paying attention to fans' own perspectives and how they perceive *yaoi* manga as a 'Japanese' text, this chapter brings fans' discussions with one another to the forefront of analysis.

This chapter categorises fans' learning processes about Japan into five stages. As will be outlined below, learning about Japan and Japanese culture does not necessarily equate to learning about a 'static' Japanese identity, but is instead a process through which fans interact with one another.

### **Method of Data Collection**

Participants for the present research were recruited by posting four introductory threads in the Community Café discussion board of the *AarinFantasy* forum, from which seventy-nine individual responses were collected. Of these seventy-nine responses, twenty-five were willing to take part in in-depth semi-structured interviews and the remaining fifty-four agreed to complete a shorter survey posted on the website that was less intrusive and less time consuming. The responses included in this paper are taken from interviews conducted textually online via Skype. All fan names reported in this study are the fans' usernames on *AarinFantasy*<sup>1</sup>.

Information was also collected from publicly accessible threads on the website. However, the fact that online communication is sometimes readily available for the public to access does not necessarily mean that the members of

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1 The author gained permission to use participants' usernames, as well as their communication, for this chapter.

such online communities see their communication as public. James and Busher (2009, p. 86) advocate a position of full disclosure and stress how important it is that participants know when and what data will be stored and disseminated, and how their identities will be protected if they wish them to be. Therefore, all original posters have been contacted for permission to use their comments. Where permission was refused or the poster did not reply, data has not been used. Finally, the researcher also contacted the administrator of the group, explaining their position as a participant researcher and the intentions of research in order to gain approval, as well as to request a short explanatory posting from the administrator to introduce the researcher to users. Gaining access through 'gatekeepers' has been identified as one of the best ways to facilitate ethical access and trusted membership on websites (López-Rocha, 2010, p. 295) and to ensure informed consent.

### **How Do Fans Enter Yaoi Fandom?**

Some fans have an interest in Japanese culture that predates their interest in *yaoi*. For others, there appeared to be no prior interest in Japanese culture and their interest in *yaoi* was the result of an introduction from friends or a family member. Regarding the former group, many fans on *AarinFantasy* connect *yaoi* to Japanese culture. For example, Gloomy Gloo states that she is interested in various facets of Japanese culture:

I've always been interested in Japan... even the architecture... and one day I stumbled upon *yaoi*. (Gloomy Gloo)

For Gloomy Gloo, it was her interest in Japanese culture that led her to do further research and eventually she 'stumbled upon' *yaoi*. Other fans mention that their interest in *yaoi* blossomed from an interest in Japanese art, music and traditional Japanese culture such as geisha, samurai and calligraphy amongst others. On the other hand, some fans have an interest in Japanese culture that is born out of *yaoi*, rather than being a precursor to it. In some cases, this interest is due to a family member:

If I remember well, it was my siblings that introduced me to *yaoi*.  
(Solene)

For others, it was a friend:

I thank my friend for the rough introduction. He always reminds me of the first *yaoi* every time we go out for coffee. (Namsoon)

For these fans, their interest in *yaoi* did not stem from a prior interest in Japanese culture. However, similarly to those who had a previous interest in Japanese culture, they first came across *yaoi* through friends and family.

The friendly/familial introductions to *yaoi* highlight the very social aspect of *yaoi* fandom. This is further developed in this chapter in order to build a more coherent understanding of *yaoi* fans' activities that involves not only fans' relation to their chosen fan text, which has been the focus of previous scholarship, but also their interactions with one another online. This is important, as *yaoi* fans do not always engage with their fandom solitarily which has been the implication of studies focusing on the reasons that individuals are fans of *yaoi*. Such approaches will naturally isolate fans to understand their personal reasons; however, this study moves to understand what fans do with one another. This is important as the existence of sites such as *AarinFantasy* demonstrates that fans do indeed interact with one another and do not exist in isolation.

### **How Do Fans Connect Yaoi to Japan?**

As *yaoi* is increasingly found in different countries, scholarship relating to the genre has also become more widespread. Within these studies, there are few instances of comparison with what is termed 'slash' fiction, a genre of fan fiction, supposedly originating in the USA, that focuses on same-sex relationships between fictional characters. If slash is mentioned, it is often in passing to explain the nature of *yaoi* to a wider audience within fan studies who may not be familiar with *yaoi* but who may be familiar with slash.

Whilst other researchers on Japanese fan cultures, such as Sharon Kinsella (2000) and Mark McLelland (2001), have examined *yaoi* manga and their popularity outside of Japan well, it is interesting that they have not made connections between *yaoi* and slash. Both genres feature homosexual themes and often contain characters appropriated from commercial media texts. The obvious similarities between the two have led some, such as Matt Thorn (1997), to argue that slash and *yaoi* are almost identical. Thorn himself writes on the idea of a global media community and argues that pop culture today creates a

set of shared idioms that go beyond any geographical differences. In respect to girls' manga, he argues that it 'binds girls and young women who will never meet in a media community' (Thorn, 1997).

It would appear that the reason *yaoi* and slash have often found themselves isolated from one another in scholarly literature is because, as Busse and Hellekson (2006) state, Western scholars, lacking in contextual knowledge of Japan or Japanese culture, are wary of misrepresenting *yaoi*. At the same time, those studying *yaoi* fandoms tend to focus on the Japanese context of the genre so as to emphasise the specificity of their study, which – at times – encloses *yaoi* in an orientalist bubble (Busse and Hellekson, 2006).

*Yaoi* manga and its fandom are often described as one of the few ways that Japanese women have been able to criticise and fight back against patriarchal Japanese society. In *Male Homosexuality in Modern Japan* (2000), McLelland describes *yaoi* manga with its 'androgynous' characters who 'combine feminine sensibilities with the freedom to live and act as men' – as the only way for Japanese women to be able to fight back against 'constraining roles imposed by [Japanese] marriage and family system[s]' (McLelland, 2000, pp.78–79). By making this argument, he creates an image of Japanese society that is patriarchal and slightly closed minded in relegating Japanese women to a 'subservient role in life' (McLelland, 2000, pp.78–79) – a common theme in research concerning *yaoi* manga that has been hard to read against. By not mentioning that there is a genre in the West that also deals with male homosexual themes and which has also been widely interpreted as a means of female resistance to Western patriarchy, work such as McLelland's runs dangerously close to reinforcing Orientalist stereotypes of the Japanese woman as 'she-who-must-be-saved' (Yamamoto, cited in Galbraith, 2011).

It may seem obvious that a prior interest in Japanese culture would make a natural link to *yaoi* if fans found the genre whilst searching for Japanese culture. Nonetheless, it has proved interesting to pay further attention to how fans start, and continue, to connect *yaoi* with Japanese culture. Through an analysis of *AarinFantasy* and the fans' responses, it may be suggested that fans connect *yaoi* manga with Japanese culture by definition, content and art style.

Fans often cite their own definitions of the word *yaoi*. For example, some argue that *yaoi* is Japanese because the artists are Japanese:

Most of them [yaoi manga] are by artists who live in Japan who write about ... Japan. (Gloomy Gloo)

Others claim it can only be Japanese because of the very word *yaoi*:

[I]n order to be called yaoi, a story, picture or whatever needs to be influenced from where the word yaoi comes from, aka, Japan. (Solene)

*Yaoi*, as a term, is an acronym that stands for *yama nashi, ochi nashi, imi nashi* [no climax, no end, no meaning] and is generally accredited to Japanese *mangaka* Sakata Yasuko and Hatsu Akiko who created it in the 1980s (Saito, 2007, p. 223). According to Ingulsrud and Allen (2009, p. 47), the term was used as a euphemism for the homosexual romance narratives to distinguish it from what were considered the more complex narratives found in *shōnen* [boys'] manga of the time.

Fans also compare *yaoi* texts from Japan to homoerotic texts produced in different countries by non-Japanese artists. These are often known as Original English Language (OEL) and the fans on *AarinFantasy* are familiar with so-called *yaoi* OEL. In particular, fans mentioned GloBL Manga, a producer of OEL manga explicitly marketed as *yaoi*, owned by the publishing company SuBLime. Fans argue that the publications of GloBL should not be considered *yaoi*, or even manga, but viewed as Western comics that plagiarised *yaoi* manga themes and artistic styles:

These works [OEL manga] are fake yaoi, as in not really yaoi at all. The term yaoi refers to Japanese anime and Japanese manga. Anything with the 'yaoi' description must first be Japanese in origin. (Adjani)

If it has nothing to do with yaoi then why use the title?  
(LadyPhantomHive)

Adjani and LadyPhantomHive suggest that the term *yaoi* itself is somehow Japanese and, therefore, anything described by this term should come from Japan. These comments reflect assertions by other fans on *AarinFantasy* that *yaoi* is Japanese by definition and anything else should be called 'comics' or 'graphic novels'.

Fans also mention that the presentation in terms of reading style and publishing methods of *yaoi* manga is connected to Japanese culture. In the *yaoi* fan community, the drawing style and method of storytelling is considered Japanese. For the fans, a major aspect of this Japanese style is the traditional right to left reading direction of manga. Some fans feel particularly strongly about keeping the original reading direction:

Right to left is more natural for manga. I think left to right is more good [sic] for OEL manga and manwha for example. (CactusMaid)

The thought of flipped art makes me want to die. It should always be right to left. (Sleeplesstown)

Fans have such strong opinions on keeping the original reading direction that attempts to change it can, and have, been an issue for some manga publishers. TokyoPop, a publisher that translates and sells manga from Japan, originally flipped manga so it could be read left to right for its English-speaking customers. However, sales immediately dropped and fans complained until the original right to left reading direction was reinstated. In the series *Blade of the Immortal*, fans did not want flipping because the symbol stitched onto the back of the character's clothing would change from a Buddhist symbol to a Nazi swastika, highlighting that fans are also sensitive to manga content. A senior editor at Tokypop, Forbes, confirmed that many of the fan complaints they received were about content issues in relation to flipping (Fletcher, 2012).

For other fans, *yaoi* is Japanese because of what they can see, with many talking about the cultural content of *yaoi*, such as where the characters live and the localities that surround them:

They might start with a scene where Japan is everywhere such as the signs, or the schools. They're obviously growing up in Japan. (Pweedie)

I think the characters are Japanese because they have Japanese names and their daily customs. (Lokeira1)

By citing these reasons for connecting *yaoi* to Japan – through content (customs, daily life, and names), art style and definitions – fans are establishing their own

definition of Japan. This chapter now turns to consider the reasons why fans come to believe that what they are consuming is Japanese by examining the final three stages.

### How Do Fans Learn about Japanese Culture?

Learning more about *yaoi* and Japan is a recurrent theme that came up in interviews with *AarinFantasy* members. But how the fans come to understand Japan is a complex process. In order to fully explore this issue, this chapter now introduces motivations for learning more about Japanese culture (stage three), how they get their information about it (stage four), and, finally, the evaluation of this information in terms of the perceived accuracy and authenticity concerning Japanese culture (stage five). Simply put, this process boils down to fans asking a question, getting an answer and evaluating that answer. In total, three motivations have been established from the message boards and interviews with fans by analysing and categorising responses. These three categories are to learn more about *yaoi* manga, to check the validity of the things they have read or seen and to learn about Japan and Japanese culture generally.

On *AarinFantasy*, fans often seek to assess the validity of Japanese culture in a series that they have read as manga:

I have seen in some series that vending machines are everywhere in japan [sic] ... is there any validity to this? (Ziv)

I see so many teenagers that are high school students living on their own ... what's all that about? (Mellusia)

They will often come across something that they have seen in a *yaoi* series and then question whether or not this is an accurate depiction of everyday life in Japan. This type of motivation also raises the questions of expertise, of who arbitrates validity in the community and how do they disseminate it amongst the community? These questions will be addressed in stage five.

As fans ask whether or not something seen in *yaoi* represents an authentic 'everyday' occurrence in Japan, many ask why *yaoi* manga employs certain common tropes. Sometimes these are related to the everyday lives of the characters:

Why is there so many yaoi manga with high school settings? Also in high-school yaoi, I often see stuff going on at the roof-top, is this just the mangaka's attempt to advance the characters' interaction, or do they have a lot of rooftops in Japan's high-schools? (Trifoilum)

Trifoilum wonders whether the depictions of high schools found in *yaoi* manga are indeed typical of high schools in Japan. Fans also want to know why *yaoi* regularly uses high school settings, which leads them to ask about Japan as a country and Japanese culture:

I'm here to ask for your input on Yakuza culture whatever else you want to add to it. Anything you could probably find in Wikipedia, I know them as well... unless you have more to add? (Applette)

Applette demonstrates that, as well as wanting to know if something is true, he also wants to know more information about the wider cultural contexts embedded within the *yaoi* manga which he is reading. This demonstrates a motivation to know about Japanese culture on a more general level that is not directly related to any *yaoi* series or story.

These motivations indicate the types of things that fans are looking for in their pursuit of information and demonstrate that fans do have an interest in Japanese culture beyond their primary interest in *yaoi* manga.

### **How Do Fans Get Their Answers?**

In this stage, attention is paid to how fans receive answers to their questions. When a fan on *AarinFantasy* requests new information, they invariably get an answer from other fans and if these other fans cannot provide an answer they will be directed to another source. Rather than focusing on individual answers to individual questions, emphasis will be put on the sources. The sources of information that will be explored in this section are educational sources such as classes, citations of personal experiences and citations of manga and anime as sources of information.

The most common examples of formal educational sources are references to learning Japanese in an educational institution such as high school or university (including from teachers). Fans discuss what they learn in school and university courses:



After taking 2 semesters of Japanese in college, we learned A LOT about how very formal and full of rules Japan is ... I was totally not forced to read 3 academic articles on it this year ;) (Shattered)

By referring to these sources of information, Shattered indicates that formal institutions or scholarly works will give correct information about Japan. This also occurs when fans mention education professionals who teach them. In one case, fans were discussing the historical roots of the Japanese writing system:

If my Japanese course lecturer was not mistaken, hiragana was not any more Japan's 'native script' compared to 'Chinese'. (Mimo)

This example of using an education professional to endorse legitimate knowledge is not uncommon. There are other examples where fans refer to their teachers whilst also indicating that they are fellow fans:

Our teacher ... is also a fan of yaoi ... [she] explained in our classes ... various kinds of *hentai* ... from normal *hentai*'s laws ... to yaoi (KarumA)

KarumA mentions that her teacher is also a fan of *yaoi* who explained the difference between *yaoi* and *hentai* (*hentai* is not strictly a genre but rather an adjective that describes perverse or strange sexual acts; however, it has also found parlance as a descriptor for anime and manga that depict explicit and extreme sexual themes. *Yaoi* are homosexual texts that may, but do not necessarily, include explicit or graphic sex). By creating this sense of connection between information provider and fellow fan, KarumA indicates that fellow fans of the genre are to be trusted (particularly if they are in a position of power, such as teacher).

When fans discuss Japanese culture and want to give their opinion, they sometimes draw upon personal experiences. These typically involve time spent in Japan, or an individual or individuals that they personally know who have been to Japan or are Japanese. Some members of *AarinFantasy* have visited Japan themselves as tourists, exchange students or because their family moved there. Often fans would cite this time spent in Japan to support their opinions. Referring to the aforementioned discussion of Japanese high schools, the fan Ato explained his answer to the original question:

I noticed several 'template A1 school buildings' just on the way from home to Tokyo ... On the other hand, schools that don't fit the template won't be identified as such by me, so I'm fairly sure your average fan will only notice the school architecture of yaoi manga fame, thus reinforcing the 'all schools look the same' idea. (Ato)

This is interesting because this fan's explanation is that because he is not very knowledgeable about Japanese schools, the only buildings he will identify as such will be those that look similar to the ones he sees in *yaoi*. This suggests that fans' perceptions of Japan are strongly based on what they have seen in *yaoi* manga. Ato acknowledges his own narrow understanding of an aspect of Japanese culture, revealing an understanding that this aspect of culture cannot be simply reduced to what he has seen in *yaoi*.

A second common fan experience is related to knowing or having contact with Japanese people:

If you want to understand Japanese culture, you have to speak with someone who knows Japanese culture from experience or is part of it. (Jiyutenshi)

Knowing a Japanese person gives a sense of authority to a fan's posts. In one example, a fan had asked about Japanese houses; in particular he wondered if it was true that the houses could get very cold because of a lack of central heating. The reply to this was:

Speaking generally, yes. During the summer they don't tend to stay very cool either, I spent a few weeks with my uncle in Tokyo ... and in the summer it becomes ungodly hot. My aunt is Japanese, and believes in many of the Japanese housewife superstitions such as: Air-conditioning is bad for you. She would leave the air conditioning off all day in more than 100 degree heat and only turn it on when my uncle or I got home. (Mit7059)

In his answer, Mit7059 includes information about Japan's weather and one of the 'many ... Japanese housewife superstitions'. By doing so, he provides cultural information about Japan to support his answer. By using his knowledge

of Japanese people and his time in Japan, Mit7059 appears to have legitimised his knowledge of Japan.

The final information source commonly utilised by fans on *AarinFantasy* to explain Japanese culture is *yaoi* manga itself. Fans typically guide other fans to a particular *yaoi* series to find further information. For example, one fan was looking for manga that included themes of traditional Japanese festivals:

Hey there. I'm looking for anything that includes traditional Japanese festivals or holidays. An example of what I'm looking for would be something like *watanagashi* [cotton drifting festival] from *Higurashi no Naku Koro ni* [Higurashi when they cry]. (Farro)

In response, a fan suggested that they look to a specific type of *yaoi* manga that may be found on the site:

I'd say you should just look into some Slice of Life series that take place in japan [sic] and interest you somewhat as it's almost inevitable for them to feature some Japanese holiday and/or festive [sic] sooner or later. (Konakaga)

Konakaga refers to what fans call 'slice-of-life' manga, which focuses heavily on everyday experiences rather than supernatural or magical themes. 'Slice-of-life' *yaoi* manga is suggested to be an adequate source of information on Japanese culture that fans may use for their own pursuit of information or use to inform others.

These three sources of information fans offer in response to questions from fellow fans include: educational sources, including teachers and course content from institutions such as high school and university; experiential sources, either personal first-hand experiences of Japan or second-hand experiences from Japanese friends and relatives; and, finally, *yaoi* manga as a source of information in itself. Interestingly, it appears that fans do not accept the information they receive at face value, but will assess the efficacy of what they are told in response to their questions.

### **How Do Fans Judge the Accuracy of the Information?**

Whilst all fans may be readers of *yaoi*, not all have access to knowledge about Japanese culture. Some fans have never been to Japan, had contact with

Japanese people or learnt about Japan in school or university or schools, and so their judgements are sometimes based on the information provided to them by others.

When receiving information from other fans in the discussions boards and posts, fans have to make a judgement on whether or not they trust that other user, with judgement often being based on the amount of time that a member has been registered to the site:

I respect and trust their opinion according to... the amount of time they have spent being a member of the site. (Alex Dekibo)

Alex Dekibo trusts information offered by a member who has spent a considerable amount of time in the community. This transcends positions on the site, implying that a long-standing general member's information is of higher value than that of an administrator or moderator who has invested less time on the site. This raises the question: how long must one be a member of the site in order to be considered trustworthy?

On *AarinFantasy*, the Aarin Buddy System pairs up an inexperienced/newer member with an established/older member. The members are known by the Japanese terms *senpai* and *kōhai*, with *senpai* referring to the older member and *kōhai* referring to the newer member. In order to be considered a *senpai*, a user must have been registered with the site for at least six months and have made at least 200 posts on the boards. Two fans involved in my study are in one such *senpai-kōhai* relationship: Gloomy Gloo and Jaiden. Jaiden is the *kōhai* and Gloomy Gloo the *senpai*. Coincidentally, Gloomy Gloo was the creator and instigator of the Aarin Buddy System. Speaking about their relationship, Gloomy Gloo states:

[I] have no trouble taking care of new members and questions they have about thing [sic]. I'm just one of the members that ... others turn to when they have questions. (Gloomy Gloo)

Jaiden mentions:

I can ask Gloomy [Gloo] about anything I don't understand ... I really learnt a lot from her and I trust her completely. (Jaiden)

The existence of this buddy system leads to an interesting phenomenon whereby fans may trust other fans regardless of potential inaccuracies in the information that they may provide. This suggests a system of hierarchy where the *senpai* controls access to understanding; long-standing members act as 'gatekeepers' to knowledge and can potentially influence the group's understanding of Japan and Japanese culture in various ways. However, one fan has told me:

There are different levels of authority of course, I mean the admins can end threads or ban members but you never see them doing those things. They're really friendly and we can talk to them. (Diepenhorst)

Fans are adamant that there is no hierarchy, but they do favour their friends' interpretations of Japanese culture, highlighting the importance of community for the members of the site. The focus on community over potential accuracy is further reflected in fans' discussions of 'bad fandom'. One example of 'bad fandom' may be seen in the case of the weeabo fan. In a more general context, a weeabo is commonly considered to be someone who is overly obsessed with Japanese culture (Neal, 2007); in the context of *AarinFantasy*, some members use the term 'weeabo' to refer to:

Fangirls that bring other yaoi fans down with their ... refusal to compromise. (Diepenhorst)

What is interesting in this particular description of weebos is that they are thought to be difficult to get along with. By emphasising socialisation and openness to interpretations, fans suggest that notions of accuracy concerning Japaneseness or *yaoi* are arrived at through a process of collaboration; therefore, a fan's interpretation of Japan is a product of interaction.

When judging the accuracy or authenticity of *yaoi* manga, judgements are often made on the basis of whether or not a text is a translation produced by fans, commercial publishers or distributors. Adaptation is the process by which cultural industries alter a text so that it can be consumed more readily abroad. The extent to which *yaoi* is adapted to specific audiences contributes to how fans perceive it as an accurate source. Fans mention that they prefer texts that are as close to the Japanese original as possible:

Sometimes I have the urge to kill the publishers when the manga is wrongly translated. (Jiyutenshi)

Jiyutenshi explains that he does not mind reading manga in its translated form. However, he sees the adaptation process as damaging, citing issues of inaccurate translations. Fans also describe adaptation in terms of loss:

Often bad translation loses the cultural meanings of most of the jokes ... Japanese have a very unique way of expressing themselves. (Jaiden)

A common theme is that fans describe an inaccurate translation in terms of a loss of originality, which could result in a 'weird' text. This raises the issue of authenticity and who controls what is deemed authentic in the community. Many fans believe that manga translated by other fans is more accurate. Cindy Wu demonstrates this attitude towards fan translations of manga and anime:

It's so much easier to get a better feeling of the original from fan stuff. (Cindy Wu)

She also explains how fans reject licensed works in favour of scanlations (a scanlation is a medium of manga which involves a hardcopy of original Japanese manga being scanned and translated). Jess S shares this trust in fan versions of original manga and explains in more technical detail the merits of scanlation:

I think they make the story flow better. The licensed manga usually have this 'strictly translated' language that sounds so... overblown, while the scanlation is from fans for fans with simple words. (Jess S)

Jess S believes that the stories are 'overblown' whereas scanlation is more 'simple' and is 'from fans for fans', thus highlighting the importance of community. She prefers scanlations because individual fans like her create them.

When fans look towards *yaoi* manga for authenticity or accuracy, they have a choice in the type of manga they read, either fan-produced or officially licensed versions. Fans often opt for fan translations, rather than commercial translations, because they believe they more authentically capture the nuances of Japanese culture. On the other hand, some fans express a sense of caution regarding how much Japanese culture they can understand through reading manga. Not all participants have had contact with Japan or Japanese people,

so for many, their contact with Japanese culture comes from their *yaoi* reading activities or interactions with other users who have had such experiences. Sometimes, fans discussed this process of learning objectively. For example, Milwaen explained the benefits and limitations of *yaoi* in terms of learning about Japanese politeness:

While *yaoi* doesn't exactly explain all, it does offer the most important thing of all about Japanese culture, which is the way in which people act every day. All manga features some things ... which make it wackier than real life. If you can take the craziest stuff with a grain of salt you can learn a lot. For instance, reading *yaoi* gives you a general idea of just how polite Japanese people can really be. (Milwaen)

Milwaen demonstrates that she is apprehensive in claiming a complex understanding of Japanese culture, but she does believe some aspects are likely to be true, such as Japanese daily customs. During an interview Milwaen discussed whether or not the information on Japan and the interpretations of Japaneseness she finds online are authentic:

I think everybody decides it though his/her own 'filters'. I mean, for example, let's take our little *yaoi* manga community. We accept authentic what we judge that belongs to our vision ... it'd be 'my Japanese culture'. (Milwaen)

Milwaen touches upon two important areas. Firstly, she mentions that sharing information about Japan forms part of the community's activities. For example, they 'often use manga Japanese in conversations in English, [that's] the identity of our own community'. Milwaen further explains that the users of *AarinFantasy* 'interpret and acquire everything through [their] own lenses made of [their] own basic community' and that any understanding of authenticity she reached would be subjective, it would regard '[her] Japanese culture'.

She does not associate this Japanese culture with that of a 'real Japanese person' and is not sure what a Japanese person would think. However, this is not of crucial importance as it is '[her] Japanese culture' and it does not need to be compared to that of Japan for validation. It is something that she

has interpreted for the community's benefit, as have other fans. This is an understanding shared by Alex Dekibo:

I usually go into suspended disbelief mode because it's probably not all true but that shouldn't be bad because it's fun for us, you know? (Alex Dekibo)

Therefore, it may be better to consider fans' experiences and understandings of 'Japaneseness' as not necessarily 'authentic' in the strictest sense of the word. However, authenticity is not crucial to the *yaoi* fan community. This is expressed clearly in this comment from Sapir Be:

I am aware of all the inaccuracies and idealizations that yaoi manga has, but it is perhaps the idealizations that allow me to like yaoi and the community to begin with. (Sapir Be, 22, student)

For fans, the community is more important than the accuracy of representations of Japan, and fans remain engaged with *yaoi* manga and the community despite inaccuracies. Trusting other fans and maintaining objectivity relates to the fan's relationship with both the *yaoi* manga and with the wider community of fans. There are potentially limitless fan interpretations of Japanese culture, with each new fan bringing their own interpretation of what they have read. But part of the process of being a fan is negotiating these interpretations with others and in this process fans show a preference for community over accuracy.

## Conclusion

*Yaoi* is a cultural text that contains images and information about Japan. It provides characters, plots and other pieces of information that can be read by *yaoi* fans and constructed into 'image-centred ... accounts of strips of reality' (Appadurai, 1996, p. 35).

As mentioned, Napier (2007) and Newitz (1994) argue that there is not a link between an interest in manga and an interest in Japanese culture, but fans on *AarinFantasy* do establish such a link. There is a process through which fans learn about Japan: fans first enter the community through a prior interest in Japanese culture or through friends and family. If they have not



already done so, they then make a link between *yaoi* and Japanese culture and they show an interest in Japan and a desire to learn about it. Fans express the things they are interested in learning about and other fans answer, drawing upon anecdotal or experience-based knowledge or directing queries to textual evidence in *yaoi* manga. Finally, in this process of learning about Japan, fans judge the accuracy of the information offered. The potential for inaccuracy in some of this information does not deter fans from seeking opinions from their community, as the community may be more important than accuracy for the *yaoi* fans under investigation in this chapter.

By examining the aspects of *yaoi* that fans like and what fans see when they read *yaoi* in terms of Japan and Japanese culture, it becomes necessary to explore the wider issue of what fans do when they are online in their community. The link between *yaoi* manga and fan practices remains largely under-studied and the question of what fans of Japanese popular culture do has become an important one. It's a question that foregrounds this chapter's consideration of *yaoi* fans' online activities, in particular their processes of understanding Japan and Japanese culture. As part of the wider literature, further studies are needed that focus on fresh opportunities to examine fan group activities and interactions in connection with Japan and Japanese culture.

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# AN EVALUATION OF PHYSICALITY IN THE *BARA* MANGA OF *BÁDI* MAGAZINE

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## Introduction

A wealth of studies have examined the discourses of masculinity and sexuality appearing in homoerotic manga marketed towards girls and women, which is known as *yaoi* or Boys' Love (BL) (see Levi, McHarry, & Pagliassotti, 2010) (see also chapter five). Yet little attention has been paid to the genre of *bara*, which is marketed towards homosexual men, and there appears to be very little consensus amongst scholars about how gay subjectivity is constructed within *bara* manga. Indeed, whether or not *bara* is dominated by depictions of 'hard' masculinity is debated (Suganuma, 2012). This is despite the fact that various literary, sociological and anthropological studies of Japanese gay experience have highlighted the important role of *bara* manga, and various other gay media, as 'gateways' to knowledge concerning male homosexuality in Japan (Lunsing, 2001; Mackintosh, 2010; McLelland, 2000). What little scholarship exists has tended to be de-contextualised and presents a homogenised image of the stylistic devices utilised within *bara*, particularly in regard to depictions of the male body (Ruh, 2014).

Loosely defined, *bara* [rose] refers to a genre of manga that depicts male homosexuality and is produced for and by Japanese gay men (Butcher, 2007). Butcher highlights the fact that *bara* may also be viewed as an art form and an

article in the Australian gay magazine *DNA* also demonstrates that creators of *bara* are often prolific producers of erotic portraiture, illustration and even photography (Brennan, 2010).

Mackintosh (2006) suggests that the term *bara* became widely circulated in the gay press of the 1960s as a result of *Bara Kei* [Ordeal by Roses], an anthology of semi-nude homoerotic photographs taken by Eikō Hosoe of the author Mishima Yukio. This usage was further reinforced by the publication of *Barazoku* [The Rose Tribe], Japan's first mainstream gay magazine, in the early 1970s (Mackintosh, 2006).

Previous research has suggested that hyper-masculine understandings of homosexuality and homoerotic desires are promoted within *bara* manga (Tagame, 2009). Lunsing (2006) has argued that these hyper-masculine discourses have developed in *bara* as a reaction against the supposedly 'androgynous' and 'unrealistic' depictions of homosexual men appearing within many *yaoi*/BL manga. Many *bara* manga artists attempt to deliberately distance themselves from these images and depict 'realistic' homosexual men, argues Lunsing. Although it appears true that *yaoi*/BL typically contains somewhat androgynous representations of gay men (Matsui, 1993; Wilson & Toku, 2003), Lunsing's argument fails to take into account the full history of the genre known today as *bara*, which is quite distinct from that of *yaoi*/BL, as discussed below. Furthermore, Lunsing, like researchers before him, has unassumingly accepted the idea that *bara* is a homogenous art form and that all *bara* promote the same images of masculinity and gay subjectivity. Indeed, a recent article by Ruh (2014) has highlighted the need for researchers to challenge this position, especially as *bara* manga is now becoming available in formal English translation.

This chapter presents a more nuanced analysis of the discourses of masculinity and homosexuality appearing within *bara*. Through qualitative and quantitative examination of how stereotypical gay subjectivities are discursively constructed within the *bara* manga published in *Bádi* magazine, this chapter suggests that depictions of the male body, in conjunction with gendered language, are stylistically deployed as semiotic resources in the production of gay subjectivities. The chapter also challenges the belief that *bara* is a homogenous genre built around representations of hyper-masculine bodies by suggesting that the *bara* found in *Bádi* may be grouped into 'thematic clusters'.

Drawing upon Nakamura's (2007a, 2007b) engagement with discursive theory, which highlights language as a resource utilised by individuals to index or 'construct' gender, this study will also reference work by Cregan (2012, pp. 135–138) in order to theorise the body as a resource for 'constructing' gender. Firstly, however, it is necessary to examine the history of *bara* and review the literature examining how homoeroticism and masculinity have been represented within it.

### **Bara Manga**

Watanabe and Jun'ichi (1989) suggest that Japan has long had a tradition of homoerotic art, typified by *danshoku shunga*, erotic artwork depicting the pederastic relationships between older men and younger boys in Buddhist monasteries. They highlight the fact that the rose was utilised as a motif within various homoerotic works of this period, and have subsequently argued that scholars should consider these artworks as representing the beginning of *bara* as an artistic genre.

However, the popular *bara* artist Tagame Gengoroh (2009) suggests in his survey of the history of homoerotic art published within Japan that, although it is certainly true that roses were drawn upon stylistically within *danshoku shunga*, there is no evidence to suggest that these artworks were known contemporaneously as *bara* or that the image of the rose was utilised to represent homosexuality as opposed to merely being an aesthetic component of the work. Tagame suggests that it was Mishima Yukio's knowledge of this aesthetic practice that led him to also utilise roses within the photographic anthology *Bara Kei*, mentioned above, and that *bara* became subsequently linked to discourses of male homosexuality due to his use of them. Furthermore, Tagame (2009) argues that *danshoku shunga* should not be viewed as part of the genre of *bara*, as these artworks depict culturally defined traditions of sexuality as opposed to the more personal, innate and, what he terms, 'legitimate' sexuality of the so-called 'modern' homoerotic *bara*.

Contrary to Watanabe and Jun'ichi (1989), McLelland (2005) argues that although *bara* may draw upon imagery found within traditional Japanese homoerotic art, it is perhaps more accurate to view the development of *bara* as part of a recent artistic tradition referred to by Tagame (2009) as 'modern

homoeroticism'. McLelland (2005), through an analysis of post-war gay media, has suggested that the genesis of *bara* is situated in the so-called 'perverse press' [*hentai zasshi*] of the 1950s and 1960s. Certain pseudo-academic journals of sexology, such as the fetish magazine *Fūzoku Kitan* [Strange Talk About Sex Customs], which was in print from 1960 to 1974, contained much homoerotic content, including comics of men engaged in sexual acts, eroticised illustrations and photographs of the naked male body (McLelland, 2005).

The popularity of these pseudo-academic magazines, as well as the art published within, led the publisher Itō Bungaku to begin publishing *Barazoku* in 1971 (Mackintosh, 2006). It was in *Barazoku* that the illustrations found in magazines, the so-called 'modern homoeroticism', began to more closely resemble the *bara* of today. Interestingly, as *bara* was beginning to develop within *Barazoku* and other gay magazines produced in the 1970s and 1980s, the genre of *yaoi*/BL began to develop separately in *shōjo* manga (aimed at a teenage female readership), through the influential homoerotic work of the *Hana no 24-nengumi* [The Year 24 Group], a collection of female artists experimenting with themes of love between boys (Shamoon, 2007; Toku, 2007). It is important to note that the emphasis on eroticism and sex present in *bara* most likely derives from its development in gay magazines, which, as both McLelland (2000) and Mackintosh (2010) have highlighted, often serve as masturbatory aids. *Yaoi*/BL developed separately within *shōjo* manga magazines and the emphasis is less on eroticism than on presenting a safe forum within which young women could explore their sexualities in a more emotional way (McLelland, 2000) (see also chapter five).

During the 'gay boom' of the 1990s and 2000s (Lunsing, 2001), *bara* manga became less confined to the established gay magazines (of which *Bādi* is one example). Indeed, with the advent of self-publication [*dōjinshi*] and Internet publishing, and the development of gay-friendly publishers such as Pot Publishing and Terra Publications, *bara* manga are increasingly available via other means. This diversification in publication venues for *bara* has also led to the diversification of representations of gay subjectivity, as the genre becomes increasingly influenced by autobiographical and personal reflection (see Butcher, 2007). Furthermore, there has been an increased foreign interest in *bara*, with exhibitions of *bara* in Sydney (Brennan, 2010), New York (Kidd, 2013) and Paris (Musée de l'Érotisme, 2014). This foreign interest may have an

impact on how *bara* is composed and what images of masculinity are to appear within, as in the case of recent work by Tagame Gengoroh (Kidd, 2013).

As *bara* diversifies, there is an increasing need to re-engage with previous research, as most studies have analysed *bara* manga produced from the 1950s to 1970s. This literature shall be reviewed below, with particular attention to discussions of physicality in the construction of discourses of hyper-masculinity.

### **Masculinity as Depicted in *Bara***

One of the first studies to examine gay subjectivity in *bara* was McLelland's (2000) survey of the discrepancy between the lived experiences of Japanese gay men and the representations of homosexuality in various media. Comparing what McLelland refers to as 'gay manga' in the magazines *G-Men* and *Sabu* to '*yaoi*', he describes gay manga as 'relentlessly sexual, taking less time to establish character and mood before getting to the sex scenes [than in *yaoi*]. The sex is also of the hard variety ... [and features] short-haired, well-built, hairy men with a strong emphasis on bondage ...' (2000, p. 135). Although a minority of McLelland's participants did engage in bondage, he argues that these images do not necessarily reflect the lives of the majority of his informants, most of whom were interested in developing loving relationships as opposed to engaging in quick, 'hard' sex.

McLelland suggests that gay manga typically promotes discourses of homosexuality that draw heavily upon sado-masochism (SM) through the depiction of a certain type of physicality. He demonstrates that men are constructed as hyper-muscular, with the frames in most manga dominated by images of the torso, the buttocks or the (disproportionally large) penis. Mackintosh (2010), whose work is reviewed below, terms this type of physicality 'hard' masculinity. Usage of images of bondage and abuse in gay manga suggests to McLelland an attempt to move away from the beautiful and clean imagery of the so-called androgynous romance depicted in *yaoi*/BL (2000, p. 136). Instead, gay manga focuses on raw masculine energy, which leads to the construction of hyper-masculine discourses similar to, for example, the gay leather subculture of 1970s/1980s New York (see Levine, 1998).

McLelland's work represents an important first step in the analysis of gay manga and it is highly likely the manga discussed in his study are indeed *bara* manga. McLelland demonstrates conclusively that physicality is deployed



by *bara* manga artists as a semiotic resource in order to say something about gay subjectivity, namely that is a messy and virile affair. However, the *bara* that McLelland analyses is predominantly drawn from gay magazines such as *G-Men* and *Sabu*, which explicitly focus upon SM-themes and so-called 'hard masculinity' and thus it would appear problematic to extend McLelland's findings to a discussion of all *bara* manga, as some scholars have attempted in subsequent work (see Lunsing, 2006). Indeed, in later scholarship, McLelland (2005) highlights the fact that more nuanced images of gay subjectivity do appear within *Barazoku's* manga.

In his analysis of discourses of 'manliness' in 1970s Japanese gay magazines, Mackintosh (2010) explicitly engages with these more nuanced images of homosexuality in order to argue that *bara* manga (as well as other content) was utilised to promote 'normative' gay subjectivity. Mackintosh provides an alternative reading of the physicality depicted within *bara* manga to suggest that instead of promoting a hyper-masculine discourse of gay subjectivity, *bara* artists use depictions of highly muscular, hairy bodies to counteract the mainstream belief that all gay men are somehow effeminate and participate in transvestite practices (see McLelland, 2000). Thus, for Mackintosh (2010), physicality is a semiotic resource to challenge and subvert normative assumptions about what it means to be a gay man in Japan.

Suganuma (2012) has also discussed how so-called hyper-masculinity is utilised within *bara* manga to challenge normative assumptions about Japanese gay masculinity. Focusing upon *bara* manga and homoerotic art published within *Barazoku*, Suganuma explicitly analyses manga depicting Japanese gay men in 'intercultural contact-moments' with American gay men. In these *bara*, it is the American men who are depicted physically as hyper-masculine, with Japanese men portrayed as smaller, lither and comparatively more androgynous, with longer hair and stylistics reminiscent of *yaoi*/BL characters. Suganuma argues that the depiction of American men as hyper-masculine represents their perceived obsession with sex, which is a negative stereotype of American gay men found within some Japanese gay media (see Mackintosh, 2010). The American men, depicted as deformed in their overly muscular bodies, are presented as subjects of ridicule: their hyper-masculine identities are not shown as desirable, but are instead utilised to promote the legitimacy of Japanese gay subjectivity (Suganuma, 2012). Suganuma argues that *bara* is a resource that

Japanese gay men turn to in order to affirm their subjectivities and that it provides them with a Japanese discourse (as opposed to an American queer-rights based discourse). This Japanese gay subjectivity appears to Suganuma (2012) to be more moderate.

It is evident that physicality is utilised to strategically promote various discourses of gay subjectivity within *bara* manga. However, problematically, all of the studies reviewed above argue that *bara* manga is predominantly focused upon hyper-masculine discourse, although Suganuma (2012) does in fact argue that this hyper-masculinity is not always presented as representative of Japanese gay subjectivity. This chapter extends this discussion of physicality to include depictions of not only hyper-masculine men, but other stereotypical gay subjectivities as well. Through a contextualised analysis of physicality, in conjunction with an examination of gendered language, a more nuanced understanding of the construction of gay subjectivities in *bara* manga can be reached.

### **Constructing Masculinity**

Nakamura (2007a) presents a theoretical understanding of the social construction of gender within Japanese society through a discursive analysis of stylistic representations of femininity within various media. This owes much to Butler's pioneering work on performativity, where gender is viewed as 'the repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts ... to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being' (1990, p. 45). Nakamura (2007b) presents a renewed critical theory of Japanese approaches to gender, which draws upon the discursive theories of social constructionism. Nakamura affirms that gender is not an essential category, but is in fact constructed through the repetition and affirmation of various socially salient practices, which are circulated and popularised through stereotypical imagery (see Butler, 1990). This chapter draws upon Nakamura's work in order to understand how various linguistic features of Japanese, commonly perceived as inherently masculine, such as certain referent pronouns and sentence final particles (SFPs), are utilised in conjunction with depictions of the male body.

Nakamura (2007b) has herself utilised this theoretical approach to analyse how a heteronormative masculine subjectivity is projected within the language of *Slam Dunk*, a popular sports manga published during the early 1990s.

Nakamura demonstrates that two distinct patterns of personal pronoun and SFP use exist within *Slam Dunk*, one utilising ‘predominantly masculine’ linguistic features in homosocial speech, while the other presents men who utilise ‘predominantly feminine’ personal pronouns mixed with ‘gender neutral and somewhat masculine’ SFPs when in discussion with girls they have a crush on (2007b, pp. 119–120). Nakamura suggests that, on the one hand, the supposed ‘feminisation’ of the males’ speech in fact serves to index their heterosexual desires, whereas, on the other hand, the ‘predominantly masculine’ speech in homosocial situations can be viewed as limiting the ‘threat’ of their homosocial bonding being perceived as somehow homoerotic (2007b, pp. 121–122).

Throughout her scholarship, Nakamura cautions researchers to avoid reifying gender into a dislocated and decentralised process constructed solely through linguistic practices and she draws upon Butler’s (1990) work to address the relationships between embodied and linguistic gender practices. Following Nakamura (2007b), Mackintosh (2010) and Cregan (2012, pp. 135–138), this chapter endeavours to map gendered language onto the physical body, for although gender is understood to be a socially constructed category, there are many aspects which are still perceived to be biological by the majority of individuals. The body is a prime example of one such area that is considered gendered, especially in relation to sexual desirability. Thus, physicality and depictions of the male body may be important semiotic resources in the construction of gay subjectivity in *bara* manga, as demonstrated in the previous research. The overall aim of this chapter, then, is to understand how physicality, in conjunction with gendered language, constructs both hyper-masculine and other discourses of masculinity within the *bara* manga found in *Bádi*.

## The Data

*Bádi*, from which the data for the present study is drawn, is the most popular gay magazine in Japan, with a monthly nationwide circulation of approximately 80,000 copies (Abe, 2011). *Bádi* targets a diverse audience of gay men, including young and older men, students and professionals, niche markets such as SM and bondage enthusiasts, and transgendered and transvestite gay males (Abe, 2011). Within its pages, *Bádi* contains erotic fiction, HIV/AIDS information, news articles, reviews of pornographic films, photography of nude men (known

as gravure imagery), numerous advertisements for clothing, beauty services and brothels, and, of course, manga – all of which are explicitly labelled as *bara*. Indeed, *bara* amounts to roughly 20 to 30 per cent of an average issue's content. As it contains diverse content and targets a plurality of gay subjectivities, *Bādi* may itself be typified as diverse.

It is due, in part, to this diversity that *bara* manga featured within *Bādi* were selected for analysis, as this study focuses upon the construction of diverse gay subjectivities. Furthermore, very few scholars have previously examined *Bādi* and its contents (see Abe, 2011) and it appears that no study to date has explicitly examined the *bara* manga appearing within *Bādi* magazine.

Within this study, 24 issues of *Bādi* magazine published from 2010 to 2011 were selected for quantitative analysis. The page space afforded to the contents of the magazine in each issue was tallied so as to understand the importance and frequency of *bara* manga within the overall structure of the magazine. Following this, a critical reading of every *bara* manga episode in each issue was undertaken in order to understand their common themes and stylistic elements. This critical reading resulted in the formulation of three 'clusters' of *bara* to categorise the three different overarching narrative structures, themes and artistic styles identified. Each of these thematic clusters present highly distinct constructions of gay subjectivity and, thus, demonstrate that *bara* contain diverse representations of gay subjectivity, which are explored below.

## Findings

### Thematic Clusters

Through close reading of the *bara* in *Bādi* magazine, it became apparent that traditional descriptions of *bara* as hyper-masculine did not necessarily fit all the depictions of gay subjectivity. Indeed, exploratory analysis demonstrated that hyper-masculine characters represented only a fraction, although a significant one, of the characters appearing within these manga. Three major themes, and related stylistic elements, emerged, each containing common plot devices, narrative themes, character tropes, artistic styles and instances of gendered language. These clusters – slice-of-life, humorous and erotic – are detailed below.

The thematic cluster slice-of-life [*nichijō seikatsu*] is a popular genre of manga and anime dealing with mundane, everyday events and circumstances, often within institutional settings such as the workplace or school. Although the term ‘slice-of-life’ is not utilised within *Bádi* itself, it appears to be an appropriate title for the *bara* manga grouped within this cluster, as they portray the mundane, ‘normal’ lives of Japanese gay men, with the presentation of normality being a traditional plot device found within other slice-of-life manga. Furthermore, as Rivera Rusca (see chapter three) has indicated, slice-of-life manga is becoming increasingly visible within Japanese manga magazines, and *Bádi* is no different. The narrative themes of *bara* manga belonging to the slice-of-life cluster typically revolve around a character’s (usually the protagonist’s) blossoming homosexual desires and their resulting romantic entanglements, as well as how Japanese gay men negotiate heteronormative Japanese society.

Slice-of-life *bara* manga differ substantially from the stereotypically hyper-masculine *bara* analysed in previous scholarship, as there is less of an emphasis on eroticism and intercourse and more of a focus on character development and romance, suggesting potential commonalities between this cluster and *yaoi*/BL manga. However, the depictions of the male body within slice-of-life *bara* do not draw upon the androgynous tropes of *shōjo* manga and instead utilise a somewhat more masculine physicality to construct gay subjectivity. Indeed, characters within slice-of-life *bara* are typically depicted with short, almost military style, hair, broad shoulders, muscular torsos and rounded, somewhat plump faces with stubby noses. These stylistic tropes are referred to in Japanese as *gachimuchi* [muscular-chubby] and are indicative of a gay masculinity distinct to that of the hard masculinity found within hyper-masculine presentations of the male body, and the androgynous depictions of masculinity found in *shōjo* (see Baudinette, 2011; Sukanuma, 2012). Representative examples of these tropes can be found in the works of one of the authors in the corpus, Nohara Kuro (2011). The dialogue in slice-of-life *bara* promotes a ‘normative’ gay subjectivity, as characters draw upon lexical items indexing a diverse range of masculinities, such as the mildly masculine *boku*, the strongly masculine *ore*, and the gender-neutral *watashi*, all of which mean ‘I’ or ‘me’. Interestingly, the SFPs found within the majority of these *bara* manga are also only mildly masculine, with strongly masculine emphatic SFPs such as *zo* and *ze* being utilised less frequently than their mildly masculine counterpart *yo*.

The second thematic cluster, humorous [*yūmoa*] *bara*, contains similar plot devices to those found within slice-of-life, as humorous *bara* also generally depict the day-to-day lives of Japanese gay men. Humorous *bara* differ in two important ways. Firstly, there is less emphasis on character development and romantic themes and more emphasis on parodying stereotypical tropes of gay subjectivity drawn from the broader Japanese gay subculture. For this reason, humorous *bara* generally include a more diverse cast of characters than the *gachimuchi* characters typically found within slice-of-life. Thus, stereotypically hyper-masculine men, foreigners and effeminate, often transvestite, Japanese gay men, known as *okama*, can be found within humorous *bara*. Secondly, humorous *bara* differ stylistically and structurally to slice-of-life as they utilise an artistic style in which characters are presented with grossly oversized heads, small bodies and exaggerated facial features. This artistic style is colloquially referred to as ‘super-deformed’ style, and representative examples from the corpus may be found in *Niji'iro sanraizu* [Rainbow Surprise] (Maeda, 2011). Humorous *bara* are usually in *yonkoma* format, traditionally used for humorous/parodic manga, wherein each narrative arc is presented as a collection of four panels, typically as a vertical comic strip. Each page of humorous *bara* will typically include two ‘collections’ of *yonkoma* panels.

Humorous *bara* is typified by the portrayal of a diverse range of gay subjectivities, perhaps due to the fact that including as many stereotypical gay characters as possible allows for greater flexibility in the portrayal of humorous circumstances, with the super-deformed artistic style indexing the parody of these stereotypical gay subjectivities. Of particular interest is the image of the transvestite *okama*, only found within humorous *bara*. As sympathetic representations of *okama* appear in other sections of the magazine, it appears the parody of *okama* in humorous *bara* is intended to be affectionate and tongue-in-cheek. This is further supported by the fact that gay men identifying as *okama* are prominent members of the editorial board of *Bādi* magazine. More research into the presentation of *okama* in *Bādi* appears necessary.

Humorous *bara* succeed in presenting a diversity of gay subjectivities. Interestingly, due to the super-deformed nature of the artistic style utilised within humorous *bara*, the majority of the physical tropes deployed in the construction of gay subjectivities relate to the presentation of the face and hair. *Gachimuchi* gay men are presented with short hair, large eyes and with the

stubby nose characteristic of this style of character, *okama* are presented with long hair, large eyelashes and large pouting lips, whereas hyper-masculine characters are typically depicted with larger bodies than other characters, bald or with incredibly short hairstyles and with smaller, more angular and less rounded heads. Clothing is also utilised in the depiction of *gachimuchi* and *okama* characters, with *gachimuchi* characters typically wearing shorts and *okama* dressed either flamboyantly (for example, with large collared shirts and jewellery) or in women's clothing. Linguistically, the *gachimuchi* characters utilise similar gendered language to that found in slice-of-life *bara*, whereas *okama* utilise SFPs, such as *wa yo* and *da ne*, and self-referents such as *atashi* [I], typically considered feminine. Hyper-masculine characters exclusively utilise strongly masculine lexical items such as *ore* [I], *omae* [you] and strongly masculine SFPs such as *zo*, *ze* and *ssu*.

The final cluster, erotic [*ero*] *bara*, is the closest thematically and stylistically to the hyper-masculine manga about which McLelland (2000), Mackintosh (2010) and Suganuma (2012) have written. Erotic *bara* are primarily concerned with the explicit depiction of homosexual sex acts to the detriment of character development, although, unlike in the manga referred to in McLelland's (2000) study, there do appear to be instances where romance is superficially explored (often, however, only as a prelude to hardcore sex). The narrative structures of erotic *bara* tend to be highly flexible and only sketch in enough detail for the sexual acts to not come across as overly contrived, a phenomena referred to as 'porn without plot' by Mowlabocus (2007). Erotic *bara* in *Bádi* magazine also draw upon SM plot elements whereby innocent men are captured and tortured by others, or a willing 'slave' awakens the frustrated, sadistic desires of a typically older man. Examples of this may be found in Tagame (2014). This inclusion most likely reflects the fact that the majority of the *bara* within this cluster were created by Tagame Gengoroh and his disciples, all of whom profess an interest in SM (Armour, 2010; Kolbeins, 2013; Tagame, 2009). It may also be argued that the choice of including such content also allows *Bádi* to appeal to the niche market of Japanese gay men interested in SM, rather than this inclusion demonstrating something about the discourse of gay subjectivity being promoted by the magazine overall.

Similar to Suganuma (2012), this chapter's findings indicate that, to a certain extent, the hyper-masculine discourses within erotic *bara* are not

intended to represent a normative depiction of Japanese gay subjectivity. This is evident when examining the construction of gay subjectivity in erotic *bara*. Firstly, characters in these manga are typically depicted with exaggeratedly muscular bodies, often to the point of being anatomically problematic, with a similar emphasis on penis size to that found in the manga analysed by McLelland (2000). Furthermore, the fact that anal and oral penetration is often presented in ‘close-up’, dominating a single frame, suggests that the images found within erotic *bara* are constructed so as to arouse the reader. The use of strongly masculine language, such as that used by hyper-masculine characters in humorous *bara*, also seems to be a strategy to increase the arousing nature of these erotic *bara*. Indeed, as Tanaka asserts (see chapter twelve), there are strong ties between masculine language and roughness/impoliteness, and the choice to use highly masculine language in erotic *bara* fetishises this rough language to form part of a sado-masochistic discourse of desire (see Armour, 2010). As the intended audience for the majority of these manga are, presumably, those interested in SM, the use of highly muscular bodies and language is not necessarily indicative of the promotion of a hyper-masculine gay subjectivity, but perhaps merely a strategy to sell magazines.

The discussion of the three thematic clusters presented here is limited due to the scope of this chapter and does not take into account the fact that there is considerable overlap between these clusters and that certain episodes of *bara* manga found within *Bādi* magazine could be mapped onto more than one (or even all three) of the clusters. However, it is argued that taking *bara* as a homogenous genre that presents a uniformly hyper-masculine discourse of gay subjectivity is problematic, as the above discussion illustrates wider diversity than previously acknowledged by scholars. Some *bara* attempt to depict a gay subjectivity based upon the tropes of *gachimuchi*, others attempt to parody stereotypical depictions of recognisable gay subjectivities such as the *okama*, and others that may seem to present hyper-masculine discourses may be best approached as objects of arousal rather than an endorsement of a specific gay subjectivity.

### **The Place of *Bara* Manga within *Bādi***

To further contextualise the above discussion of the presentation of gay subjectivities, Table 6.1 illustrates the results of quantitative analysis of the content of



each issue of *Bádi* from 2010 to 2011. As the results indicate, *bara* was afforded the second highest amount of page space of the top five sections in the magazine, occupying on average 21.6 per cent of the total available page space per issue in 2010, and 30.5 per cent in 2011. Interestingly, although the total average number of pages per issue decreased between 2010 and 2011 (from 278 pages to 249 pages), the number of pages afforded to *bara* actually increased during this same period. This is despite the fact that certain other content, namely reviews of pornography and gravure imagery, decreased during this period.

	2010 (average no. of pages)		2011 (average no. of pages)	
<i>Total number of pages</i>	278		249	
1. Advertisements	114	(41%)	105	(42.2%)
2. Bara manga	60	(21.6)	76	(30.5%)
3. Reviews of pornography	27	(9.7%)	21	(8.4%)
4. Gravure imagery	16	(5.8%)	12	(4.8%)
5. Erotic stories	10	(3.6%)	11	(4.4%)

**Table 6.1. Average page space afforded the top five types of content within *Bádi* magazine.** Numbers in parentheses represent the average number of pages afforded each section as a percentage of the whole.

As the editors of *Bádi* were required to reduce the overall number of pages per issue in 2011, it appears that they chose to reduce certain content such as pornography and gravure imagery and mitigate this loss through the inclusion of more *bara* manga. Indeed, as is evident in Table 6.2, between 2010 and 2011 there was an increase in the page space allocated to slice-of-life and erotic *bara*. Slice-of-life *bara* once occupied 8.6 per cent of the overall page space in 2010, whereas in 2011 it occupied 14.5 per cent and erotic *bara* likewise increased from 7.2 per cent to 10.8 per cent. Although humorous *bara* also increased in page space allocated in the overall magazine (from 5.8 per cent to 6.8 per cent), it decreased within the overall pages the magazine afforded *bara* manga in general – from 26.7 per cent to 17.1 per cent – whereas slice-of-life and erotic increased from 40 per cent and 33.3 per cent to 47.4 per cent and 35.5 per cent, respectively. As earlier discussion demonstrated, slice-of-life and erotic *bara* features *gachimuchi* and hyper-masculine discourses of gay subjectivity, whereas humorous *bara* produces not only these two discourses, but also the

*okama* discourse. Thus, between 2010 and 2011, the page space afforded manga that promoted more ‘normatively’ masculine understandings of gay subjectivity appears to have increased.

	2010 (average no. of pages)			2011 (average no. of pages)		
Total number of pages	278			249		
Total no. of pages of <i>bara</i> manga	60 [21.6%]			76 [30.5%]		
1. Slice-of-life	24	(40%)	[8.6%]	36	(47.4%)	[14.5%]
2. Erotic	20	(33.3%)	[7.2%]	27	(35.5%)	[10.8%]
3. Humorous	16	(26.7%)	[5.8%]	13	(17.1%)	[6.8%]

**Table 6.2. Page space afforded each thematic cluster of *bara* within *Bādi***

Numbers in parentheses represent the average number of pages afforded each thematic cluster as a percentage of the number of pages afforded *bara* manga, whereas numbers in square brackets represent the average number of pages afforded each thematic cluster as a percentage of the whole.

It would be naive to interpret this change as suggesting that in 2011 *Bādi* magazine came to conform to the theory that *bara* as a homogenous genre promotes hyper-masculine understandings of gay subjectivity. The increase in page space afforded slice-of-life and erotic *bara*, however small it may appear, may instead be read as a strategy the magazine adopted to increase its overall erotic content as a result of the decrease in gravure image and pornographic reviews, which traditionally fulfilled these roles. This argument is further supported by the fact that, as shown in Table 6.1, the page space afforded erotic stories also increased slightly in 2011. More research into these editorial strategies will be needed to further investigate these trends.

Looking at trends over time demonstrates that the discourses of gay subjectivity promoted within *Bādi* magazine through its *bara* must always be understood contextually, and researchers should examine *bara* as it is situated in order to avoid overgeneralising the ‘features’ of the ‘genre’ of *bara*. *Bara* manga in other media, such as online media and within self-published *dōjinshi*, also appear worthy of further investigation.

## Concluding Discussion

This chapter has suggested that while hyper-masculine depictions of the male body can be found within *bara* manga, a close reading of the *bara* published

within *Bádi* magazine has demonstrated that tropes of physicality which evoke hyper-masculinity do not dominate all *bara*. Instead, these depictions of hyper-masculinity are embedded within a much more diverse representation of gay subjectivity, which includes ‘normatively’ gay and masculine *gachimuchi* and transvestite *okama* subjectivities, amongst others. Indeed, this chapter has shown that the *bara* manga of *Bádi* magazine maybe be broadly situated in one (or more) of three thematic clusters, only one of which (erotic *bara*) appears to include depictions of the male body similar to those featured in the gay manga analysed previously by McLelland (2000) and others.

Furthermore, the contextualised approach adopted within this study has suggested that it is necessary for researchers to engage with the role *bara* manga play within media in order to truly come to terms with which gay subjectivities are promoted and how this promotion relates to issues such as the construction and dissemination of ideas concerning masculinity.

Overall, this chapter suggests that researchers must engage with *bara* manga as a situated genre and follows Ruh (2014) in questioning claims that *bara* is typified by homogeneity. These findings are not only relevant to the study of *bara*, but also to the study of other genres of manga. As an emerging discipline, Manga Studies has the potential to deconstruct reified ideas concerning stylistic genre whereby all cultural productions from a particular ‘genre’ are automatically and uncritically perceived to share common characteristics. This chapter, and the others collected in this volume, mark an important exploratory step in this direction.

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# FINDING MUSIC IN MANGA

## Exploring Yaoi through Contemporary Piano Composition

PAUL SMITH

### Introduction

The visual world of manga and anime is readily identifiable as influencing disparate visual media. Filmmaker Quentin Tarantino used segments of manga inspired storytelling in *Kill Bill: Volume 1* (2003). Artist Murakami Takashi has adopted the manga character form in large 3D sculptures and American cartoons such as *Futurama*<sup>1</sup> and *The Simpsons*<sup>2</sup> have depicted characters using the manga/anime aesthetic for various comic situations or cultural allusions. Similar to these visual adaptations of the dominant manga aesthetic, this chapter explores the ways in which I, as a composer, use the visual cues within manga to help articulate musical material. Having grown up watching anime every morning on television, I began reading manga in high school. Learning of more mature material, my reading and viewing broadened into my late teens and early twenties. This direct involvement with a visual medium is in contrast to my history as a composer. For the majority of my compositional development, I have looked towards other composers for musical inspiration and ideas, which is often of the musical pedagogical model. When I began writing music for solo clarinet, for example, I looked at the history of writing for the clarinet, exploring how composers employed the instrument, considering the

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- 1 In season 6, episode 26, 'Reincarnation', a short story depicts the main characters as anime parodies of themselves.
  - 2 In season 10, episode 27, 'Thirty minutes over Tokyo', the Simpsons travel to Japan and watch an anime that causes seizures.

instrument's possibilities in different ensembles and the qualities of its different timbres. However, there is no question that my deep affinity for and involvement with anime and manga as a reader has affected my personal aesthetic. I was spurred by this to further investigate how I might respond to manga with my music. I am no longer just a consumer of manga but enter into dialogue with it as an artist, adding to the creative body of manga culture through intermedial translation. In the same way that I add to the breadth of the clarinet, I add to the breadth of manga, albeit through music.

Underscoring this chapter is a broad attention to artistic form, specifically the unique shape of any given expression within a work of art or the broader discourse surrounding individual modes of media expression, the musical form or the manga form, for example. To move between these is to at once acknowledge these expressions as unique, but also suggest that 'form' and 'media' are less strict than our senses would have us believe. To expand on the title of this collection, *Manga Vision*, perhaps this chapter points towards manga *hearing*.

My 2012 piece for solo piano, *Tides of Falling Leaves*<sup>3</sup>, was written in response to the dominant gestures, tropes and overall design of the manga subgenre *yaoi* (referring to manga that focus on homoerotic/homoromantic sexual relationships). This chapter explains the relationship that exists between my composition and a *dōjinshi* manga, randomly purchased in Osaka, *My Sweet Little Cat*, upon which the piece is based. The connections between visual and aural, and how this connection affected compositional decisions are outlined. Then, the act of music re-mediating manga is explored via the adoption of a specific definition of two concepts: ekphrasis and translation. While it may be more common to lead with the theoretical foundations prior to a textual analysis, as the composition is the first stage of research, it is discussed prior to the theory so that the structure of the chapter reflects the research process.

The chapter is underscored by poststructuralist notions of non-representational thinking, which move away from the assessment of texts that originate in another language or another medium as secondary or mimetic. According to Belsey,

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3 The title, *Tides of Falling Leaves*, responds to the more general use of the seasons as a metaphoric and symbolic device in manga and anime. Moving from autumn to winter, the evocative depiction of falling leaves suggests a melancholic tone, one that resonates, for me, with many *yaoi* narratives.

poststructuralism names a theory, or a group of theories, concerning the relationship between human beings, the world, and the practice of making and reproducing meanings. On the one hand poststructuralists affirm, consciousness is not the origin of the language we speak and the images we recognize, so much as the product of the meanings we learn and reproduce. (Belsey, 2002, p. 5)

These concepts also invite some new considerations within the manga and anime world itself, given the many language-based translations that already occur in these fields.

As the composition discussed in this study takes as its impetus something non-musical, the way poststructuralism deals with complex notions of representation aid in its analysis. Doel (2010) discusses the problem with representation, finding it 'is bound to a specific form of repetition ... the problematic is constrained to keep these repetitions in order to ensure that they do nothing more than return originals, identities and givens' (p. 117). *Yaoi* is not the 'original' version of my work (which would then become a 'copy'), nor is it the 'primary' version. *Tides of Falling Leaves* does not seek to repeat the dominant aesthetic of *yaoi*; rather, it seeks to express it in ways that it otherwise could not be. *My Sweet Little Cat* is used as a fixed object with which to engage; however, there are connections to the broader *yaoi* subgenre as well, given the regularities in design and character. The music opens up *yaoi* to a new sensory realm and its composition is viewed as existing in dialogue with *yaoi*, not in reliance upon it.

## Composition

*Tides of Falling Leaves* responds both to dominant *yaoi* gestures and tropes across the subgenre and takes a primary source material in the form of a *dōjinshi* called *My Sweet Little Cat*. The story follows a young man playing a joke on his lover, pretending that he can shape-shift between human and cat forms. At the beginning, he displays his tail and cat ears, though they are later revealed to be props. My compositional decisions have been affected by *yaoi* through three musical parameters: structure, harmony and texture.

Structurally, the work differs from other pieces I have composed in that it is collection of individual musical gestures that combine to create a whole. I



generally write music based on anime; however, for this piece I was particularly interested in the visual structure of manga and the way the page is divided into panel layouts. While anime is a temporal medium containing clearer progressions and transitions between animated cells, manga highlights the possibility for coexisting panels that can act and be viewed separately. These panels change in shape, mood and aesthetic; they can be stand-alone or connected in some way. This visual arrangement encouraged me to reconsider the structure of my music. Rather than compose music that moves fluidly from one phrase to another, I responded to different manga frames and ideas with less connected musical gestures. Usually my compositions would make use of a clear macro structure governing the shape of the whole work. However, within *Tides of Falling Leaves*, closer attention has been paid to the individual gestures possible. They operate in different registers of the piano and use different techniques.

In order to keep the piece musically cohesive, I based it around an interval of two notes on the piano, F#-C#. This is an open sound that does not suggest a specific tone or emotion. The beginning of the work repeats the interval a number of times in the middle register of the piano establishing it as the harmonic centre for the work (figures 7.1, 7.2, and 7.3). This interval forms the basis of the gestures throughout the piece, allowing for a variety of contrasting musical responses to the *yaoi* aesthetic that maintain a sense of musical integrity in terms of creating a cohesive composition. It might be possible to create different pieces of music based on individual manga frames; however, I wanted to explore broader, more dominant traits of *yaoi*.



Figure 7.1. Smith, *Tides of Falling Leaves*, b. 1-4.  
F#-C# interval played in the opening bars of the piece.

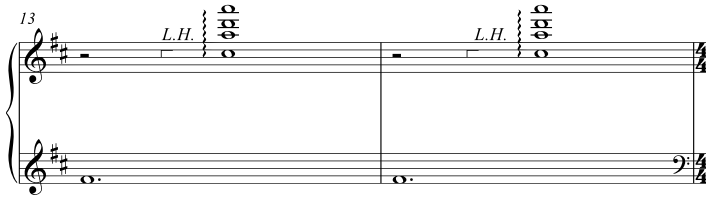


Figure 7.2. Smith, *Tides of Falling Leaves*, b. 13–14.

One of the first gestures in the piece, based around the F#-C# interval, played in the upper register of the piano.



Figure 7.3. Smith, *Tides of Falling Leaves*, b. 17.

One of the first gestures in the piece, based around the F#-C# interval, played in the lower register of the piano.

The range of panel sizes that *My Sweet Little Cat* employs were drawn upon during composition. The different panels in the manga include small close-ups of individual body parts, such as hands, eyes or hair, both juxtaposed with and supporting larger, more detailed panels, often showing the protagonists in full length. I composed the musical ‘panels’ in *Tides of Falling Leaves* to similarly vary in length. Some operate within a single bar of music as only one chord, while others are longer flurries of notes that take time to develop in their details.

Responding to the tone of the manga was difficult at first, given the mixture of romantic, comedic and melancholic moods common to *yaoi*. It was not until I engaged with literature surrounding *yaoi* that aspects of the genre became more readily apparent and aided in my interpretation. An often-explored concept is the way *yaoi* rejects gender norms. There is a usurping of the male gaze; *yaoi* is ‘a medium that fetishises beautiful boys, emphasising the “feminine” qualities such as slender bodies, harmonious features and hairless skin’ (Meyer, 2008, p. 236). The submissive *uke* characters are predominantly the sexual focus of *yaoi* manga, as is the case in *My Sweet Little Cat*. This focus on slender figures rarely drawn in detail, anthropologically, became the

impetus for the first clear musical gesture in the piece. Figure 7.4 shows how the original interval is extended into the upper register of the piano with a sustained open bright chord, which is played arpeggiated, meaning the notes are played one after another in quick succession as opposed to in unison. This articulation gives the chord a slight fantasy element, just as *uke* are often made the object of fantasy by the narrative. In *My Sweet Little Cat*, this sense of fantasy is established when the *uke* claims to be able to morph freely between the forms of cat and human. The simple nature of these chords responds to what Zanghellini (2009) describes as the *uke*'s characterisation as 'vulnerable, innocent and less experienced' (p. 171). A short tremolo is then played where two notes are repeated one after another while the left hand plays a short melody underneath. The melody underneath the shimmering tremolo suggests the surreal elements of the plot.

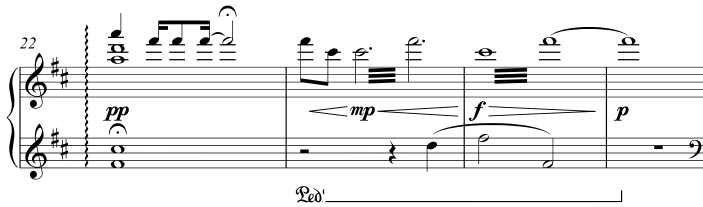


Figure 7.4. Smith, *Tides of Falling Leaves*, b. 22–25.

There is a visual clash present in much *yaoi*, which disrupts the depiction of the *uke* as serene beautiful boys. When engaging in sexual activity, the *uke* is shown to be in discomfort, the experience is painful. The *uke* is often shown scrunching his eyes or resisting the embrace of the larger and more forceful *seme* character. I have incorporated this into the piece by using frequent low chords, still consisting of the initial interval F#-C#, but with the addition of dissonant accompanying notes played at the same time (Figure 7.5). This is scored for the low register of the piano where the strings are thicker and more resonant. This makes the dissonances more prominent.



Figure 7.5. Smith, *Tides of Falling Leaves*, b. 27–30.

This visual clash forms a recurring theme for the piece. There is a gradual return to these two gestures in different forms throughout the work, given that this depiction of beauty and agony is taken as a dominant aesthetic necessity for *yaoi*. As the piece is played, the gestures are extended and eventually also share musical material. Symbolising the penetration of the *uke* are high register chord clusters, the discomfort/dissonance that has been established in the lower register of the piano eventually appears in the upper register where we had only heard serene chords previously (Figure 7.6). In addition to the sexual discomfort expressed by the *uke*, these gestures and aspects of atonality have developed from the necessary angst exhibited by the characters' personal situations. Zanghellini (2009) explains that 'the protagonists of *yaoi*/BL work are commonly haunted by everything from struggles for self-acceptance, through memory loss, rejection by others, personality splits and dark pasts, to traumatizing experiences' (p. 172).



Figure 7.6. Smith, *Tides of Falling Leaves*, b. 76–79.

Texturally, much of the piece is quite still, using held chords, repeated notes or single melody lines with no accompaniment, influenced again by the simple design and uncluttered depictions of the character figures and backgrounds. However, *My Sweet Little Cat* makes use of a detailed small crosshatching pattern drawn in small, enclosed boxes, which is often used to

indicate the passing of time. During the climax of the manga, this pattern is used again to cover the protagonists, both their skin and clothes, from head to toe. This creates a vastly different texture than in their other depictions. Brophy (2005), addressing anime and manga aesthetics, states that there are often ornamentations that abstractly describe an inner state. A decorative surface requires a ‘realignment of one’s optical system in order to focus on its depth’ (p. 16). Within these textures there are different forms of spatial and emotional depth. This prominent panel appears in the composition as a sudden change in musical texture, from open, long and reflective chords to a much faster rhythmic passage (Figure 7.7). Just as these different surfaces require a change in one’s optical system, my piece requires a change in one’s aural system at these moments. The score, too, shows this difference visually. The way the notes are placed on the staff depicts this textural change.



Figure 7.7. Smith, *Tides of Falling Leaves*, b. 36–39.

Seemingly simple, small frames are often included to focus on a specific body part. These frames are highly suggestive and impart more information than they would in isolation. Depictions of hands, eyes and tails make up the impetus for the majority of the beginning of the composition, with smaller isolated gestures being played. These are more fully explored, musically, when the frames in the manga become larger and more interconnected, like the musical material towards the end of the piece.

In composing *Tides of Falling Leaves*, I did not view following the narrative structure of the manga as a necessary part of the response, as the manga suggests certain musical material that can then be more fully realised through other compositional conventions, such as exploring the harmonies and rhythms and their relationship. In this way, compositional practice also acts as a musical analysis of the manga. The material, once suggested, is musically explored and fleshed out. Located within the individual gestures is an artistic response to the aesthetic, characterisation and structure of both *My Sweet Little Cat* and broader *yaoi* tendencies. The way the music moves between two distinct sound worlds articulates a strong dichotomy in the subgenre between beauty and pain.

### Ekphrasis

There are a number of observations that can be made when one art form re-mediate another. The name for this practice is 'ekphrasis'. It is a term used mainly within academic literary discourse to describe specifically the verbal description of a visual work of art. Within poetry and prose analysis, it is a technique relating to a detailed description in the text of a book or poem of a real world painting or sculpture, for example, which thus re-mediate the visual material into verbal material. Barry (2002) states that 'the 1990s saw a revival in the critical interest of this practice' (p. 155), which brought it to the attention of non-literary disciplines. One of the earliest forms of ekphrasis is commonly cited as being Homer's epic rhapsody the *Iliad*, in which he describes at great length the shield of Achilles. The word *ekphrasis* is of Greek origin and can be broken into two parts, 'ek' (out) and 'phrasis' (speak). This junction, meaning roughly 'out-speaking', suggests that the subject matter to which the artwork refers lies outside of itself, 'in the parallel universe of art' (Barry, 2002, p. 115). The artwork is not self-contained. Since visual and verbal symbols are heavily codified within our society, one can draw quite distinct parallels between media such as these. Abstract art forms, such as music and some avenues of visual art, are often marginalised in their potential to enact an ekphrasis. Al-Nakib (2005) informs that 'the more restricted sense of ekphrasis as a verbal representation of a visual representation does not become standard until the fourth century C.E. at the earliest' (p. 254). It is not limited, though, to these media, and

the recent focus on the concept has expanded its definition to incorporate a greater number of direct relationships between two artistic objects of different media, which may include music.

Composers are able to respond to material just as poets, novelists and other artists do. While music is reputedly abstract, it can be formed in response to any number of initial representations. Bruhn (2001) claims that composers 'may transpose aspects of both structure and content; they may supplement, interpret, respond with associations, problematise, or play with some of the suggestive elements of the original image' (p. 551). Bruhn moves ekphrasis away from the strict symbolic referential status that it holds in literature and suggests that, beyond the literal, it may encompass the many varied artistic responses an artist has in an effort to rearticulate another's work. It is possible, then, to explore a sculpture that embodies a novel, a poem that embodies a painting or a musical composition that embodies manga.

It is not uncommon to hear of composers drawing on non-musical stimuli for their compositions. The greater Western canon contains many examples of music that 'speaks outside of itself'. Prominent examples include Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* (1831), in which the movements of the symphony tell the story of an artist who has fallen in love, and Jean Sibelius' *The Swan of Tuonela* (1895), an orchestral tone poem which musically recounts a tale from Finnish mythology. These compositions come under the category known as 'program music', due to the extra-musical details included in the program notes of a performance or within the liner notes of a CD recording. However, in these instances the composers are not drawing from an existing artwork; rather, the music serves a narrative that has not previously been mediated by an artist.

In an effort to move away from programmatic music, Bruhn firmly positions musical ekphrasis within the realm of representation, suggesting that a three-tiered system exists to denote it:

1. a real or fictitious 'text' functioning as a source for artistic representation;
2. a primary representation of that 'text' in visual or verbal form; and
3. a re-presentation in musical language of that first (visual or verbal) representation. (Bruhn, 2001, p. 560)

Bruhn adapted these tiers for music from her analysis of poetic ekphrasis. The reason that most examples of programmatic music do not fit Bruhn's model is because their inspiration, the folk tale for Sibelius or the story of an artist for Berlioz, only comply with the first and third tiers of her model.<sup>4</sup> There is no separate artist of another medium who has first interpreted the real or fictitious text. However, the process of composing *Tides of Falling Leaves*, as outlined above, fits these tiers. Although Bruhn does not explicitly define the first tier, the word 'text' may be considered to function as an idea or inspiration, either a narrative or theme which a visual or verbal artist wishes to explore. For *Tides of Falling Leaves*, the first tier can be assessed as the narrative of the manga and any other inspirations that might have been used by the author of *My Sweet Little Cat*. The second tier is the manga itself, *My Sweet Little Cat*. It is an initial visual and verbal realisation of the idea and inspiration. The third tier is the composition, which interprets the manga using musical language. In a tangential use of the concept of ekphrasis; given that *dōjinshi* are in some ways a slightly different medium to more formally published manga, it could be claimed that they themselves are examples of *ekphrasis*. The characters of established manga and anime are in some ways re-mediated by the many *dōjinshi* authors who appropriate their relationships and events.

In 2001, the year Bruhn's article was published, it is slightly ironic for Bruhn to state that 'the application to music of the term "representation" has become more accepted' and to commend artistic discourse for this acknowledgement 'that music represent reality' (p. 560). The irony stems from an avenue of philosophical thought within poststructuralism that has predominantly, for the last decade, moved further away from the concept of representation, highlighting it as a problematic foundation for analysis. Hasty (2010) opens his discussion of the topic stating that 'music's resistance to representation has long been its curse and its promise' (p. 1). He finds, though, that it 'can provide a useful vehicle for criticising the *doxa* of representation' (p. 3). Bruhn's definition of musical ekphrasis and the tiers she has constructed instigate a clear hierarchy

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4 While the folktale itself is likely to exist in a represented form, Sibelius does not clearly respond to an artistic representation, which the second tier requires. Because ekphrasis is a relationship between two works of art, Sibelius would have to have drawn on either a painting or poem that depicts the folk tale. A historical recount, while a form of representation, does not fit the qualities of a musical ekphrasis as it pertains to artistic representation.



in which the music sits at the bottom in a power relationship riddled with issues of primacy and originality. Colebrook (2002) is critical of the term 're-presented' and in her discussion on thought as a re-presentation claims that when something re-presents it is as though it were 'a passive picture or copy' (p. 1). Drawing on Deleuze, Colebrook 'wants to reverse and undermine this hierarchy [of original and copy]' (p. 1). By employing the terms 'representation' and 're-presentation', Bruhn is implying that the resulting piece of music exists only in relation to the source material, a passive imitation. It is also up for scrutiny in terms of its success as being representative of the primary artwork. Given the acknowledged abstract nature of musical gestures, this is problematic and reductive.

If we consider musical ekphrasis within the realm of representation, by implication we are assuming that the composer (or by extension any ekphrastic artist) is attempting to return originals or employ symbolic language, musical or otherwise, that will connote symbols from another medium. Commenting on this aspect of representation, Doel (2010) states that when 'one medium is transposed into another, which medium will serve as the original and which the copy is completely arbitrary and contingent' (p. 119). Ekphrasis beyond representation allows *Tides of Falling Leaves* to form a relationship with the subgenre that is productive, not reductive. The Bruhn model is not fully appropriate for unpacking the results and outcomes when an artist adopts this method. The new work should not be considered only in relation to the perceived 'original'. Their relationship is more dynamic; the works together invite new information in each other. Unlike in programmatic music, where the music and composition process serve an exterior narrative, in musical ekphrasis, neither the initial articulation of material nor the musical articulation is in servitude to the other. The music may develop in response to the original, but this does not deny its agency or the listener's agency to move beyond it or even enhance it in some ways.

The dynamic relationship between *Tides of Falling Leaves* and *yaoi* might then be viewed as an example of an 'exchange', as explored by Al-Nakib (2005). An exchange involves an interaction between separate and unrelated things. Al-Nakib, drawing on Deleuze and Guattari, states that 'what can occur in an exchange is not simply a quantitative trade of elements reduced to a single unit of measure but, rather, a qualitative transformation or deterritorialisation that

affects both sides and creates something altogether different in the process' (Al-Nakib, 2005, p. 259). Ekphrasis highlights the mutability of form, whereby an object can be re-expressed, re-mediated or re-articulated in any number of ways. Depending on the different ways this process occurs, the exchange is altered, producing different effects on both sides and expanding different aspects of the source material. By this process, my music reveals *yaoi* in an original way. Beyond the fact that the manga was conceived and expressed first, newer understandings of it are uniquely arranged by the compositional process. Other ekphrastic works behave in the same way. Structural, harmonic and textural effects exist in response to dominant *yaoi* aesthetics in my composition. These work backwards to impart meaning back onto the subgenre and the specific manga source material. This notion of exchange can be tangentially ascribed to the *dōjinshi*-manga relationship. While *dōjinshi* are not primary material, in that they use characters, relationships and locations from other authors, their inferences can often be mapped back onto the original in occasionally dominant ways. Incidents of *dōjinshi* character and relationship depictions becoming more recognised and accepted than the original have occurred, destabilising the hierarchy of original and copy.

The exchange between *Tides of Falling Leaves* and *My Sweet Little Cat* (and more general *yaoi* design characteristics) suggests that the piano piece offers something back to the manga. To further invert the hierarchy suggests that the piano work inversely informs the manga, not only the other way around. What does someone learn about the manga after listening to the work? Do they *hear* in the manga new relationships and understandings? Are aspects of the visual placement, design and structure of the frames informed by my musical gestures? The answers to these questions lie in individual receptions of the works.

## Translation

In addition to ekphrasis, which is an established inter-art concept, an expanded definition of translation will additionally frame the understanding and ramifications of the compositional process outlined above. Rather than viewing *Tides of Falling Leaves* as an adaptation or as a piece inspired by manga, the re-mediation acts as a translation. Composers necessarily deal with musical

language and there is a relationship between the syntax and phrasing of the musical material of *Tides of Falling Leaves* that responds to the visual language in *yaoi*. This process does not adapt the plot, characters and dialogue for a new medium but rather translates the work as a whole between the senses, evoking an aural manga.

A dominant mode of Western thinking positions the translator of a text below the author, viewing theirs as a mechanical language-based process that replaces grammatical structures from language X with those from language Y. This establishes a hierarchical relationship between both the author and translator, and the original text and translated text. Zeller (2000), a translator, critiques this view claiming that ‘translation responds to a deep-seated creative need to explore new territory’ (p. 139). This suggests that a translated product is not a reduced or lesser version of the original; rather, it is a product that takes something beyond its original parameters. Any act of translation is its own act of authorship. As Zeller concludes, ‘translation is a work of art emanating from another author’s context’ (p. 139). What occurs during translation, then, is an act of recontextualisation, not a distillation of information. Languages are contexts, as are media. Each subsequent translation of a work is its own work. However, the level of social debate around the merits of certain language translations of books and films, for example, would suggest that this is not an accepted view. This is particularly true within the anime and manga world, where English versions of Japanese ‘originals’ are highly scrutinised in relation to their attention to cultural and social details by fans. Additionally, Cubbison (2005) explains that ‘for many sub fans, watching an anime with the Japanese audio track and subtitles is a more authentic experience’ (p. 48).

At the core of anti-translator/author discourse is the perception that a translation acts as a representation of an original text. Though Venuti has been an instigator in promoting the translator outside of the invisible realm, he often discusses intertextual relations that are reliant upon fundamental binds. He states that every text is fundamentally an intertext, and goes on to suggest that it is within these relations that a text forms its ‘meaning, value and function’ (2008, p. 157). He further asserts that ‘reception is a decisive factor. The reader must possess not only the literary or cultural knowledge to recognize the presence of one text in another, but also the critical competence to formulate the significance of the intertextual relation’ (pp. 157–158). This is problematic,

as it assumes that one must be familiar with any text's inherent relations in order to know or assess its value. To use the term 'fundamental' could be viewed as imposing unrealistic restrictions on the act of translation and reception. The pedestals that originals sit upon, from which these 'fundamental' associations stem, are often put there by their authors. Japanese novelist Murakami Haruki (as cited in Kelts, 2013) is fluent in both English and Japanese yet he does not translate his own works into English. He claims that 'my books exist in their original Japanese. That's what's most important, because that's how I wrote them'. Despite Murakami being a translator himself, one who often translates other authors' novels from English to Japanese, Murakami has publicly positioned the Japanese versions as 'most important'.

The representational paradigm implies that a translated novel, poem, or anime *could* stay as true as possible to its original. 'Representational thinking suggests that there is an ordered and differentiated world' (Colebrook, 2002, p. 3) and that order from original language text to translated language text is measurable and specific. However, Doel (2010) continues to problematise this view arguing that 'representation, by necessity, brings forth more than the same, it is always in excess of itself' (p. 117). In the case of Murakami, the translator might strive to evoke as much of the Japanese tone as possible in a repetitive endeavour. However, a task that implicitly involves subjective interpretation rejects repetition. A more productive stance may be to acknowledge that every translator is an inter-translator. To adapt Venuti's assertion, the (inter-) translator brings independent meaning, value and function to the translating process, rather than that of the text itself. By this logic, any composer who writes in relation to another text will bring their own meaning, value and function to that text.

Translations occur across a variety of disparate and potentially endless media. To limit translation to language is to ignore the variety of expressive material in our society. Saussure's notion of the signifier is not limited to language (Belsey, 2002, p. 12) and neither, then, should translation be. Anime may translate manga, for example. Many anime are adaptations of popular (or not-so popular) manga series and, as such, are often assessed as representations of a perceived original. Within any act of translation, though, there is a necessary familiarity with the media being translated to and from in order for representational judgement to be passed. The more fluent a person is in the

medium being translated to and from, the more they are in a position to judge the final product as an accurate representation. Is this a worthwhile assessment? If were I to read an English translation of a Goethe poem, I cannot speak to the process of translation as I am not fluent in both German and English. Therefore, I take the poem as its own object and not as a representation of the original. In line with Zeller's stance, the English poem is its own work of art that has emanated from the original German context. It may also be argued that a grammatical one is not the only type of language translation. Robertson (see chapter nine), for example, discusses the somewhat unique issue for Japanese translation of having four scripts with which to express a single word. Expanding on this issue, one could visually view the German and choose English words that were visibly similar, or sound them out and choose English words that were aurally similar. Would these not be types of language-based translation as well? Johnson provides an appropriate quote here insisting on the 'necessity of emancipating translation from the drudgery of counting lines and interpreting single words' (as cited in Carne-Ross, 2010, p. 151). While Johnson is not suggesting emancipation from grammatical translation, I am. Ekphrasis opens the door to inter-media translations and this can only propagate broader understandings of works, not narrower ones.

It could be said that when English voice actors dub an anime they are translating the speech patterns of the original since the animation has already been drawn based on the original *seiyu* or voice actor. These performances are not listed as translations of an original performance nor viewed as such by the audience. When the American voice actors who dub over Studio Ghibli anime with English are interviewed for publicity, they are often praised for 'performing' under such strict parameters. Many voice actors even admit to listening to the original Japanese version as a guide for their delivery. This is another example of creative work rising from another's context.

For my research and practice, I must be aware of the anime or manga I am drawing on. For someone to assess my translation of the manga, they too would need to be familiar with it. Where this is not possible, they would judge the piece purely on its own merits and not as a relational object. *Yaoi* functions as another artist's context from which my pieces are then formed. This could also be argued as a forced 'foreignisation', a concept explored by Zulawnik (see chapter thirteen). This does not remove my agency as a composer, but also gives

allusion to the fact that the piece is born of another medium. Discourse that positions translations in terms of their ability to repeat originals are bound to representational difficulties. Authenticity is not a synonym for quality and vice versa.

Skilled translators are perhaps best thought of as artists who are able to skillfully articulate their critical inspection of a work in another language or medium. Venuti (2008) argues that ‘translation communicates not the foreign text but rather one interpretation of it, and that a node of intertextuality is a productive means of exploring that interpretation’ (p. 170). I do not attempt to analyse or understand the manga form from the outside, a process which itself can reveal or produce much information, but rather to use the artistry of manga to lead my interpreting, composing *and* thinking. The process is similar to the performance of a piece of music. Musical performances and translation are both realisations of a primary material. It is often not the performances that best articulate the composers score that are well-received, but those who bring more to the score through their own interpretation. When *Tides of Falling Leaves* is performed, the most interesting part for me will be hearing what the performers bring forward outside of my own thinking, in the same way that my composition brings forward aesthetic qualities in the *yaoi* that may not be in line with the manga author’s intentions. This could even be extended further back in that the manga as a *dōjinshi* brings forward its own dominant traits from the characters’ initial contexts. This complex tag-team of inspiration and re-mediation warrants a less comparative analysis and a more symbiotic one. The long-term relationship between any of these iterations will yield new and evolving meanings.

## Conclusion

It may appear that I have taken much artistic license. Were a poet to convey *yaoi* in a poem, they might be forced to employ a more tangible analysis that would more directly make use of semantic association between the lines of the poem and the depictions of the *uke* and *seme*, for example. However, the goal of *Tides of Falling Leaves* is rather to consider and explore the way that music has the potential to translate and explore *yaoi* and visual forms. Doel (2010) suggests that representation is second nature, part of everything we do and

are subject to. He admits ‘there is an original and a copy, and the relationship between the one and the other lends itself to an evaluation in terms of the degree of similarity’ (p. 119). However, the term non-representational allows a proliferation of media, each of which are liberated to follow their own path. Such compositional practice encourages a broader scope for interpretation, inspiration and artistic analysis throughout and between different sensory media. With *Tides of Falling Leaves* and *My Sweet Little Cat*, ekphrasis becomes a form of translation where a work of art is both recontextualised and re-mediated simultaneously. Both works gain in the process and new things are revealed in their association, not in their dependence.



#### Online Multimedia Component

Audio files and music score for *Tides of Falling Leaves* are available at <http://mangastudies.com/mangavision/mangamusic.php> or scan the above QR code.

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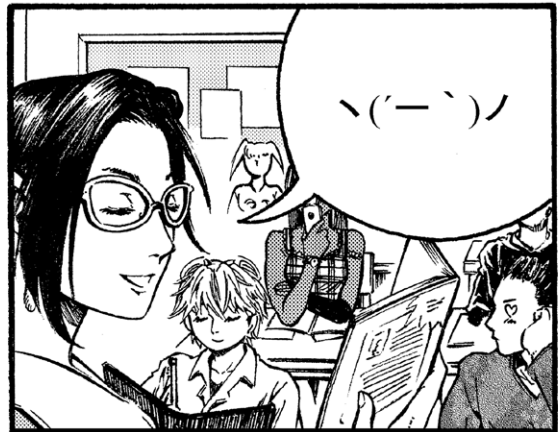
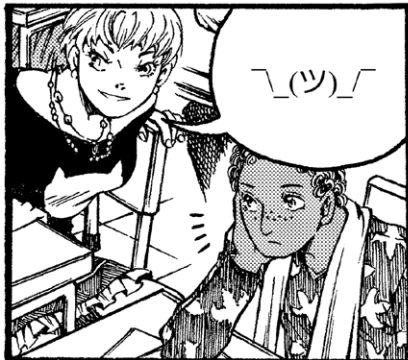
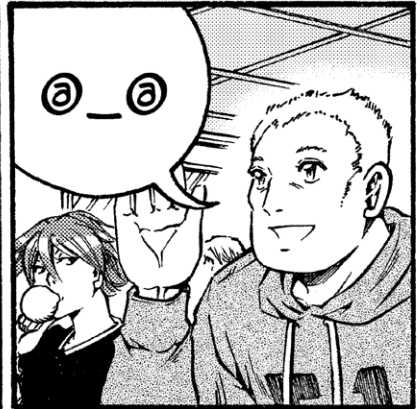
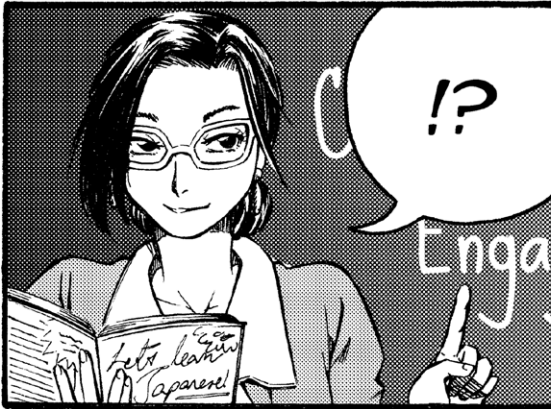
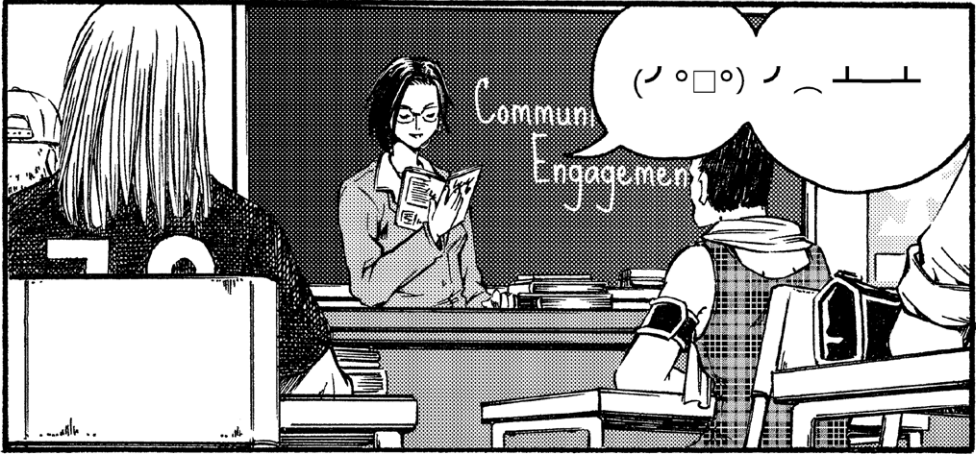
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# SECTION TWO: Communication and Engagement *Language Exchange*



# NODAME'S LANGUAGE LESSONS

TOMOKO AOYAMA AND BELINDA KENNETT

## Introduction

### Manga and Language Learning

In contemporary Japan and (increasingly) elsewhere, manga has been used widely in teaching and learning a number of subjects in a number of fields. Manga has shaken off notions about the genre as a poor literary cousin or as being at odds with the educational qualities of other literature. There are manga texts that deal with history, the modern and classical literary canon, socio-economic issues, gender issues and many other subjects and areas of knowledge.

The now defunct journal *Mangajin* (Simmons, 1988–1998) (see also chapter ten) inducted English-speaking learners of Japanese into the world of manga as a resource for learning from its spoken language and sociocultural aspects. In the teaching of Japanese as a second language (JSL), manga are used in texts and learning materials. For example, the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) funded the textbook *Pera pera* (National Japanese Curriculum Project, 1994), aimed at high-school learners, in which reading materials designed to introduce learners to both language and culture are predominantly delivered in a manga format. More recently, *Doraemon no dokodemo Nihongo* (Tōsaku, Fujiko & Inahara, 2009) uses manga in its situational approach to teaching later elementary level Japanese. *Manga Botchan* (Matsuyama, 2011) is a textbook, based on the well-known Japanese novel *Botchan*, for English speakers at an intermediate level of Japanese. *Manga Botchan's* website espouses the value of its format as being an

aid to comprehending the context of the language and promoting interest in its literature. It claims the text provides the student with the added opportunity for understanding the historical background of Japan while learning the language. There is even a manga series that deals with the teaching and learning of Japanese as a foreign language. *Nihonjin no shiranai Nihongo* [The Japanese the Japanese don't know] (Umino & Hebizō, 2009–2013) focuses on the comic interactions between a teacher of JSL and her students. As its title suggests, this manga introduces to its audience (predominantly Japanese) a range of issues on the Japanese language that its native speakers 'don't know'. The popular manga has also been adapted into a live-action television series (Yomiuri Television, 2010). These selected examples show that manga itself has a vast diversity in forms, themes and quality, and that manga's pedagogical or instructive function and significance vary.

This chapter focuses on language learning scenes in Ninomiya Tomoko's popular manga series *Nodame Cantabile*, aimed at Japanese readers, and consider the insights they offer and how they function both within and outside the narrative. The manga, serialised in the magazine *Kiss* from 2001 until 2009, depicts the development of its protagonist, Noda Megumi and her love interest, Chiaki Shin'ichi. It focuses on the growth of these characters in their relationships – romantic and otherwise – and in pursuit of eventual careers in classical music. The manga won the Kodansha Manga Award in the *shōjo* category in 2004 and has been adapted into live-action TV drama (Fuji Television, 2006–2010) and films (Fuji Television, 2008), anime (Ninomiya & Fuji Television, 2010), games, novels and so on, attracting a diverse audience, including classic music performers, students and educators.

There are three scenes in which Nodame is engaged in language-learning activities. Two of them concern French and one German. Each depicts an interesting aspect of foreign-language teaching and learning. These episodes are not only entertaining; they also give us material to consider such questions as the following:

- What can second-language teachers and students learn from these scenes?
- How does Nodame's language learning relate to various themes of the manga, including the pursuit of creative and performing arts skills and personal development?

- How is the language learning process linked to sociocultural and gender issues within the narrative?

Before analysing the three scenes in question, it is useful to refer to the six roles or functions of foreign-language education that J. V. Neustupný outlines in his book, *Gaikokujin to no komyunikeeshon* [Communication with Foreigners] (1982, pp. 122–126). In contemporary society, teaching and learning of another language is assumed to be for the sake of developing abilities to communicate in the target language. However, on Neustupný's list, communication is cited last, indirectly subverting its usually privileged position in modern language education discourse. As the commentary on *Nodame Cantabile* below will elaborate, its author, Ninomiya, highlights the existence of some of the other functions of language learning and sets them up for judgement through the eyes of the characters and the reader.

The first function of language learning is 'maintenance of the establishment' (*taisei jiji*), which signifies language teaching conducted in order to maintain socio-political, cultural and educational systems, including school and university curricula, the employment of teaching staff and the production of teaching material. It is expected, or taken for granted, that students learn the language through the formal language education system, regardless of students' needs, interests and ability. Neustupný does not claim that 'all learners, teachers and schools in the world have nothing but ... [maintenance of the establishment] in mind', and notes that 'language education, like other education programs, is not determined by one factor'; however, he points out the importance of observing the extent to which maintenance of system is given priority within the system (1982, p. 123). In some cases it may be unnoticed. In others, it may be over-emphasised.

The second function on his list is language learning as 'hobby' (*shumiteki kinō*), an intrinsically motivated activity for which learners may or may not have an actual communicative purpose. Neustupný suggests that this motivation may be found among many learners with lots of free time and also those who seek diversion from various worldly worries (1982, p. 123).

The third function is the 'symbolic function' of language education, which is frequently seen in social interaction. Neustupný cites an example from Russian writer Nikolai Gogol's play *Marriage* (1842). The protagonist searches for a wife who can speak French, 'not because it is necessary to be able to speak

the language but because French, to this protagonist, signifies culture, that is, a symbol of a social class' (p. 124). The symbolic function is also found in national policy documents or government papers that endorse the learning of languages for geopolitical, economic or social purposes.

The fourth function is 'skill formation'. As with mathematics and music, 'language studies require and nurture advanced discipline, patience and systematic attitude' (Neustupný, 1982, p. 125), even if the language skills themselves may not be perceived as useful outside the classroom. We may note the parallel Neustupný draws between music and language learning. As discussed below, this analogy can be applied not just to skill formation but to other functions as well.

The fifth function of language education is 'to enable the understanding of foreign culture'. Students of foreign languages 'receive direct and indirect training to be tolerant with another culture and to create a positive relation between that culture and themselves', claims Neustupný (1982, p.125). Learning a foreign language thus functions as an instrumental means to learn about the target culture and at the same time the language is treated as the embodiment of that culture.

The final and most putative and self-explanatory function of foreign-language education is that of 'communication'. Neustupný states that this is 'the most basic, and original role' of foreign-language education; however, as already mentioned, he does not disregard any of the other five functions stated.

## German Lesson

The first example of foreign-language learning in *Nodame Cantabile* appears in an early volume of the series (volume three), when Nodame and another student, Ryū, are desperately trying to avoid failing their final examinations. There are two subjects left – German and the history of Western music – and if they fail either, they will have to repeat the second year at the university. They rely on the superstar senior student (and Nodame's love interest), Shin'ichi, to help them. Here we see the first representation of language learning as an activity divorced from the function or goal of communication. The students are not interested in the target language or culture; they do not need to use the language in their lives.

The tutor, Shin'ichi, is uninterested in teaching such untalented and lazy students and, since he himself speaks several languages fluently, he simply cannot understand why they have difficulty with such basic German. Here we see the manga narrative associate language proficiency and skills with sociocultural symbols. Just as a woman fluent in French represents a certain class in Gogol's Russia, in the context of the classical music institutions in this story, German is the language of the Western classical musical establishment. Shin'ichi suggests that Nodame and Ryū translate the text into Japanese: 'after all that's what'll be in the exam' (vol. 3, p. 13). In doing so, he acknowledges that the goal of this learning is to pass the exam, which does not test communication skills in the target language. It is clear that he is disdainful of such a narrow instrumental goal, but he acknowledges the reality of the situation and gives them a strategy aimed solely at achieving it.

Even though the textbook they are using is situationally focused, the exam is stuck in the era of grammar-translation. The existence of the German exam is itself explicable in terms of Neustupný's identification of the 'maintenance of the establishment' function of language learning. It is a requirement that, to the students at least, does not currently serve a particular purpose in their overall degree or future aspirations.

As already mentioned, it is also clear that German is a symbolic acknowledgement of the European musical traditions on which the music degree builds, and this relates to the third of Neustupný's functions of language education, which is the 'symbolic function'. The narrative juxtaposes Nodame and Ryū's poor performance in German with their ignorance of music history (the other subject they need to pass) and also with the idiosyncrasy of their musical performance. While Shin'ichi notices some very special musical genius in Nodame, she is grossly underdeveloped as a pianist at this early stage of the narrative, in terms of 'skill formation, cultural understanding and compliance with the education system.

Returning to the German learning scene, after half an hour, both students fall asleep 'thanks to the magic power of the textbook' (vol. 3, p. 15). Shin'ichi is irritated by this and tells them to study with more interest and think about the meaning of the sentences, showing that he is still not committed to the practical advice he previously gave to the pair and has some investment in them achieving more lofty communicative goals. However, this new directive from

Shin'ichi only leads to Nodame and Ryū being distracted by irrelevant 'interest' and 'meaning'. For example, this is demonstrated when they question the logic of in a model conversation in their textbook in which the Japanese student Mariko asks 'Who is the man next to Barbara?' while ignoring Ingrid who has just said 'Hello' to her. They speculate as to whether Mariko might have no boyfriend and may be only interested in men and not in women like Ingrid (pp. 16–17). Shin'ichi gets more and more annoyed, but Nodame and Ryū obviously cannot muster any interest or motivation.

Within the narrative, the difference in attitudes to language learning between Shin'ichi and his two students has two important functions: first it contrasts the skills, background and personality of the two protagonists, Nodame and Shin'ichi. Nodame is regarded as a weak-willed, eccentric student in everything she does. Though she studies at university majoring in piano, she is terrible at sight-reading and has an aversion to rules and restrictions. Thus, her music learning within the system does not comply or contribute to 'maintenance of establishment', 'symbolic function' or 'skill formation'. Shin'ichi, on the other hand, seems to possess everything: musical talent (in piano, violin and conducting), pedigree (his father is an internationally renowned concert pianist), cultural and financial support, good looks, intelligence, language skills and domestic skills (for tasks such as cooking and cleaning).

Besides demonstrating the difference between these two protagonists, the German language lesson scene also provides some comic moments, which involve not only slapstick and exaggerated actions, but also some critical or didactic meaning. After their all-night study session, Nodame and Ryū seem to have learned just enough to pass their exams. Shin'ichi, on the other hand, falls asleep and misses his own performance exam. In this scenario, it is the gifted and disciplined student who ends up repeating a subject, not the lazy and untalented pair, who get through on their short term strategy.

It is also possible to see a deeper meaning developing through the series. The episodes/chapters in this manga series are referred to as Lesson 1, Lesson 2, Lesson 3, and so on, which is suggestive of learning as an ongoing theme. For the aspiring conductor, it is not enough to have music and language skills and knowledge; Shin'ichi himself has other things to learn. He needs to understand and learn to communicate his thoughts better to all the members



of the orchestra, including the less skilled or talented ones like Nodame and Ryū. Shin'ichi's lessons develop alongside the main theme of the manga, which is the pathway taken by Nodame in developing her music with the assistance of Shin'ichi and others.

From the viewpoint of language teachers and learners, the scene offers a comic depiction of a number of issues of interest in language pedagogy. First, the existence of the German exam, seemingly without rationale or communicative purpose, is critiqued. Second, the learners are not intrinsically motivated to study German, and because Shin'ichi has largely acquired his languages through informal learning (in meaningful interactions with speakers of those languages and in contexts where the languages are spoken), he is not in a position to mentor Nodame and Ryū as formal, classroom learners, as this is outside his personal experience. Shin'ichi also lacks pedagogical skills or training in the teaching of German. He is not motivated to try out a different teaching approach or to find a path that will help his students learn.

This lesson contains interesting material for further consideration. For example, the German textbook in the manga seems to be a typical modern language textbook for beginners, depicting a reasonably realistic situation in which guests introduce each other at a party. Some simple sentences are given in German together with photos/illustrations. It is, by no means, the old 'Jack & Betty' type textbook which was parodied by Shimizu Yoshinori and others (see Aoyama & Wakabayashi, 1999). However, despite efforts to make the model conversations as natural as possible, slightly awkward sequences still remain, which could easily distract unmotivated students. In this sense, Nodame and Ryū actually 'defamiliarise' what might be passed off as 'natural' in the dialogues in modern language textbooks. Defamiliarisation or *ostranenie* is an important notion in art and literary theory developed by formalists in early twentieth century, also translated as 'foreignisation' or 'alienation'. It signifies the artistic technique of presenting familiar things (such as everyday language) in an unfamiliar or strange way. The strangeness draws our attention to things we normally take for granted. The notion of defamiliarisation is useful not only for our present discussion of language learning in this manga, but for a wide range of discussions on manga and other art forms.

## French

### Lesson 1

While Nodame only needs German to pass her exam, French is a language that is essential to her. From volume ten onwards, Nodame studies at the Paris conservatorium while Shin'ichi pursues his conducting career. Prior to the 'French lesson' scene we are about to discuss, Nodame has experienced a series of miscommunications during her first days in Paris. She did not have the time or opportunity to learn the French language before arriving in Paris and French was not part of her degree structure. It is no wonder, then, that she does not understand the instructions at an aural exam at the conservatorium, or that she is completely at a loss in a restaurant when she cannot read the menu and does not understand what the waiter is saying. These painful instances of a failure to communicate in a foreign language are contrasted with Shin'ichi's complete ease not only with verbal communication in the French, Italian, English and German languages, but also with European culture and customs. However, Nodame cannot rely on Shin'ichi to be her mediator and interpreter; as a fledgling conductor, he will be frequently away from Paris. So out of sheer necessity, Nodame tries to learn French.

This time the book she uses is a (fictitious) book titled *Tsukaeru Furansugo jiten* [A Dictionary of Usable French], which has many supposedly useful phrases and sentences. Starting with the usual, 'Enchantée. Je m'appelle ...', she practices various expressions in a coffee shop with Shin'ichi. The sentences she chooses reflect her desire and imagination: 'I'm his wife'; 'this is my husband'. In this manga, Nodame is the one who falls in love and expresses her sexual interest, whereas Shin'ichi remains aloof and uninterested in her as a love interest (or at least tries to appear to be). However, he is strongly interested in and almost obsessed with her hidden musical gifts.

In this French learning scene, Shin'ichi tells Nodame not to start with expressions that won't be necessary for her, but to concentrate on phrases she will need in everyday life. Nodame flips through the pages and finds sentences such as 'You were snoring last night' and 'Don't forget to take the rubbish out'. Her humorous selection of supposedly useful French phrases escalates to include phrases such as 'Help!' and 'I was raped', which shock the café waiter.

Needless to say, the point here is not to trivialise serious situations but to present a comical and carnivalesque reversal of the ‘king’, Shin’ichi, and the ‘fool’, Nodame. As Nodame continues to practice sentences such as ‘Give me back my money’ and ‘You are disgusting!’, Shin’ichi tries to reassure the waiter that she is just practicing French.

Nodame’s efforts to learn French function at several levels. Her regurgitated chunks of language represent her desires and interests in a wooden and comic manner. They draw attention to the gap between the words and her reality, playfully mocking the decontextualised language of the phrase book. Even though learners are trained to role-play in the classroom, this learning strategy does not always prepare students to meet the expectations of the outside world. Nodame’s role-playing in the café causes misunderstanding. Phrasebooks are short on information on context and usage, with each entry appearing to be of equal value and emotional impact. Nodame plays with this, disempowering Shin’ichi’s role of mentor and commentator and reducing him to the position of embarrassment, despite his undoubtedly superior linguistic and cultural knowledge.

This manga teaches the readers about language and music in an incidental way. On the page, French sentences are given a *katakana* guide to pronunciation and Japanese translation in brackets. These offer a mini-conversation lesson and transport the reader into Nodame’s linguistic situation, even though it would be highly doubtful that French expressions read in *katakana* without the knowledge of French pronunciation would be understood by French speakers. For the reader who is already familiar with French, these examples work as a kind of proof of authenticity.

It is interesting to compare this ‘teaching’ function of the manga with a much earlier example found in Takahashi Makoto’s girls’ manga, *Pari-Tōkyō* [Paris-Tokyo] (originally published in 1956, reprint included in Takahashi, 2006). The main plot of this manga is the protagonist’s search for her father, who her mother claims died in Paris when the girl was very young. France is strongly associated with the girl’s longing for her father, as well as with art, fashion and culture. The French ‘lesson’ for the reader appears in the margin of each page, outside the main narrative, and yet they are connected with the phrases and objects that appear in the page. Some very simple words and phrases such as ‘goodbye’ and ‘a park’ are shown vertically in Japanese and

*katakana* ('ō ruvoaarū' and 'paruku'), reminding us of the second and the third functions of Neustupný's list: the hobby and symbolic functions. Compared with the naive image of French culture represented in this early post-war manga, Nodame's 'phrasebook' offers more usable phrases in everyday life. However, its communicative function is parodically reversed by Nodame to cause Shin'ichi embarrassment.

The juxtaposition of teaching and learning, both within the narrative and for the reader, and its comic carnivalesque reversal, is also repeated in the development of the main theme of the manga, the pursuit of music. The story includes many details about aspects of classical music such as the instruments, particular playing techniques, history, training and competitions. For those without musical knowledge the manga deliberately introduces this information, and it is not too difficult to draw an analogy between the functions of musical learning and the functions of language learning on Neustupný's list. Again, for those familiar with classical music and music training and education, the accurate detail certifies the authenticity of the manga's portrayal and gives them the pleasure of discovering identifiable issues. A number of professional musicians have commented on this quality (see Aoyama 2010), which can be linked to the more general issue of the educational function of manga narratives. Many women artists and critics have commented, for example, that they have learnt about (or were inspired to study) the French Revolution through *The Rose of Versailles* (see Nakamura, 2012). More recently, Yoshinaga Fumi's *Ōoku* [The Inner Chambers] must have triggered interest in the Edo period. Nodame's French lesson occupies only a small portion of the complete narrative but it is connected to the life and culture she experiences in France through subsequent volumes, and avoids stereotypical touristy jokes about French or French culture.<sup>1</sup>

## Lesson 2

Anime fandom plays some interesting roles in several episodes in *Nodame Cantabile*, including the third language-learning episode discussed in this chapter. In this episode, Nodame manages to make some new friends, including

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1 Besides numerous earlier examples, there are some contemporary examples with persistent stereotypes, such as the flautist Jane Rutter's song 'The French song (La vie en rose)', inserted in her otherwise very respectable *An Australian in Paris* show. Stereotypically 'French' things are listed to the tune of the famous Piaf song.

a French *otaku* anime fan and fellow piano student, Frank, but their communication is extremely limited. In Frank's room, Nodame notices her favourite anime is being shown on television. This is an interesting case of fiction within fiction, which is a common device in manga, often involving parody and meta-fiction. Since Nodame is thoroughly familiar with every bit of the anime, she can recite all the lines in original Japanese simultaneously as they are spoken in the French dubbing on the television. On the surface, it looks as if Nodame can interpret simultaneously. To other people (Frank and his flatmate, Tanya), it looks as if she is conversing with the television (vol. 10, p. 74). Already the comic incongruity of a simultaneous interpreter without the knowledge of the other language is presented. But Nodame does not stop there; she continues to watch the same episode of the anime on video again and again and again, repeating the French lines until she memorises them.

Such repetition is widely used in language learning, especially in the audio-lingual method, which, as a critical alternative to the traditional grammar-translation method, emphasises the importance of spoken language. In audio-lingual classrooms of the past, the linguistic content was often based on dialogues that were memorised and chorused with a view to developing linguistic habits in learners. This was in contrast to the grammar-driven approach, in which students constructed language guided by the application of rules. The meaning of the target language was often conveyed to learners through idiomatic expressions in the learner's first language rather than word for word translations. In Nodame's unanalysed repetition and memorisation of the French in the anime, paired with her existing understanding of the meaning she had acquired through her previous engagement with the Japanese anime, she has followed the principles of audio-lingualism. Ninomiya shows that this application has achieved fluency in terms of technical production of French (Neustupný's category of 'skill formation'), while at the same time critiquing her engagement with the anime medium as antisocial and uncommunicative.

Using anime clips is also very common in language classes, the material being usually selected for its representation of certain aspects of the target language and/or target culture. In *Nodame Cantabile* it is a dubbed version of a fictitious Japanese anime that has Nodame's attention. Her French learning in this scene is through culturally familiar Japanese material. While currently it is common for educational institutions to aim for bilingual language programmes

through which new content material is delivered through the target language, in this scene it is the love of and familiarity with this Japanese material that motivates Nodame and draws her focus toward the singular challenge that it offers, that is, the French language. The episode also shows how anime and terms such as *otaku* have gained currency outside Japan. Frank expresses his admiration for the particular anime Nodame watches: 'My *otaku* friends say it's too childish but I don't agree with them. *Puri Gorota* is a true anime for grownups, for it softly consoles our distorted minds. But they don't realise this.' (vol. 10, p. 80) Thus, the manga offers to its Japanese audience some snapshots of anime fandom outside Japan. However, Nodame is too absorbed in watching the video to pay any attention to what he says, and even if she did listen to him, as he is a French-speaker she would not understand his argument. This seems to capture certain characteristics of the *otaku* culture: its globalisation, critical and theoretical discourse, dedicated fandom, total obsession and absorption, and the desire for communication and bonding with fellow *otaku*, which may not always be possible.

As in previous examples, Nodame's behaviour and action are contrasted with Shin'ichi's. Ninomiya does not avoid stereotypes, but she skillfully combines them with comic/ironical twists and subversion. Nodame continues to exhibit eccentric behaviour, which causes Frank to abandon his budding romantic interest in her. This is juxtaposed with Shin'ichi maniacally trying to make Tanya play the notes correctly in another room. Tanya is a Russian piano student who lives with Nodame, Shin'ichi and others in the house in Paris that Shin'ichi's mother owns. The episode concludes with the French boy and the Russian girl giving up their respective interest in the Japanese newcomers in the apartment because of their fanatical and obsessive behaviour. While the differences between Nodame and Shin'ichi are emphasised, their similarities are also suggested by Frank and Tanya's observations of the two: Nodame has out-otakued Frank, and Shin'ichi's spartan coaching reminds Tanya of another stereotype, namely the workaholic Japanese. In any case, after intensively studying the anime video, Nodame becomes able to converse in French as long as the words and phrases she uses are included in the video. This amazes Shin'ichi, who is usually very difficult to impress. Here, again, the 'hidden ability' of Nodame, in her use of the dubious language-learning strategy and maniacal approach, becomes clear as it achieves astonishing results.

### Three Lessons Reviewed

As outlined above, the three language-learning scenes depict different approaches to language learning and particular circumstances. The German course that Nodame is enrolled in functions partly to maintain the establishment and a grammar-translation approach is required to pass the exam. The audio-lingual approach Nodame takes when she recites Japanese dialogue over a French-dubbed anime impresses the global *otaku* but is limited in its usability. Despite the critique of the system and learning strategies represented in these episodes, it is clear that they each fulfil certain, albeit limited, functions. Certainly, each strategy functions differently for the protagonists, reminding us as teachers and learners that individual differences mean that we should not be overly precious or narrowly focused on our style of teaching or learning. In this way, each scene abounds in comic elements as well as hints and insights on education, pedagogy and second-language acquisition. Narratologically, too, these scenes have interesting points to consider. The German lesson can be read as a story of the inferior (weak/lazy/untalented) surpassing the superior and thereby creating laughter. Carnavalesque reversal of the weak/strong is seen throughout the manga. The French phrasebook scene can also be regarded as the weaker speaker ('fool') indirectly making fool of the stronger ('king'). The anime within the manga contains intricate metafictional issues.

Fujimoto Yukari (1998) has identified the search for one's place or position [*ibasho*] as the key motif and even *raison d'être* of *shōjo* manga. Nodame's struggle to find her own musical and personal happiness certainly matches this generic theme. However, as the pioneer of *shōjo* studies, Honda Masuko, poignantly remarked, *Nodame Cantabile* departs somewhat from the narrative conventions of *shōjo* manga, especially in gender representations. As Honda points out, Nodame is not a Cinderella and 'the story does not progress towards a happy ending, but [...] the process of the development of the story itself is what continues to interest the reader' (Honda, 2010, p. 18).

It is tempting to link the three language learning scenes to this. Between Nodame and Shin'ichi there is a clear gap in terms of language proficiency and sociocultural knowledge/experience. This kind of gendered teacher-student relationship we see between Shin'ichi and Nodame is commonly found in *shōjo* manga and, as Honda points out, it is also found in *The Tale of Genji* and

numerous texts of world literature and culture. But the relationship that exists between Nodame and Shin'ichi is not static or defined by gender. Honda cites Shi'ichi's domesticity as an example of this. 'Shin'ichi acts out a traditionally female role when he undertakes household chores', she argues (Honda, 2010, p. 19). Moreover, the language lesson episodes show us that even in the putative teacher/student relationship, the student may surpass the teacher or the teacher may realise that they need to learn more than the student. The teacher may not find anything to learn from the student in terms of their technical skills and geo-cultural and historical knowledge, but the teacher may discover their student is more skilled in the area of personal relationships, which are essential for true communication, whether it is conducted in native or foreign languages, or through music, art and other non-verbal methods.

To quote Honda again, *Nodame Cantabile* 'concentrates on the process of the story rather than its outcome'. This process-focused approach is very much applicable to language learning. It is not whether one passes an exam or memorises phrases, it is the process of learning that is invaluable and learning never ends but continues throughout one's lifetime. The two-dimensional form of manga seems particularly well suited to present this process in a convincing manner. Anime and live-action drama would inevitably leave some traces of inauthenticity in the sound (pronunciation, intonation and fluency), action and movement of its characters; the manga text can achieve a satisfactory level of authenticity precisely because it leaves room for the audience's imagination to produce 'authentic' sounds and movements from the graphic depictions and space.

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# WRITING ANOTHER'S TONGUE

## Orthographic Representations of Non-Fluency in Japanese Manga

WES ROBERTSON

### Introduction

The manipulation of text to convey paralinguistic information to an audience is a long recognised phenomenon. Any cursory review of advertisements, menus, graffiti or, indeed, manga and comics, will attest to the fact that the visual nature of writing allows authors to convey messages that are not contained in the meanings of words themselves (Sebba, 2007). However, written Japanese affords its writers an additional stylistic option perhaps unique amongst world languages: the potential use of up to four different scripts to portray a single word (Iwahara, Hatta & Maehara, 2003). Although the conscious manipulation of these scripts is not unstudied, previous work has generally focused only on *what* non-standard elements are being employed. The contextual, social, interpersonal and historical influences that determine when this non-standard orthography can be utilised have often been ignored, as have those which affect how variation is employed, why it is interpretable by readers and why the use of other possible scripts was rejected (Masuji, 2011).

This chapter will attempt to investigate the nuances behind the use of non-standard orthography in Japanese writing, focusing on the portrayal of non-native speakers (NNSs) in manga. This decision is due to the historical tendency for the speech acts of NNSs to be viewed as something marked and strange (Loveday, 1986), making them a potentially fertile ground to witness orthographic play. Additionally, this study aims to uncover the purposes for

which these methods are exercised (or ignored) and shed light on the various contexts and historical influences that affect their employment.

In total, four volumes from two series of Japanese manga will be explored. Manga makes an ideal object of linguistic analysis due to the medium's popularity – over 1.7 billion copies are sold yearly in Japan (Ito, 2000) – its influence on Japanese media and writing (Tranter, 2008) and its peculiar status (shared with other comics) as a silent art form that must rely on visual strategies to indicate sound (Wolk, 2007). Attention will be given to both non-native and native Japanese speakers' productions of a second language, with the similarities and differences in speech between characters and series given particular focus. Through this analysis, I hoped to expose, somewhat, the intricate ways in which the conventions of contemporary written Japanese can be subverted, and deepen our understanding of how these strategies can provide subtextual meaning to a work.

### **Manga Under Study**

This chapter draws its data from the first and second volumes of the popular manga series *Daarin wa gaikokujin* [My Darling is a Foreigner] (henceforth *DWG*) and *Nihonjin no shiranai Nihongo* [Japanese that Japanese People Don't Know] (henceforth *NSN*). Though the mainstream success of these manga is relevant, a more important criterion behind their selection was that all volumes feature a large number of NNSs in significant roles. The series are also fairly recent works, first published in 2002 and 2009 respectively, and purport to be semi-autobiographical and based on stories and humor from actual events. *DWG* deals with the author/artist's relationship with an American man who speaks fluent Japanese, while *NSN* is set inside a Japanese language school in Japan, and features students who possess a wide range of Japanese ability.

Manga like these provide a particularly fertile location for viewing script play, both because of their reliance on visuals and because of the abundance of what Kinsui (2003) refers to as 'role-language' existing within them. This prevalence is linked to the fact that speech in manga lacks the grammatical scaffolding available to other written mediums. A novel may be capable of commenting on or describing the style, mode or sound of a character's speech without the use of non-standard elements (as it does in a sentence like this: "Let's go", he said, his words muffled by the roar of the wind and his thick

drawl'). Manga does not have the same ability. This has resulted in manga developing innovative strategies for conveying sound within this silent, visual medium (McCloud, 1993; Wolk, 2007). Common examples of these strategies include changes to spelling, font, or the size, shape, and roughness of text (McCloud, 2006), all methods which make 'the irregular shapes of letters resemble the irregular patterns in the way people speak' (Saraceni, 2003, p. 21) and which are not often seen in other forms of writing. Although the use of non-standard orthography in Japanese for similar effect has not gone unnoticed (Narasaki, 2009; Schodt, 1983; Unser-Schutz, 2011), the question of how this technique is utilised has received cursory coverage at most (Unser-Schutz, 2010) and the depiction of non-native speech has rarely been examined at all.

### Research Questions

Examination of this phenomenon will occur within a case study style of analysis. Initially, each series will be looked at separately and the various examples of non-standard orthography contained within will be discussed. These results will then be compared between the series to look for overarching similarities that point to more universal strategies, and show some of the ways in which deviation from orthographic conventions can occur. These findings will then be used to shed light on the following two research questions:

1. How does each manga utilise non-standard orthography to portray non-native speech?
2. In what ways do these uses agree with, reinforce, reject or expand upon the 'traditional' semantic or semiotic attributes of each script?

### Terminology

The term 'non-standard' will be used frequently throughout this chapter to refer to orthographic choices that do not reflect the norms of Japanese writing. What is actually normal or standard can be difficult to define, though, as the guidelines that govern which orthography should be used for a particular word are much more flexible than the rules used for spelling or grammar systems. Some proscriptive documents, such as newspaper style guides and the government's *Jōyō Kanji* list (guide for the general use of *kanji* characters) do exist, but they cannot be said to contain actual restrictive power, despite their influence

(Honda, 2009)<sup>1</sup>. Still, there are general conventions and these are perhaps best understood by splitting the Japanese vocabulary into four categories: words that are only written with one script, words that are usually written in one script, words that are written in two scripts equally, and words that are written in three scripts equally (Iwahara, Hatta & Maehara, 2003). For example, grammatical particles like the subject marker は [*wa*] are formally written in *hiragana* alone, relegating them to the first category and marking any other choice of script as non-standard. In contrast, verbs often allow two different portrayals, such as もらう or 貰う [*morau*] for ‘to receive’ (Kess & Miyamoto, 1999). In cases like these, dictionaries and other such references do not mark which of the familiar options are preferable unless the *kanji* for the word is exceedingly rare, and so this project required a novel method for defining the terms. When competing representations were found to exist, they were entered into *Alexa* (2013),<sup>2</sup> a language-learning website which searches a corpus of example sentences from various sources, with the version garnering the most hits being treated as standard.

### Japanese Orthography

Prior to the analysis of the use of the four main Japanese scripts (*hiragana*, *katakana*, *kanji*, and *rōmaji*) in manga, it is important to detail the impressions and images associated with each one. While they all serve practical roles, they also are able to ‘convey subtle shades of meaning on the visual level’ (Hiraga, 2006, p. 134) and ‘invoke different connotations, [with] each script type painting a unique tapestry of emotive imagery and synesthesia’ (Kess & Miyamoto, 1999, p. 107). In more concrete terms, historical and cultural influences have resulted in each form carrying supplemental impressions that affect a user’s ultimate choice of which to employ when options are available (Suzuki, 1977). Perhaps the most similar feature in English would be the use of different fonts, italics or bolding, although this analogy greatly underplays the depth and range

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1 A current version of the Jōyō Kanji list can be accessed here: [http://kokugo.bunka.go.jp/kokugo\\_nihongo/joho/kijun/naikaku/pdf/joyokanjihyo\\_20101130.pdf](http://kokugo.bunka.go.jp/kokugo_nihongo/joho/kijun/naikaku/pdf/joyokanjihyo_20101130.pdf)

2 A popular language website that searches a corpus of dictionary resources and real-world bilingual texts. Though the site is flawed, the number and diversity of examples it provides does allow it to be used with confidence regarding which scripts are more common, especially when two different depictions return a significantly different number of results. Search engines were not used because they return results regardless of whether the example directly matches the input, i.e., もらう and 貰う [*morau*] can show results for both versions.

of factors that affect choice of script and doesn't acknowledge that a mixture of these scripts is necessary for writing the language (Rowe, 1976).

*Hiragana* is a phonetic script that has been viewed historically as soft, intimate, emotional, smooth or feminine, and it still carries these connotations in modern times, with some parents giving their daughters names in *hiragana* to create a more feminine image (Haarmann, 1989; Hiraga, 2006; Kataoka, 1997; Kess & Miyamoto, 1999; Miyake, 2007). The early use of *hiragana* by women and poets, and in private correspondence, likely plays a role in these impressions (Iwahara, Hatta & Maehara, 2003). It is also the first script most Japanese people and foreign learners learn while acquiring the language, and it serves key roles in both grammar and pronunciation, being the only script considered acceptable in standard writing for verb endings, inflections and particles. It is also used to detail the sounds of *kanji* a reader may not be familiar with (Backhouse, 1993; Kess & Miyamoto, 1999).

*Katakana* is also phonetic but is more limited in its employment than *hiragana*, with its usage 'tied to its representational function for foreign loan words' (Kess & Miyamoto, 1999, p. 88). Because of this, *katakana* can also carry an image of modernity, pop culture or foreignness – a state of being not-Japanese (Kataoka, 1997; Onishi, 2004). The script often plays an imitative role also, being used for sounds, animal noises and the like in manga (Nishimura, 2006; Schwartz & Rubinstein-Avila, 2006).

*Kanji* are perhaps the most difficult aspect of the Japanese writing system to describe, as they contain visual elements as well as set sound patterns (often multiple). For this reason, Matsunaga (1996) defines them as morphophonetic, which recognises their ability to be processed as both phonetic representations and iconic visual allusions (Hiraga, 2006; Nara & Noda, 2003). Originating from Chinese characters, *kanji* were initially restricted to the domain of scholars and men (Backhouse, 1993) and, perhaps because of this, they are linked to concepts like science, erudition, rigidity, masculinity, formality and to the elite (Kataoka, 1997; Kess & Miyamoto, 1999; Hiraga, 2006; Honna, 1995; Nishimura, 2006).

Finally, *rōmaji*, or romanised Japanese, plays a much smaller role in the language, but can often be found in advertisements, signs and packaging (Backhouse, 2003). At times it carries senses of prestige, globalisation or decoration

(Gottlieb, 2010). These connotations often result in it being employed next to other scripts in a complementary role (Backhaus, 2010; Blommaert, 2010).

<i>Hiragana</i>	<i>Katakana</i>	<i>Kanji</i>	<i>Rōmaji</i>
feminine, soft, smooth, round, tender, simple, childish, lovely, unmarked, intimate, private, nice, elegant, poetic, Japanese	novel, foreign, imitative, emphasising, hard, simple, inorganic, fake, marked, young, male, futuristic, neutral, sharp, fresh, jarring, precise, angular	scientific, rigid, elite, masculine, formal, hard, difficult, intellectual, conspicuous, learned, visual, adult, Chinese, substantial, Japanese	prestigious, global, decorative, international, eye-catching, symbolic, cool, sophisticated

Table 9.1: Summary of the various adjectives cited in this section have been by researchers to describe the different scripts. Note that some of the terms are contradictory and some overlap.

However, although the various sources cited earlier have provided valid historical and cultural reasons for the existence of the various associations carried by each of the four main Japanese scripts, a compilation of which can be seen in Table 9.1, they have not provided much empirical backing. This is problematic for any orthographic analysis, as it may cast doubt on whether these associations are truly active in the minds of non-linguists. Fortunately, a psychological study conducted in 2003 by Iwahara, Hatta and Maehara investigated the existence of semantic associations with all scripts besides *rōmaji*, and the results do mirror the previous descriptions. In the first section of the experiment, seventy-five Japanese college students, aged from nineteen to twenty-one, were asked to write down any term they ascribed to each script. *Hiragana* was frequently linked to terms like soft, round, lovely and feminine; *katakana* was seen as angular and linked to noun phrases like ‘foreign language’, ‘foreign country’ and ‘foreign person’; *kanji* was associated with terms like hard, difficult, intellectual, masculine and formal. Ultimately, the study provides strong empirical backing to the assertions mentioned earlier, concluding that ‘Japanese people do not arbitrarily choose a certain type of script in writing, but select a particular script based on certain considerations ... [and] the sense of compatibility between the script-type images and the mental representations of what they want to write must be one of these considerations’ (Iwahara, Hatta and Maehara, 2003, p. 387).

## Manipulation and Play

It is also important to note that these associations are not merely a subconscious feature of Japanese speakers' minds; they are associations that people manipulate and play with to suit their needs, beliefs and the meanings they wish to convey. In other words, analysis of Japanese script should take into account not only the passive views of the reader, but also 'the active perspective the writer employs when producing a piece of written Japanese ... [since] the writer may consciously choose to place a specific word in a particular script type for the 'feeling' it invokes' (Kess & Miyamoto, 1999, p. 108).

Evidence of these measured deliberations can be easily seen in the orthographic choices of Japanese poets. Gardner (2006), for example, notes Anzai Fuyue's juxtaposition of てふてふ (an archaic term for butterfly) and 鞆鞆海峡 (the Tartar Strait) as a conscious attempt to contrast frail fluttering with the rugged and inhospitable. Gardner later argues that another poet's decision to write the word *kakumei* [revolution] in *katakana* (カクメイ) instead of the standard *kanji* (革命) is to emphasise that the revolution's origins are in outside influences. Examinations of the revisions of famous haiku poet Basho also reveal intense concern with script, as his drafts contain almost twice as many orthographic manipulations as phonologic, syntactic or semantic changes (Hiraga, 2006). Often, these adjustments are a constant back and forth, showcasing the level of reflection behind the selection of each word's script. Similar manipulation and play have also been noted in advertising, personal communication, newspapers and novels (Igarashi, 2007; Masuji, 2011; Rowe, 1976).

Unfortunately, less attention has been given to the orthographic choices used to portray non-native speech. One of the few researchers to comment on the topic is Loveday (1986), who notes arguments that Japanese production by non-natives, especially Europeans, has been long considered an unnatural act, being rendered through intelligible but non-fluent speech. This strange balance is achieved by odd turns of phrase, recognisably different voice quality, *katakana* use, non-standard word order or simplification. While the demographics of Japan have changed over the last few decades, Loveday is not alone in asserting that Japan has a tendency to strongly emphasise the foreign (Onishi, 2004). As recently as 2009, McDonalds Japan employed a controversial Caucasian



character in their advertising, whose Japanese was portrayed on billboards and advertisements with every word and even particle depicted in *katakana* (Masters, 2009). This extremely non-standard use of orthography starkly emphasises the mascot's non-fluency and provides evidence for the possible continued validity of these claims.

## Manga Analysis

The first series this chapter will examine is *Nihonjin no shiranai Nihongo* [Japanese that Japanese People Don't Know], or *NSN*, which is a set text in a Japanese language school for foreign students living in Japan. The main character, Ms. Nagiko, is Japanese, but it is her interactions with NNSs that make up the story. Many of these characters play recurring roles throughout both published volumes.

In this manga, the most obvious use of non-standard orthography can be seen in the selection of *katakana* to mark non-fluent speech or a foreign accent, a selection that very much agrees with Loveday's (1986) aforementioned comments. A clear example of this can be found in a panel where a beginner and an advanced-level student exchange greetings. While both students say *konnichiwa*, the skilled student's utterance is in *hiragana*, the standard script for this term<sup>3</sup>, while the beginner's response is portrayed in *katakana* (コンニチワ), creating a stark visual marker of their different abilities. This gap is further emphasised by the final *hiragana* は [*ha*] being changed to the *katakana* ワ [*wa*]; in the greeting *konnichiwa*, the final sound is normally written with the mora for *ha*, but the character's attempt at using the term sees the actual mora for the sound *wa* employed, which supplements the use of *katakana* in marking her beginner's Japanese. The use of non-standard *katakana* for this purpose can sometimes be even more pointed, such as when a character asks 'nande? dōshite?' [why? why?] in non-standard *katakana*, while an arrow labeled 'beginner' points at his head. In this way, visual asides unavailable to novelists or many other writers are used along with script by the author to emphasise the learner's low level of language.

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3 Alc.co.jp gives 210 examples in *hiragana* and one in *katakana*. Appropriately enough, the example sentence using *katakana* is a translation of a non-native speaker's comments.

However, this is not the only use of *katakana* in the manga. It is also used to show imitation, a function perhaps arising as an extension of the scripts' traditional association with onomatopoeia. The most striking example comes from a scene in which a low-level learner is reciting what he believes is the intro to his favourite television show, not realising that he is actually repeating an advertising blurb. In portraying this utterance, basic function words, possessives, particles and verb stems – all normally the exclusive realm of *hiragana* (Kess & Miyamoto, 1999) – are converted into *katakana*. Although this instance differs from those above in that it is literally imitative, it could be argued that the previous examples of *katakana* use are also influenced by this mimetic function of the script, with non-fluent Japanese marked as an imitation, not a production, of the language.

The use of *kanji* in *NSN* is more intricate than that of *katakana*, and understanding its link to non-native speech often requires looking at the *kanji* these speakers do *not* use instead of those they do. In one panel, the teacher Ms. Nagiko employs the *kanji* for the verb *morau* (貰う) [to receive], which is interesting not only in that it is non-standard (3,358 examples in *hiragana* vs. 14 in *kanji*), but also in that no other character in the comic can be found using this *kanji*. Her ability to use this character thereby subtly expresses her clout and knowledge; an authoritative tone is conveyed via her use of a character the learners do not (or cannot) use themselves. A second teacher-restricted *kanji* can be found in the verb *machigatteiru* (間違っている/まちがっている) [to be wrong]. This word leans towards presentation in *kanji* (1,218 examples in *kanji* vs. 166 in *hiragana*), yet the only character in the book that follows this convention is Ms. Nagiko, and she only does so when handing back an assignment, i.e., this use occurs when she is explicitly acting out her role as an instructor and judge. That said, two examples of students using difficult *kanji* do exist, with a character named Jack using the polite form of *morau* (*itadaku*) in *kanji*, which also leans towards non-standard (1,491 examples in *hiragana* vs. 266 in *kanji*), and a Chinese student using *kanji* for the word snake.<sup>4</sup> However, Jack is noted as being so skilled he does not actually need to attend the school, and the difficult character used by the Chinese student is one that is identical to

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4 Neither is standard. Both *katakana* and *hiragana* have nearly 400 examples, although the teacher's speech contains the term in *katakana*.

that used in his native Chinese. These exceptions therefore confirm the analysis rather than contradict it.

The connection of *kanji* to authority also allows its use to convey confidence in second-language learners, a possibility especially visible in a series of stories involving the word *maru* [circle]. The first time this term appears, students are complaining about the teacher's use of circles to mark answers as correct, stating that it signifies a mistake in their countries. Unfamiliar with the term's usage in this context, and perhaps with the word itself, their use of the term is rendered by the author in *katakana* (マル). However, a few pages later, one of these students again uses the word *maru* to answer a question, this time with confidence, and the author chooses to render it in *kanji* (丸). Even though the student's guess is ultimately incorrect, this switch in orthography tacitly shows the reader that this learner has changed from someone who does not understand a term into someone who has acquired it, accepted it, and can use it appropriately. *Kanji*'s association with confidence can also be seen when a student uses the word 'body' [*nikutai*] instead of 'necktie' [*neikutai*] to answer a question. Her initial response is written in *kanji* (肉体) once she recognises her mistake and states, 'ah, not *nikutai* but *neikutai*', it becomes *katakana* (ニクタイ). This example functions in the opposite way to the previous one, as the script changes to show the *loss* of confident and fluent tones via the student's speech adopting the semiotic images of a beginner. Still, both examples function as instances wherein characters speaking with the assumption they will be understood do not have their errors marked until the speaker notices them.

The use of non-standard *hiragana* is much less distinct, but what can be found seems to agree with Nishimura's description (2006) of the script as unmarked. Change in script to *hiragana* in *NSN* often simply represents sounds that do not link to an actual word, like when a student mispronounces 七夕 (*tanabata*) [a Japanese festival] as たなぼた (*tanabota*) [meaningless] in *hiragana*. This mistake is due to a simple mishearing, with the speaker's learning-level not low enough for the words to be portrayed in *katakana*. That said, perhaps the most interesting use of non-standard *hiragana* is found when it appears in contrast to other scripts, as can be seen in the following examples:

- Nagiko: 気に入らない<sup>い</sup> を はいらない<sup>はい</sup> って読む人が多  
 いな。多<sup>はい</sup>いって言うか全員! ? もしかして気に入ら  
 ないと読むのが正しいの…?  
*'ki ni iranai' o 'hairanai' tte yomu hito ga ōi na. ōi tte iuka*  
*zenin!?! Moshikashite ki ni hairanai to yomu no ga tadashi no?*  
 [Lots of people read 'ki ni iranai' as 'ki ni hairanai'. Not  
 lots, but all!?! Maybe 'ki ni hairanai' is actually correct ...]
- Nagiko: 鼻は「わたし」じゃなくて「はな」  
*hana wa 'watashi' janakute 'hana'*  
 ['Nose' is not 'watashi', but 'hana'.]
- Student: ハナ  
*hana*  
 [Nose.]

In both samples, *hiragana* can be seen to represent pronunciation that is native-like in sound but does not reference an extant term. In the first excerpt, the teacher corrects students' misreading of *ki ni iranai* (in *kanji*) as *ki ni hairanai* (in *hiragana*), reading the mistake out loud but not attaching meaning to the phrase. However, once she realises that every student made the same mistake, she questions her own knowledge, and the phrase *ki ni hairanai* receives *kanji* as she wonders to herself if the students may in fact be correct. In the second excerpt, the word nose [*hana*] is seen written in three scripts (鼻, はな, and ハナ) allowing for all aforementioned uses of script to be seen in tandem. When Ms. Nagiko refers to the concept 'nose' it is in *kanji*, when she corrects the student's earlier mistake, the native sounds are portrayed in *hiragana*, and then, when a student repeats it, her fluent or imitative tones disallow her the use of *kanji* or *hiragana*, and her speech is relegated to *katakana*.

In contrast, *Daarin wa gaikokujin* [My Darling is a Foreigner] (or *DWG*) features less frequent use of non-standard orthography on the whole, although some of the strategies noted in *NSN* can be observed. The use of non-standard *katakana*, for example, is employed similarly. The most poignant example actually comes when the main character, Saori, attempts English. In one panel of the manga, she greets the mother of her partner, Tony, with 'na...

*naisu tu miichuu*, an attempt at ‘nice to meet you’. This is written in *katakana*, rather than Roman letters. Her frequently mentioned discomfort with her low English abilities thereby manifests itself visually through the author’s decision not to use the Roman alphabet.

*Katakana* also performs an imitative function in *DWG*, as can be seen when a NNS of Japanese mocks Japanese women for fawning over him. Despite the fact that he is telling a story and therefore technically quoting speech on both occasions, when he puts words in the girls’ mouths they are in standard *hiragana*, yet when he repeats these terms himself the orthography switches to *katakana*, while an arrow labeled ‘imitating’ points at him. This is similar to the use of *katakana* to portray onomatopoeia (Nishimura, 2006), but in this case human speech, not animal calls or natural noises, are being replicated.

*Kanji*, as before, is connected to knowledge or confidence, limiting the frequency with which it is used to portray non-native speech. This phenomenon is perhaps easiest to view when Tony, the titular ‘darling’, attempts to count pigeons in Japanese. At first he refers to pigeons [*hato*] in *katakana* (ハト), but as he becomes flustered trying to remember the correct way to count them in Japanese, his incorrect guesses are portrayed in *hiragana*. When Saori corrects him, playing the role of a teacher and fluent native speaker, *kanji* is used for both the word pigeon and the necessary counter. What makes this interaction particularly interesting, though, is that Tony then attempts to justify his mistake, arguing that the Japanese counting system is overly complex, and here *kanji* is used for pigeon again. While neither *katakana* nor *kanji* are clearly standard for this term (122 instances in *kanji* vs. 144 instances in *katakana*), the change in script is still able to transmit paralinguistic information to the reader through comparison with the form employed by Saori. In short, Tony’s lack of confidence is first portrayed through dissimilarity, and his later attempt to adopt a knowledgeable stance is reinforced through the use of same script as the NS.

*Hiragana*, again, appears to show speech as unmarked, or as representing sound that is fluent-sounding, but not intended to be linked to an actual word. The attempt at producing counters in the pigeon story is one example of this, as is an instance where Tony is shocked by the grotesque title of the ghost story *Miminasbi Hoichi* [Hoichi the Earless]. Unsure that *mimi* here actually refers to ears, he first repeats it twice in *hiragana* before switching to *kanji*. These

first utterances are interpretable as sounds he does not yet, or does not want to, attach meaning to, while the latter instances in *kanji* convey both the sound and the word 'ear' itself. This selection of script again works in tandem with the art in the panels, in this case Tony's terrified expression, to guide readers' interpretation. While in some ways the achieved affect is similar to writing 'by ear you don't mean *ear* ... do you?', the change of scripts clearly delineates the depth of Tony's growing level of comprehension and horror in a way that would be difficult, if not impossible, to do in other languages or mediums.

### Comparing the Series

In regards to the first research question, *NSN* and *DWG* show a number of similarities in their use of non-standard orthography. In both series, *katakana* has attachments to foreign, harsh and imitative elements; *kanji* projects authority, competence and erudition; and *hiragana* connotes smooth, fluent and unmarked speech. However, the two manga differ in the extent to which they point out differences between characters, with level, ability and foreignness being more starkly emphasised in *NSN*. This may be rooted in the narrative needs of the manga themselves, with *NSN's* humor and story relying heavily on the difficulties of being a learner. In contrast, *DWG* expects the audience to sympathise with the character of Tony, and has a stated goal of emphasising that all people are, at heart, the same. As such, its use of orthography seems to run counter to Loveday's comments (1986) about foreign speech, as even speakers with limited abilities are usually depicted via standard orthography, the content of their message more important to the story than their actual linguistic ability.

Both series also seem to place more importance on the speaker's level of confidence than their actual ability when deciding on a script. Non-standard orthographies are often used for stuttering, self-correction, lapses of memory and other such slip-ups, whereas standard portrayals can be employed for mistakes and mispronunciations that are made with assurance. In other words, portraying NNSs speech via orthography that matches Japanese norms appears to be used by both manga to show confidence and fluency, but these terms are not synonymous with correctness.

As for the second research question, some uses can indeed be seen to match the psychological and historical associations attributed to each script.

*Hiragana* is linked to smooth and unmarked speech, while *katakana* carries clear connotations of harsh, inorganic or marked utterances as a whole, *hiragana* can also serve this function when used in place of *kanji*-standard nouns. *Katakana* is also linked to the concept of ‘foreign’, but at times this is more in the sense of ‘not-acquired’ than ‘from another place’. The use of *katakana* for emphasis, in a similar that italics are used, is conspicuously absent from the speech of foreigners, and a different font or calligraphic style is used for emphasis in their speech instead. Nothing about the choice to use *hiragana* in these series seems to be directly rooted in its feminine associations. The masculine connotations of *kanji* are also missing, but its connections to the scientific, difficult and erudite clearly influence its application. Somewhat surprisingly, non-standard use of *rōmaji* is almost completely absent from the NNS’s utterances, despite its non-Japanese and international impressions. This may be due to practical factors, such as the difficulty of reading the *rōmaji* script.

It must be mentioned that the explorative and small-scale nature of this study brings about various limitations, and it may be difficult to extrapolate these findings into general rules (although this was never the study’s intention). The fact that neither author is seen to make use of certain connotations that certain scripts are argued to have does not mean that no authors take such aspects into consideration. It must also be recognised that some of these orthographic strategies could be used to portray NSs as well. The speech of NSs who are, for example, stuttering or confused could theoretically be presented in a non-standard manner. Although no instances of this were found in these four volumes, the non-standard use of orthography should be in no way viewed as something restricted to the depiction of non-native speech. Further research on this subject that looks at the speech of manga characters whose salient trait is not related to their foreignness, or the non-standard employment of orthography in other genres, would greatly expand the understanding of this phenomenon.

## Conclusion

Ultimately, it is clear that the orthographic choices in these manga are deliberate and strongly influenced by the authors’ viewpoints and associations with each

script, as well as the ways they expect their audience will read them. When different scripts are used for different characters, each one is meant to be read a certain way and this builds on, plays with and manipulates various socially proscribed images. This follows a rich historical tradition of orthographic play in Japanese and shows the continued gravity of these decisions in contemporary writing.

Different orthographic choices might seem minor and are perhaps unintelligible or confusing to students of Japanese who are at a beginner level. But for native or fluent readers who are decoding a text these choices are significant. In manga this is doubly true, as it must convey aspects of tone or phrasing largely without the descriptive resources other written mediums allow. Ultimately, unconventional blends of orthography make up a vital part of the Japanese literary landscape and can combine with manga's already existent receptivity to visual modifications to provide an especially unique and detailed way for readers to navigate a text when the line between conversation and writing is blurred.

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# FACTORS INFLUENCING NON-NATIVE READERS' SEQUENCING OF JAPANESE MANGA PANELS

JAMES F. LEE AND WILLIAM S. ARMOUR

## Introduction

While it is not possible to exactly pinpoint when manga become a popular medium for use in Japanese as an additional language (or L2) classrooms, the publication of the magazine *Mangajin* (Simmons, 1988–1998) in the United States in June 1990 could be a potential date to note. In its seven years of publication, *Mangajin* presented a different way of approaching Japanese as an L2, since it differed so much from the textbooks of the day. The magazine also addressed the huge interest in Japanese-language learning that began in the late 1980s. The focus of *Mangajin* was on language learning – grammar, vocabulary (including *kanji*) and aspects of politeness – and cultural familiarisation – crucial cultural aspects were often embedded in the selected examples. In June 1993, a monthly Japanese language journal designed for teachers, *Nihongo*, published a special feature, ‘Manga o kyōshitsu de tsukau ‘Sazae-san’ kara ‘Kureyonshin-chan’ made’ [Using manga in the classroom: From Sazae-san to Kureyonshin-chan]. This issue of *Nihongo* also acknowledged *Mangajin* as a useful resource for teaching idiomatic expressions. Jumping ahead twenty years to the present day, it is unsurprising, then, that The Japan Foundation found that under ‘knowledge-based tendencies’, the second most popular purpose of Japanese language study was ‘learning about manga, anime, etc’ (2011, p. 9).

Manga seem to have earned a place in the toolbox of resources available to both Japanese language teachers and learners alike. However, despite the enthusiasm for using manga as material for pedagogical purposes, there is a paucity of empirical evidence informing their use in the L2 Japanese language classroom. The present chapter attempts to fill this gap by investigating a fundamental skill required by all who engage in the reading of comics or manga, that is, the correct sequencing of the panels or *koma*,<sup>1</sup> and begins with a review of literature presenting empirical and synthetic works related to reading Japanese manga from both first language (L1) and L2 perspectives.

### L1 Perspectives

Ingulsrud and Allen (2009) provide a comprehensive treatment of how L1 literacy develops in a cohort of Japanese nationals who read manga. They found that in regards to the sequence of *koma*, it 'is an issue for readers and has to be learned through experience ... Learning how to interpret the panel order takes much practice' (p. 133). In a previous study, they point out that 'teachers and critics also need to understand that reading manga is not a mindless exercise. It is an activity that requires a great deal of skill. Readers have to interpret the conventions of text, illustrations, and format' (Allen and Ingulsrud, 2003, p. 681). Their findings reveal that the sequencing of *koma* is a learned skill and one that cannot be taken for granted since it is vital to other kinds of processing, including the comprehension of the narrative itself.

Nakazawa (2005) presents his process model of manga reading comprehension and has conducted considerable research on Japanese children learning to read manga to support his model. He identifies both the form and arrangement of *koma* as features of manga that must be processed. The arrangement of *koma* is an element of semantic long-term memory that can influence the functioning of short-term or working memory. The reader must code information in the short-term memory, including identifying *koma*. Once coded, the reader must form propositions and to do so must connect each *koma* with others.

Nakazawa and Nakazawa (1993) presented a four-*koma* manga to children of different ages and asked them to sequence the *koma*. Successful sequencing

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1 There are manga that have complex and creative or unusual *koma* arrangements. The length of the narrative also needs to be factored into the discussion regarding *koma* sequencing. In this study, the examples chosen represent a standard arrangement of *koma* for the genre (an everyday, slice-of-school-life narrative).

improved dramatically with the age of the children. The least successful were kindergartners and first graders, with 5.2 per cent and 6.6 per cent correct, respectively, but the success rate was 80 per cent by fourth grade, 81.2 per cent by 6th grade and 92.9 per cent by 8th grade.

Nakazawa (2002) examined the effects of manga reading experience on two seventh grade girls. One indicated that she read manga every day, whereas the other claimed to read manga once a week. The more experienced reader scored higher than the less experienced reader on a recall test and a comprehension test. The two children also showed differences in eye movements and reading times. The experienced reader moved her eyes in a 'left, down, left, down' pattern more often than the less experienced reader; that is, the experienced reader had a script for the common Japanese arrangement of *koma*. The less experienced reader fixated on word balloons more often, relying on textual elements to understand the story. The more experienced reader skipped more *koma* and word balloons and made fewer unnecessary eye movements.

Panel sequencing has also been studied among adult L1 readers in Japan. Nakazawa (2004) compared the panel sequencing ability of fourth graders, university students (aged nineteen to twenty-one) and adult students (aged thirty to seventy). The university students outperformed the other two groups. The explanation provided refers to the ongoing cognitive development of fourth graders versus the reading experiences of the two adult groups. The adult students had less experience reading manga compared to the university students because they grew up in a time when reading manga was for children and indicated that they had read manga in childhood but did not read it in the present.

In addition to panel sequencing, the relationship between manga reading experience and comprehension has also been examined among adult L1 readers. Nakazawa (1997) found that university students in their twenties had more manga reading experience than those in their forties and fifties. He found that students in their twenties and thirties recalled more and comprehended more of story manga than university students in their fifties and sixties. Additionally, Nakazawa compared the results of nineteen to twenty-year-old students who indicated they read manga one or more days per week to those who indicated they did not read manga at all. Those with current manga reading experience recalled more than those who did not currently read manga.

To summarise, the L1 literature provides the basis for including several features of the present study of L2 reading. First, the L1 literature identifies panel sequencing as a necessary ability of reading manga. Will this also be the case among L2 learners/non-native readers? Second, the L1 literature outlines a clear role for manga reading experience in how children approach a manga story and how well adults recall and comprehend manga stories. Will manga reading experience also play a role amongst L2 learners/non-native readers and what might that role be in relation to panel sequencing?

## L2 Perspectives

Though manga have been used in L2 Japanese language classrooms over the last two decades, it appears that they have attracted virtually no empirical scrutiny to support claims regarding their effectiveness in the actual development of language skills. Brantmeier, Davis and Havard (2011) compiled a comprehensive bibliography of empirical research and theory about reading in languages other than English. These researchers found forty-eight references in both Japanese and English since 1974, yet none seem to deal directly with manga as a unit of analysis in spite of a focus on topics such as narrative comprehension, word knowledge, comprehension of technical Japanese, strategy use, cognitive load and affective variables (pp. 150–152). Panel [*koma*] sequencing did not appear in any of the titles referenced in Brantmeier, Davis and Havard.

Published material specifically concerning manga in the L2 Japanese classroom context tends to offer an application focus, that is, a series of how-to activities using manga as a so-called 'authentic' materials. The June 1993 issue of *Nihongo* is an example of this kind. More recently, Chinami (2004) provides a comprehensive series of activities using manga for advanced learners, while Chinami (2005) provides methods for pedagogising manga. In February 2010, The Japan Foundation launched the website [anime-manga.jp](http://anime-manga.jp), offering interested parties access to a variety of learning materials using manga as the impetus.

In summary, there appears to be limited or no published empirical work that has dealt with reading manga from an L2 perspective, let alone the issue of panel sequencing by non-native Japanese language readers (although Promnitz-Hayashi describes the use of manga in English teaching in chapter eleven).

## The Present Study

This chapter examines the reading behaviors of two groups of L2 learners/non-native readers while reading Japanese manga. One group had studied the Japanese language through to advanced-level courses and, at the time of the study, was enrolled in a course in which they read manga for language learning purposes. The other group was enrolled in a Spanish linguistics course and some indicated that they had read Japanese manga in English. The purpose of examining the Spanish group is to gain an understanding of non-native readers' initial knowledge state for reading Japanese manga. By comparing the performance of the Spanish students to the advanced-level Japanese students, it is possible to gain a sense of the distance L2 learners must travel in becoming more proficient readers of Japanese manga. Japanese, unlike English (or Spanish), typically reads from right to left. One important aspect of reading manga is to move from *koma* to *koma* or to sequence the *koma* right to left and top to bottom. Therefore, we focus on this aspect of reading manga in the present chapter.

## Research Questions

Given the issues identified in the review of the literature above, the following research questions guide the present study:

1. Does manner of presentation (panels-only, panels-plus-visuals only, panels-plus-visuals-plus-text) contribute to the success with which non-native readers sequence Japanese manga panels?
2. Does L2 proficiency in Japanese (+/- proficiency) contribute to the success with which non-native readers sequence Japanese manga panels?
3. Does manga reading experience (+/- experience) contribute to the success with which non-native readers sequence Japanese manga panels?
4. Do individual differences contribute to how non-native readers approach sequencing Japanese manga panels and the success with which they sequence the panels?

## Methods and Procedures

Two groups of undergraduate students enrolled in the School of International Studies at the University of New South Wales participated voluntarily in the study. They each signed an informed consent form. One group (n = 20) was enrolled in an upper-level Japanese language course, 'Learning Japanese by reading manga'. All members of this group had experience reading manga and had studied the Japanese language to an advanced level. The other group (n = 15) was enrolled in an upper-level Spanish linguistics course, 'Spanish/English contrasts'. Thirteen students in this group had never studied the Japanese language. Four students indicated they had experienced reading manga in English, with two of these students having studied Japanese to the advanced level and indicating that they had experience of reading Japanese manga.

The participants' task was to sequence manga panels under three conditions as described above. Each participant was given a booklet of materials that contained the manga panels for the three manners of presentation (conditions). The first page of the booklet provided instructions for the various sequencing conditions. The researcher read aloud the instructions to the participants as they followed along silently.

The first condition required participants to sequence blank *koma* (no visuals or text). The blank *koma* were prepared by the researchers (see Appendix). A set of five, six or seven *koma* was arranged to look like a page of manga. The participants had five pages to sequence, a total of twenty-eight panels. They were instructed to write a number inside each panel to indicate the panel sequence and were given an example. They were given twenty seconds to number each page. The time restriction pushed them to do the task quickly and to not over think the sequencing. They were also instructed not to turn the page in the booklet until instructed to do so.

The second condition required the participants to sequence *koma* that had visuals (people and empty speech bubbles). The materials for this condition consisted of two two-page manga stories in which each two-page story was presented on a separate page of the booklet. These stories originally appeared in Taketomi Kenji's 2006 *Suzuki Sensei*, volume 1 (pp. 4–5, 42–43). The stories were photocopied and the text was removed from the speech bubbles. The first extract had seven panels on one page and eight on the other. The second extract



had eight panels on one page and nine on the other. The participants were given thirty seconds to number the *koma* and again were instructed not to turn the page in the booklet until instructed to do so.

The third condition required the participants to sequence *koma* that were graphically and linguistically complete. The materials for this condition consisted of two two-page stories for which each two-page story was presented on a separate page. These *koma* originally appeared in Taketomi Kenji's 2006 *Suzuki Sensei*, volume 1 (pp. 58–59, 100–101). The first extract had six panels on one page and seven on the other. The second extract had eight panels on one page and nine on the other. This time the participants were given fifty seconds to number the two stories (as there was more information to process) and at the end of the allotted time the participants handed in the booklets.

## Analysis

A score for each participant was calculated based on the number of panels sequenced correctly under each of the three conditions. There were a total of twenty-eight panels in the first panel-only condition, it was found that certain panels were sequenced correctly regardless of what other factors influenced performance. For example, the middle of a three-panel sequence could be identified as the second one no matter whether the participant was sequencing from left to right or right to left. Thus, twelve such panels were not included in the score. The maximum score was, therefore, sixteen. Applying the same consideration to the second panels-plus-visuals condition, seven panels were found which could be sequenced correctly under any sequencing orientation. Thus, the maximum score for condition two was deemed to be twenty-five. Only one of the panels in the third condition (graphically and linguistically complete manga) could be sequenced correctly under any approach to numbering, thus, the maximum score for this task was twenty-nine.

Three factors for analysis were identified, based on participants' background and performance. First, the participants have different backgrounds in terms of Japanese language study (+/-) and manga reading experience (+/-). Second, participants differed in the direction in which they sequenced *koma*: correctly, from right to left, incorrectly, from left to right, and a mixture of the two. Third, when participants sequenced the two-page manga, some sequenced

them continuously across the two pages, others sequenced them separately (starting at one on each page) and others employed a mixture of the two methods (sequencing one continuously and the other separately). The analysis of these factors will be discussed in relation to the research questions below.

## Results and Discussion

The first research question addresses whether the manner of presentation of the manga (panels only, panels-plus-visuals only, panels-plus-visuals-plus-text) contributes to how successfully non-native readers sequence Japanese manga panels. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 10.1, in which the column averages, presented in the bottom row, are relevant to this research question.

Factor		Panels-only (%)	Panels-plus-Visuals (%)	Panels-plus-Visuals-plus-Text (%)	Row TOTALS (%)
<i>Background</i>	+Japanese/ +manga n = 22	56.81	67.00	60.17	61.33
	-Japanese/ +manga n = 4	67.19	44.92	57.76	56.62
	-Japanese/ -manga n = 9	2.06	3.08	0.00	1.71
<i>Direction</i>	right to left n = 12	94.75	89.00	98.86	94.20
	left to right n = 13	0.44	0.28	0.00	0.24
	mixed n = 10	39.38	2.12	36.90	26.13
<i>Continuity</i>	continuous n = 22	45.38	28.00	48.59	40.66
	separate n = 10	49.38	62.00	48.62	53.33
	mixed n = 3	0.00	6.40	0.00	2.13
<b>Column Average percentages</b>		39.49	33.64	38.99	

Table 10.1. Percent of panels sequenced correctly in the three manners of presentation by factor

The average percentages of correctly sequenced panels across the three manners of presentation are 39.49 per cent, 33.64 per cent and 38.99 per cent, respectively. That the differences in correctly sequenced panels are so small – 4 per cent – suggests that, overall, the manner of presentation does not contribute to the success with which participants sequence Japanese manga panels. The similarity in scores supports the idea that panel sequencing is an independent component of manga comprehension.

This pattern of small numerical differences may be observed in four of the nine rows of data. However, there is at least a 10 per cent difference between the three manners of presentation within certain rows: +Japanese/ +manga, -Japanese/+manga, mixed direction, continuous enumeration and separate enumeration. Moreover, there is no discernible pattern as to which manner of presentation was the most or least difficult according to different backgrounds, directions and continuity of enumeration. The panels-only presentation is the highest scoring in three of the nine factors and the lowest in three of the nine factors. The panels-plus-visuals presentation is the highest score in four cases but also the lowest in another four cases. The panels-plus-visuals-plus-text presentation was the highest score for one factor and the lowest for three. These factors and the relationships between them will be discussed below.

The second and third research questions address the background factors of Japanese language study and experience reading manga in Japanese or any other language. Three groups of learners were identified based on this background information: +Japanese/+manga experience, of which there were twenty-two, -Japanese/+manga experience, of which there were four, and -Japanese/-manga experience, of which there was a group of nine. As can be seen in the row averages (the last column) presented in Table 10.1, the most successful participants were the +Japanese/+manga experience participants, who correctly sequenced 61.33 per cent of the panels. The least successful participants were the -Japanese/-manga experience participants, who correctly sequenced 1.71 per cent of the panels. They had neither linguistic nor extra-linguistic knowledge upon which to draw. The effect of manga reading experience is quite large. The -Japanese/+manga experience group successfully sequenced 56.62 per cent of the panels and there was a 54.94 per cent increase in accuracy due to manga reading experience. There was also a difference in scores between the +Japanese/+manga experience and -Japanese/+manga experience groups of 4.71 per cent, which

suggests that Japanese language study has only a minor influence on correctly sequencing panels.

Manner of presentation was not expected to affect the participants who were characterised as -Japanese/-manga experience, because they had neither linguistic nor extra-linguistic knowledge to bring to the task. These participants did not process the cues that the visuals provided, such as the direction of the characters' gaze or the objects presented in the panels to create a continuous story. The text, when added, was impenetrable to them. The participants characterised as -Japanese/+manga were expected to benefit from the addition of visuals because they had the extra-linguistic experience of reading manga. It was hypothesised that these four participants would process the visual cues from experience; however, they were less successful in the panels-plus-visuals condition (44.92 per cent) than in the panels-only condition (56.81 per cent). The decrease in their success rate may be due to the differences in how visual cues are organised in Japanese manga compared to English-language manga. This group's success rate improved with the addition of text, even though they could not read the text.

The fourth research question addresses individual differences in non-native readers' approaches to sequencing manga panels as well as their success in sequencing them. The analysis revealed two sequencing behaviours for further investigation. The first was the direction in which the participants sequenced the panels. The Japanese manga panels examined were sequenced from right to left and from top to bottom. The analysis revealed three approaches to sequencing related to direction: exclusively right to left sequencing, exclusively left to right sequencing, and mixing of these two directionalities either within the two-page manga or between different manga. The row averages in Table 10.1 reveal that the most successful sequencing was accomplished by those who exclusively sequenced right to left, 94.20 per cent, whereas the least successful was undertaken by those who exclusively sequenced left to right, 0.24 per cent. Those who mixed sequencing directions achieved some success, 26.14 per cent, most likely due to the panels they sequenced from right to left.

Analysis revealed that only twelve participants exclusively sequenced panels from right to left. What are their characteristics? Two of the twelve were from the -Japanese/+manga experience group – meaning that, surprisingly, only ten participants of the twenty-two +Japanese/+manga experience group

exclusively sequenced the panels in the correct direction. The analysis revealed that only ten participants adopted a mixed orientation to sequencing (sometimes right to left, sometimes left to right). Two of the ten were from -Japanese language study groups, whereas the other eight had studied Japanese. Analysis revealed that thirteen participants adopted an exclusive left to right orientation to sequencing. These participants consisted of nine -Japanese language study participants and four who had studied Japanese language previously. Interestingly, and importantly, enrolment in a course in which reading manga is required did not guarantee that the participant adopted a right to left orientation.

The second sequencing behaviour the analysis revealed was the continuity with which non-native readers enumerated the panels of the two-page manga stories used in the panels-plus-visuals and panels-plus-visuals-plus-text manners of presentation. The participants demonstrated three approaches related to continuity: enumerating the two-page manga stories continuously, thus overtly connecting the story line, enumerating the two-page manga stories separately, starting the sequencing over again on the second page, and enumerating some two-page stories continuously and others separately (mixed). The row averages in Table 10.1 reveal that the greatest success was achieved by those who sequenced the panels separately, 53.33 per cent, followed by those who sequenced them continuously, 40.66 per cent. The least successful participants, by far, were the three who mixed their approach to continuity, 2.13 per cent.

Most participants ( $n = 22$ ) adopted a continuous orientation to sequencing panels, thus overtly connecting the sequencing of the two pages of manga. These 22 participants consisted of participants with Japanese language study experience ( $n = 16$ ) as well as those without ( $n = 6$ ) and among those six, some had manga reading experience ( $n = 2$ ) and the others had none ( $n = 4$ ). Among those adopting a continuous orientation were participants who sequenced panels from right to left ( $n = 8$ ), left to right ( $n = 9$ ) and mixed the directions ( $n = 5$ ). The term 'separate' in Table 10.1 refers to treating the two-page manga as two distinct manga. That is, a group of participants ( $n = 10$ ) restarted at one the sequencing of panels across the two pages. Thus, they did not overtly connect the panels into one story line. Once again, it is a diverse group of readers. Among the group with no Japanese language study, five with no manga reading experience and one with manga reading experience enumerated the pages separately. Four of the group with Japanese language study enumerated the

pages separately. Readers from each of the three approaches to the direction of panel sequencing enumerated pages separately: right to left ( $n = 4$ ), left to right ( $n = 3$ ) and mixed ( $n = 3$ ). Only three participants mixed continuous and separate enumerations of the panels and all three study the Japanese language. Their approach to continuity proved extremely unsuccessful (2.13 per cent correct). Two had mixed the direction of their sequencing while the other adopted left to right sequencing.

Taken together, these results demonstrate that (1) continuity and direction are separate aspects of sequencing manga panels, (2) the various approaches to continuity are not associated with Japanese language study (+/-) or manga reading experience (+/-), and (3) the various approaches to direction are not associated with Japanese language study (+/-) or manga reading experience (+/-).

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The pedagogical implication is clear: in order for students to successfully engage with manga, sequencing strategies should be taught explicitly and practiced frequently. There is a small literature mostly from a L1 perspective that advocates using comics in a broad range of curriculum areas, not just in the language arts. Jenkins and Detamore (2008, pp. 33–35) recommend a sequencing-in-reading activity be employed. These authors are not concerned with manga or the initial first step of orientating novice manga readers so that they can correctly sequence manga *koma*, they focus more on the reconstruction of the story from comic strips that have been cut into discreet panels. The objective here is that the reconstructed story 'make sense'. Steinberg suggests a similar activity (1992, p. 9). While these and other comparable classroom activities are laudable, the present study suggests that in the case of manga reading, there is a preliminary step before the cutting up of the manga and that is to inure students to the correct sequencing of *koma* in the first place. More recently, Yoshida provides a comprehensive summary of what she calls 'techniques to take you into the atmosphere of the manga world' (2010, p. 22). In this summary, Yoshida, with the help of an actual manga (Aoiike Yasuko's *Eroika yori ai o komete*), discusses how to read the sequence of frames in the example given (pp. 22–23) by providing a chart and written exegesis – 'How

your eyes should travel through the frames' (p. 22). Knowledge of this aspect of reading cannot be assumed or taken for granted.

### Directions for Future Research

A much larger-scale study involving many more participants would lend itself to statistical analysis, such as a multiple regression analysis. Such a statistical analysis would allow us to identify factors that could predict successful sequencing. Based on the data presented, we hypothesise that the factors that might predict successful sequencing are right to left sequencing followed by Japanese language study, subsequently followed by manga reading experience.

The non-native readers who participated in this study were overtly focused on sequencing manga panels. The title of the booklet they received was 'Manga sequencing tasks'. They were required to write numbers in each panel and were given a limited amount of time to complete the task. In the end, the three manners of presentation we examined showed little effect on successful panel sequencing. One direction for future research is to examine the role of comprehension – multi-modal including text and other clues and cues – in panel sequencing. Such a study would involve instructing the learners to read a manga story and as they do to indicate the order in which they read the panels. To be sure that comprehension was in focus, the participants would be told that they had to answer comprehension questions after reading each manga story.

Furthermore, testing panel sequencing using manga examples from a range of styles appears necessary. As mentioned above, for the present study, the researchers chose a manga that could be characterised as a slice-of-life narrative set in a Japanese high school. The rather simple and regular arrangement of *koma* in this manga is more characteristic of *shōnen* style manga, written for young males, and contains little *koma* complexity. When compared with many *shōjo* manga in which *koma* styles are less regular and perhaps less obvious, even the more experienced manga reader may have trouble in sequencing the *koma* correctly.

Finally, a study that replicates those carried out by Nakazawa (see above), but using L2 Japanese readers as the control group and those without Japanese language knowledge as a second group appears possible, utilising advancements in eye-tracking technology. Such an approach may shed light onto when

sequencing takes place and how *koma* are sequenced by the reader before he or she actually has a chance to think about the sequencing too deeply (that is, how a reader's eyes scan both the page and the printed *koma* while using different types of manga as discussed above).

## Conclusion

The analysis presented above may be summarised as follows in relation to the research questions:

1. The manner of presentation (panels only, panels-plus-visuals only, panels-plus-visuals-plus-text) contributes little to the success with which non-native readers sequence Japanese manga panels.
2. L2 proficiency in Japanese (+/- proficiency) contributes little to the success with which non-native readers sequence Japanese manga panels.
3. Manga reading experience (+/- experience) contributes greatly to the success with which non-native readers sequence Japanese manga panels.

The fourth research question was: Do individual differences contribute to how non-native readers approach sequencing Japanese manga panels and the success with which they sequence the panels? The following factors and behaviors are associated with *successful* panel sequencing:

1. manga reading experience;
2. sequencing panels from right to left, consistently or inconsistently;
3. a consistent approach (continuous or separate) to enumerating the panels in two-page manga.

The following factors and behaviours are associated with (extremely) *unsuccessful* panel sequencing:

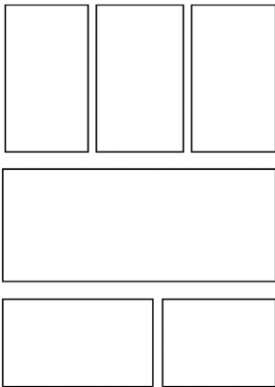
1. a lack of Japanese language study combined with a lack of manga reading experience;
2. adopting a left to right orientation to sequencing;
3. mixing continuous and separate approaches to enumerating panels between manga pages.



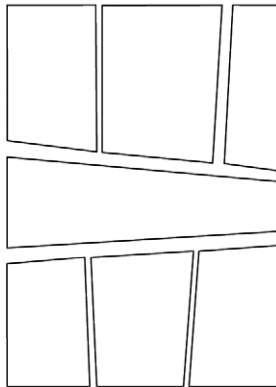
While comprehension of the manga stories was not measured in the current study, it would appear impossible for non-native readers who are extremely unsuccessful in sequencing manga panels to successfully comprehend the manga stories. Thus, in order for learners to make the most of manga, appropriate instruction in terms of sequencing strategies is crucial.

### Appendix: Manga Panel Layout

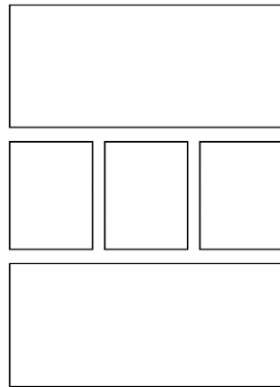
1



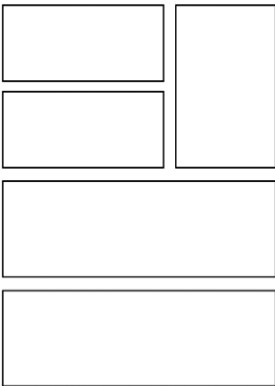
2



3



4



5



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# MANGA IN THE ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

LARA PROMNITZ-HAYASHI

## Introduction

Critics of manga tend to assume that manga are for children, when in fact adults are also avid readers (Allen & Ingulsrud, 2003; Jacobs, 2007). Walking into a bookstore or manga café in Japan, one will find a large selection of genres catering for everyone, including *shōnen* (boy) *bishōjo* (girl), *dōjinshi* (amateur), sports (especially basketball and tennis), *yaoi* (love between gay men), adventure, *sarariman* (businessmen), OL (female office worker) and *gurume* (cooking) (Brau 2004; Lent 2004). While manga and comics have long been a prominent form of popular culture, they have frequently been viewed negatively in the education realm, with many educators arguing that they are for children who have not yet attained ‘the level of reading “real” books’ (Marsh & Millard, as cited in Fukunaga, 2006, p.220), which if true, may make manga suitable for second-language learners. Some educators are reluctant to incorporate popular culture into the classroom at all (Morrison, Bryan & Chilcoat, 2002). However, Cary (2004) states that between 90 and 95 per cent of literate Japanese people read manga, and if this is the case it may be a useful medium to bring into the classroom as students already have a basic knowledge on which to build.

## Multiliteracies

Foreign-language classrooms have long used a variety of teaching methods, such as grammar-translation, audio-lingual and, more recently, communicative language. In addition, critical thinking has come to the forefront of teaching in recent years. While textbooks have always had a place in the classroom, it can be argued that the more 'modern' classroom relies on multimodality in order to enhance multiliteracies:

Literature pedagogy now finds itself confronted with highly sophisticated visual as well as textual material that has sprung out of the most unexpected of sources – the comics ... we are in the midst of a cognitive shift and reading today has become a hybrid textual-visual experience, as witnessed by the inescapable presence of the Internet, PowerPoint, cell-phone screens, and the numerous full-colour illustrations and photographs now found in newspapers. (Tabachnick, as cited in Vandermeersche & Soetaert, 2011, p. 5)

Chun (2009) argues that by incorporating substantive topics that relate to students' own experience and knowledge, multiliteracies pedagogy works to 'promote learning that recognizes students' own knowledge resources, which in turn affirms students' identities as learners and thinkers' (p. 145). The use of manga in the language classroom can not only motivate students, it can also introduce them to a variety of literacies, such as cultural literacy, visual literacy and critical literacy. Williams (2008) further states that the use of comics in the classroom provides students with the opportunity to deconstruct texts on different levels, to examine the stories, characters, contexts and relationship between the images and text.

## Cultural and Critical Literacies

Kubota (2002, as cited in Fukunaga, 2006) questions how culture should be taught in language classrooms, claiming that cultural knowledge taught in language classrooms is often static. Zeising (2001) argues that the foundation of any meaningful understanding 'requires understanding of the cultural context' (p. 1). Developing students' cultural literacy has become an integral part of foreign-language learning. It is important for students to have knowledge about

their own culture before learning about the culture of their target language. Naqeeb (2012) states that cultural literacy is about ‘understanding the meaning of the words based on a common knowledge that enables one to make sense of what is read’ (p. 41). Thanasoulas (as cited in Naqeeb, 2012) further argues that learning English as a foreign language (EFL) includes grammatical and communicative competencies, and language proficiency together with cultural competence. That is, knowing the beliefs, conventions and customs along with systems of meaning of another country.

Through the use of different mediums, students are able to reflect, analyse and understand their own culture before moving on to different cultures. In addition, students are able to become more motivated to critically question different aspects of their own culture and actively share their opinions. Fukunaga (2006) suggests that students can become active learners rather than passive learners through critical awareness. This often occurs when students are given a number of different tasks and discussion activities in which they need to question specific cultural and linguistic elements.

## Study Design

‘Popular culture through television, manga, anime and horror’ was a fifteen-week elective course that consisted of two ninety-minute classes per week at a private university in urban Japan. There were thirty students (twenty-six females and four males) in the class, who were third and fourth-year students majoring in EFL. The course was comprised of five units: ‘Introduction to popular culture’, ‘Television’, ‘Horror’, ‘Manga’ and ‘Anime’. The objectives of the course were for students to identify cultural aspects in their own (sub)cultures and to compare and contrast Japanese and ‘Western’ cultural elements through different mediums. Students enrolled in the course for different reasons, but twenty-three students reported that they primarily enrolled because they were interested in anime and manga, even though the course covered other topics. Of those twenty-three students, five described themselves as *otaku* and reported that they often dressed as their favourite characters when they visited Tokyo and attended cosplay conventions and cosplay parties. Six students enrolled because their peers had taken the course previously and recommended it to them, while one student admitted to taking the course largely because it fit in her schedule.

## Methodology

The findings for this study were obtained through a number of different methods. As all activities presented to the students were communicative in nature, it was possible for the teacher to observe discussions among students as they worked through the activities. Students were given worksheets to complete during their discussions, as well as copies of manga for translation (see online content for a printable introductory manga worksheet), both of which the teacher collected for analysis. In addition to the worksheets, students were also required to present a manga character and story to the class and were observed by the teacher from the planning and preparation stage through to the presentation. Finally, students were asked to complete a questionnaire about the course. It is important to note that all activities undertaken in this unit of the course encouraged students to both develop multiliteracy skills in order to build their English-language proficiency and further their understanding of cultural differences through the medium of manga.

## Findings and Analysis

### Pictures are Worth a Thousand Words

As manga is a highly visual medium, studying the medium allows students to develop visual literacy skills. Versaci maintains that graphic novels, a description that also applies to manga and comics, enable teachers to ‘pose questions that help students do two things: understand how images produce meaning, and become engaged in the search for this meaning’ (as cited in Connors, 2011, p. 75). Jacobs argues that, as texts, comics or manga can provide a ‘complex environment for the negotiation of meaning’ and that the page layout itself can facilitate meaning making by the readers (2007, p. 21). Allen and Ingulsrud argue that the ‘multimodal nature of manga is not simply text with illustration, but text in the speech bubbles representing the illocutionary force of the manga character, which is central to the illustrations’ and that simply knowing the words is ‘not sufficient to understand the content’ (2005, p. 267). They further state that in manga, meaning is communicated at different levels, which includes the layout of the frames, the illustrations and the words, and that a successful reader must ‘process and interpret the meanings of these layers in order to build an understanding of the text’ (p. 267).

In the course discussed in the present chapter, the students were first introduced to the visual elements of well-known Japanese manga. For this exercise *One Piece*, *Death Note* and *Sazae-san* were chosen, as students were likely to be familiar with the titles and could easily access copies in the university's library on campus. Students were given copies of the manga in which the text was omitted and in small groups they were asked to identify any aspects of the page layouts that they felt were important. Students were able to identify images (people, creatures) settings (buildings, places, scenery), the shapes, sizes and position of word balloons, the number of frames and their positioning, and sound effects (onomatopoeia). It was here that meaning making came into play, as the students were then asked to imagine what was happening in the story simply by observing the visual cues. The students were next given copies of English-language comics. *Spiderman*, *The Avengers* and *The Simpsons* were chosen, as many of the students had watched at least one of these in either cartoon or movie format. Students were asked to repeat the same activity as above. Following this, students were next given copies of the manga with the text included and asked to compare the Japanese manga and English-language comics and list any differences they found.

The first obvious difference that students identified in the visual style of the manga and comics was that manga are usually monochrome and are often printed on low-grade paper, while English-language comics are more often printed in colour. One student stated that at first glance the English-language comics looked more 'sophisticated because they are so colourful'. Many students also felt that storylines and easy reading appeared to hold more importance in manga than a sophisticated (i.e., colourful) appearance and they noted that the images and detail in the images often expressed more than the text. Schodt describes manga as 'visual narratives with a few words tossed in for effect' (1996, p. 26) and this was a judgement reiterated in student discussions. Many students stated that text is sometimes unnecessary, as the images already contain enough information. On the other hand, students felt that comics seemed to place more emphasis on appearance (based on their use of colour), and on text rather than illustration.

Students further noticed that manga portrayed more emotions than their English comic counterparts. In manga, an illustrator's shorthand can portray emotions, such as anger, happiness or embarrassment (Wolk, 2001). A simple

line or shading can alter a character's emotion or even suggest the mood surrounding a character. Shading drawn under the eyes or sweat drops can indicate blushing and embarrassment and lines on the forehead can represent anger. Sometimes pupils of the eyes may be deleted and the eyes left blank, which indicates an uneven emotional state (Natsume, 2000). Parts of the body may be exaggerated or distorted in order to portray different situations and feelings. Female characters are usually drawn with large eyes that are surrounded by long eyelashes and may even glisten with stars to show beauty or radiance. Natsume (2000) describes these visual characteristics, albeit unrealistic, as 'figurative idioms'. Students stated that it was easier to understand emotions in manga than in English-language comics; in comics, the faces were often too small to see. For example, when looking at sample pages from *The Simpsons*, one student stated that 'I can't understand if Professor Frink is angry or thinking because he is wearing big glasses and his face is too small because the talking bubbles are big with many [sic] text'.

Furthermore, students noted that figures and objects can be drawn in a realistic style or an exaggerated style depending on the artist. Japanese manga often place emphasis on onomatopoeia rather than detailed dialogue. Balloons are usually kept short and the framing varies from the very simple to very detailed, depending on the illustrator and the story at hand. Toku (2001, p.13) divides manga into four important visual elements:

1. Picture (which depicts figures and objects)
2. Word (including onomatopoeia)
3. Balloon (indicating words)
4. Frame (the surrounding pictures)

She further states that manga consist of more complexity and more emotional and psychological depth and readers' attention is usually focused on minute details. For example, scenes of a flower coming into bloom may last for three pages. Students in the class identified all of these elements without any scaffolding from the teacher, and noted that, in manga, one movement could last for several frames, as if in slow motion, whereas the English-language comics that they had been given to read did not use this form of illustration, and actions finished more quickly.



## It is all in the Words

Students appeared to have no trouble as they investigated the visual aspects of manga and comics; however, when they were faced with the task of investigating the text, they had more difficulty. To introduce the concept of text in class, students were given copies of the famous manga *Sazae-san*. The original Japanese text was written in the margins, but the English translation had been omitted from the speech balloons by the teacher. In small groups, the students were asked to translate the Japanese and write what they felt was the best English translation in the speech balloons. This task produced a variety of different outcomes and resulted in the students thinking about how difficult translating manga into English can be, as meanings and humour can easily be lost in translation. See Table 11.1 for examples of some of the translations students wrote, followed by the published translation as given in the English edition released by Kodansha International.

Japanese	Students translation
1. Sazae-san asks Masuo-san why he is already in bed:	
アラもうおやすみ? [ara mou oyasumi?]  Masuo-san replies:	Oh, are you already in bed? <i>(female student, 21 yo., 4th year)</i>
ガスちゅうどく [gasu chūdoku]	I have a gas addiction. <i>(male student, 20 yo, 3rd year)</i>  I'm gas toxic <i>(female student, 21 yo, 3rd year)</i>  I'm gasaholic <i>(female student, 19 yo, 3rd year)</i>  <i>(Published translation: Gas poisoning!)</i>
2. Katsuo-san is talking to himself while trying to make a sweet potato stamp:	
だめだこれもしっぱい [dameda kore mo shippai]	Oh damn it! It seems crap, either. <i>(female student, 22 yo, 3rd year)</i>  Nooo! Failed again! <i>(female student, 20 yo, 3rd year)</i>  <i>(Published translation: This one's no good either.)</i>

Table 11.1. English translations by students.

Students were asked to discuss the difficulties they had in translating and all students stated that translating humour was the most difficult, as it can be culturally specific. They felt that humour in manga was lost when it was translated into English. Additionally, they found humour difficult to understand when reading English-language comics and manga translated into English. When reading English-language comics such as *The Simpsons*, which contains a great deal of humour, students said it was extremely difficult to understand the jokes and cultural interaction with the humour as there was a lot of sarcasm. One student stated that ‘I didn’t know sarcasm before and it was very difficult to understand in the comics. I didn’t know if they were serious or joking’. A further difference they found was that sometimes phrases are simpler in Japanese, as they can be as short as one or two words, whereas in English, the translation can be much longer. Students also felt that when there was more text, it distracted the reader from the visuals, which they viewed as equally important as textual content. For example, one group of students were discussing *One Piece* and *Spiderman* and argued that some frames of *One Piece* had very little text, yet it was ‘easy to know what was happening in the story and Luffy’s emotions just looking at the pictures’, whereas in *Spiderman* it was difficult to know how Spiderman was feeling as ‘we can’t see his face and there is too much difficult text we don’t understand’.

Students, upon investigation of the text and wording in both manga and comics, came to the conclusion that English-language comics were off-putting and not motivating as they had far too much text for them. They admitted that when they opened the comics and saw the first page, they wanted to close them again, as they felt the amount of text was overwhelming. The students claimed that having large chunks of text in addition to a larger number of smaller frames made the page seem too ‘busy’. One student stated that when they saw the amount of text in *The Simpsons* it made them feel as if they were reading a novel. They questioned why comic writers could not use more illustrations to tell the narrative rather than relying on a lot of text.

### **It is all the Same yet Different**

Upon reading both the translated manga and English-language comics, students were asked to critically compare and contrast them. Initially, students were asked to write about their ideas individually, and then form groups of

three or four to share their findings and ideas. The end of the exercise involved a classroom discussion of what they had found and their opinions. All students found significantly more differences than similarities (see Table 11.2).

Similarities	Differences
Price Easy to buy Always has a 'hero' of some form Speech balloons Variety of genres 'Otaku'/'nerd' fan base Good vs. evil	Reading direction Amount of text Number of frames Number of characters Monochrome vs. colour Size Advertising Continuity Language

Table 11.2. Similarities and Differences between Manga and Comics.

The first difference students noticed was that they had to read English-language comics 'backwards', they open in the opposite direction to manga and their frames are ordered from left to right and top to bottom. Students also noticed that many comics are in colour, which they found appealing, and that comics often contained more frames per page than manga, with significantly more text in each frame. While one page in a manga may have five frames and the only text may be onomatopoeia, in a comic there may be ten frames with each frame containing speech in addition to onomatopoeia. They found that some comics had many characters, especially superhero comics, and this was often confusing. Students were also surprised that characters often die in comics, only to come back in future editions, which does not occur in Japanese manga. In addition, they found it easier to feel empathy for characters in Japanese manga compared to English-language comics, although they admitted that this was possibly due to the fact they shared similar cultural ties and knowledge.

Many students noticed the size difference between manga and comics, with some preferring comics as they are thinner and are therefore lighter to carry. On the other hand, some felt that the size of comics was 'stingy' as they are quite short in the terms of the number of pages, and felt that it was not good value for money, especially as some pages were 'wasted' with advertising. Students felt that manga contain more continuity, as volumes are often connected in

some way, whereas comics had one storyline that finishes, with the next volume containing a completely different storyline. Lastly, students noticed differences in the language. They thought that manga contained more narration and at times more slang than English-language comics. They reported that these additions made the story easier to understand and more fun to read. Students also found the language in English-language comics to be more difficult, and needed to refer to their dictionaries more frequently than when reading manga translated into English. Therefore, perhaps when introducing manga and comics into the language classroom, it would be beneficial to use translated manga initially as it generally contains less text.

Despite finding many differences, students did notice some similarities. Students thought that the pricing and ease of purchase for both manga and comics was quite similar, although translated manga cost three times more than the original Japanese versions and are more difficult to buy. Both manga and comics have a variety of genres and students noticed that both seemed to have a 'hero' of some form, whether it was a superhero, a character with special powers or an 'everyday hero' that readers could respect. Many genres contained storylines that were about good versus evil in different forms with good winning in most instances. They noticed that both contain balloons and that the shapes change depending on whether they depict speech or thought. Ultimately, both have an 'otaku'/'nerd' fan base, although, interestingly, the students felt that manga characters were more popular for cosplay and comic characters were more popular for Halloween costumes. This could possibly be a cultural interpretation as cosplay is originally a Japanese phenomenon and students view Halloween as predominantly an American concept.

### **Collaboration and Writing**

Following critical analysis of the visual and textual elements of manga and comics, students were given a collaborative project to complete. Students were divided into groups of three or four and each group was given a blank A4 sheet of paper. Each group was asked to design a single manga character and draw it on the paper. They were then asked to write information about the character. While this was a free activity, groups had to include information on the character's name, age and place of birth. Additional information was completely up to the group members. Students submitted their illustrations

at the end of the class and in the following class each group was given copies of all the characters from the previous class (a total of eight characters) and notepaper. They were informed that each group was to design a story for a manga and they were required to incorporate every character and decide which genre it belonged to. They were given approximately one hour to do this and then they were told that they would present their 'manga' to the class and upon completion of all presentations, the class would vote on which 'manga' they thought would be best published. Students chose different ways to present their story to the class. Some told simple narratives, some held the pictures of characters as they told the story to make it more visual and two groups used the paper to actually draw panels and produce a one-page layout of a manga.

A number of similar themes and elements were described. Most characters had large eyes, female characters were *kaawaii* (cute), male characters were often muscular and all characters had some form of special ability, whether it was flying, teleportation, super strength or shooting ramen soup from their antennae. All groups decided on stories belonging to the *shōnen* genre and they contained adventure, humour, friendship, fighting and a love story. Through this activity, students were able to negotiate meaning and utilise their acquired knowledge of agency and structural and grammatical conventions. These were also utilised in students' formal writing. In the course, they were given a reading about *mangaka* [manga artists] (see Gravett, 2004, pp. 14–17) and had to write a one-page summary of the reading, followed by an essay at the end of the course. Students were able to include and discuss many of the elements of manga that they had covered in the unit and many said that they would not have been able to do that had they not critically thought about manga.

### **Why are Manga so Popular?**

When students were asked the reasons for manga's popularity, they provided a number of explanations. They felt that manga are good value for money, easy to read, easily recyclable, easy to buy, can invoke emotion and that the vast number of genres means there is something for all ages and tastes. Most importantly, many manga stories are about normal people doing normal things and readers relate to this. Manga often provide an idealised view of the world in terms of morality (respect, honour and traditional values) and also justice (good overcomes evil). It is interesting to see that most series end on a note of

everything being right in the world. On the other hand, manga can be a form of escape, whereby readers are taken into a world that is more interesting, exciting and fundamentally 'right'. Japanese children are able to live their dreams and be anyone or anything they want in a virtual context, while adults can learn about the world from a 'visual textbook' (Toku, 2001).

One of the most popular manga among students in the class was *One Piece*, a *shōnen* manga serial about pirates, written by Oda Eiichiro. When asked why they thought it was such a popular manga, they replied that is easy to read, fun and exciting, and that it had a number of themes, such as adventure, friendship, loyalty, hardship, family, 'magic' and the idea of fighting for what one believes in. In addition, readers can feel empathy towards a number of the characters in the manga as they struggle through hardship, experience sadness and forge friendship.

The plots and themes in manga vary greatly and include youth and its trials and tribulations, coming of age, finding a place in a world that is constantly changing, gender identities, the importance of friendship and family, love stories, comedy, action, sex and fantasy. Many of these themes involve issues that many people encounter and can therefore relate to. For example, school-related issues interest teenagers, coming of age themes interest teenagers and upper elementary-aged children, and friendship themes target all ages and genders, as do comedy and fantasy.

Censorship of Japanese manga appears to be more relaxed than that of its Western counterparts and nudity and sexual themes can appear in genres popular for very young teenagers. When students were faced with the concept of censorship, they were surprised and felt that 'the West' was too strict. When they were shown stills of the anime version of *One Piece*, they commented on how noticeable censorship was. For example, Sanji's infamous cigarette was changed to a lollipop, Nami and Robin's revealing clothing had extra lines drawn to make the collars higher, and bloody scenes suddenly contained very little blood.

The use of multimodal texts in the language classroom has numerous benefits, including increases motivation, the promotion of a community of practice and enhanced multiliteracies. Eckert (2006) defines a community of practice as 'a collection of people who engage on an ongoing basis in some common endeavor' and who are 'engaged in mutual sense-making' (p. 683). As students had a common interest in manga and all shared the endeavor of

understanding their own culture and a more 'foreign' culture, all students were equals in the classroom.

## Conclusion

Incorporating manga and comics into this language class promoted students' objectivity through analysis. Students were interested in learning more vocabulary in order to effectively describe the different elements of manga, such as the imagery, storyline and characters. Through the manga development activity, students were able to experiment with creative language use in ways not traditionally possible using the academic English they were expected to use in other courses. Students' feedback showed that this type of activity was viewed in a very positive way, as it was fun, creative, collaborative and 'outside the norm' of a typical English class.

The incorporation of manga and comics into the classroom positively contributed to student motivation and critical and cultural awareness. Their shared knowledge of manga saw reluctant students contribute more confidently in discussions and activities. It is important to note that all activities in the class were conducted in English, with the exception of the translation activities. This provided students with an opportunity to develop their English vocabulary and grammar. Although students read manga regularly outside of class, they had never given much thought to all of the elements involved in what they were reading. Through reading and analysing manga in the classroom, students were able to interpret not only textual conventions, but also those of format and illustration, something they would not be doing if they were reading in Japanese and for pleasure.



### Online Multimedia Component

A printable EFL worksheet designed for use in teaching English through manga is available online at <http://mangastudies.com/mangavision/EFL.php> or scan the above QR code.

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# IMPOLITE LANGUAGE IN MANGA

LIDIA TANAKA

## Introduction

In the last ten to fifteen years, the general view towards manga has changed dramatically from contempt for it as cheap entertainment (Natsume & Takeuchi, 2009) to appreciation for its educational, cultural, aesthetic and narrative value. It is thanks to publications such as *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics*, the pioneering book by Schodt (1983), that manga was introduced to the West as a topic of research (for more details, see Brenner, 2007; Minami, 2008; Natsume & Takeuchi, 2009). An increasing number of scholars from different disciplines, such as gender studies and anthropology (see chapter six, see also Allison, 1996, 2000; Chinami, 2003, 2007; Gagné, 2008; Ito, 1994; 2005; Kinsella, 2000; Lee, 2000; Napier, 1998; Ogi, 2003; Takahashi, 2009; Ueno, 2006); literature (Hirota, 1997; L. Miyake, 2008); language and language education (see chapters eight and eleven, see also Ingulsrud & Allen, 2009); and translation studies (see chapter thirteen, see also Jüngst, 2004) have written on social issues through the analysis of manga.

Manga attract academic interest not only because of their popularity but also due to the breadth of topics that they depict, and the social problems in contemporary Japanese society they reflect. Moreover, they also contain rich and wide-ranging communicative situations that provide a valuable source of linguistic data. Manga is a unique multimodal medium that includes visual and textual information, so characters' psychological and emotional changes are easily visible (see chapters two, nine and fourteen). Moreover, due to the sequential arrangement of panels, it is easy for the researcher to understand

the impact words have on their characters. These characteristics make manga an ideal source of linguistic data, in particular for the present research. Although concerns in relation to whether manga truly reflect how the Japanese communicate in different situations might exist, the fact that they are used to teach Japanese to foreign students is evidence that they are viewed as vivid reflections of everyday communication (see Mangajin, 1993; Lammers, 2004). Many researchers have advocated the use of manga as a legitimate source for discourse analysis (Maynard, 2004, 2008) and they prove to be particularly important for communicative situations where recording is not possible due to ethics or other difficulties (Matsuoka & Poole, 2010).

Studies on communication in the last twenty years, such as those in sociolinguistics and other linguistic areas, have emphasised the importance of using authentic data. While conversations in interviews or between friends or acquaintances can be easily obtained, there are situations where data recording is extremely difficult because of privacy and/or lack of timely opportunities. Due to strict privacy laws in Japan, taping or recording interactions in confidential settings such as hospitals or counselling sessions is generally not allowed. In scenarios of conflict, taping or recording instances of confrontation or quarrelling is very challenging, not only due to the complexity of obtaining the interlocutors' permission but also due to the unplanned and unpredictable nature of such encounters. In contrast, such exchanges in manga are abundant, providing an excellent resource for linguistic data.

Research on Japanese spoken communication has been extremely productive; however, the focus of such studies has been mainly on exchanges with friends or amicable encounters. Despite the enormous interest in linguistic politeness in Japanese, there has been little critical exploration of how intentional impoliteness is conveyed, with some notable exceptions (K. Miyake, 2009; Nishimura, 2010). It has been claimed that Japanese is a 'swear-less' language (K. Miyake, 2009), but situations of conflict and confrontation exist in Japan, as they do in any society. What is said in those situations to indicate anger, criticism, disagreement, or offence is not really known because of the lack of empirical study.

In linguistics research, particularly research based on communicative interactions, the importance of using authentic examples is stressed. Given the difficulty of obtaining data on real-life communicative interactions involving

conflict, the use of manga as data seems to be an ideal solution. It provides a very rich selection of linguistic impoliteness through scenes of confrontation, arguments and fights (verbal and physical). Manga dialogues are depicted with particular visual strategies that convey phonological features such as loudness, stress, low voice, silence, pauses, etc., that help convey pragmatic meanings. Moreover, because they occur within a narrative, they are in a context and it is possible to observe not only the impolite linguistic utterances, but also what triggered them, the responses they receive, the characters' relationships and the situation. It is difficult to confirm the authenticity of these impolite encounters, and whether similar encounters might occur in 'real' life, but some indication of their 'naturalness' might be taken from the fact that such interactions in manga are accepted by readers and used to teach spoken Japanese. However, we might expect slice-of-life manga works to contain more 'natural' exchanges, and science fiction (SF) manga to contain less such exchanges.

This chapter looks at examples of impolite language in manga to understand more about linguistic impoliteness in Japanese. It aims to find what type of linguistic strategies are used to show rudeness and in which situations impoliteness occurs. It also shows that manga adds another dimension to the study of interactional linguistics that will contribute to our understanding of Japanese communication.

### **Japanese Politeness and Impoliteness**

Japanese society has been described as harmonious and conflict avoidant (Lebra, 1984) and its language is associated with politeness. Although linguistic politeness exists in all the world's languages, Japanese and its complex honorific system is the example of 'polite language' par excellence in linguistic politeness research (see Brown & Levinson, 1987; Watts, 2003).

The concept of linguistic politeness being an essential element in human communication was postulated by Brown and Levinson (1987). They write that politeness is universal and that this phenomenon revolves around the concept of face. They posit that linguistic politeness is necessary to maintain good relationships and avoid 'face-loss'. Brown and Levinson refer to two different types of strategies are used in polite encounters, which they name as 'positive' and 'negative' politeness. Positive politeness refers to those actions that highlight

friendliness, such as using in-group markers, or showing solidarity. Negative politeness, on the other hand, includes actions that seek to maintain distance and thus minimise any imposition placed on the listener. This theory of politeness generated an enormous research output. The concept of negative politeness as not applicable to many East Asian languages was debated (see Fukada & Asato, 2004; Ide, 2005; Ide & Lakkoff, 2005; Matsumoto, 1988; Pizziconi, 2003; Spencer-Oatey, 2002; Usami, 2002).

### What Is Impoliteness?

As mentioned earlier, in contrast to politeness, impoliteness has received little attention with some notable exceptions (Bousfield, 2008; Culpeper, 1996, 2005, 2011; Kienpointner, 1997). Although impoliteness has been considered to be the absence of politeness, defining it has been challenging. Kienpointner (1997) uses the term rudeness instead of politeness and describes it as non-cooperative and competitive behaviour. For Bousfield (2008), impoliteness is the intentional delivery of face-threatening acts. Culpeper's (2011) definition is that of an *intentional* face-attack, which causes offence and is perceived by the listener.

Although the concept of intention seems to be common in Bousfield's and Culpeper's definitions, one important aspect of this phenomenon is that not all actions that are intentional and face-threatening are impolite. For example, insults can be used to strengthen in-group relationships (Bernal, 2008; Culpeper, 2005). Kienpointner (1997) defines ritualised insults or mock insults as cooperative impoliteness strategies, as opposed to noncooperative impoliteness actions (p. 261). Negative impoliteness includes actions that are observed in institutional interactions where the power relationship is uneven.

Impoliteness, in the same way as politeness, has been classified into positive and negative and bald-on-record strategies (direct and clear actions that are not minimised). Bousfield (2008) identified fourteen categories of impoliteness: (1) snubbing, (2) disassociating from the other, (3) being uninterested, unsympathetic, (4) using inappropriate identity markers, (5) seeking disagreement, (6) using taboo words, swearing or using profane language, (7) being threatening, frightening, (8) being condescending, scorning, (9) explicitly associating the other with a negative aspect, (10) withholding politeness, (10) criticising, (12) interrupting, (13) enforcing a role shift, and (14) challenging. Culpeper (2005;

2011) identifies actions one through six as positive and actions seven through fourteen as negative strategies. Culpeper (1996) considers actions that show the addressee to be disliked or not accepted to demonstrate positive impoliteness, whereas actions that impede the addressee's freedom of action demonstrate negative impoliteness.

Regardless of whether impoliteness is negative or positive, impolite actions are usually carried out in 'a sequence' and rarely occur in isolation. This is a phenomenon observed in the present study.

## Literature Review

Although many scholars have studied manga, most have focused on social issues associated with manga; there are not included in this literature review. The published work that looks at the language used in manga tends to focus on gender (Chinami, 2003, 2007; Takahashi, 2009; Ueno, 2006) and healthcare (Matsuoka & Poole, 2010; Matsuoka, Smith & Uchimura, 2009).

Chinami (2003, 2007) explores female characters' speech and finds that women's language in manga is portrayed differently depending on the intended audience. While works aimed at children and at men display traditional female linguistic elements associated with youth and positive features, those aimed at a female audience use male, neutral and feminine language depending on the situation. In a different work, Chinami (2007) examines manga created in the 1960s, 1980s and 1990s. Predictably, works from the 1960s and 1980s portray women's speech in the traditional way. This is not always the case in manga created in the 1990s. In scenes where female characters show embarrassment or there is heightened tension, Chinami finds that female characters shift to male language and, most interestingly, females use male language to express anger and release frustration.

Takahashi's (2009) work looks at the language of the 'wicked woman' in the manga series *Raiju*. The character uses traditional women's language to construct an image of someone who needs to be protected, thus receiving sympathy from other characters. However, when she plays against the heroine, and curses her, she shifts to 'male' language. Takahashi shows that language in manga is used to construct and deconstruct characteristics associated with particular social and cultural images.

Ueno (2006) looks at women's language in *shōjo* and *josei* manga. Comparing the dialogues of young and older characters in nine magazines, she finds that younger characters use more masculine language and older characters speak in the traditional women's language. She suggests that the use of feminine language comes with maturity. However, what is of relevance for this study is that even the older characters switch to masculine language when expressing anger. Equally, teachers talking to their male students use male style in order to project authority. As can be seen in the works of Ueno (2006), Chinami (2003, 2007) and Takahashi (2009), male language is associated with linguistic rudeness and is used to release feelings of frustration. This association of gendered language to linguistic impoliteness is perhaps more prominent in Japanese where 'genderlects' are quite distinct; this is also observed in the present study.

The works by Matsuoka and Poole (2010) and Matsuoka, Smith and Uchimura (2009) examine language in health care in a number of manga. Their goals are to observe which politeness strategies are successful when healthcare professionals talk to their patients and how these examples can be applied in the training of professionals, such as nurses and doctors in the area of communicating with patients. Matsuoka, Smith and Uchimura (2009) look at the expression *ganbare* (sometimes translated as 'try hard') and its different inflections. Analysing situations where patients need encouragement, they found that situations in which *ganbare* is used do not lead to successful politeness strategies and they suggest that other expressions be used instead. Matsuoka and Poole (2010) examine the interactions of a nurse and a 'difficult' patient and suggest the use of alternative strategies for each unsuccessful scene. So, for example, instead of showing one's authority using imperatives, healthcare professionals could use alternative ways of communicating facts and risks to the patient. What is of interest in these two works is that the manga authors of the series had worked in the healthcare environment and therefore their works are based on cases that they had experienced, thus supporting the validity and authenticity of the language.

There appears to be only one paper published on Japanese impoliteness so far (Nishimura, 2010), and this is based on Internet postings. No similar studies using manga as data seem to exist. As Nishimura's work is not directly relevant to the present study, it will not be discussed in detail here, beyond citing

Nishimura's observation that impoliteness is a way of negotiating power that has to be understood within the norms of the community (Nishimura, 2010).

## The Data

Selecting manga works for this study was a challenge due to the sheer number of titles available. As the focus of this chapter is on impolite language in contemporary Japanese, historical manga and manga featuring non-human characters or samurai were excluded. The action and yakuza genres, common in *shōnen* and *seinen* manga, tend to have more scenes of confrontation than *shōjo* and  *josei* manga, so in order to avoid a skewed sample, 14 works were selected (Hazuki, 2008; Shinohara, 2007; Hōjo, 2001; Kawai, 1989; Kōda, 2010; Makimura, 1999; Miyagi, 2006; Morimoto, 1999; Motomiya, 1994; Sekiya, 2005; Togashi, 1995; Tsuda, 1996; Yamamoto, 2001; Yoshikawa, 2006).

Although produced over a number of years, the oldest from 1989–95, these works were chosen because they belong to diverse categories and contain confrontation scenes where impolite language is used. Obviously, scenes of conflict are more common in manga featuring yakuza characters, delinquents and scenes of bullying, so there is an imbalance in the occurrence of impolite language that might not be a reflection of ordinary life in Japan. In other words, the cases of confrontation in everyday life where impolite language is used may (fortunately) be limited to rare occurrences; thus, the difficulty in collecting such instances in real life.

## Rude Language in Manga

Impolite exchanges in manga are highlighted through particular manga iconography. The words are printed in bold with a much bigger font, and in many cases are written in *katakana* to differentiate them from normal speech. They are often followed by exclamation marks and explosion speech balloons that express anger or a louder tone of voice, and/or the use of onomatopoeia. The characters' eyes, mouths and foreheads are drawn with features indicating extreme emotions such as the exaggerated opened mouth and serrated teeth, or popping veins above the eyes, and so on (for more details on these features, see Robertson, Sell and Pasfield-Neofitou, and Moreno Acosta, this volume).



As stated earlier, rude language is not isolated. Invariably, linguistic impoliteness is expressed across a number of panels and pages. Therefore, one of the characteristics of impoliteness in manga is that the rude language consists of more than one utterance. Characters invariably start an altercation with exclamations and the use of personal pronouns later accompanied with verbs in the imperative form and other vulgar words as in Table 12.1.

Linguistic items	Examples		
<b>Personal Pronouns</b>	'I'	'You'	'That person'
	<i>ore/ora</i>	<i>omae</i> <i>anta</i> <i>kisama</i> <i>temee/temeera</i>	<i>koitsu/koitsura</i> <i>soitsu</i> <i>aitsu</i> <i>sonnano</i>
<b>Insults</b>	'brat'	others	'asshole'
	<i>obocchan</i> (sarcastic) <i>kozō</i> <i>gaki</i> <i>ossan</i> [old man] <i>onna</i> [cow] <i>amaa</i> [bitch]	<i>kuzu</i> [garbage] <i>senkō</i> [teacher (derog.)] <i>mezawari</i> [eyesore] <i>baka</i> [stupid] <i>kiseichū</i> [parasite] <i>bonkura</i> [idiot] <i>hebo</i> [clumsy]	<i>yarō</i> <i>sarariiman yarō</i> <i>hanpa yarō</i> [half] <i>hage bōzu</i> [bald] <i>baka yarō</i> [stupid] <i>bengoshi yarō</i> [lawyer] <i>onna no kusatta yarō</i> [rotten woman]
<b>Exclamations</b>	'hey'	'shut up'	'what'
	<i>kora</i> <i>oraloraa</i> <i>oi</i>	<i>urusē/ussē</i>	<i>nandato</i> <i>nandaa</i>
<b>Swear words</b>	kusso/kusō/chikushō [shit, damn]		
<b>Verbs Imperative forms ~rō and ~na</b>	<i>damaryagare</i> [shut up] <i>hikkonderō</i> [stay out] <i>fuzakeruna</i> [don't mess around]	<i>~tsuttarō</i> ( <i>tte itta</i> ) [I said] <i>~shyagatta</i> [(you) did]	<i>kenka uttenoka</i> [do you want to fight?] <i>yacchimaē</i> [let's do (attack)]

Table 12.1. Examples of impolite language in manga

As we can see from Table 12.1, most impoliteness is delivered through the use of the listed personal pronouns, but also through some of the insults and verbs listed. Personal pronouns, for example, may be used together with a verb or an exclamation such as in the following excerpt from *Gokusen* (Morimoto, 1999). *Gokusen* is the story of Yankumi, a schoolteacher who is also the daughter

of a yakuza boss. The scene we will examine concerns Yankumi confronting some delinquent students (who are bullying some of their schoolmates).

Yankumi: *Yō, monoshiridana, omē*  
 [You're a bit of a know-it-all, are you?]

Student: *O o o temē nani shiyagaru!*  
 [Oh! What the hell, you?]

The teacher and student use *omē* and *temē*, respectively, accompanied by a noun phrase and a verbal phrase. As these personal pronouns are used in almost every confrontation scene, it seems that they have a different pragmatic function than an ordinary personal pronoun and cannot be fully rendered in translations as they carry different nuances according to the situation.

Insults found in manga, such as *gaki*, *amaa* or *onna*, often reference the target's personal characteristics. Others, such as *senkō*, reference their jobs. Insults that refer to low intelligence (used by both male and female characters), especially the word *baka* [stupid], are the most commonly used insults. *Yarō*, which is variously translated as 'asshole' or 'bastard', is also common. It should be stressed that there are no insults of a sexual nature in manga and comparatively few insults in general (as Japanese is regarded as a 'swear-less' language, this is not surprising).

Exclamations seem to signal the start of a confrontation. In *Bambino*, (Sekiya, 2005), the story of aspiring chef Han, there is a scene in which a chef hits one of his assistants for not helping Han, who is in training at the restaurant. He shouts *Oi kora* [hey] and punches the assistant. *Temē, nani miteminufuri shiyagatta?* [You, why did you pretend not to see?], he demands, *Mendō miteyare ttsutaro?* [(I) told you to look after him]. The scene is extremely short, but it gives us an example of a physical attack that is preceded by the expression *kora*. This pattern of an exclamation followed by a physical confrontation is seen in other manga. Swearwords are used most commonly when characters are frustrated or angry and are generally used in thought balloons. They are sometimes used before a fight.

All verbs used in an impolite exchange are in the imperative form; affirmative forms end in *~rō* and negative forms in *~una*. These forms are associated

with male language, an aspect further emphasised by the use of sentence final particles (SFP) *zo* and *ze*.

In the manga examined, impolite exchanges were found in the following context: (a) before the escalation of violence, (b) during physical confrontations, (c) in-group uses, to instigate action, to challenge positively, (e) when self-directed or as thoughts/emotions. They were also uses in instances of sarcasm, but due to space limitations this aspect will not be discussed.

### Exchanges Before Escalation of Violence

Perhaps the most common types of conflict situations in manga involve yakuza or bullying. Characters use personal pronouns, insults, male final particles, exclamations and verbal threats. For example, in the first scene of *Obi o Gyutto ne* (Kawai, 1989)<sup>1</sup>, the main character, Takumi, has an accident involving his bike and a yakuza car. The first panel shows a mangled bicycle and a speech bubble from Takumi. Underlined words indicate impolite language.

- Takumi: *A korya hide! Moo norenēyo, kore.*  
 [This is wrecked! I won't be able to ride this again]
- Yakuza: *Nani ittenno. Anta!? Ora. Shingoo mushi de tsukkonde kite sa.*  
 [What are you talking about? You're the one who hurtled through a red light!]
- Yakuza: *Isoidetandatte? Sonna rikutsu tōru wake? Shinsha ni kizu tsuketoite saa!! Oya ni benshō saserukara ne, dokono gaki?*  
 [In a hurry, were you? That's your excuse, is it? Look here, you've scratched my new car! Your folks'll have to cough up/pay for it. Whose son are you?]
- Takumi: *Ossan, chūgakusei dato omotte nametenno? Kocchini kega ga nakattadeke kansha shite moraitaindakedo na.*  
 [Hey, gramps, you making fun of me thinking I'm a school kid? You should be happy I wasn't injured. I'll get you to cough up for that!]
- Yakuza: *Naniyo konō*

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1 *Obi o Gyutto ne* is about seven friends that enter high school and try to set up a judo club.

[What're you on about?]

Takumi: *Ore bakka warui mitēni itteyo. Socchidatte seigen sokudo mamottetano?*

[Trying to sound like I'm the only one in the wrong! I suppose you were sticking to the speed limit?]

Yakuza: *Anta innen tsukeru ki?*

[Spoiling for a fight, are you?]

At this point, a police inspector intervenes and the conflict does not escalate. Both characters use male language (see the endings of verbs and SFPs) and refer to each other using pejorative nouns: *gaki* and *ossan*. Note the yakuza's last line '*innen tsukeru ki*', which can be translated as wanting to start a fight and indicates open physical conflict.

### Exchanges During Physical Fights

Naturally, physical fights, as the most open expression of aggression, are some of the clearest examples of impolite exchanges. As mentioned before, most examples of physical fights in the manga examined occur in encounters with yakuza or delinquents. As *Sarariiman Kintarō* (Motomiya, 1994) and *Gokusen* (Morimoto, 1999) are two works based on the theme of yakuza, there are many depictions of physical fights. In the opening of *Sarariiman Kintarō*, a drunk office worker demands an apology from the man who bumped into him, not knowing that he is a yakuza. Instead of receiving an apology, he is punched. The yakuza grabs the terrified man and says that he hates people like him: *Ossan yō oraa dēkkirē nanda temēra mitēna sarariimanyarō ga yo* [Hey, you. I hate your type, you little salaried man]. In the next panel, we see the yakuza preparing to punch him again and saying *Nioi kaitadakede hedo ga deruze* [Your smell makes me puke]. We also see pejorative terms – *ossan* and *sarariiman yarō* – and personal pronouns – *oraa* and *temēra* – which are accompanied by particular phonological characteristics such as *dēkkirē*, instead of *dai kirai*. Notice the SPFs – *yo* and *ze* – which add pragmatic force to his lines and amplify the aggressive stance of the speaker.

### In-Group Marking (Encouraging In-Group Members)

As stated earlier, there is one side of impoliteness that is used as a form of in-group bonding, an example of which is the ritualised insult (Bousfield, 2008; Culpeper, 2005, 2011). In manga, we also find rude language used by characters who are trying to encourage each other or be persuasive. One example of such an encounter is seen in *Sket Dance* (Shinohara, 2007), when Bossun tries to persuade his friend Usui Kazuyoshi (who has become a *hikikomori*) to join him on an outing. When Usui refuses, Bossun shouts *Ore wa omae ni aini kitanda! dakara derō! Monku aruka kono yarō* [I came to meet you so come and meet me. Do you have anything to say, asshole]. Although not as aggressive as an openly confrontational encounter, we can see semantic choices in the dialogue starting with the choice of personal pronouns (*ore* and *omae*), the verbs in imperative form (*derō*), the pejorative expression (*kono yarō*) and *monku aruka* [do you have a problem?]. Bossun's friend Himeko tries to calm him down and intervenes: *Nani o kōfun shitonnen* [What are you excited about?]. In this instance, the offensive language is used to indicate the strong concern of the speaker and his desire to persuade his friend. Similar instances are seen when characters try to cheer up their friends after a failure in *Obi o Gyutto ne*, *Sket Dance* and *Heroine Shikkaku*. The use of impolite expressions in these instances seems to be very common in manga.

### Self-directed Speech and Thought Bubbles

In manga, as opposed to real life situations, it is possible to know what characters are thinking: the use of the thought bubble in manga can reveal a character's inner feelings and ruminations. However, it is quite difficult to consider them as examples of linguistic rudeness as these thoughts and feelings are not necessarily expressed to others. Significantly, when female characters' thoughts are represented in thought bubbles, the characters often use very strong or male language. In the *shōjo* manga *Kareshi kanojo no Jijō* (Tsuda, 1996)<sup>2</sup>, the academic reputation of the main character, Miyazawa Yukino, is threatened by the arrival of true all-rounder Arima Sōichiro. The excerpt below depicts the thoughts of very upset and jealous Yukino:

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2 *Kareshi Kanojo no Jijō* is known as *Karekano* in other languages.

Yukino: *Kussō aitsu sae inakya hottoitemo watashi ga chūmoku saretanoni*

[Shit. If only that bitch was not there I could have all the attention]

*Kussō mezawaridaze Arima! Mitenasai! Anta o jigoku ni tsukiotosuno wa watashi yo!*

[Shit, you Arima. You are an eyesore. You will see. I am the one who will send you to hell!]

There is a strong contrast between the way Yukino normally talks and the use of very strong masculine language in the thoughts presented above. This example's mixture of masculine language with feminine speech features (such as *mitenasai*) is also noteworthy. The words *kussō*, *aitsu*, *mezawaridaze* are rude expressions; however, the personal pronoun she uses to refer to herself is *watashi*, which is in line with the way she talks to her classmates.

### Linguistic Impoliteness and Male Language

One of the most interesting aspects of impolite Japanese is its direct association with male language, as seen above. Many of the linguistic elements used in scenes of confrontation and open aggression belong to the repertoire of what is considered 'male language', in particular the use of personal pronouns, SFPs and imperatives deliver the forcefulness of the threat, challenge or verbal attack. Sarcasm is delivered usually with very feminine linguistic items. This phenomenon reinforces the traditional gender associations: male language is strong and rough while female language is soft and elegant. Although there are scenes where girls use rough verbal endings and other male speech items, they are only used when female characters confront someone or in verbally unexpressed thoughts; as Takahashi (2009) observes, the use of masculine speech styles in such instances are strategic.

### Discussion

Despite Japanese being generally regarded as a polite language, it is obvious that impolite language is used and this can be observed in manga, usually in scenes involving aggressive encounters. Such examples defy the concept that Japanese

is a 'swear-less' language (K. Miyake, 2009). However, the fact that most taboo words or insults (Bernal, 2008; Kienpointner, 1997) refer disparagingly to intelligence, appearance or profession and not to sexual matters might in part account for the perception of Japanese as a particularly polite language. It can also be said that some aspects of linguistic impoliteness are specific to Japanese and not directly applicable to languages such as English or Spanish.

Japanese linguistic impoliteness can be delivered in a variety of ways and there are three particular cases of impolite phenomena that are difficult to group following the categories of impoliteness described by Bousfield (2008) and Culpeper (2005): the use of incorrect speech style, personal pronouns and male language.

The need to speak using the appropriate speech level in Japanese has been emphasised thoroughly (see Usami, 2002). Speakers must be aware of status differences, context and other variables in order to choose the right speech style (see Fukada & Asato, 2004; Ide, 2005). In principle, the polite, formal style is used in interactions with higher-status people and the informal style in interactions with lower-status people or in interactions between people who share a familiar relationship. Shifts in style sometimes occur in conversations if there is a change in rapport or topic, and for a variety of reasons that are not exclusively restricted to status differences (Tanaka, 2008a, 2008b). However, the informal style used deliberately by a lower-status person to a higher-status listener can indicate that he or she is withholding politeness. It can show scorn and lack of respect and it may be used as a challenge; it is considered a direct face attack. Note that all of the impolite language is expressed in informal style and violates all protocol (this is seen when the students insult the teacher in *Gokusen*).

Japanese personal pronouns are very different in nature to those in other languages, such as English. This is not only because of the number of their variants, but also because of their pragmatic function. The choice of personal pronouns depends on both the relationship between the interlocutors and the context. In particular, what is extremely remarkable is the use of personal pronouns considered 'rude', such as the second-person pronouns *temē* or *kisama*, which are used to challenge, threaten and show scorn.

What is considered 'male language' can also function as 'rude' language and does not serve only to index the gender of speakers. This style contains

particular SFP, verb endings and phonological changes that can be interpreted as something akin to taboo words challenging the listener. These are used in conflicts that may escalate into physical fights. It is unclear whether all instances of male language project the same pragmatic meaning; however, as with most linguistic elements, they are polysemous. Some can be used to threaten, others to insult and others emphasise negative aspects and withhold politeness.

As we can see, the way in which impoliteness is conveyed in Japanese seems to work at different levels and the division between positive and negative strategies cannot be drawn clearly. Some personal pronouns are translated into English as swearwords and are used to threaten and challenge; swearwords are considered positive impolite strategies, while threats betoken negative actions. Male language may be used to criticise and show scorn, but also shows the characteristics of taboo words. Again, the actions belong to both positive and negative impoliteness categories.

Another type of situation not mentioned by Bousfield (2008), Culpeper (2005, 2011) or Kienpointner (1997) is the use of impolite language to persuade friends. This is a use of impolite language often seen in most manga. While the degree of impolite language varies, the use of particular forceful personal pronouns, vocabulary and imperatives nevertheless convey a character's strong feelings of care towards the addressee. This phenomenon is similar to the use of ritualised insults for in-group marking (Bernal, 2008); however, in this case the objective is different. Although further studies are needed to determine whether this phenomenon can be considered impolite, the use of rude language could be added to a similar category as ritualised impoliteness, because its purpose is not to insult, but to strengthen group membership.

While the use of manga for analyses of impolite language is proving extremely useful, a number of problems still need to be solved, the most important being related to their authenticity and whether the selected examples are considered offensive to everyone. While the latter can be addressed with further research, the problem of authenticity is more problematic. In further studies of impolite language in manga, other types of impoliteness, such as sarcasm, also need to be looked into.



## Conclusion

This chapter has analysed impolite Japanese in situations of confrontation and conflict using manga. The study found a number of interesting aspects of Japanese impoliteness and the use of particular linguistic elements to convey rudeness in the manga examined. Personal pronouns, informal speech style and male language are used to threaten, challenge, seek disagreement, express scorn or withhold politeness. The use of impolite language is never isolated and is often exchanged before confrontations and during physical fights, contained in characters' thoughts and feelings and expressed when attempting to persuade or encourage in-group members. This study shows that manga provide a rich source of linguistic data because they depict characters' relationships and contexts, often via their visual nature, while also providing a variety of communicative interactions, including those not normally accessible to researchers.

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## **KEN-HONYAKU-RYŪ**

### **Issues in the Translation of Controversial Texts Focusing on the Manga Comics *Hate Korean Wave* and *Hate Japanese Wave***

**ADAM ANTONI ZULAWNIK**

#### **Introduction**

The Korean Wave began in Japan in 2002, triggered by the soap opera *Winter Sonata* (“*Kanryū*”, 2012). The 2002 Japan-Korea FIFA World Cup, which Japan and Korea co-hosted, furthered Japan’s interest in Korea, as did the introduction of K-pop (South Korean popular music). However, the Korean Wave also entailed negative reaction from some groups in Japan, manifested most predominantly through the ‘Hate Korea’ and ‘Hate Korean Wave’ sentiments, the latter said to have come into use as a standard term in 2005 (J. Y. Lee, 2011). There is a distinction between these two sentiments in that ‘Hate Korea’ (嫌韓: Jp. *kenkan*, Kr. *hyeomhan*) indicates a general feeling of hatred towards Korea, and ‘Hate Korean Wave’ (嫌韓流: Jp. *kenkanryū*, Kr. *hyeomillyu*) stresses a more specific feeling of hatred towards the ‘Korean Wave’. In 2011, public protests in front of the Fuji Television building in Tokyo occurred in response to the ‘excessive airing’ of Korean programs. Protestors regarded the Korean Wave as a Korean government-run movement aimed at promoting the ‘South Korean brand’, or South Korean soft power (Baek, 2005; Groves, 1997; Ryoo, 2008).

#### **Project Significance and Translation Brief**

Japan–Korea relations are an important area in Asian studies, yet scholars without knowledge of the source languages find it difficult to contribute to

the discussion. There is a need for impartial translations of sources into third languages. The importance of this is particularly clear when one considers the increased likelihood of bias when Korean articles are translated into Japanese, and vice-versa, not to mention when translations involve biased researchers.

The comics *Manga Kenkanryū* (*Hate Korean Wave – HKW* from here onwards) and *Hyeomillyu* (*Hate Japanese Wave – HJW* from here onwards) express the opinions of certain groups (e.g. Internet communities or the right-wing) on both sides of this divide and have attracted significant interest both in Japan and South Korea. Surprisingly, neither of the texts has been fully translated into English, although there are some excerpts of *HKW* available (see C. Lee, 2006; Liscutin, 2009; Sakamoto & Allen, 2009). It should be noted that the researchers translated these excerpts themselves.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, information available about the two comics in English is largely unreferenced, and in many cases somewhat slanted.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Manga Kenkanryū* (HKW)**

*HKW* was written and illustrated by the Japanese manga artist Yamano Sharin (pen name), a self-proclaimed ‘Korean Peninsula watcher’, who has ‘daringly travelled all over South Korea in order to find authentic materials’ (Yamano, n.d.), and claims to have initiated the ‘Hate Korean Wave’ movement through his comic in order to counter the Korean Wave, which he claims is created by the mass media (Yamano, n.d.).

Reception of *HKW* in Japan has varied. According to the publisher, the series sold in excess of 1 million volumes (Yamano, 2015). That said, Yamano initially struggled to find a publisher (Yamano, 2005), and even after the publishing house Shinyusha Mook accepted the manuscripts, all mainstream Japanese newspapers refused to advertise the publication. Still, the comic managed to stay atop the book rankings on Amazon Japan for several weeks (Liscutin, 2009). In contrast to this mixed reception in Japan, South

1 Liscutin (2009) and Sakamoto and Allen (2007) differ, for example, in their translations of the term *panchoppari* as ‘neither Korean nor Japanese, not even half’ (Liscutin 2009, p. 188) and ‘half-Japanese’ (Sakamoto & Allen, 2007), missing a highly derogatory connotation along the lines of ‘half-Jap’.

2 A *SBS Eight O’Clock News* report on the manga states: ‘[*HKW*] portrays martyr Jung-geun Ahn as a stupid terrorist [who] caused the death of Hirobumi Itō, the only person who understood Korea’ (Seoul Broadcasting System, 2005). However, the source text does not explicitly label Ahn a ‘stupid terrorist’ – the adjective ‘stupid’ is used to illustrate the ‘terrorist action’ by which Itō perished (Yamano, 2005, p. 211).

Korean media universally condemned the publication.<sup>3</sup> Thus far, there has been no official Korean translation of *HKW*.<sup>4</sup>

### *Hyeomillyu (HJW)*

Written and illustrated by South Korean comic artist Byeong-seol Yang (pen name), *HJW* is a reply to Yamano's *HKW*. Yang, whose real name is Gyeong-su Bang, has previously written for prominent South Korean comic book authors such as Hyun-se Lee and was the second president of the Korean *Manhwa* Story Authors Association (*manhwa* is the Korean equivalent to Japanese manga).

*HJW* has been translated into Japanese and was published in Japan by Yūgaku Shorin. Stocks were exhausted and the comic was reprinted. However, the reception has not been positive in either South Korea or Japan and the author has been tormented by Korean netizens who have criticised his work as 'rubbish' and 'low quality' (Kim, 2006). Yang said he felt 'betrayed' by this reaction and added that he had raised the matter in court (Kim, 2006). The president of Yūgaku Shorin, Ōnota Tetsurō, has also been targeted and has reportedly received numerous threats from Japanese right-wing activists (Kim, 2006).

### Methodology

Hans Vermeer's *skopos* theory, or *skopos* theory, is part of the functionalist paradigm in translation studies (TS). First developed in the German Federal Republic in the 1970s and 1980s, the theory places paramount importance on the pragmatic elements of the source text (ST), signifying that the *translatum*, or target text (TT), is established through the careful analysis of the TT's function, as opposed to simply the ST's properties (Delisle, Lee-Jahnke & Cormier, 1999). This chapter utilises a combination of *skopos* theory and purposeful translation to analyse the approach to translating *HKW* and *HJW* undertaken in the current project.

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3 Nishimura (2006) writes that many South Korean media made negative comments based solely on the manga's provocative title, well before publication.

4 According to Yamano (2005), a number of South Korean publishers approached him after the publication of the manga asking if he would be interested in a Korean translation for the South Korean market; however, he refused upon advice from a South Korean lawyer that such a publication would be at risk of court action as per South Korea's 'Punishment of Pro-Japanese action law' (p. 265).

### **Skopostheorie**

*Skopostheorie* has been widely discussed since its first detailed introduction in 1984 (cf. Vermeer, 1989/2004; Reiß, 2000). It grants the translator considerably more freedom than a strict formal equivalence approach. Such freedom is attained in the style of *finis coronat opus*, where practically any method deemed adequate by the commissioner for the purpose of meeting the translation *skopos* can be applied during the translation (*skopos* meaning aim, purpose or end). According to Hatim (2001), there are a number of important *skopos* rules, with two basic concepts: (1) interaction is determined by *skopos*, (2) *skopos* differs according to the TT's receiver (p. 74).

One problematic aspect of *skopostheorie* is the lack of translation approaches and guidelines. In other words, the theory does not prescribe guidance as to how to achieve the *skopoi*. The first step taken towards achieving the *skopos* in the current project was through supplementation of the *skopostheorie*, using Nord's (2001) 'Purposeful Translation' approach.

### **Purposeful Translation**

The purposeful translation approach offers a considerably more detailed functionalist model than *skopostheorie*. Nord's approach begins with the definition of two basic modes of text transfer, namely 'documentary' and 'instrumental' translation (2001, pp. 80–84). Documentary translation serves as a method of 'documentation' of information pertaining to the ST (Nord, 1988/2005, p. 72), whereby the ST is 'simply reproduced, with no special allowances made for the target context' (Hatim, 2001, p. 89). A TT achieved following the documentary method allows the reader full access to concepts in the ST through techniques such as literal translation and 'exoticisation' (Hatim, 2001, p. 89), albeit never posing as a 'fluent' or 'idiomatic' translation (Larson, 1998, pp. 18–20).<sup>5</sup> Instrumental translation is aimed at the production of an instrument for a new interaction between the source-culture and a target-culture audience (Nord, 2001, p. 47), with the TT read as a work originally written in the target language. Although the documentary translation mode provides a general approach to complement the purpose, what it does not provide is an explicit

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5 Exoticisation is defined as a method which preserves local flavour of the ST (Nord 1988/2005, p. 81).

methodology. In order to adopt an appropriate translation methodology, the ST medium must first be analysed.

### **Manga/Manhwa Translation**

Manga (Jp.) / *manhwa* (Kr.) are Asian versions of the ‘comic’. The manga industry is now fifty times larger than that of comics industry in the US (Pilcher & Brooks, 2005), and accounts for 40 per cent of all printed material in Japan. Translation of manga into English has been limited in spite of their broad readership (Zanettin, 2008a, p. 19). Nevertheless, there is now a steadily growing range of literature on comic and manga translation (see Baccolini & Zanettin, 2008). Of particular interest in this area is what could be generally summarised as ‘foreignisation’ versus ‘domestication’, terms coined by Venuti based on a distinction made by Schleiermacher in the early nineteenth century (Rota, 2008).

Venuti (2008) defines foreignisation as ‘a process that allows the original work to resist integration and to maintain its features’, and domestication as ‘an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target language cultural values’ (p. 20). Foreignisation allows the receiving culture to be aware of the foreign origins of the translation and the reader is not led to believe that the text they are reading is an original. Hatim (2001) emphasises the risks of a domesticating approach having an exclusionary impact on the source culture values, as it can result in the formation of stereotypes.

In the current project, allowing the receivers of the source culture to recognise the translated texts as translations through a fair representation of the ST is crucial, while fully domesticated translations may lead readers to believe the translator is biased. In accordance with the project *skopos* and documentary approach, a translation should be fairly literal so as to preserve important elements of the ST.

In the book *Comics in Translation*, the consensus amongst the contributing scholars regarding foreignisation is that it has become a predominant translation norm, although this has not always been the case (Jüngst, 2008a, 2008b; Rota, 2008; Zanettin 2008b; Zitawi, 2008). In this project, a foreignising approach was justified by the *skopos*; when considering that foreignisation is a norm in manga translation, the approach gains increased importance. The reasons for a foreignising approach are plentiful, even in respect to standard manga translation. Readers of manga often harbor expectations for a certain ‘Japaneseness’.



Although the readership defined by the main project *skopos* is certainly not a manga fan-base, manga is the medium of the ST and therefore must be preserved.

Examples of foreignisation in manga translation include retaining the reading direction of the ST and keeping onomatopoeia in the SL form. However, not all foreignising methods need be applied – as Hatim emphasises, foreignisation and domestication are not a binary (2001). In this project, although the ST reading order has been preserved, a domesticating approach has been applied in the case of onomatopoeia. This decision was based on the fact that the overriding project *skopos* is a TT aimed at academics, commanding a clear and full understanding of the ST.

The consideration of the manga medium in relation to the project *skopos* and documentary mode of translation allow for a more concrete translation approach, which could perhaps be termed ‘supplemented foreignisation’. The importance of such an approach is accentuated when considering the issue of risk in translation.

### **Risk in Translation**

Both Akbari (2009) and Pym (2010) have made contributions to ‘Risk Management in Translation’, mainly addressing ‘metaphorical risk’, particularly that of the ‘economic’ kind. However, translation risk can also be of a physically dangerous nature (or ‘mortal risk’, as I term it), affecting not only the translator, but the client and readership.

Examples of such risk in translation are numerous, ranging from the mistranslation of political texts in the Middle East and Europe (cf. ElShiekh, 2012; Schäffner, 2004; Sharifian, 2009), to the infamous case of Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses*, which resulted in a fatwa, the death of the book’s Japanese translator (Weisman, 1991) and death threats followed by assassination attempts on three others (Fazzo, 1991; Petrou, 2010; Yalman, 1994), one of which resulted in the death of thirty-seven bystanders, in an event known as the ‘Sivas Massacre’ (Yalman, 1994).

Akbari (2009) thoroughly analyses different kinds of risk, dividing them into five translation activities: ‘market’, ‘financial’, ‘project’, ‘production process’, and ‘product’ (pp.1–2). In the case of this project, only production process and product risks were of relevance, as the *skopos* is not subject to commercial issues. Production process and product risks are significant as they relate to the act of

translation (possible mistranslations) and acceptability (readership reception) respectively (Akbari, 2009, pp. 2–5). Pym (2010) asserts that translators must carefully judge which risks pose the most danger, and places risk into a spectrum ranging from ‘very low’ to ‘very high’ (pp. 1–4), briefly alluding to ‘real’ or ‘dangerous’ risk. It must also be noted that ‘metaphorical’ risk, too, can bring ‘real’, ‘physical’ outcomes upon the translator and other parties, as illustrated above.

### **Ethical Risk Management in Translation**

What Akbari (2009) terms ‘risk treatment’ is categorised as ‘risk avoidance’, ‘risk reduction’/‘mitigation’, ‘risk transfer’ and ‘risk retention’ (p. 5). Examples include: choosing not to engage in a translation after consideration of the risks (risk avoidance); inclusion of a forward or notes so as to disambiguate precarious terms and explain the translator’s approach, word-for-word translation, or transliteration so as to retain important lexical features in the ST (risk reduction/mitigation); conducting a group translation (risk transfer); and, finally, the decision to accept risk (retention) (Akbari, 2009, pp. 1–5).

The gravest risk in the project at hand is ‘misleading of the readership’ through inaccurate translations. Initially, following an ethical model (risk retention and reduction) combined with a foreignising approach seemed to be the safest path.

### **Ethical Choices**

Decisions during the translation of *HKW* and *HJW* ranged from stylistic to philological choices. It is important to examine some examples of the ethics-based risk management approaches defined earlier, which are not necessarily obvious in the TTs. This section shall briefly address style and onomatopoeia, followed by an analysis of the translator’s notes, translation of nationalistic discourse, and the issue of translating ‘mistakes’ in the STs.

### **Translation of Style**

All mediums susceptible to translation require the analysis of relevant ethical aspects. Comics naturally contain a large number of visual elements such as text direction, varying font and onomatopoeia/mimesis (for an account of the issues in translating onomatopoeia and mimesis see chapter fourteen).

Translating comics involves both the translation of text and visual elements. Respecting the ST style is crucial in an ethics-based, modified literal translation approach, as the main project *skopos* is to bring target readers as close to the ST as possible.

The ST of *HKW* is in a standard Japanese layout, read from right to left, with text running vertically. Modern Korean texts, on the other hand, are read in the same way as those in English. The translation of *HKW* follows the trend of ST reading order retention, as aforementioned, as part of foreignisation in manga translation. The downside to this technique is that the Japanese layout may be unfamiliar to some readers, resulting in reading difficulty. Thus, a manga reading guide, shown in Figure 13.1, was supplied with the TT, a widespread method for overcoming such problems. Care was also taken to preserve layout and font as much as possible, as can be seen in the onomatopoeia and cover art.

A foreignising approach was applied to preserve both comics' covers (Figure 13.2). The Japanese title of *HKW* was maintained in *katakana* and *kanji* scripts, whilst the Korean title of *HJW* was left in *hangeul*. The text on the far left of the *HKW* ST cover was translated from romanised Japanese (*kenkanryu*) into English as 'Hate Korean Wave', the word *hate* written in outlined characters to reflect the different font utilised for the first character, *ken* (嫌) in the original. This is a means of retaining ST emphasis, ensuring understanding of the concept behind the comic as being that of 'hating the Korean Wave', as opposed to a general 'hate wave' aimed at the country or its people, an important distinction in terms of risk and ethics.

Both comics utilise various fonts to distinguish dialogue and emotions, another aspect that required preservation, as shown in Figure 13.3.

A standard font was maintained for narration ('Kouichi Matsumoto ...'), a more cursive font for standard speech ('Hey, Kaname ...'), italics and bold script for emphasis ('Let's support ...'), and a smaller darker font for thought ('Though I'm only ...'). On the other hand, *HJW* only employs two fonts: for speech ('Milady ...') and narration ('Even up until the Meiji ...') (see Figure 13.4).

It must be stressed that this adherence to minute visual details is a conscious ethical choice made after the consideration of project-related risk. Although the rendering of all text into one font would perhaps not hinder comprehension per se, it would not allow for as much insight into the authors' treatments of different types of information.

### **Bam! Translation of Onomatopoeia**

Onomatopoeia, used to express sounds such as *boom* and *squeak*, are a staple feature in comics. However, Japanese and Korean utilise onomatopoeia to a much greater extent than English (Fukuda, 1993; Inose, 2008).

Translation of onomatopoeia in *HKW* and *HJW* required special care, not only in terms of finding equivalent sounds, but also rendering text in a font similar to that found in the STs. As per Figure 13.5, *HKW*, for example, utilises a wide range of onomatopoeia and mimesis to express sound and emotion, for example, *swiish* and *humph*.

One method of dealing with onomatopoeia when translating comics is to leave the field in the source language. However, doing so could be seen as extreme foreignisation, thus not suitable for the project *skopos*, as it would not promote complete understanding of the STs. A second method is that of romanisation, wherein ‘swoosh’ would become *zuzazazaza*, and ‘splashhh’, *hudeu-deudeuk*. Such a method would gravely hinder comprehension, especially in the case of ‘humph’, where the ST term ‘*gakkuri*’ provides no semantic clues for non-Japanese speakers. A final method is meaning-based, the method applied in this project. Meaning-based translation of onomatopoeia is by no means a simple task, as some Japanese and Korean examples have no known equivalents in the English language. The existence of no *known* equivalents does not warrant pronouncing a term ‘untranslatable’, however. There should always be room for the introduction of new terms, as this can be beneficial to the target language and culture. In the case of the *HJW*, there is only limited use of onomatopoeia, perhaps because most of the comic content is centred on dialogue. Apart from ‘splashhh’ (cf. Figure 13.5), there are only three other pages with onomatopoeia.

### **Translator’s Notes**

One of the most significant elements introduced into the TTs are the translator’s notes. A common feature of scholarly and manga translations (Jüngst, 2008a, 2008b), notes are usually utilised to explain information in the ST that may otherwise be ambiguous, elements that are exclusive to the ST culture, or contain a nuance that is difficult, or even ‘impossible’, to translate. Notes can therefore be seen as a means of bringing the TT reader closer to the ST, through the bridging of knowledge gaps. In other words, notes aid readers in reading a translation by providing them with an understanding closer to that of a ST reader.

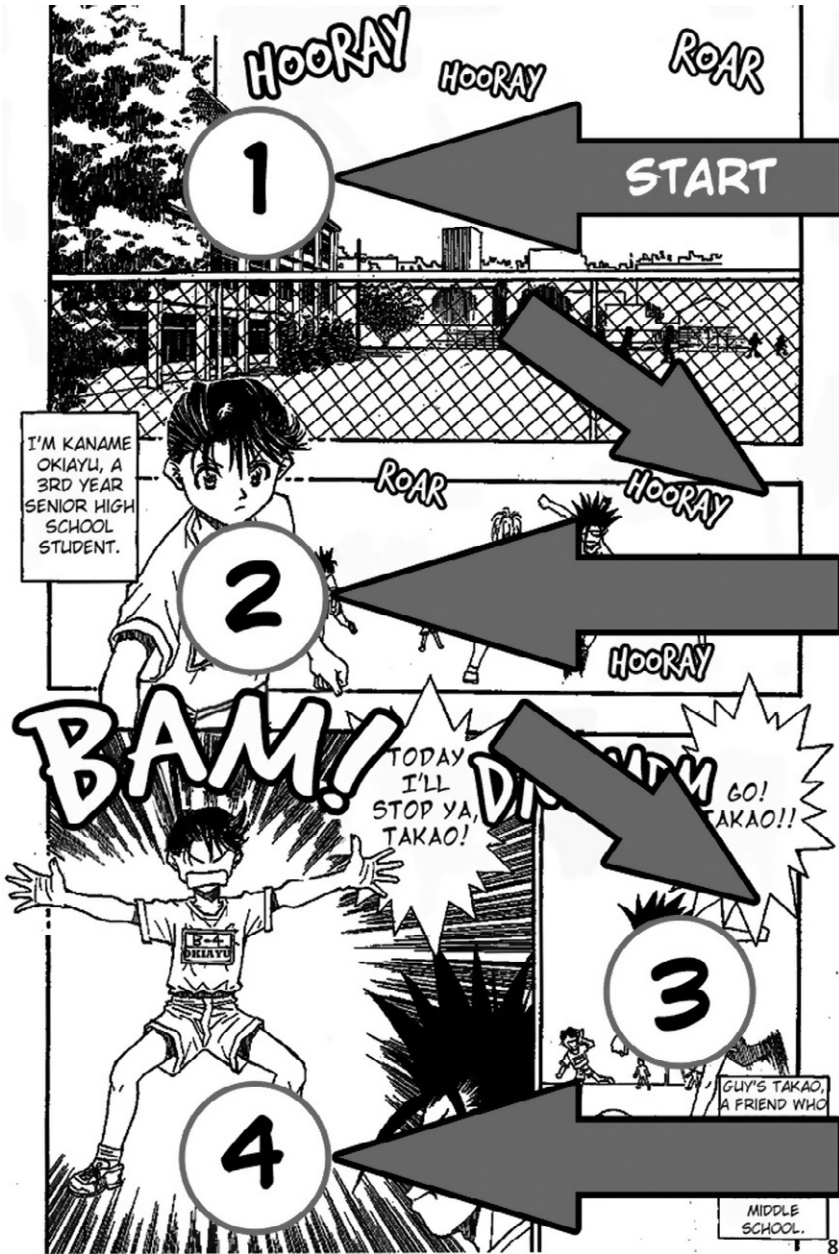


Figure 13.1 (above and opposite). Guide to Reading *Hate Korean Wave*.


*Hate Korean Wave*, p.8 (left), p.38 (right) © 2005 Yamano Sharin (Zulawnik, Trans.).

Courtesy of Shinyusha Mook.

Far East Asia  
Investigation  
Committee Report


# 極東アジア 調査会レポート


File01 "WHAT IS 'FWABYON';  
A MENTAL DISORDER ENDEMIC  
TO KOREANS"?


\*  FIRST... NOT TO BE BLAMED  
FOR B... ST, LET ME BRING  
OUT A... FROM THE KOREAN  
SIDE. ... OTATION TAKEN  
FROM... ILBO, STH. KOREA'S  
NATION... PAPER, DATED


\* **3**

\* **FWABYON, A MENTAL DISORDER  
ENDEMIC TO KOREANS, IS  
MANIFESTED AS A COMBINATION OF  
CONDITIONS SUCH AS ANXIETY,  
DEPRESSION, AND STIMULATION  
(PARTS OMITTED). IN 1996, THE AMERICAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION  
RECORDED THIS DISORDER IN ENGLISH  
"HWAPYUNG"; OFFICIALLY  
RECOGNIZING IT AS A KOREAN DISORDER.  
MAIN SYMPTOMS INCLUDE AN UNEASY  
CHEST, A BURNING LIKE SENSATION  
ACCOMPANIED BY BREATHING DISORDER,  
INDIGESTION, AND NUMBNESS OF THE  
HANDS AND FEET (END OMITTED).**


\*  A NATIONAL SOUTH KOREAN  
NEWSPAPER HAS RECOGNIZED  
THE EXISTENCE OF FWABYON!?  
SO, FWABYON IS A DISEASE THAT  
REALLY DOES EXIST, HUH.

\*  SUEYUKI-SAN, PLEASE DO TELL US  
MORE ABOUT THIS DISEASE!

\*  AS YOU SAW IN THE ARTICLE,  
FWABYON HAS BEEN REGISTERED AS  
A "CULTURE-BOUND SYNDROME"  
UNDER THE NAME "HWABYLING"  
(NOTE: THE CHOSUN ILBO'S  
ROMANIZED SPELLING IS THOUGHT TO  
BE MISTAKEN), BY THE AMERICAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION.  
A "CULTURE-BOUND SYNDROME",

\*  ITSUMI..... SEEMS TO BE A  
DISEASE C... "FWABYON" WHICH  
ONLY EXIS... IN KOREANS!  
IT APPEAR... UGH KOREANS'  
SHORT-TE... RESULT OF IT.


\* **1**


\*  THERE'S... IS A DISEASE  
WHICH O... IN KOREANS!  
TREATING... AL CHARACTER  
AS A DISE... LABELLING IT SO  
SOMEHOW... LIKE A RACIST  
REMARK.

\* **2**

\* YE...YEAH THAT'S RIGHT, HUH.  
THERE'S NO WAY THERE'S A DISEASE  
LIKE THAT. I WAS VERY CLOSE TO  
BEING RACIST....

\* EVEN IF YOU'RE CRITICISING KOREANS'  
RECKLESS REMARKS, IT IS WRONG  
TO SAY SUCH DUBIOUS THINGS.  
OUR CLUB IS NOT LIKE THAT!

\*  NAH, THE DISEASE CALLED  
"FWABYON", A MENTAL  
DISORDER ENDEMIC TO KOREANS,  
CERTAINLY DOES EXIST!!

\*  WH, WHAAAT...-SANS.  
WHEN DID YOU...

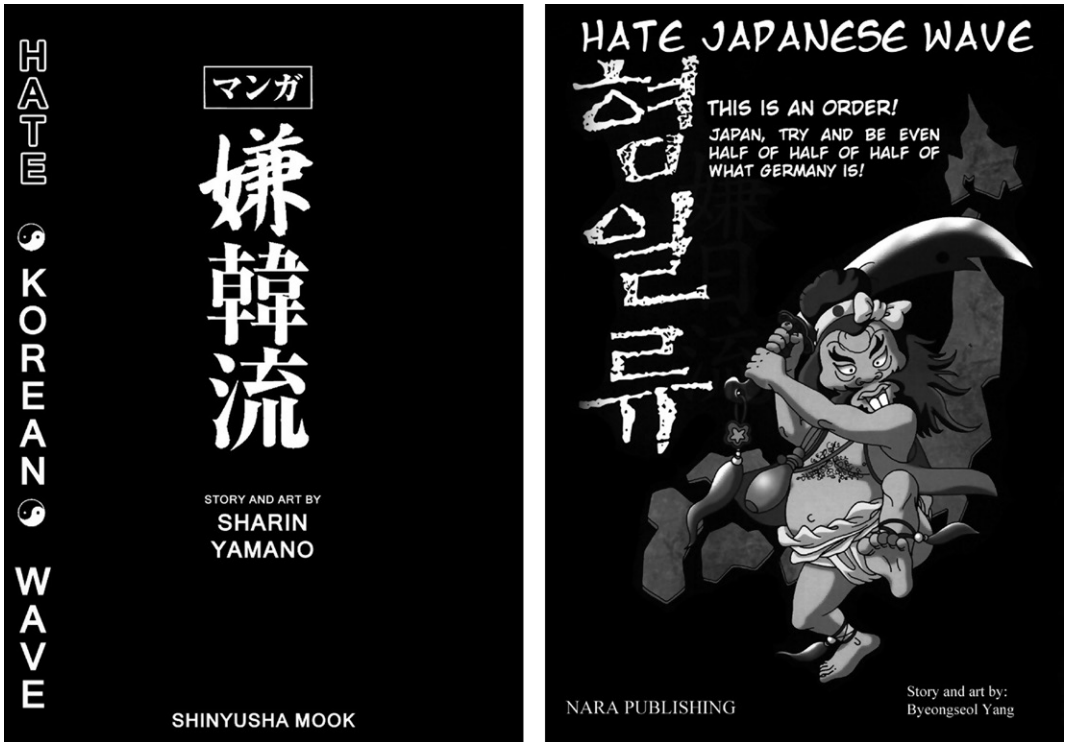


Figure 13.2. Cover art.

Left: *Hate Korean Wave*, Front Cover © 2005 Yamano Sharin (Zulawnik, Trans.). Courtesy of Shinyusha Mook.

Right: *Hate Japanese Wave*, Front Cover © 2006 Byeong-seol Yang (Zulawnik, Trans.). Courtesy of Nara Publishing.



Figure 13.3.

*Hate Korean Wave*, p. 10 © 2005 Yamano Sharin (Zulawnik, Trans.). Courtesy of Shinyusha Mook.





Figure 13.4.

*Hate Japanese Wave*, p. 15 © 2006 Byeongseol Yang (Zulawnik, Trans.). Courtesy of Nara Publishing.

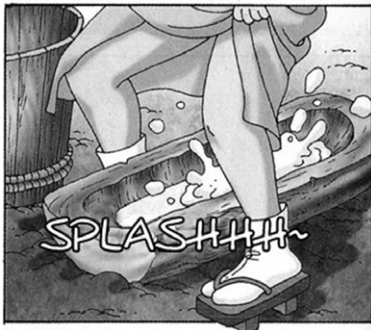
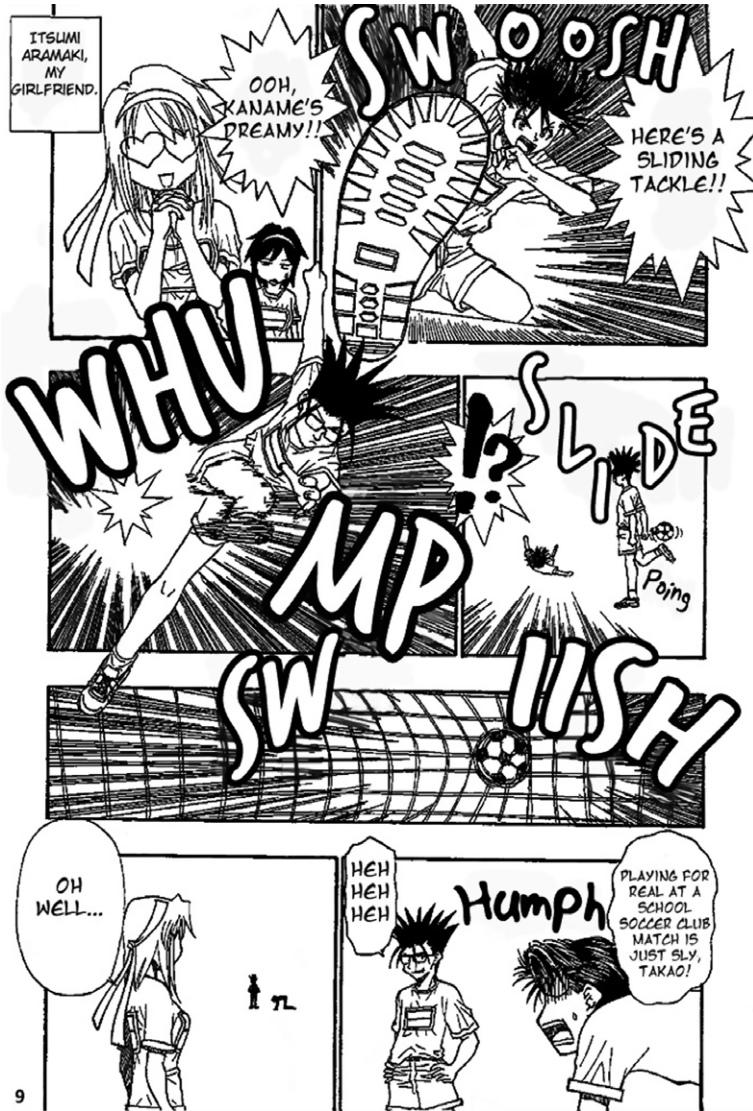


Figure 13.5. Onomatopoeia in *Hate Korean Wave* and *Hate Japanese Wave*.

Above: *Hate Korean Wave*, p. 9 © 2005 Yamano Sharin (Zulawnik, Trans.). Courtesy of Shinyusha Mook.

Left: *Hate Japanese Wave*, panel from p. 14 © 2006 Byeong-seol Yang (Zulawnik, Trans.). Courtesy of Nara Publishing.

In the translations of *KHW* and *HJW* completed for the current project, notes were utilised in the case of culturally specific factors such as facts (e.g. the names of historical figures), specialised terminology and linguistic factors. The choice to apply notes in this way was made upon consideration of ethical issues. Considering that *HKW* and *HJW* largely address similar topics, the two TTs could be rendered in a consistent and therefore more ethical, manner. Both, for instance, address the issue of the Takeshima/Dokdo Island dispute. Academics who conduct research on Japan–Korea relations are sure to know about the issue, but that does not mean that the same can be said of scholars who specialise in, for example, Chinese or Malaysian studies. Subsequently, the choice was made to include notes 12 and 15 for *HKW* and *HJW*, respectively. Both entries, although indexed with the term used in the STs ('Takeshima' and 'Dokdo', respectively), contain identical information. Both notes only provide basic geographic and political facts.

The use of notes to clarify specialised terminology also minimised potentially high-risk comprehension issues. Such 'specialised' terms included note 5, probably the most significant in *HKW*. Translator's note 5 (Figure 13.6, at the end of the sentence in the right-hand side speech bubble) was included to provide original ST renditions of terms used to describe some aspects of Japan's historical occupation of the Korean Peninsula. The decision to include notes for the terms 'oppression of the independence movement', 'Imperialisation of the People Policy', 'Name-Change Policy', 'forced deportation' and 'comfort women' was made on the basis that the target audience may wish to further investigate the issues. Moreover, there exists more than one way of defining most of these terms in English, which could potentially result in confusion, which is a high-risk factor.

'Imperialisation of the People Policy', for example, is a calque translation (cf. Delisle, Lee-Jahnke & Cormier, 1999; Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958/1995) of the ST term *kōminka seisaku* [皇民化政策]. Although the ST term ('*kōminka seisaku*') is seemingly often translated into English as either *Japanisation* or *Tennōisation*, *Japanisation* can be seen as considerably Eurocentric, whilst *Tennōisation* is a term derived from *tennō*, Japanese for *emperor* and not *kōmin* (emperor's people).<sup>6</sup> Both are hardly terms that Japanese characters in *HKW* would use. For a Japanese person coming in contact with the term '*kōminka*

6 Compared to *Nazification*, *Tennōisation* is inaccurate in terms of lexical composition. Whereas *Nazi + fication* means *making something or someone Nazi*, *Tennō + isation* literally means *turning something/someone into the Emperor of Japan*. When back-translated into Japanese (*tennōka*, 天皇化), the term makes as much sense.

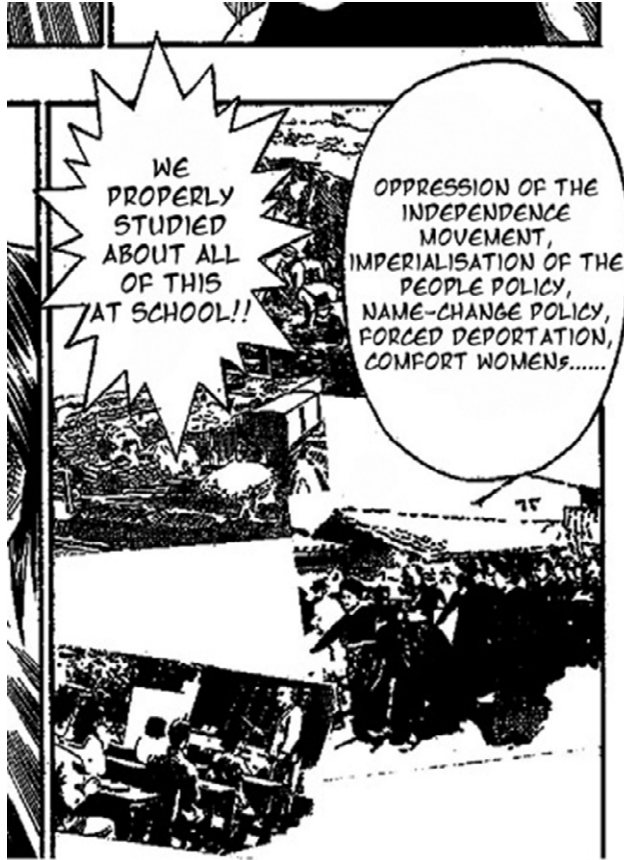


Figure 13.6. Use of Translator's Notes in *Hate Korean Wave*.

*Hate Korean Wave*, panel from p. 28 © 2005 Yamano Sharin  
(Zulawnik, Trans.). Courtesy of Shinyusha Mook.

*seisaku*', it is likely that the first image to come to mind would be people becoming part of Japan's 'Empire', or 'the Emperor's people'.<sup>7</sup> Thus, it is hard to imagine a Japanese reader envisioning *kōminka seisaku* as a policy that simply 'Japanises' or 'Tennōises' a people. Nevertheless, *Japanisation* and *Tennōisation* have both been mentioned in the notes for reference as commonly used terms when referring to the concept of *kōminka seisaku*.

7 'A Japanese occupational policy from World War II used within Korea [*Chōsen*] as part of wartime mobilisation. Under the name of "cultural assimilation", it was aimed at making Koreans loyal people of the [Japanese] Emperor, whilst obliterating national identity. The policy included name change [*sōshi kaimei*] and educational regulations [*kyōikurei*]' (*The Great Japanese Dictionary*, 1995, p. 741) [my translation].

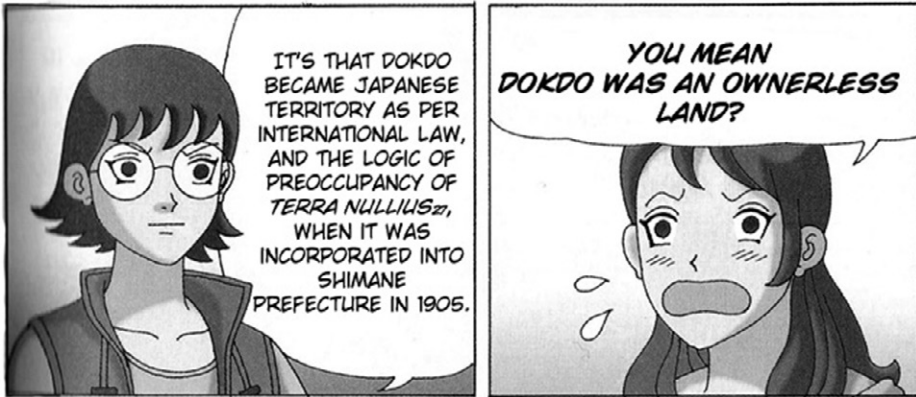


Figure 13.7. Use of Translator's Notes in *Hate Japanese Wave*.

*Hate Japanese Wave*, panels from p. 23 © 2006 Byeong-seol Yang (Zulawnik, Trans.). Courtesy of Nara Publishing.

A similar high-risk issue was faced with note 2. Kaname's grandfather, portrayed as having lived on the Korean Peninsula before Korea became divided into North and South Korea, refers to the country as *Chōsen* (朝鮮). Using the word 'Korea' here to translate *Chōsen* is the easiest option, except it is already used in the text to refer to 'South Korea'. Rendering both with the one term would be detrimental to cohesion. Another option is to romanise *Chōsen* from the word's Korean pronunciation (*Joseon*). However, as with the issue discussed in note 5, one could hardly imagine Kaname's grandfather pronouncing this particular term in Korean. Subsequently, the decision was made to apply foreignisation, romanising the term directly from Japanese as '*Chōsen*' and providing an explanatory note.

A similar problem was encountered in *HJW* in relation to the term '*mujumul seonjeom*', explained in note 27. *Mujumul seonjeom* [무주물선점, 無主物先占], although an important term in the Dokdo/Takeshima Island dispute, carries no definite English equivalent as of yet. As a high-risk term, 'meaning-based' or 'idiomatic' translation (cf. Larson, 1998) was applied. The term was supplemented with a note containing the original ST word in *hangeul*, *hanja*, and romanisation for reference. It should be noted that as *mujumul* on its own can refer to any kind of 'ownerless object', it would be risky to simply translate the term as *terra nullius*. Nevertheless, as shown in Figure 13.7, *terra nullius* is a '*mot juste*' (cf. Delisle, Lee-Jahnke & Cormier, 1999), as *mujumul* when combined with *seonjeom* clearly refers to the *preoccupancy of previously*

*unoccupied land*. The following sentence (‘You mean Dokdo was an ownerless land?’) provides further contextual justification.

### Translation of Nationalistic Discourse

Throughout the project, the translation of nationalistic discourse was considered to be high-risk. Maintaining fidelity to nationalistic terms used in STs is an issue requiring special consideration, especially if the TTs are to serve the role of an academic resource, as is the *skopos* of the project.

*HJW*, in particular, contains a very high frequency of *uri* [우리], meaning *our*. The use of *uri* in reference to the ‘Korean people’ and ‘Korea’ clearly denotes the term’s rhetorical significance, and should be preserved wherever possible.



Figure 13.8. Use of *uri*.

*Hate Japanese Wave*, panels from p. 31 © 2006 Byeong-seol Yang (Zulawnik, Trans.). Courtesy of Nara Publishing.

*Uri* (Figure 13.8) is commonly used throughout as a pronoun (*we, us*) and attributive adjective (*our*); both in dialogue between characters, and between the author and intended ST readers (cf. *HJW* introduction). Translating *uri* as *our* and not *Korean* or *Korea's*, was an important ethical choice. *Korean* or *Korea's* would constitute under-translation and under-toning of the ST's strong nationalistic rhetoric. One may argue that *urinara* only refers to 'Korea' (whatever this may mean) when the *uri* and *nara* are written as one word; however, space or no space the two bear no difference in pronunciation.

### Translation of ST Mistakes (?)

The STs both contain a number of factual errors retained as per figures 13.9 and 13.10. *Hanja/kanji* that are pronounced as *Seokdo* in Korean are in *HKW* rendered into Japanese by the author as *Tokto*, thus sounding more similar to *Dokdo*.<sup>8</sup> As per Figure 13.10, *HKW* presents the opinion that Japanese does not have a polite grammatical speech form, in spite of equivalent honorific forms existing between Korean (i.e.: *jondaetmal*) and Japanese (i.e.: *keigo/sonkeigo*).

The translation of Article 2a from Chapter 2 of the San Francisco Peace Treaty presented by the author of *HJW* (Figure 13.11) is inaccurate. The ST of the treaty 'quoted' does not include the words 'and a number of contained islands' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2012).<sup>9</sup>

In case of translations with a different project *skopos*, the translator may check mistakes encountered within the ST with the authors. However, in the case of this project, the *skopos* is to provide TTs that maintain as many ST features as possible, including any mistakes, whether they be explicit or implicit. Considering the project *skopos*, the intention of the STs must be conveyed as is.

8 The correct Korean pronunciation 'Seokdo' [석도] should therefore be written as *Sokto* [ソクト] in Japanese.

9 The original Article 2a of the San Francisco Peace Treaty reads: 'Japan, recognizing the independence of Korea, renounces all right, title and claim to Korea, including the islands of Quelpart, Port Hamilton and Dagelet' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2012).

Figure 13.9 (Right). Factual Error in *Hate Korean Wave*.

*Hate Korean Wave*, panel from p. 247  
 © 2005 Yamano Sharin (Zulawnik, Trans.). Courtesy of Shinyusha Mook.

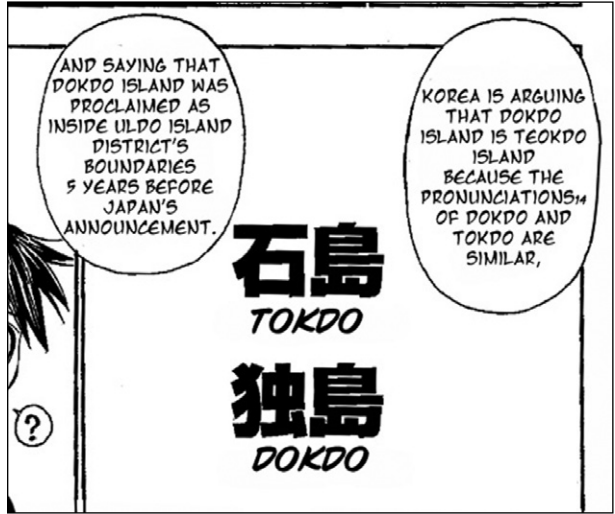
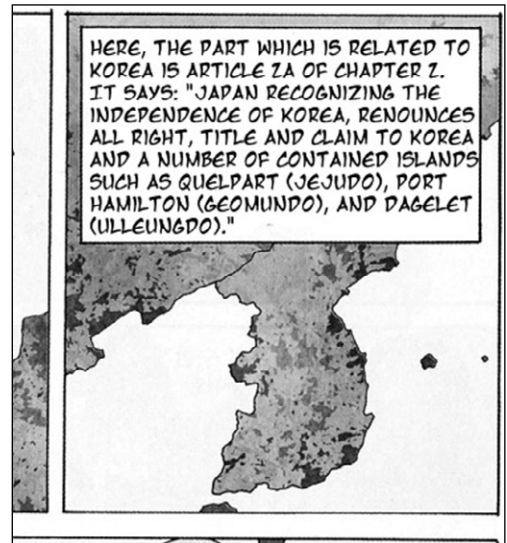


Figure 13.10 (Above). Factual Error in *Hate Japanese Wave*.

*Hate Japanese Wave*, panel from p. 14  
 © 2006 Byeong-seol Yang (Zulawnik, Trans.). Courtesy of Nara Publishing.

Figure 13.11 (Right). Factual Error in *Hate Japanese Wave*.

*Hate Japanese Wave*, panel from p. 25  
 © 2006 Byeong-seol Yang (Zulawnik, Trans.). Courtesy of Nara Publishing.





## Conclusion

The *HKW* and *HJW* translation project resulted in a reliable resource for examining the portrayal of Japan–Korea issues through the popular medium of comics. The project has addressed a variety of under-researched issues in translation studies. However, what makes the project particularly significant is that it not only *discusses* project-relevant theories, it also demonstrates and critically analyses their application. Research of this type can aid scholars in better defining the strong points and/or shortcomings of translation theory. The practical application of the theories presented has demonstrated and justified a methodology that strives to achieve these ideals.

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# THE SOUND OF SILENCE

## Translating Onomatopoeia and Mimesis in Japanese Manga

CATHY SELL AND SARAH PASFIELD-NEOFITOU

### Introduction

In manga and comics, the use of sound effects is extremely common. While English-language comic books are well known for effects like ‘POW!’ or ‘BAM!’, often associated with conflict and action, Japanese-language manga include a more extensive repertoire of sound representations. For example, one manga surveyed in the present study included effects such as *baku* to represent biting into an apple and *guoooooooo* to simulate the sound of a large airship (Hoshino, 2011, pp. 261–263). Sound effects may be the largest element on a page, appearing even larger in some cases than the characters. At times, they are the main or even only textual elements in a panel or page. One of the defining features of sound effects in manga (one that makes them very challenging for translators) is their hybrid textual-visual nature. The translation of onomatopoeia and mimesis from Japanese to English in manga poses two main challenges. Firstly, on the linguistic level, it is generally acknowledged that there are many more onomatopoeic and mimetic terms in Japanese than English, posing translation language resource difficulties. Secondly, on the artistic level, sound effects are often hand-drawn and integrated into the surrounding artwork, posing aesthetic difficulties (and cost increases) in the production of translated texts.

Particularly unique and challenging mimeses in Japanese manga are those that represent silence. In fact, the *Gitaigo giongo jisho* (Onomatopoeia and Mimesis Dictionary) (Makita, 2004), which defines almost 1,000 terms with

illustrations and photographs, devotes an entire spread to only three words that signify silence or lack; *shiin*, representing a lack of sound; *jii!*, a lack of motion; and *jiin*, a lack of feeling (Makita, 2004, pp. 112–113). Rather appropriately, the four pages following this spread are left almost entirely blank, except for a pale blue and green wash, demonstrating the visual impact of lack (pp. 114–117). Such ‘sound effects’ that signify a lack of sound or change are especially difficult to translate into English.

Onomatopoeia and mimesis are difficult to translate at the best of times. As the forward to Scheiner’s translation of *Nihon keizai nyuumon* (published in English as *Japan Inc*) states, ‘Like any respectable comic book, this one was filled with the Japanese equivalents for words like BAM! CRASH! and BOING! – words that seem obvious in context but are often difficult to translate. What, for example, is the English for *koro koro*, the sound a pencil makes rolling across a table?’ (Ishinomori, 1988, p. vii).

In answer to these difficulties, Scheiner states: ‘In general, such words have been left untranslated. Since their function is partially decorative, they can be considered part of the artwork, or enterprising readers can devise their own translations’ (1988, p. vii).<sup>1</sup> Indeed, 83 per cent of the onomatopoeia and mimesis identified in the English-language edition of Ishinomori’s *Japan, Inc.* is untranslated, and many publishers elect not to provide any translation of such effects at all. Yet, in other translations, all or most onomatopoeia and mimesis are considered essential and translated. How, then, are these ‘often difficult to translate’ terms rendered into English? Are onomatopoeia and mimesis textual, and is it the duty of a translator to translate them along with the dialogue? Or are they mainly decorative, to be considered as artwork beyond the translator’s domain? And how does one attempt to describe the ‘sound’ of silence? This chapter will explore the translation of onomatopoeia and mimesis in manga in general, and with a particular focus on those words that represent silence as a case study.

## Onomatopoeia and Mimesis

Ono’s (1984) *Practical Guide to Onomatopoeia and Mimesis* provides useful sub-categorisation of this terminology group: firstly, according to whether they

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1 Jüngst (2008) suggests that leaving onomatopoeia untranslated and untouched in Japanese script also heightens the reader-perceived ‘authenticity’ of the text (p. 22), a trait which is particularly valued by readers of manga (p. 59).

represent sounds or other states or conditions, and, secondly, according to whether they relate to an animate being or an inanimate object, as Table 14.1 below shows.

Sound (onomatopoeia)	State/Condition (mimesis)
擬音語 [ <i>giongo</i> ]	擬態語 [ <i>gitaigo</i> ]
擬声語 [ <i>giseigo</i> ]	擬情語 [ <i>gijyogo</i> ]

Table 14.1. Onomatopoeia and Mimesis.

Onomatopoeia are words that imitate sounds, with examples including laughter, barking, or the sound of breaking glass. They are known in Japanese as *giongo* [sound words] (Ono, 1984). A subset of onomatopoeia that specifically imitate the voices of animate beings, either human or animal, are known as *giseigo* [voice words].

While onomatopoeia represent sounds, mimesis or *gitaigo* [mimicry words] represent states or conditions. Ono (1984) defines *gitaigo* as words that describe the appearance or nature of phenomena, movement, growth or other change. *Gitaigo* also have a subcategory known as *gijōgo* [feeling words], which represent human emotions or feelings (Ono, 1984). Inose argues that mimeses are a ‘much more distinctive feature of the Japanese language’ (2008, p. 98) than onomatopoeia: while other languages have a comparable volume of onomatopoeia, there are few with as many mimetic words as Japanese. In manga, *giongo*, *giseigo*, *gitaigo* and *gijōgo* are commonly drawn outside of speech bubbles, and are integrated into the artwork to various extents.

### Silent Language

Sound is an integral element of manga, but so is silence. Somewhere between 60 per cent and 90 per cent of human communication, it is thought, is expressed non-verbally (cf. Hall, 1973; Goleman, 1995). Thorne (2005) argues that many aspects of non-verbal communication transcend national and linguistic boundaries, yet some areas remain culturally specific.

Scholarly interest in non-verbal communication has increased in recent years, apparently due to three main drivers: a growing recognition of the

importance of emotional intelligence, the spread of globalisation necessitating cross-cultural communication, and the increasing use of images in daily communications and media (Thorne, 2005). As described above, manga has a long tradition of combining visual and linguistic elements and is hence an important area for study.

As Kalman and Rafaeli argue, silence is, in fact, part of the message, even though it is often treated as an ‘insignificant background, a meaningless default, a useless emptiness’ (2011, p. 54). They cite Bruneau’s demonstration of the importance of silence: ‘silence is to speech as the white of this paper is to print’ (1973, p.18) – an especially poignant observation when considering the representation of silence in black-and-white printed manga.

### Translation Strategies

In his aim to compile a framework for the study of comics, Kaindl (1999) breaks down the structure of comics into three areas: linguistic, typographical and pictorial. However, the inter-relatedness of image and text in comics and manga blurs the boundaries between these categories. As Zanettin (2009) notes, comics and manga are primarily visual texts and in translation they are often manipulated at both textual and pictorial levels. Pictorial manipulation is often necessary due to differences between the source text (ST) and target text (TT) in terms of amount of the space needed, the reading direction and the orientation of text. Indeed, Kaindl describes typography as ‘the interface between language and pictures’ (1999, p. 274). This blurring is particularly evident in the case of onomatopoeia and mimesis.

While Kaindl defines onomatopoeia as a linguistic element, it is important to point out that in manga and comics, they are more often than not physically and aesthetically a part of the artwork, especially as they are usually hand-drawn. Unlike speech dialogue and narration, set apart by the use of balloons and boxes, onomatopoeia are often fully integrated into the aesthetic layout of the depicted scene. Additionally, whether hand-drawn or digitally rendered, the typography used for onomatopoeia can be extremely expressive. Thus, while Kaindl categorises onomatopoeia as linguistic, there also exist important pictorial and typographical aspects, in which sense they may be described as both image and text, as Scheiner (1988) indicates.

## Typographic Strategies

Kaindl (1999) suggests comics translators use an adaptation of the categories used for film translation analysis by Delabastita (1989): *repetitio* [repetition], *deletio* [deletion], *detractio* [detraction], *adiectio* [addition], *substitutio* [substitution] and *transmutatio* [transmutation]. While it is important to acknowledge the differences between audio-visual and image-text works, they do share many similarities that make the adaptation of these concepts useful in examining typographic strategies in manga.

- *Repetition* refers to the use of elements from the ST as they are, without change. This is common for elements deemed semantically unimportant, or too difficult to translate. In the case of onomatopoeia, repetition is employed where translation is seen as interfering with the original aesthetics.
- *Deletion* is another translation strategy that is in essence a strategy of non-translation, in which the ST onomatopoeia is erased.
- *Detraction* is an omission or reduction of partial content without deletion of the entire element and is more commonly seen in the abridgment of volumes, for example, rather than short textual units such as onomatopoeia and mimesis.

Where onomatopoeia and mimesis are translated in comics and manga, the common strategies employed are addition and substitution. Rare cases of transmutation can also be found.

- *Addition* is the addition of material, which was not in the ST, to the TT. This often takes the form of translators' notes and cultural or linguistic explanations such as in-text explication, footnotes, endnotes or prefaces. Onomatopoeia and mimesis in manga may be translated through addition by using in-panel subtitles, gutter or footnote notation, or through the use of endnote glossaries.
- *Substitution* refers to the substitution of TT elements for corresponding elements in the ST. This covers not only the standard practice of replacing the ST dialogue and other text with translated equivalents, but it also relates to the treatment of pictorial elements when adapting (or censoring) a text. Naturally, this also covers instances when onomatopoeia are deleted and replaced by target language (TL) equivalents.



- *Transmutation* is a change in order of the source material. The classic example of this in manga translation is ‘flipping’ (also known as ‘flopping’), where Japanese right to left pages are mirror-imaged so that they read in the English left to right direction. Transmutation can also occur on a micro-text level in manga where the information that is presented across speech bubbles or panels can end up rearranged in the translated text. In this case, it is often a necessity caused by differences in syntax. In onomatopoeia and mimesis translation, transmutation can in effect be an additional strategy employed when using either substitution or addition.

Kaindl’s adaption of Delabastita’s strategies are helpful in identifying the way that translation has been achieved in manga. However, it is important to recognise that these are not linguistic strategies for translation, but rather strategies that deal with the structure of the text. On the level of onomatopoeia and mimesis, they are typographic strategies that enable the physical process of producing the target text. Specifically, repetition, deletion and detraction allow omission of content in translation; while addition and substitution integrate the translation within the image-text environment of the manga manuscript; and transmutation allows micro-level management of the content.

### **Linguistic Strategies**

Kearns (2009) defines translation ‘strategies’ as courses of action undertaken to achieve a goal in an optimal way. Four linguistic strategies were identified in the translation of onomatopoeia and mimesis in the present study: equivalence, coinage, descriptive, and omission.

- *Equivalence* may be defined as the use of any TL form that is deemed equal to the SL form (Catford, 1965, p. 27). In the present study, we use equivalence to refer to TL terms that are neither a neologism (as would be the case for a coinage), nor a description of the ST term. Although common, as Baker (2011) points out, the use of equivalent forms is not always possible, as not all concepts are shared across languages. Thus, a number of alternatives, as outlined below, have been developed.
- *Coinage* refers to a type of communication strategy identified by Tarone (1977), which involves the creation of a new term in the TL, often on the basis of existing rules. This strategy is particularly useful where an

appropriate equivalent cannot be found in the TL and the modification of existing TL terminology would be contextually incomprehensible to the audience.

- *Descriptive* strategies are instances where the translator uses generic as opposed to culture-bound terms in order to convey meaning, similar to a gloss (Harvey, 2000). Where no equivalent exists and a coinage would be inappropriate or not readily understood, particularly in relation to culturally-specific terms, description of the term may be utilised.
- Finally, *omission* or non-translation may also be used as a strategy. Baker (2011) points out that in situations where the meaning of a term is not vital enough to justify the distraction of a lengthy explanation, it can be, and often is, left out of translation. In comics and manga translation, aesthetic concerns and spatial restrictions are also reasons for choosing to omit onomatopoeia and mimesis. Omission also reduces costs and resources associated with relettering, and artwork alterations.

The decision to translate, reproduce, or omit onomatopoeia and mimesis is most often made by the publisher, and this decision often comes down to the philosophy of the publisher and their target audience, and, ultimately, the underlying purpose of the translation. One of the most prominent strategies for onomatopoeia and mimesis employed on a publishing company level is omission through the typographic strategy of repetition. In particular, this strategy is made use of by publishers who assert their motive as respect to the source material and the preservation of ‘authentic’ manga elements (Sell, 2011, p. 100).

## Methodology

The present study makes use of a corpus of 738 translated manga *tankōbon* (books of collected manga) drawn from Monash University’s JSC Manga Library collection. This sample was analysed to establish trends in reading direction (‘flipped’ versus ‘preserved’) and the dominant typographic strategy employed in translation of onomatopoeia. Many of these manga are part of a series and, in total, 206 separate series are represented in the sample. Few instances of strategy variation between volumes of the same series were observed<sup>2</sup> and, consequently, the overview statistics were compiled using data trends based on the 206 grouped series, rather than the 738 individual volumes so as to avoid skewed results. The

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2 With some exceptions, cf. *Chobits*, *Love for Venus*, and *Maison Ikkoku*.

findings from this large-scale quantitative analysis will be used to provide a backdrop for the in-depth discussion of the translation of silence in manga.

At the time of analysis, the JSC Manga Library collection held over 2,000 books. The 738 volume subset of this collection used for quantitative analysis in the present study represented the English translated manga collection. Publication dates ranged from 1988 to 2011, as detailed in Table 14.2.

Decade	No. Series	No. Volumes
1980s	3	6
1990s	16	44
2000s	181	658
2010s	6	30
TOTAL	206	738

Table 14.2. Corpus used for Quantitative Analysis by Publication Decade.

While the composition of this corpus is largely based on availability of donations to the library, it is also roughly indicative of the increase in the popularity of manga outside of Japan over time. Patten has argued that while some in the US became aware of manga in the late 1970s and early 1980s, manga were more ‘legendary’ than accessible until the end of the 1980s (2004, p. 259). Wong (2007) identifies a concerted marketing effort on the part of Japanese publishers in the mid- to late 1990s, resulting in an increase in the popularity and accessibility of manga from 2000 onwards, the decade from which the majority of our sample is drawn.

Ten manga were selected for in-depth analysis, as listed in Table 14.3. These ten manga represent three different demographic genres: three *shōnen* (targeted at boys) – *Azumanga Daioh*, *The Power of Negative Thinking*, and *Yotsuba&!* – three *shōjo* (targeted at girls) – *Boys Over Flowers*, *Neon Genesis Evangelion: Angelic Days* and *Antique Bakery* – and four *seinen* (targeted at adults, mostly male) – *Phoenix: Dawn*, *Maison Ikkoku*, *Professor Munakata’s British Museum Adventure* and *Japan, Inc.* Pinning down the genre and target audience of manga is notoriously difficult and sometimes slippage occurs between Japanese and English markets in addition to the blurred distinctions in the Japanese market itself. However, *shōnen* and *shōjo* manga have been described as the two

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main marketing genres (Toku, 2005) and, fittingly, 60 per cent of our in-depth sample consists of volumes that may be categorised as targeted towards these target readerships.

Genre	Title & Translated Title	Author & Translator	Publisher & Year
Shōnen	<i>Azumangadaiou</i> [Azumanga Daioh]	AZUMA Kiyohiko (Bertrand, Kay; Wiedrick, Jack; Lopez, Javier; Forsyth, Amy; Rodriguez, Ai)	Tokyo: Mediaworks, 2000 (Houston: ADV Manga, 2003)
	<i>Sayonara Zetsubo sensei</i> [The Power of Negative Thinking]	KUMETA, Koji (Aurino, Joyce)	Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2005 (New York: Del Ray, 2009)
	<i>Yotsuba to</i> [Yotsuba &!]	AZUMA, Kiyohiko (Lopez, Javier)	Tokyo: Media Works, 2003 (Houston, ADV Manga, 2005)
Shōjo	<i>Hana yori dango</i> [Boys Over Flowers]	KAMIO Yoko (Jones, Gerard)	Tokyo: Suiheisha, 2003 (San Francisco: Viz Media, 2003)
	<i>Shin seiki evangelion Kōtetsu no gaarufurendo 2nd</i> [Neon Genesis Evangelion: Angelic Days]	HAYASHI, Fumino (Wiedrick, Jack; Bertrand, Kaoru)	Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 2004 (Houston, ADV Manga, 2006)
	<i>Seiyōu kottō yōgashiten</i> [Antique Bakery]	YOSHINAGA, Fumi (Sato, Sachiko)	Tokyo: Shinshokan, 2008 (Gardena: Digital Manga, 2005)
Seinen	<i>Hi to tori: Reimeihen</i> [Phoenix: Dawn]	TEZUKA, Osamu (Dadakai - Cook, Jared; Sakamoto, Shinji; Schodt, Frederik L.)	Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1986 (San Francisco: Viz Media, 2003)
	<i>Maison Ikkoku</i> (translated under the same title)	TAKAHASHI, Rumiko (Jones, Gerard; Thorn, Matt.)	Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 2003 (San Francisco: Viz Media, 2003)
	<i>Munakata kyojyu Ikōroku-Daiei Hakubutsukan no Daibōken</i> [Professor Munakata's British Museum Adventure]	HOSHINO, Yukinobu (Rousmaniere, Nicole Coolidge; Uchida, Hiromi; Clarke, Timothy)	Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 2010 (London: British Museum, 2011)
	<i>Nihon keizai nyuumon</i> [Japan, Inc.: An Introduction to Japanese Economics]	ISHINOMORI, Shotaro (Scheiner, Betsey)	Tokyo: Nihonkeizaishimbun, 1986 (Berkeley: U. California, 1988)

Table 14.3. In-Depth Sample by Demographic Genre.

The onomatopoeia and mimesis in these ten volumes were analysed according to script in the ST (*hiragana*, *katakana*, *kanji* or roman alphabet) and the translation and typographic strategies used in the TT (based on the theoretical framework outlined above). In total, over 1,400 unique pairs of Japanese onomatopoeia/mimesis (transcribed using the ‘wapuro’ method of romanisation to facilitate digital management processes and retrieval) and their English translations were collected and entered into a database for analysis, and for use as a glossary, available at: <http://www.mangastudies.com/sfx/>.

## Findings

In order to examine how onomatopoeia and mimesis are translated between Japanese and English in manga, patterns and strategies employed in the corpus were first examined, before undertaking a case study of the translation strategies used to translate sound effects that express the ‘sound’ of silence, a particularly ‘difficult to translate’ set of terms.

### Patterns of Translation According to Publisher

As previously mentioned, it is often the case that decisions of whether or not to translate onomatopoeia and mimesis are made by the publisher rather than the translator; thus, determining patterns of translation in relation to publishing house is of importance. The top publishers represented in the corpus of translated manga were Tokyo Pop, Viz Media, Chaung Yi, ADV Manga, CMX Manga, Dark Horse, CPM Manga, Del Rey and Go! Comi. Overall, publishers made their translations available primarily in unflipped right to left format (ranging from 67 per cent to 100 per cent of the publications of individual companies in the sample).

In terms of the dominant translation strategy used for onomatopoeia and mimesis, in the 206 series sampled from these publishers, substitution appeared most frequently (39 per cent), followed by repetition (29 per cent). Addition was slightly less frequently used (23 per cent) and a dominantly mixed approach appeared in a smaller number still (9 per cent). Of the nineteen series that employed a mixed approach, addition was used in all nineteen, while substitution featured in seventeen and repetition in just eight. Thus, it appears that, on the whole, the use of substitution, repetition and addition strategies

were the most popular. This demonstrates that even though onomatopoeia and mimesis are considered difficult to translate, and despite their integration with visual elements, they are generally translated. Deletion and transmutation were not dominant translation strategies for any of the publishers in the sample and less than a third predominantly utilised repetition. While the majority of publishers (71 per cent) opted to translate most onomatopoeia and mimesis, it should be noted that the 29 per cent that mainly used repetition do not represent an insignificant number. As repetition could not generally be used as a translation strategy for other communicative linguistic elements such as dialogue, this highlights the disputed nature of sound effects as text/image.

**Patterns of Reading Direction over Time**

Changes in the consumption and marketing of manga in the West were also hypothesised to affect patterns of translation over time. Figure 14.1 displays the direction of reading utilised in the manga series surveyed in the sample, according to time of publication (grouped into two-year clusters).

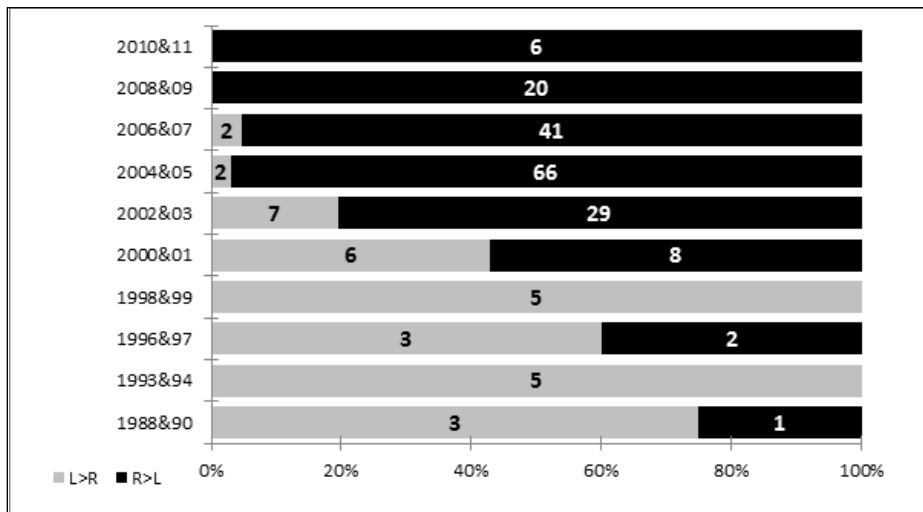


Figure 14.1. Reading Direction over Time.

Over time, it appears that right to left formats have become more common; in the 1980s and 1990s, left to right publications dominated the sample, while in the early to mid-2000s, this number declined sharply, perhaps driven by recent trends for ‘authenticity’ (Rampant, 2010). In the late 2000s and early

2010s, no series utilising a left to right format in the translated text was found in the sample. Zanettin notes that the 'prevailing norm for Japanese comics published in translation now seems to be to retain the original right to left reading direction, a strategy favoured by fans' (2009, p. 40).

Reading direction and the treatment of onomatopoeia and mimesis are intimately related. As previously mentioned, the transmutation strategy of 'flipping' creates a mirror image of the artwork in order to accommodate a different reading direction. This may influence whether or not a term is substituted, to replace the now mirrored Japanese, or simply left in its transmuted format and considered a part of the artwork. These considerations are explored in more detail below.

### Script–Artwork Integration

Script–artwork integration entails a number of challenges and opportunities for translators. A note on the copyright information page in *Professor Munakata's British Museum Adventure*, for example, explicitly states that 'Japanese sound notations that form an integral part of the original drawings have been retained' (2011, p. 4) and directs readers to a glossary in the appendix. Here, we see recognition of the integrated nature of drawings and sound notations in manga, a decision that appears fitting for a museum publishing house, where preservation of culture and artistic expression may be viewed as an important aim. The English translation of *Japan, Inc.* does not translate most of the ST sound effects and a prefatory note describes the function of sound effects in manga as 'partially decorative' and 'part of the artwork' (Ishinomori, 1988, p. vii). Of course, the purpose of translation varies across manga and both of these volumes have a somewhat academic focus (one is a story published by and about the British Museum, the other is a scholarly introduction to the Japanese economy published by the University of California). In manga where action and emotion are of crucial importance to the storyline, the option not to translate sound effects may not be well-received by readers. Indeed, there appears to be a substantial demand for translations of sound effects. Dozens of fan-produced guides to sound effects in manga exist online such as, for example, *The JADED Network* (Lee, n.d.) and fan comments indicate a sense of frustration with untranslated sound effects in the English manga they read, as well as a strong desire to understand the nuances of the Japanese terms used.

Layout and textual considerations are highly influential in the translation of manga. Although, as demonstrated above, there appears to be a preference to preserve right to left reading direction in contemporary translations, issues did exist in the past with the ‘flipping’ of manga, where not only would the page order be reversed, but the content mirrored. As the text in speech bubbles and thought bubbles is almost always replaced with translations in the TT, this practice rarely presents a problem outside of the mirroring of onomatopoeia and mimesis (with the exception of elements such as signage and logos being mirrored, and a larger than usual proportion of the population appearing to be left-handed). When manga are flipped, sound effects appear backwards also, meaning that they need to be re-mirrored, replaced with TL translations, or risk bilingual readers noticing their strange appearance.

Space restrictions, where a translation takes up more or less room on the page than the ST, are also cause for concern when translating elements such as signs and sound effects. While the appearance of speech bubbles in English manga translations has long been noted (where the thin speech bubbles designed to accommodate vertical Japanese characters are not well shaped to fit horizontally written English), sound effects in some respects present even more challenges. As they are often written directly over a background or even integrated into the illustration of a character in the story, it can be necessary to either add to the illustration (if the TT is smaller) or remove more of the illustration (if the TT is larger). In one of the examined translations, the two-character expression *shin* (Jp. しん) for silence is translated as the two-word and four-letter vocalisation ‘hm hm’ in English (Kumeta, 2009, p. 54).

In Japanese to English translation, either the TT term must be rendered much smaller, losing some of its readability, or more space must be taken up with lettering in order to keep the text the same size. In the case of silent mimesis, the more space that is taken up by the text, the ‘louder’ or more dramatic the state may appear. Conversely, when translating loud sounds such as explosions or collisions, making the text smaller in order to accommodate a longer translation may detract from the visual impact of the panel.

Having described the typographic considerations and publishers’ typical stances, the following section will examine the strategies used to deal with the linguistic challenges involved in the translation of manga, in conjunction with



these typographic considerations and constraints, with a particular focus on words that express the sound of silence.

### Strategies for Translating the Sound of Silence

In the glossary created as part of our in-depth analysis of ten selected manga volumes, all entries from TTs which were the same as or derived from the three terms collected in the *Gitaigo giongo jisho* (Makita, 2004) to signify silence or lack were collected for analysis and their referent verified in the ST. That is, only terms that were considered references to a lack of sound, action or emotion were included. Table 14.4 groups these terms according to the translation strategy utilised. The three terms collected in the *Gitaigo Giongo Jisho* are: *shiin*, representing a lack of sound; *jii!*, representing a lack of motion; and *jiin*, representing a lack of feeling.

Translation strategy	Examples
Equivalent/Coinage	<p><b>Onomatopoeia</b></p> <p><i>jii!</i> じーっ gullllllp (Takahashi, p.128)  <i>shi!</i> シッ shhh (Tezuka, p. 239)  <i>shin</i> しん hm hm (Kumeta, p. 54)  <i>shiin</i> しーん sh-hh (Takahashi, p. 59), shhhhhhh (Kamio, p. 9)  <i>shiisshi!</i> しーっしーっ shh shh (Takahashi, p.120)</p> <p><b>Verbalisation</b></p> <p><i>jii</i> じー hmph (Takahashi, p. 58), hnnh? (Takahashi, p. 99), huh? (Takahashi, p.103), uhh (Takahashi, p. 65)  <i>jii!</i> じーっ hmmm (Takahashi, p.197)  <i>jiin</i> じーん ahhh (Takahashi, p.107)  <i>shiin</i> シーン what!? (Tezuka, p. 262)</p>
Description	<p><i>ji!</i> ジッ staaare (Hayashi, p.105)  <i>ji!</i> じっ stare (Hayashi, p.169)  <i>jii</i> じー glare (Takahashi, p.158), stare (Azuma, p.73)  <i>jii!</i> じーっ stare (Takahashi, p.128)</p>
Omission	<p><i>jin gamigamigamigami</i> じーんガミガミガミガミ squrnch squrnch (Takahashi, p. 212)</p>

Table 14.4. Strategies for translating onomatopoeia and mimesis, which represent silent actions and states.

NOTE: Page numbers above refer to TT references.

It should be noted that in analysis coinage is extremely difficult to discern from equivalence, because accurate identification would require detailed knowledge

of the translator's process, including their reference sources and their familiarity with the existing corpus of translated manga and original comics and manga in the target language. Therefore, for the purposes of this project, these strategies are acknowledged to be different in creative endeavour, but are treated as similar in analysis, due to their shared use of target language onomatopoeia and mimesis, even though the source of the terms differ by creation versus reference.

As can be seen above, two types of equivalent strategies were identified: onomatopoeia and verbalisations. Several onomatopoeic expressions for silence were translated as a kind of *giseigo* [voice word] – for example, a person making a shushing or gulping sound. While the Japanese refers to an uncomfortable silence, an absence of any sound, the English signifies a lack of talking. *Shi!*, *shiin* and variants were often translated with the phonetically similar 'shhh' or 'sh-hh' in English, and many of the translations may also be considered coinages, making use of the repetition of letters and sounds in non-traditional spellings. In another example, 'gullllllp' (Takahashi, 2003, p. 128), an innovative spelling of 'gulp' (a word that describes a sound in English) is used to represent an uncomfortable quiet. It is important to note here that the original Japanese *jii!* represents silence itself; however, lacking a suitable equivalent in English, the translator has used a sound that may be associated with uncomfortableness.

Equivalent strategies that transformed sound effects in Japanese into verbalisations in English were frequently used, particularly in *Maison Ikkoku*. This strategy substitutes an utterance in place of a term used to signify either the character's condition or the atmosphere they are in. The clearest example of this is perhaps in Tezuka (1986, p. 263) where a large crowd reacts to the news that an army is approaching. In the ST, *shiin* is used to indicate a stunned silence; in the TT, the crowd's reaction is rendered as 'what!?' Although typographically *shiin* is clearly a sound effect, it seems obvious that the translation 'what!?' is intended as a verbalisation of shock, rather than a silence. It is interesting to note that although this interrogative is not normally used as a sound effect in English, the translated text is presented outside of any speech or thought bubble, in the same way as the ST sound effect.

It is noteworthy that, due to the differences between Japanese and English, particularly in relation to the number and variety of mimetic expressions available, none of the equivalent terms utilised above are semantically or

mimetically equivalent. While all of the ST terms examined here are mimetic, expressing a state or condition (of silence, of lack), all of the TT terms involve sound, either onomatopoeic or verbal, and express presence (of someone hushing, of a lump in one's throat or words of shock or surprise). However, they are contextually equivalent within the manga.

Descriptive strategies were generally used where a silent action (such as moving stealthily or staring) was given an English description (such as 'sneak sneak' or 'stare') to replace a Japanese mimesis. In one example (Hayashi, 2006, p. 106), the translator opted to modify this description by elongating the vowel, possibly in order to make it appear more like a sound effect ('staaare'), and thus, it may also qualify as a coinage (similar to 'gulllllllp').

Only one example of the omission of a mimesis pertaining to silence was uncovered, and it was found to occur in a very specific environment. In Takahashi's *Maison Ikkoku*, two sound effects – *jiin* and *gamigami* (repeated twice) – are both given in the one panel, both produced on the character Godai's head (Takahashi, 2003, p. 212). In this scene, Godai is walking along the river dejectedly and stops to clean his ear. The use of *jiin* here may relate to Godai's mental condition – he has just seen the object of his affection with his rival and has decided to take a long walk to clear his head. The *gamigami* on the other hand is more likely related to the sound of Godai cleaning his ear. The two are written in different scripts – *jiin* in *hiragana*, and *gamigami* in *katakana*. However, in the TT only one sound effect is given, also repeated twice via substitution: 'squrnch squrnch'. Once again, the sound effect in the TT is based on its phonetic similarity to an English word ('squelch') and we may assume the repetition is intended as a translation of *gamigami*, rather than *jiin*. Here, it appears that a translation for *jiin* was omitted with the original Japanese retained instead. It may be that the translator felt that the use of 'squrnch squrnch' adequately depicted the action Godai was undertaking, which in turn revealed something about his underlying mental state, or perhaps space constraints were a factor – fitting all of these sound effects into the small space of Godai's head printed on the page appears challenging enough in Japanese, let alone in the English. This demonstrates the tensions present when deciding how to translate particularly problematic terms such as onomatopoeia and mimesis, and in particular those that express the sound of silence.

## Concluding Discussion

The translation of onomatopoeia and mimesis from Japanese to English is a double-layered challenge. Firstly, it is difficult linguistically because Japanese contains a greater and more varied range of sound effects than does English. The existence in Japanese of numerous mimeses, including those used for expressing silence and soundless actions and states, is evidence of this. Secondly, translation is difficult typographically because such effects are often handwritten, artistically rendered and, aesthetically speaking, a component of the artwork. While the translation of dialogue often requires a strategic placement of text or even the expansion of speech bubbles, onomatopoeia and mimesis are often fully integrated into the artwork and the translator (and the reader) may therefore prefer that the original Japanese be retained. In cases where substitution is desired, the question of whether it is the translator's or the artist's job to render the sound effects into the TT may arise.

Via the analysis of a corpus of manga and selected case studies, this chapter has examined some of the most frequently used strategies of response to these challenges, namely substitution, repetition and addition, in terms of typographic strategies used overall, and equivalent/coinage and description, in terms of linguistic strategies used. These choices of strategy highlight the hybrid nature of onomatopoeia as image/text (as seen in the frequent use of repetition) and the ways in which neologisms in particular can help overcome the linguistic challenges inherent in translating manga from Japanese to English.



### Online Multimedia Component

You can access the manga sound effects glossary online via the Manga Studies website at <http://mangastudies.com/sfx/> or scan the above QR code.

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# MANGA SPECTACLES

## Manga as a Multimodal Research Tool

CATHY SELL

### The Multimodality of Manga

On the whole, manga demonstrate great interrelatedness of image and text, perhaps more than many other mediums. As Tanaka states, the multimodal nature of manga allows the audience easy access to characters' psychological and emotional changes (see chapter twelve). This multimodality makes manga an object of great interest not only to researchers, but also to translators, for whom this multimodality presents additional challenges (see chapters thirteen and fourteen), and to educators, who increasingly recognise the importance of multiliteracies (see chapter eleven).

Although 'silent' comics with no dialogue do exist in the minority, they often employ the use of symbols or text as part of the scenery. Examples of experimental manga with minimal use of pictures also exist, but such experiments tend to be highly specific. They include meta-textual explorations of the medium and its conventions, such as the episode of Akatsuka Fujio's gag manga *Tensai Bakabon*, which leaves the majority of images out to make it 'easy to read', pushing the boundaries of manga expression (Akatsuka 2009, pp. 118–122). Consequently, the multimodal nature of the image-text can be seen as a defining communicative aspect of what continues to be a medium that is both extremely diverse and difficult to describe and define, perhaps making multimodalism equal to the sequential nature of manga/comics, as they and single-panel cartoons can be viewed as different branches of the same base



medium and also share many of the same cultural and communicative tools of expression.

As to the precise nature of their multimodality, comics and manga fall under Snell-Hornby's (2006) definition of multisemiotic texts; they are a combination of verbal signs and graphic signs, in which the images are more than simply illustrative – rather, the images and text are interconnected in carrying out their communicative function. As Kaindl points out, the images in comics and manga 'play an integral role in the constitution of the meaning, whether through interaction with the linguistic elements or as an independent semiotic system' (2004, p. 176). Therefore, both linguistic and pictorial elements can work together, as well as play against each other, in the multisemiotic medium of manga.

Snell-Hornby asserts that certain types of multisemiotic texts in translation, such as subtitling and dubbing, can result in 'constrained translation' (2006, p. 86), because the close relationship between the visual element and the source language linguistic element can then restrict the translated text from being comfortably integrated. This is especially relevant in the case of translated manga, where text and artwork integration presents certain challenges – for example, translated text may create additional white space, typically at the top and bottom of speech bubbles, that may require artwork manipulation.

Kaindl's (1999) framework for the analysis of comics (as drawn upon in chapter fourteen) breaks the medium up into pictorial, typographic and linguistic elements, and further breaks down linguistic elements into titles, dialogue, inscriptions and onomatopoeia. This framework offers a model through which textual analysis can be implemented by analysing comics and manga, and Kaindl uses it to analyse translation strategies by applying Delabastita's (1989) film translation strategies. Similarly, communicative analysis of the source text can be carried out using the theories of multimodal transcription text analysis.

Baldry and Thibault (2006) apply multimodal transcription text analysis to single-panel cartoons as a way of enabling in-depth analysis of the visuals and narrative event structure (pp. 7–15). However, in the case of sequential artwork, such as comic strips and story manga, the advanced complexity of temporal sequencing also increases the complexity of pictorial and linguistic communication. This requires wider analysis and the inclusion of linguistic

elements. Therefore, while the multisemiotic nature of the medium seems to be one of the most defining communicative aspects of manga, it is clear that sequential artwork also has an enormous effect on how that communication is achieved. The complexity of manga linguistic elements can be included through the use of the multimodal transcription method devised by Baldry and Thibault for audiovisual texts.

Scenes from an audiovisual work can be broken down into the multiple modes of visual image, movement and soundtrack in order to analyse visual, kinesic and aural communication (Baldry & Thibault, 2006). In the same way, manga communication can be analysed by examining these communication modes in relation to an adaptation of Kaindl's framework of pictorial, typographic and linguistic elements. This allows us to examine the preciseness of manga's communicative capabilities.

Visual communication may be analysed by examining the pictorial elements on a page or panel level, including Kaindl's linguistic subcategory of inscriptions (see chapter one, see also chapters four, ten and thirteen).

In manga, kinesic communication is achieved through the use of action lines within the artwork and situational differences between panels. For sequential works, the use of temporal features such as white space, repetition of imagery and scene transitions between and across panels and pages (particularly across page turns and in cliff hangers between serials) also offer rich methods of kinesic communication and subsequent analysis. Moreno Acosta and Lee and Armour both explore flow, reading direction and other elements of kinesic communication in chapter two and chapter ten, respectively.

The aural environment of manga – the atmospheric tone and background soundtrack – is communicated very explicitly through a combination of typographic elements, onomatopoeia, mimesis and the linguistic elements of dialogue (these features are explored further in chapters nine, twelve and fourteen).

These pictorial and linguistic techniques that are observable in manga allow researchers the opportunity to examine not only how content is situated within cultural contexts in manga, but also how the sensory world can be semiotically conveyed in manga with such expressiveness. Examinations of this kind lead to a deeper understanding of the capabilities of manga and the capabilities of multisemiotic communication.

## Manga Studies Perspectives

The image–text relationship that is so central to manga allows researchers to contextually examine manga’s language elements, such as onomatopoeia and mimesis, its depiction of different language varieties, including regional dialects and second-language speakers, and its language registers, including politeness levels (for further discussion, see chapter fourteen, chapters nine and eight and chapter twelve, respectively). These elements, and their use, differ substantially across languages and cultures.

Japanese has more onomatopoeia and mimesis than many other languages. Combined with the situational context provided by pictorial aspects, the concentration of these terms to convey a manga’s aural and aesthetic environment provides a rich resource for analysis. The level of integration between image and text in manga is particularly evident upon examination of onomatopoeia and mimesis and the difficulties in translating these (see chapter fourteen).

The contextual nature of the pictorial and linguistic elements in manga also makes it a good resource for discourse analysis, particularly the analysis of non-standard discourse such as depictions of second language and impoliteness.

Manga’s multimodal capabilities of expressing a variety of linguistic realities are highlighted by Robertson’s examination of the subversion of orthographic norms to depict non-native speakers (see chapter nine). An analysis of how this is achieved gives us a greater understanding of how speakers from these linguistic groups are portrayed and also how they are perceived within different cultural contexts. While it is well understood that manga conveys created, rather than authentic dialogue, it stands as an illustrative medium for the depiction of language use and an expressed notation of linguistic information. As a tool for analysis, this allows us to grasp how language can be used, as well as what could affect or potentially aid that use.

Aoyama and Kennett’s exploration of depictions of language learning within manga illustrates that manga has applications as both a teaching and learning tool (see chapter eight). Their identification of separate language learning approaches depicted in the manga *Nodame Cantabile* highlights the relationship between manga and real-world situations, which allows manga to act as a point of reference in examining social and linguistic relationships.

Similarly, Tanaka's study of impolite language in manga illustrates its use as a primary resource material for types of dialogue and linguistic practice that are difficult to access and observe in real-life scenarios (see chapter twelve). While researchers must be careful in their selection and use of texts, and wary of their limitations, they nonetheless provide a valuable resource.

The study of manga's surrounding culture further demonstrates the multi-disciplinary strength of manga studies. Manga's multiple modes of expression and existence across different forms of media have been met with as many forms of commercial and fan engagement, which include various adaptations (anime, games, light novels, illustrations, character goods and so forth) and cosplay, fan fiction and *dōjinshi*, which often exhibit hybrid artistic styles and intercultural content. These all add to the corpus of manga culture. For these creative practices, manga acts as a source text.

As Langsford discusses in chapter one, manga is the primary resource used by cosplayers, who acquire a 'way of reading' manga that enables them to re-create it as three-dimensional costumes and live performances. Fan groups such as cosplayers form distinct networks tied together by shared interests and values. These networks are useful subjects of cultural and communicative analysis, whether the networks exist to share information and techniques regarding effective cosplay (see chapter one) or to discuss the cultural qualities of a specific sub-genre of manga (see Turner's study of online *yaoi* fan communities in chapter five).

The influence of manga can also be seen in the growth and development of original OEL manga (and indeed other original non-Japanese manga) and the stylistic choices of OEL artists. This is an area that brings into question the issue of Japaneseness, as discussed by Moreno Acosta in chapter two. Moreno Acosta argues that OEL artists must reinterpret the manga form with creativity and originality and move beyond initial attempts to re-create the 'Japaneseness' of manga. Moreno Acosta finds that the desire to achieve this can be identified in some OEL works, in which it is expressed stylistically as well as metatextually.

Examinations of these partly reactive creative practices lead us to better understand how manga is consumed, interpreted and then reintegrated into manga culture at large. Many OEL manga artists and producers of manga or anime-orientated magazines start out as fans before evolving into professional

producers of manga or manga-related media. The initially peripheral nature of many of these publications illustrates how the growth and evolution of the manga industry is fed by the participation of fans and fan communities. However, as Rivera Rusca's research shows, such publications must continue to evolve in order to remain relevant in a technologically changing society, while working within the restrictions ironically placed upon them by having become part of the established industry (see chapter three).

Another area of cultural expansion that is noteworthy is the adaptation or translation of manga into different media. Smith's musical response to a *dōjinsbi* manga is an excellent example of this (see chapter seven). While the line between adaptation and translation is often debated, Smith's translation of the multimodal manga text into musical syntax involves relational concepts common to working across sign systems. Adaptations into film, books, anime, games, character goods and so forth equally add to manga culture, but translation of a multimodal text with linguistic and visual properties into a non-linguistic and non-visual sign system facilitate new possibilities for cross-media collaboration.

The expressiveness of manga as a medium, and the wide variety of topics and genres that it covers, also make it excellent research material for examining the treatment of social and cultural situations. Bell's study of the depictions of the Japanese justice system in *Death Note* illustrates manga's potential for social commentary. It shows us what can be learnt on a social, psychological and philosophical level by examining this media (see chapter four).

Similarly, Baudinette's examination of *bara* manga published in *Bádi* magazine reveals both its construction and criticism of stereotypes of gay subjectivity through both linguistic and pictorial means. This brings to the fore manga's role in constructing, disseminating and critically engaging with social norms and subversions, as well as issues of social identity and literary genre (see chapter six).

This is true not only within the Japanese context, but also on an international, cross-cultural scale. Zulawnik's analysis and translation of politically charged anti-Korean manga and anti-Japanese *manhwa* highlights the potential for manga to be used as a media of propaganda, and the need for impartial academic translations of controversial material to aid informed discourse and debate (see chapter thirteen).

Manga are also used as objects of research and as pedagogical tools in the field of education. Such manga may have a historical focus<sup>1</sup>, a scientific or mathematical focus,<sup>2</sup> or it may serve as a resource for second-language learning (see chapters eight and ten for further discussion). Commercial manga not originally created for educational purposes is also being used in classrooms as a pedagogical resource. As Promnitz-Hayashi discusses in chapter eleven, manga allows language students to encounter and use language that would otherwise be inaccessible in the course of regular academic activities, thus improving students' motivation and cultural and communicative opportunities.

However, further investigation into the importance of manga literacy is required to ensure the effectiveness of manga as a classroom resource. Lee and Armour's research in chapter ten shows that students need instruction, at least in the initial stages, in order to correctly sequence manga panels and decode manga content, particularly in the case of short or single page manga, which may be used in class. Manga literacy, which encompasses an understanding of cover sequencing, pictorial grammar and stylistic tropes, may need to be taught in classrooms if manga is to be optimised as a pedagogical tool.

### Future Visions of Manga Research

As a medium through which to express and develop personal identities and group cultures, manga remains a fresh resource for academic attention on many fronts.

Further exploration of fan group and individual engagement with Japanese manga is needed and, in turn, the cultural ownership and expansion of manga culture internationally. The issues of 'Japaneseness' and 'authenticity' often encountered in manga research in relation to the texts, fan identity, and consumer/creator identity is a complex issue worthy of further academic attention and, ideally, a wide-scale study. In particular, the identities of OEL manga artists and cosplayers (and the identities of hobbyists and professionals within these categories) appear to be particularly fertile areas for exploration.

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- 1 See, for example: Shūeisha's textbook manga series about Japanese history (Kasahara, 1982); Kimura's manga series addressing world history (1986–1987); and Tezuka Production's *Edumanga* biography series, detailing the lives of historical figures such as Helen Keller (Yanagawa & Yagi, 2005) and Albert Einstein (Himuro & Iwasaki, 2006).
  - 2 See, for example: *The Manga Guide to ...* series, which covers topics such as calculus (Kojima et al., 2009) and biochemistry (Takemura et al., 2011).

While important groundwork on these subjects has been undertaken in this book, more exploration is required. A comparative study of creators working in different fields would be a much needed, but larger-scale project.

The place manga inhabits amongst related forms of popular culture – anime, magazines, movies, online media – is a key theme of many of the chapters in the first section of this book. Questions as to the definition, framing and ownership of particular manga genres (such as *yaoi*) are addressed, as are questions regarding the scope of manga culture. While manga culture is at times relatively pigeonholed by industry marketing assertions of ‘genre’, Baudinette rightly points out that manga studies has the potential to question such assumptions and representations (see chapter six). The moral and social attitudes depicted in manga and evident in manga culture, and how these reflect on and influence society, are an area worthy of continued study.

Cross-media adaptations, collaborations and developments of new technologies within the partner industries of manga, anime and games continue to expand the cultural scope of manga. Iconic examples of these ‘media mixes’ include the utilisation of manga intellectual properties to boost regional tourism (Kawahara and Kameani, 2014), and the rise of Vocaloid persona Hatsune Miku, who now headlines live concerts by use of holographic technology (Ito, 2012). These kind of developments both highlight and question styles of manga expression, as does Smith’s applied research on manga-inspired music discussed in chapter seven. Further cross-media and group collaborations offer exciting opportunities for artists and academics alike.

As manga itself changes, one of the key areas for academic attention will be how new technologies affect the creation and consumption of manga, and the industry and culture that surrounds and supports the medium. Both resistance and enthusiasm for digital publication methods can be seen in the manga and manga journalism industries, and the response of manga culture to these new technologies is naturally an ongoing area of research.

Other areas of research will include the depiction mechanics of the aural environment within the multi-semiotic system, through the use of expressive typography, onomatopoeia and mimesis. The bilingual terminology database that has resulted from Sell and Pasfield-Neofitou’s research (see chapter fourteen) is a project with plans for expansion, and as more terms are added it will be interesting to see further applications, such as longitudinal studies.

Robertson's study of the creative use of orthography for representing non-native speech (see chapter nine) opens up opportunities for further research into the depiction of non-standard speech, including dialects and other language varieties. How language varieties are translated is also an area that could be examined further, and manga remains a strong resource for multimodal translation analysis. Zulawnik's applied translation (see chapter thirteen) is part of a growing project that can enable a wider understanding of sensitive texts and make them more accessible as academic resources. This has important implications.

The use of manga in language education, both as a medium of instruction and as a tool for motivation, invites academic discourse. Areas of focus might include the effectiveness of its implementation and the way students engage with the material. Questions might be raised as to whether the introduction of contextual information regarding manga culture might further student learning and cultural engagement, and whether different forms of media from manga culture might be usefully incorporated in an educational setting as well.

We look forward to seeing further development of the themes explored in this volume and the emergence of other new perspectives in Manga Studies. We anticipate that the multimodality of manga will continue to raise its value as a research tool in a wide variety of academic disciplines.

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# MANGA VISION

**CULTURAL AND COMMUNICATIVE PERSPECTIVES**

**EDITED BY SARAH PASFIELD-NEOFITON AND CATHY SELL**

**WITH WORKS BY MANGA ARTIST QUEENIE CHAN**

'*Manga Vision* is a diverse collection of fascinating insights into the cultural impact and use of manga both within Japan and overseas. A wide range of accessible, and carefully researched contributions cover key aspects of the broader uses of manga by various communities, as well as an in-depth examination of the distinctive language and communication properties of manga and implications for pedagogy, multimodal research, and translation. An ambitious collection, the result is a highly readable and thought-provoking book.'

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***Manga Vision*** examines cultural and communicative aspects of Japanese comics, drawing together scholars from Japan, Australia and Europe working in areas as diverse as cultural studies, linguistics, education, music, art, anthropology, and translation, to explore the influence of manga in Japan and worldwide via translation, OEL manga and fan engagement. This volume includes a mix of theoretical, methodological, empirical and professional practice-based chapters, examining manga from both academic and artistic perspectives.

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