Comics Worlds and the World of Comics:
Towards Scholarship on a Global Scale
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ed: Jaqueline Berndt

International Manga Research Center, Kyoto Seika University

Table of contents

Introduction:
attempts at cross-cultural comics studies

Jaqueline BERNDT

Globalization affects comics in a way which calls for cross-cultural research. Awareness about each other's particularities is vital in that regard. But a common ground is needed as well. Formalist conceptualizations of the "language" of comics have been providing one opportunity for discussion across cultures, as CJ Suzuki demonstrates in his contribution to this volume. Another opportunity can be found in aspects of modernity which have been experienced worldwide, for example, gendered readership and cultural legitimacy, censorship issues and historical thinking. What comic books and graphic novels, *bande dessinée*, manga and manhua, *historietas*, *beeldverhalen* and fanzines also share is their inclination toward escaping the "national". They either go over or remain under the level of national culture, not only in recent years.

To start with the latter, once comics exceeded the widely accessible newspaper medium, they became rooted mainly in subcultural communities. Still today, "comics" (or whatever word is used) evoke images of male nerds and adolescent girls, specialty bookstores and fan-talk rather than public institutions, sophisticated readers or scholarly conferences. But comics have always been heading toward the transcultural too, and in various ways. Without their early openness to European caricatures and American comic strips, Japanese manga would not be as successful as they are today. American newspaper strips and the superhero genre were fundamentally shaped by immigrants, and American comic books served as an important source of modernization to Franco-Belgian bande dessinée in the 1950s and 1960s. Further attention may be paid to the

Jaqueline Berndt

German comics market, as its dependence on imports can be reconsidered as a site of intercultural exchange.

In contrast, much of comics discourse, including research, shows an inclination toward nationalizing its subject. Claiming national particularities has certainly been useful, at least in two regards: to the domestic struggle for cultural status and to the international struggle for market shares. Yet recent conditions appear to be more complex. When, for example, Korean publishers try to sell manhwa in Europe and America, they carefully consider how far to follow the Japanese manga boom and where to distinguish their products from it. Japanese manga on the other hand, have enjoyed such a boom precisely because they look sufficiently exotic and familiar at the same time, in other words, because they lend themselves not only to the fascination of "otherness" (especially in Europe and America), but likewise to transcultural readings. In Japan, however, all comics which are not rendered in manga-style have only a slim chance of being read transculturally, that is, as comics. Since the 1970s, the Japanese domestic market has been nationalized to such an extent that the majority of Japanese manga readers simply lack transcultural comics literacy. Manga critics and researchers contributed to this constriction, as Odagiri Hiroshi describes in his essay in this volume, contrasting contemporary Japan with the U.S. From a different perspective, nationalization can be regarded as a variation on the general trend of compartmentalization in comics research. Pascal Lefèvre points out in his essay, that only very few publications discuss comics as such, beyond specific publication sites, genres and styles. This lack may confirm the impossibility of *trans*cultural Comics Studies. Yet, it is also a fact that translated publications about comics meet with difficulties, whenever they develop their main arguments around inaccessible works. Thierry Groensteen's *System of Comics*, published in French in 1999 and in Japanese in 2009, is one example, although it manages to counterbalance its discussion of single works unfamiliar to Japanese readers with more general parts that bridge different comics cultures by means of theoretical abstraction.

Groensteen was invited as keynote speaker to the 1st International Conference held at the International Manga Museum Kyoto in December 2009[1]. Opened in

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1 http://www.kyotomm.jp/english/event/study/isc01_e.php (last access 03/09/2010).

Jaqueline Berndt

November 2006, this museum was made possible by a partnership between three parties, the city of Kyoto, the civic association which owns the land and the building, and Kyoto Seika University, the private art college with the longest tradition of educating manga artists at university level in Japan. Seika's International Manga Research Center is the conceptual carrier of the Manga Museum. With its first international conference, it finally tried to fulfill its obligation to the "international" with respect to not only introducing artists and collecting data, but also to unfolding critical scholarship. The present volume with its majority of revised and extended essays intends to be more than conference proceedings, but since it resulted from the Kyoto conference, a brief outline of this event is in place here.

Spanning three days, the conference began with a so-called New Generation Workshop where six doctoral students as well as post-docs questioned the status quo of Manga Studies from the angle of their specific research, all of them in Japanese, regardless of whether it was their native language or not. Four of these papers have been included in the present volume.

The official curtain-raiser to the conference, however, was Thierry Groensteen's keynote lecture, which drew attention to the heterogeneity of France's national comics culture, while emphasizing the importance of "one's own" heritage for future innovations. Groensteen called for a consideration of cultural differences not only in comics but also in intellectual discourse, especially between France and the U.S., but likewise Japan, whose manga criticism is still almost unknown to people without a command of the Japanese language.

Romanist and media-studies researcher Morita Naoko, appreciated within Japanese Manga Studies especially for her articles on Rodolphe Töpffer, was invited to comment on the keynote speaker. The elaborate version of her talk printed here could have served as an introduction to the whole volume, since it points at some crucial issues, such as the not-yet-obsolete virulency of comics' cultural status in Japan, and the importance of historically

Jaqueline Berndt

intertwining textual with contextual analyses, or as she puts it, literary studies with social sciences. As is evident from her questioning of the alleged universality of the English word "comics" in the titles of both conference and present volume, Morita pleads for comparative, in other words, intercultural research. Indeed, a *trans*cultural orientation may just prioritize one, allegedly universal culture over others—suffice to think of initially European notions such as "Art", "autonomy" or "authorship" and their uninhibited, ahistorical application to both non-European and derivative fan works. Nele Noppe's essay discusses the latter.

Morita voices doubts about how much the recent interest in globalization is actually linked to going into foreign cultures. The inclination to subsume "foreign" elements to one's own protocols made itself felt at the conference as much as its counterpart. Natsume Fusanosuke's essay reflects, for example, that a considerable amount of dialogue evolved around the way in which different reading and research traditions could be interrelated. This line of discussion led, among other things, to the proposal to explore in what regard experts lack "comics literacy," in other words, to admit preferences and blind spots as one possible gateway to cross-cultural research. Furthermore, there were moments during the conference when Japanese colleagues addressed each other with opinions about their own field, as if the presence of foreign colleagues, obviously "being in need of explanation", triggered communication among themselves. But there were also monologs exhibiting both the desire to be heard and a reluctance to listen. While this is not unusual for academic conferences, in Kyoto, it ran the risk of undermining not only intercultural efforts but also the spirit of comics which, as an initially non-authoritarian means of communication, was supposed to imbue the conference's atmosphere.

Recently, an increasing number of young researchers employ manga as material within their respective disciplines; in Japan this has been happening mainly in sociology and anthropology, gender and media studies. In order to stimulate discussion about comics from a variety of perspectives, not limited to the domain of Manga Studies in the narrow sense, the conference was thematically structured into three sections and one final workshop. The first section, chaired by shōjo-manga researcher Ōgi Fusami who has mainly published in English so far, was dedicated to gender-

Jaqueline Berndt

specific comics genres, with a special emphasis on women, a subject which is attracting more and more academic attention in Japan and elsewhere. Comics artist and collector Trina Robbins was the first to speak. Related to her exhibition *She Draws Comics: 100 Years of American Women Cartoonists* on display at the International Manga Museum Kyoto at the time of the conference, she reported on her experiences of "what girls want". Her talk was followed by Wendy Wong's introduction of girls' manhua from Hong Kong, a culturally intriguing topic which now runs the risk of being overlooked in view of the increasing role of manhua from the People's Republic. Her paper, as well as Itō Kimio's recollection of the role of shōjo manga in Japanese society and Mizoguchi Akiko's account of the chiefly female subculture of yaoi appear in the present volume.

The second section shifted the focus from the role which comics play for girls and women, to Comics Studies itself, especially discursive obstacles that impede cross-cultural research. The talks given by Pascal Lèfevre, Natsume Fusanosuke and Odagiri Hiroshi triggered the most vivid and controversial discussion of the whole conference, last but not least thanks to their self-critical overtones.

Under the heading of "Comics and Society," the third section examined the capacity of social-science approaches for addressing political aspects of comics, something rare in recent Japanese Manga Studies. Focusing on comics' relation to local politics and society, Lim Cheng Tju introduced Singapore and Malaysia as two completely different cases within Asia, and broadened the conference's scope by also touching on cartoons (in the sense of one-panel drawings), an otherwise under-represented category of comics. Art sociologist Thomas Becker made a proposal to intertwine aesthetics and sociology, leaning heavily on Bourdieu's "field" theory. While these two submitted essays to the present volume, Yamanaka Chie unfortunately did not. Specialized in Korean culture, her conference paper tried to link the proliferation of Japanese manga in Taiwan to specific generations, by means of surveys on media consumption within life histories.

The conference was concluded by a special workshop on *Barefoot Gen*, one of the few Japanese manga available in translation worldwide and therefore a good occasion for bringing various perspectives together. But as distinct from previous

attempts, the workshop did not recollect this manga's reception interculturally, in the context of different languages and discreet comics traditions. Instead it provided a case study for comics research, by reconsidering generic conventions and contesting fixed representational contents in order to determine the potential of *Barefoot Gen* in relation to collective memory, especially Japan's national victimization discourse. Here, some of the conference's few attempts at textual analysis were made. Against "formalist" approaches in Comics Studies (*manga hyōgenron*), critical scholars such as CJ Suzuki tend to call for research on reading protocols and contexts, as if the analysis of single works prevailed. But on closer inspection, the contrary appears to be the case, at least in Japanese Manga Studies, as this volume confirms. Natsume Fusanosuke, Saika Tadanori and Mizoguchi Akiko, for example, do name specific titles and point to their visual style, motifs or narrative content, yet employ them, at least in their essays here, to illustrate broader issues such as signification, identification and genre. In contrast, Kajiya Kenji and Thomas LaMarre demonstrate how textual analysis may result in new views of both the manga in question and not-manga-specific political issues, such as mobilizing forces of resistance against historical violence. LaMarre's textual analysis is not less critical toward conventional "formalism", but instead of replacing thorough readings of single works by investigations of audience or genre, he suggests an approach to the meaning of forms which questions the prevailing focus on manga literacy, structure and signification in order to uncover manga-specific potentials of political criticism. Mentioned in passing, Nele Noppe's call for considering, in her words, the "content" of fan-made manga (*dōjinshi*) is also noteworthy in regard to the role of textual analysis.

In the present volume, contextual analysis predominates textual. Likewise historical issues are given preference over topics that point to the future; Noppe and Kees Ribbens' consideration of the internet remaining the exceptions. In addition, investigations of the manga industry, although not missing at all, are conducted in regard to the sociology of culture, not economics, for example in Saika's essay. And if sociology comes into play, it is not the kind which relies mainly on surveys. Furthermore, our conference lacked references to art theory and film studies. Although held in Kyoto, a city of the arts, the topic of "comics as art" did not promise to

attract much critical attention. Nevertheless, shortcomings like these will hopefully not diminish the value of the present volume as an attempt at foregrounding crucial methodological issues instead of pursuing completeness, and at crossing cultures instead of just juxtaposing them next to each other.

With the help of The Japan Foundation, Goethe Institute Tokyo and Ōgi Fusami's Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research project on women's manga, nine foreign guests were invited, including *mangaka* Christina Plaka from Germany. It goes without saying that some invitations had to be left to chance for financial and institutional reasons. But it should also be admitted that the organizers' network was not yet good enough to include researchers from Latin America, Eastern Europe or the Arabian world. Apart from cultures in the geographic or regional sense, there was an intellectual problem as well. The selection of the conference speakers and the contributors to this volume might reveal a tendency toward scholarship in the sense of theoretical thinking, methodological sophistication, familiarity with a variety of critical discourses and thus the ability to communicate across both comics cultures and established academic disciplines. This kind of comics scholarship, however, is difficult to find in Asia for example, including Japan. Fundamentally shaped by European modernity, it is now determined to a large extent by U.S. American academia with its specific institutional conditions. American-style conferences are held in Japan too, increasingly on the subject of Japanese popculture, among others things, manga and the related fandoms[2]. In the name of "internationalization" often conducted solely in English, these conferences address themselves not to a general Japanese audience, but rather to those students and scholars who are in rapport with American academia, among them younger Japanese academics who went to graduate school in the U.S. Usually, they do not invite speakers who are regarded as representatives of Manga/Comics

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2 See the Asian Studies Conference Japan, held in 2010 for the 14th time, and the recent summer-school related symposia organized by Temple University's Japan campus.

Jaqueline Berndt

Studies within Japan[3]. After all, Japanese Manga Studies, even though equipped with a respective society (*Nihon manga gakkai*) since 2001, does not seem cross-cultural and scholarly enough.

Indeed, Manga Studies in Japan originates mainly from the activities of collectors and critics. Some of them are university professors by now (a fact which, following Morita's essay, is to be related more to recent trends of populism within the Japanese university system than to the allegedly unproblematic status of manga within Japanese society). Yet, decade-long research on the institutional offside (*zaiya*) gave rise to two extremes, that is, either over-respecting conventional academism, or conversely, underestimating institutionalized scholarship. Since the 1970s, there has been a strong skepticism against both research in the humanities and intellectual discourse, out of the fear that cultural elites might snatch manga away from its regular readers and misappropriate it for their "foreign" purposes. Becker points to a similar attitude in European comics artists as one obstacle a researcher has to reckon with. With respect to Japan, Odagiri traces the now-prevailing ignorance toward foreign comics back to that attitude. While his essay reveals the discursive nationalization of manga which accompanied the favorization of *story manga* for young readers to socio-critical cartoons for adults, it does not touch upon the fact that the aversion against "cultural elites" has been directed against intellectuals who aim at society at large rather than their own small communities of kindred spirits, and that it has gone hand in hand with an increasingly uncritical attitude toward the manga market and industry since the 1990s.

At the same time, the unfamiliarity of manga critics with academia has furthered notions of scholarship which tend to put emphasis on positivist historicism, or structuralist semiotics at the expense of critical theory and political contextualization. This is, for example, evident at the annual conferences of the Japan Society for Studies in Cartoon and Comics (*Nihon manga gakkai*). It may also be one reason for the difficulties in winning over scholars not specialized in manga/comics research for joint

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3 Such as Natsume Fusanosuke and Odagiri Hiroshi present in this volume, or Itō Gō and Fujimoto Yukari, speakers at our 2nd International Conference in Cologne 2010. http://imrc.jp/conference/ (last access 2010/03/09).

projects such as the Kyoto conference. All the more, I would like to thank those who did not shy away, namely sociologist Itō Kimio, literary scholar Kawaguchi Takayuki, and art historian Kajiya Kenji who contributed to this volume, but also media-studies researcher Fukuma Yoshiaki who served as chair for the final workshop. In regard to the above-mentioned American "enclave" within Japan, it deserves attention that most of the Japanese contributors to the Kyoto conference as well as the present volume are in command of at least one foreign language in addition to their native Japanese[4], and that they have an expertise in both their respective disciplines and manga research.

Until recently, Comics Studies in Japan focused mostly on domestic manga, and only rarely challenged established academic disciplines. In contrast, our conference aimed at scholarship in a cross-cultural sense, that is, at critical interrelationships between comics researchers of different cultural background and discursive perspective. Such differences apply to nationality and generation, in other words, to classics such as Tezuka Osamu's story manga on the one hand, recent fanzine creations and OEL (Original English Language) manga on the other (the latter being another desideratum of this volume, although Odagiri, Wong and Lim mention it in passing). But in the case of comics, the diversity does not end there. Among the conference's speakers and discussants were academic and semi-academic researchers, critics and translators, curators and graduate students from various disciplines. Being quite exceptional for an academic conference, such variety requires considerable linguistic and critical effort as can still be inferred from the essays in this volume. There are theoretically informed argumentations next to historical accounts, more or less journalistic reports and even personal statements. Some of the contributions reveal how difficult it is to address Japanese and non-Japanese readers alike, a fact which became especially virulent during the process of translating and editing this bilingual volume. But while many non-Japanese publications on manga, for example, are not worthy of being translated into Japanese because they confine themselves to merely introducing specific knowledge, it is hoped that the essays collected here have the potential of critically stimulating readers in both English and Japanese.

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4 Several papers in the present volume were translated by their authors, in that case there is no translator indicated.

Jaqueline Berndt

Compared to the conference, the papers have been re-arranged into three parts. The first part focuses on Comics/Manga Studies itself, with contributions by such renowned experts as Groensteen, Natsume, Odagiri and Lefèvre. While they as well as Morita consider mostly intercultural relations, Suzuki also illuminates transcultural flows in the transmedia workings of the Japanese Science fiction genre, as well as in the transnational circulation of the manga "genre" as it is often conceived abroad. His concept of "genre" allows for a consideration of readers' expectations toward single works, but it also raises the question whether all comics/manga are generic products.

The second part begins with examinations of discourses related to "authorship" by Saika, Becker and Noppe, and turns then to issues of gendered readership. These two sides of creation and reception overlap clearly in the realm of fan communities, as Noppe and Mizoguchi demonstrate. Inomata Noriko searches for reasons why the very existence of French girls' comics has fallen into oblivion and arrives at their specific publication site, that is, magazines, attributing the growth of shōjo manga not to national culture but media history. Mentioning that a separate realm of comics is not necessarily what female readers desire in France, her essay calls for further discussion about the evolution as well as the present pros and cons of girls' comics. How girls' comics related to Hong Kong's modernization from the late 1960s onward, and what role they play today, is introduced by Wendy Wong with the help of one popular female character which carries the only manhua for girls among all the imported shōjo titles today. Similar to Wong, Lim too regards the global proliferation of both manga imports and manga-style as problematic, insofar as references to the local history of both society and comics are concerned. While his essay, which is the first of part III, suggests that local alternative comics have a bigger potential to tackle with that history than manga, Kees Ribbens' analysis of Anne Frank comics closes with the question whether comics in general are a "medium without history". At the conference his paper served as an introduction to the repositioning of *Barefoot Gen* by recapitulating the change of expectations toward war comics and touching upon recent trends, such as the popular iconization of historical contents and cross-media references.

The last three papers discuss *Barefoot Gen* directly, all of them focusing on the critical potential of this highly generic boys' manga, in particular its emotional impacts.

Jaqueline Berndt

In comparison to the genre of A-bomb literature, Kawaguchi shows how this manga which lacks stylistic complexity actually resists ideological simplification. Kajiya highlights its emotional, corporeal and social impact, that is, its "performative", action-provoking power, arguing against concentrating all analytical effort on representational content in the narrow sense. This consideration of *Barefoot Gen* in relation to its specific medium (that is, comics, specifically *shōnen manga*) and as a medium of forces rather than single easy-to-read meanings is theoretically developed in LaMarre's essay. Whereas critics tend to excuse *Barefoot Gen*'s shortcomings with respect to historical representation, bowing to authorities such as academic historiography, LaMarre proposes to "believe in manga". This means nothing other than a paradigm shift in Comics Studies, from the uncritical application of established methodological frameworks which promise academic reputation, to a critical shakeup of academism by virtue of comics, in other words, getting a grasp of experiences which escape the attention of established disciplines. If Comics Studies has a particular potential, then it lies in turning alleged weaknesses into strengths. This applies, last but not least, to cross-cultural issues, for example, to the assessment of recognizably local comics on the one hand and border-crossing hybrids on the other.

Jaqueline Berndt

PART I:

Examining Manga/Comics Studies

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Challenges to international comics studies in the context of globalization

Thierry GROENSTEEN

The international dimension of comics scholarship is inevitably viewed in a different way according to the region of the world where one lives.

Accessibility to foreign production is indeed very unequal from one continent to another, and even from one country to another. In this respect, there is no doubt that the country where I live, France, is much favored.

First of all, this is because, on the European continent, France has the most dynamic comics market. Therefore, France attracts numerous foreign authors who come to work directly for French publishers, believing that they have reached some sort of comics El Dorado; Hugo Pratt, the Chilean scriptwriter Alexandro Jodorowsky, the Argentinean artist José Muñoz and his Italian colleague Lorenzo Mattotti are just a few examples of this.

However, what is more important is that comics created in North America or in Asia are translated quickly and massively. With some 265 companies, whether small or large, involved in comics publishing in the French language, every talented new artist emerging on the international scene inevitably finds a publisher interested in his work and willing to translate him.

The market has not always been so wide open; the current situation is the result of a step by step process. Until the beginning of the nineties, Asian production was almost completely unknown in our country – as in the rest of the Western world. In about fifteen years, its importance has increased to the point that it has represented

up to 40% of all new titles released. On the French market, Japanese manga, and in a lesser proportion, Korean manhwas and Chinese manhuas, account today for more than 1400 titles a year.[1] English-language comics account for approximately 300 titles, which is 8% of the total production. Other translations are primarily of European works, especially from Italy, Spain or the Netherlands. On the whole, more than one comic out of two that is published in France is a translation of a foreign comic (1.856 titles in 2008, out of a total of 3.592 titles).

All of us here know that neither the American market nor the Japanese market show a similar openness. And thus, for scholars in these countries who are willing to work on comics from an international point of view, the first problem they meet is the very narrow accessibility of foreign production in their own country and their own language.

The situation that I have described, as regards France, leads furthermore to a second conclusion: it has become very problematic to study the differences between national comics cultures, when they have themselves become very heterogeneous.

In fact, twenty years ago it made sense to speak of the French culture of bandes dessinées as something one could easily identify and describe, but it is not the case anymore. One can roughly say that there are four different types of comics that are now popular among French readers: first, series that perpetuate the tradition of classical French-Belgian heroes like Tintin, Astérix or Spirou; second, graphic novels, characterized by a larger number of pages, a smaller format, a literary ambition and by their autonomy, which means that they do not belong to a series; third, manga, that are read both in translation and, by some fans, in the original Japanese language; fourth, American comic books, which are also read either in French or in English. Thus, there are four different markets, four different audiences, each quite distinct (though we have no sociological study telling us to what extent these different readerships coincide, and if manga readers are also interested in graphic novels, for example[2]), and, finally, four

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1 2008 figures. Source: *Annual survey* by Gilles Ratier for the Association of Comics Critics and Journalists. For a presentation of the impact of manga on the French market, see Bouissou 2006. For a more general study on the reception of Japanese pop culture in Europe, see Pellitteri 2008.
2 A department of the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the "Bibliothèque publique d'information", is

"comics cultures."

These various cultures differ from each other on multiple levels:

A) The segmentation of the readership from the point of view of gender: In France, American comic books are mainly read by male readers; readers of graphic novels seem more likely to be female, whereas manga are divided between *shōjo, shōnen, josei, seinen*…, a distinction that has no equivalent in Western comics or in the French-Belgian tradition.

B) The sales points or networks: manga are mainly sold in specialized bookstores, graphic novels in more literary, or non-specialized, bookstores, and American comic books by newsdealers.

C) The kind of merchandise and by-products linked to these four types of comics: American comic books inspire Hollywood blockbusters, and shops are invaded by action figurines or trading cards; manga are accompanied by posters and art books; popular heroes from French-Belgian comics are reproduced on dishes, clothes, agendas, and various other products for students. There is no merchandising of any kind generated by graphic novels.

D) The level of cultural legitimization: graphic novels are very much praised by the critics and receive awards, whereas manga and American comics are perceived as products from the entertainment industry and are sometimes criticized with the same arguments that used to bring discredit on comics as a whole a few decades ago when the medium was very much scorned by teachers and the intelligentsia (Morgan 2003: 154-249).

These different comics cultures that exist next to each other in the same country, in this case France, certainly are quite difficult to perceive by a foreign observer. He will tend to see the French market as relatively homogeneous and he will favor the characteristic features on which he will be able to ground an opposition between this supposed "French comics culture" and his own.

I would now like to raise a specific point in order to show the complexity of the question of cultural legitimization of comics—without this cultural legitimization,

launching in 2010 a large survey on manga readership in France.

comics scholarship can hardly develop. I have spoken earlier of an "El Dorado": it is true that France is usually regarded throughout the world as one of the countries (if not the country) where comics are taken seriously, integrated within the cultural scene and more highly praised than anywhere else. However, the truth is that the level of legitimization that comics enjoy is quite difficult to estimate (Groensteen 2006). It all depends on the criteria one takes into account. For instance, we have but one comics museum in France, located in Angoulême, whereas here in Japan, there are several: not only this beautiful Kyoto International Manga Museum that welcomes our conference, but also others, devoted to major artists like Tezuka Osamu, Kitazawa Rakuten, Yokoyama Ryūichi or Hasegawa Machiko. There is no museum devoted to a single cartoonist in my country. (Belgium has recently inaugurated the Hergé Museum, celebrating the father of *Tintin* and financed by the heirs of the artist.) On the other hand, the Kyoto International Manga Museum is backed by a private university, whereas the Angoulême Comics Museum has been initiated by the French government in a 1983 program to promote comics, and receives public subsidies.

Even more indicative is the fact that, for many years now, comics are no longer taught in French universities, unlike the situation in neighboring countries such as Belgium or Germany. Except for Pierre Fresnault-Deruelle, all the most renowned specialists, all the scholars who have been extensively writing about comics these last twenty years, and whose works are considered authoritative—I think here more especially of Benoît Peeters, Harry Morgan, Thierry Smolderen and myself—work outside the academic sphere. None of us have a position as a university lecturer; we are carrying out our research outside academic institutions.

This status of independent scholar can cause financial precariousness, but its main consequence is that we are allowed to follow a more inventive approach toward the media, that we are less confined within the existing theoretical frameworks and their ideological presuppositions. The colleagues and scholars that I have mentioned and I myself tend to develop original concepts, based on an in-depth study of the media and close contact with it; we do not try to verify pre-existing theories by applying them to comics. So, the fact that we are outside the institution gives us more freedom and leads us to some sort of intellectual heterodoxy, which, in turn, confirms our

marginality with respect to hegemonic frames of scholarship as we can observe them, not only in France, but in the academic sphere as a whole.

It is not an easy task for me to explain why French universities are so little interested in comics, because I myself feel that it is an anomaly. But perhaps part of the explanation can be found in the structuring of academic research, i.e. in the degree of development of the various disciplines. One does not always perceive how different the situation is, in this respect, from one country to another. For instance, the domain of Cultural Studies, that has enjoyed an extraordinary expansion in the Anglo-Saxon world in the last decades, is not yet fully established in France, where it is still very marginal.[3] Since the triumph of structuralism in the sixties, we have remained, on the other hand, much more concerned with the semiotic approach to media. I do not know how these two different main lines of research are considered and favored in Japan, but I can assure you that between the Anglo-Saxon academic discourse about comics and the French one, there is a clear distinction, due to the differences in our respective intellectual traditions and academic frontiers. And, to tell the truth, the hegemonic position throughout the world of academic works published in the English language means that the French specificity is equivalent to a cultural exception.

Another discipline that is considered essential in the United States and that is nearly non-existent in the French university is that of Gender Studies. I can illustrate this with an example that concerns me personally. A scholar from Chicago, Amanda MacDonald, signed a long review on my essay "La Bande dessinée mode d'emploi" (Les Impressions nouvelles 2008) in the journal *European Comic Art* (vol. 1, no. 2), published by the Liverpool University Press, in England. Her article starts with the presentation of my "complicity with BD masculinism", on the pretext that my book "scarcely registers gender as a *legible* element and dynamic within *bande dessinée,* and passes over gender in authorship". To me, this criticism is irrelevant, because the

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3 In their essay, Mattelart and Neveu (2003) label France a "refractory pupil". They write: "Cultural Studies seem to have even less chance to become implanted in an academic system when this system has already developed its own frames of analysis of cultural phenomena, and when the objects studied by a body of already institutionalized social sciences leave no space where this interdiscipline could develop" (p. 75).

book deals with comics from a semiological and aesthetic point of view and does not concern the analysis of fiction according to contents, nor does it wish to provide a sociological theory of the media. But the question of *gender* is at the top of the list on Amanda MacDonald's agenda and corresponds to such a strong *doxa* in the Anglo-Saxon academic world that it is impossible for her to admit that an essay about comics does not have to automatically deal with this specific point.[4]

I started my presentation by evoking the problem of the accessibility of the works, and the scarcity of translations in some countries. To live in a country where the international production is accessible, of course not in its entirety, but more widely than anywhere else, is a real advantage for a scholar, but there is a price for this advantage in terms of methodological requests. Confronted with an overabundant production, a continuous flow of novelties, the scholar is forced to make choices and to skip over lots of artists and works, because it has become impossible to aspire to universal expertise. There are just too many comics being published, in all parts of the world, for a normal man or woman to remain aware of all the evolutions of the media and to study, firsthand, all the tendencies, all the schools, or all the genres. The limits one encounters are simply those of human capacity and available time.

To make choices means to work on a corpus of reference. You meet, inevitably, the question of how representative your corpus is, and where you have to end it. It is a question that is easy to answer if you work on a topic that is naturally delimited, a topic that concerns, by definition, a given corpus. You can, for instance, be interested in the feeling of power in superhero comics, in the theme of childhood memories in autobiographical comics, or in the aesthetics of black and white in contemporary graphic novels. But the question of the corpus becomes much more complex when your ambition is to build a general theory of comics, or when you want to deal with "the art of comics" or "the comics phenomenon" as a whole. In the past, some French scholars

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4 The accusation of "masculinism" is especially irrelevant, as far as I am concerned, since I am the French publisher who has the largest proportion of female artists in his catalogue and who campaigns for the feminization of the comics scene. I am also a member of the Artemisia Jury, who every year reward the best comic produced by a female artist.

rejected, without laughing, the superhero comic books as not being true comics; others wrote that a comic had to be epic and adventurous, and that humor comics had nothing to do with the very definition of the media but belonged to the tradition of caricature;[5] and all of them ignored manga, in all good conscience. Nowadays, one can no longer imagine such exclusions.

But how can you treat, as an undifferentiated whole, a media that admits so many different formats and channels (newspaper comics, standard comic books, hardbound albums, pocket editions, comics on the screen of your computer or your mobile phone)? How can you apply the same frames of analysis to industrial production, marketed to entertain the largest possible audience, and to alternative, experimental, avant-garde works, with a very small circulation? And finally, how do you verify that a theory grounded on the in-depth study of a limited number of examples can be rightfully extrapolated to the complete body of works conceived in various cultural areas, with significant differences between them?

I confronted this last question with the theoretical propositions I make in my book *Système de la bande dessinée*. Published in France in 1999, the book has been translated in the United States by the University Press of Mississippi in 2007 and has just been released in Japan by the publishing company Seidosha. As far as I know, it is the first essay about comics, written by a European scholar, that is available on these three continents. It makes me very proud, but at the same time a little apprehensive.

The American translation has already encountered a few terminological problems. To mention just one of them, the American tradition places the daily strip and the Sunday page in contrast, as two different formats. In France, the word "strip" designates any of the tiers (or strips) that make up the page in an average lay-out. The page is thus made of three or four superimposed strips, so that the panel is a sub-unity of the strip and the strip a sub-unity of the page. It is in that sense that I have continuously used the word strip in my essay; my translators have retained the word, and, even though the word is borrowed from the English language, it is a source of confusion for American readers.

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5 I refer here to remarks made by Pierre Couperie and Francis Lacassin in *Giff-Wiff*, the first French journal about comics, in the early 1960s.

Thierry Groensteen

My most recent work raises the same kind of difficulty. Indeed, the topic of my next essay, to be published in a few months by Skira and Flammarion, is parody in comics. I realize that in the Anglo-Saxon world, the concept of parody is used in a much broader meaning than in France. If you read, for instance, Linda Hutcheon's authoritative book *A Theory of Parody* (University of Illinois Press 2000), you will observe that she does not establish any clear difference between what she calls parody and what we, French scholars, name more generally, intertextuality. As soon as a work of art or a fiction refers to a former work or fiction, whatever the nature of this reference might be, Hutcheon identifies this link as a case of parody. She writes, for example, that modern writers like Borges, Robbe-Grillet or Nabokov used in their works "parodic versions of the structures of the detective novel". For the French-speaking community, parody is not separable from the idea of mockery and satire. It consists of an imitation of a preexisting work, which transforms it in a satirical or comical way. Thus, if my essay is to be translated in English one day, to maintain the term of parody will, inevitably, be a source of misunderstanding. The best equivalent of the concept of parody in the French version is probably the term *lampoon*.

No doubt that the translation and the critical reception of my *System of Comics in Japan* will meet the same kind of terminological and conceptual problems, but I am unable to anticipate them and I will only discover them through the reviews that will be devoted to my book – in so far that someone will be so kind as to translate them for me.

My apprehensions also concern the nature of the examples that I commented upon in my book. These examples are not numerous; there are only about ten comics pages that are reproduced. They are from French, Belgian, Swiss, Spanish, Argentinean and American artists. They have been selected, not with the intention to meet the requests of a pre-defined corpus, but because of their exemplary nature or pedagogical efficiency, with regards to the theoretical questions I raised at one moment or another in my reflection. There are two reasons why the book does not include a single page of manga: first, because the pages reproduced and analyzed do not, in any way, pretend to constitute a sample that would stand for comic art in its diversity; second, because

during the years when I worked on this book (from 1994 to 1996), the presence of manga on the French market was still marginal. I can imagine that my choice of examples will look foreign, if not exotic, to the Japanese audience, in respect to its own culture of comics. I do hope it will not keep potential readers away from reading a book that nevertheless tries to question the "Ninth Art" – as we call it – in its universal foundations.

My ambition, while writing this essay, was to provide a "toolbox" that everyone could use and that would help reach a more sharp and precise approach to every singular work. The methodic, reasoned description of all the various units that are involved in the language of comics takes a very important place in the book. Maybe I have been too long on this preliminary matter, at the risk of letting people believe that this description was the very heart of my theoretical approach. In reality, it is nothing more than a starting point. I am much more attached to the hypothesis and developments that come next, which concern the two fundamental operations of *breakdown* and *page lay-out*, the way they interact and influence each other, and the cognitive mechanisms through which the reader constructs the meaning and uses the elements of information scattered in panels that are either adjacent or distant.

I have absolutely no idea of the distance between my essay and the propositions that Japanese scholars might have made on similar questions. The popularity gained by manga on the French market has not extended to an interest in essays about manga written by the Japanese themselves. We do not know how you describe and analyze your own production and what lines of reflection about comics you follow, since no academic work has been translated. It seems to me that it would be very beneficial for us all if some university press would take the initiative of an anthology in which important articles or fragments of books would be collected and translated into English, in order to establish, for the international community of scholars, a sort of survey of the research about comics in Japan. Such a collection would be a very useful and invaluable basis for future exchanges.

The model for such a volume is *A Comics Studies Reader* (Heer and Worcester 2009), which is described on the back cover as "a survey of the best scholarly writing on the form, craft, history and significance of the comics". There are about

thirty contributors. I have the honor to be one of them, but there is only one author representing Japan, namely Mrs. Fusami Ogi, from the Chikushi Jogakuen University in Fukuoka, who sits in this room today.

How much do Western comics and manga differ from each other? Does their respective singularity allow us to dream of a unified theory of comics as such, or do they lead us to build different theories, to invent specific concepts? This question is still open, it seems, and I guess it will put many of us to work in the coming years. The historical situation that we are living is characterized by a massive spreading of manga culture throughout the world (some observers describe manga as the ferment of a new world pop culture). This situation is calling for a development of comparative studies. We are waiting for the emergence of "comparative comics" on the model of "comparative literature," and I believe that this new discipline will encourage international exchanges between scholars and resource places.

I have no intention to go to the root of this new field today, but I would like to share with you a very stimulating remark that I heard from the mouth of my friend, the British scholar Paul Gravett, during a conference that was held earlier this year in Sweden. According to Gravett, "in Western comics we read what happened next; in manga, we read what is happening right now". In other words, the narrative techniques and processes that are used in manga give the reader the feeling of being immersed in the action, whereas Western comics create a more distant relation between the reader and the narrative.

I wish to remind everybody here that, as a prelude to the comparative research that I await, I published in 2001, for the comics museum in Angoulême, an *International Cartoon Museum Guide* that not only describes some twenty-six institutions devoted to comics and caricature in the whole world, but also includes— thanks to the collaboration of Pascal Lefèvre—an international lexicon in which more than a hundred technical terms used in the comics sphere are translated into nine languages, including Japanese.

The European School of Image (École Européenne de l'Image), where I teach, also in Angoulême, has set up since last year an "Observatory for Asiatic Comics" for

graduate students. In this context, the French scholar Nicolas Finet gives a course about the history of Japanese graphic narratives and the Korean professor Wan Kyung-sung comes especially from Seoul to conduct a workshop.

If everybody among us is convinced that it is necessary to promote exchanges between scholars and tries to contribute to this common ideal at the place where he or she is, we can expect very fruitful results.

Comic art has a long history, that starts even before the invention of the cinematograph.

The history of comics has its own history. Thanks to a better knowledge of the distant past, thanks to the fact that different cultural areas are now taken into consideration, and thanks to new approaches of the media itself, we do not write comics history as our predecessors used to do it.

Finally, the theory of comics also has its own history. Rodolphe Töpffer (1799-1846), the main inventor of the media in the 1830s, was also its first theoretician. He wrote several texts which contain fundamental intuitions that are still relevant today. Nevertheless, when, more than a century later, the university started to study the media, we were in the middle of the semio-structuralist period, thus the theoretical presuppositions were somewhat different. It is our task, now, to think comics over, in the new context of globalization.

Thierry Groensteen

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2

Cultural recognition of comics and comics studies:
comments on Thierry Groensteen's keynote lecture

MORITA Naoko

This is a revised version of my oral commentary on Thierry Groensteen's Keynote Lecture at the Kyoto conference*. I focus here on the problem of the cultural recognition of comics and comics studies, based on the content of the Keynote Lecture and Groensteen's essay on this issue, *Un objet culturel non identifié* (2006).

1. Comics as un objet culturel non identifié

Groensteen affirms that "without the cultural legitimization of comics, comics scholarship can hardly develop". The cultural status of comics in France, he says, is still ambiguous, giving the examples that there is no museum devoted to a single cartoonist in France, and that comics have not been taught in French universities for many years. As these signs of recognition have both been achieved by Japanese comics, he suggests that the cultural status of comics in Japan might be higher. However, the criteria for the legitimization of comics, like the amount of national grants in aid for cultural activities and the role of universities in society, differ considerably from country to country. It is therefore difficult to say whether comics truly enjoy a higher status in Japan.

Groensteen, as a long-time editor of the French comic magazines *Les Cahiers de*

Morita Naoko

la bande dessinée and *Neuvième Art* and director of the Musée de la bande dessinée in Angoulême from 1993 to 2001, has devoted his energy to raising the cultural status of comics in France and is the author of a book on this very issue, *Un objet culturel non identifié* (hereafter *OCNI*). In *OCNI,* Groensteen explores the reasons why comics in France are not yet recognized as autonomous art or culture.

Given the importance of art in French society and the existence—personified by Groensteen—of discussions on the expertise and politics of comics, he takes it for granted that comics should be recognized as art; however, I did not have time to argue this premise in my comments at the conference. To be fair, I should also add that in *OCNI* Groensteen explains quite persuasively how the cultural field of comics in France has been historically constructed. Although his Keynote Lecture was entitled "Challenges to International Comics Studies in the Context of Globalization", most of Groensteen's remarks were fundamentally related to the question of the cultural status of comics. This paper examines, making reference to *OCNI*, conditions that would facilitate international comics studies from the viewpoint of legitimization.

2. On terminology

In the title of the Kyoto conference, "Comics Worlds and the World of Comics: Scholarship on a Global Scale", the term "comics" is used as a general term for Japanese manga, comics from the English-speaking world, French and Belgian bande dessinée and so on. The choice to use "comics" as a generic term is a temporary measure, reflecting the status of English as an international language rather than the consensus of scholars. This stands as an obstacle in the field of comics studies and criticism, and prompt revision of and consensus on terminology are urgently needed. This task is delicate, however, as the names used in each cultural sphere have their own history and meanings.

In *OCNI*, Groensteen points out that American comics have traditionally been thought of as being humorous because of the original meaning of the term "comic", while the French bande dessinée, the term itself taking time to spread, has been considered to be a childish medium due to the abbreviated appellation "BD". Groensteen suggests that these circumstances are not unrelated to the fact that comics

have been assigned a humble place in culture over a long period (Groensteen 2006: 21-22), explaining why, in the United States, a number of authors have opted to use the term "graphic novel" since the 1970s.[1]

Terms for comics in each language have their own meanings and modes of use within society. The Japanese term "manga", usually designating serial "story manga" today, is also used in a broader sense to refer to caricatures or cartoons composed of one or several panels, and the meaning depends on the context. Although serial manga prevails in the market today, Shimizu Isao's remark that the spirit of manga consists primarily of play and caricature is still relevant (Shimizu 1991: iii). The French "bande dessinée", meanwhile, refers only to serial or book-form narrative comics; caricatural drawings in the press belong to a different category.[2] That the term "manga" is not a precise translation for either "bande dessinée" or "comics" is an issue that must be approached with caution in international comics studies.

We must be more cautious still about the gaps between the first appearance of the term in the language, its first use in the modern prevailing sense, and the appearance of the medium or products designated by the term. The term "manga", originally derived from the name of a bird in Chinese, was first used to refer to caricatural drawings and serial comics at the end of the Meiji era (Shimizu 1991: 15-28), while the terms "comics" and "bandes dessinées" were coined after the emergence of their respective media[3]. As a basis for scientific investigation, it is essential to share knowledge of how the comics of each cultural sphere, with their own names, have been constructed as an autonomous field. I have not yet had the opportunity to refer to the international glossary that Groensteen mentions in his lecture, but I do hope a "World History of Comics" will be written one day, describing comics of different countries and relating the history of vocabulary to the history of forms.

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[1] The term "graphic novel" first appeared in 1964, but it was in 1978, with Will Eisner's *A Contract with God*, that a comic's artist first applied this term to his own work (Groensteen 2006: 75).

[2] The term *dessin de presse* [newspaper drawing] in *Système de la bande dessinée* was appropriately translated into Japanese as *shinbun fūshi manga* [caricatural newspaper manga] by Noda Kensuke (Groensteen 2009: 191; 2009: 306).

[3] The English term "comics" first appeared around 1900 as a synonym for "funnies". The French "bande dessineé" was coined in the late 1930s, but did not become firmly established until the late 1950s (Gaumer and Moliterni 2001: 50, 183)

Morita Naoko

3. Writing and learning history

The question of terminology is also related to the content—that is, the definition of "comics" within each culture. As demonstrated in the passage on the "impossible definition" in Groensteen's *Système de la bande dessinée* (Groensteen 2009: 14-21), the definition of "comics" differs according to the standpoint of the writer. In the late 1960s, French scholars who were committed to the cultural promotion of comics began to consider ancient works such as Egyptian frescoes, the Lascaux wall paintings, and the Bayeux tapestry to be the origins of comics. The expansion of the definition of "comics" seen during this time is an expression of the desire of comics scholars to legitimize comics and to assign them a valid role in art history (Groensteen 2006: 99-110). The controversy over the origin(s) of comics in the United States and France in 1996 was a result of the same phenomenon.

In many ways, describing the history of a cultural genre requires the establishment of a scientific process. The publication of reprinted editions and translations, facilitating access to past and unknown masterpieces, also contributes to this scientific approach to the medium. However, descriptions of the history of comics depend on the authors' points of view, which tend to privilege a specific medium (books versus newspapers, for example) or comics with specific formal components (such as balloons, serial publishing, or recurrent characters). It is often observed that somewhat biased historical views are inherited from author to author, and dialogue between different perspectives is not easily achieved (Groensteen 2006: 124-125).[4] Groensteen, in organizing the exhibition "Great Masters of European Comics",[5] held at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in 2000, adopted the new geographical and historical perspective on "European comics". This ambitious exhibition, with parallel displays of original drawings and printed pages and showcasing interdisciplinary approaches to comic works, was not as successful as Groensteen had expected. As Groensteen writes in *OCNI*, possible reasons for the exhibition's underperformance are that comic readers in general are not

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4 Miura Kazushi, in his doctoral dissertation, "A Study on Winsor McCay's comic works: *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend* and the problem of discourse on comics" (Tōhoku University 2010), picks up this issue, taking as an example the reception of *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend* in comics criticism (Chapter 3).

5 For the exhibition catalogue, see Groensteen 2000.

interested in the medium's history and that comic art is not considered to be common culture shared by Europeans (Groensteen 2006: 164-166).

In his Keynote Lecture, following the example of comparative literature, Groensteen proposed a comparative approach in comics studies. However, I argue that "comparative comics studies" is not possible before perfecting the historical survey of imitations, translations and adaptations of comic works among countries. For example, American comics have had a profound impact on non-American comics—not only were the form and content of other comic cultures influenced by American comics, but the fascination with and fear of American popular culture were generally followed by a vigorous campaign against American comics (or comics from other countries in general).

Today, the globalization of comics is under way, and it has renewed interest in the history of influences among comics from different cultures. As Groensteen mentioned in his Lecture, the French comics market is very open to comics from foreign countries, a situation in sharp contrast with the Japanese comics market. The massive influx of American comics in the 20th century was motivated by an interest in American culture as a whole. How far, then, is today's cultural globalization motivated by an interest in foreign cultures? The combination of a "culturally odorless" (Iwabuchi 2001: 27-33)[6] comic style and its reception abroad without any intercultural experience marks a new phase in world comics history.

I have discussed thus far the necessity of perfecting terminology and promotion of historical studies. I would like to put forth another suggestion for comics studies concerning manners of academic writing. It is clearly advisable that authors of comics studies, as in other disciplines, give the source of each of their quotations. My intention is not to raise comics in rank by making it a scientific object; however, it is a shame that interesting essays on comics are not always well documented and that the author himself should believe that footnotes are unnecessary or troublesome for readers.

4. Comics and children

According to Groensteen, one of the "five handicaps" which have prevented French

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[6] The term is used to suggest a strategy for the exportation of Japanese cultural products.

comics from being legitimized is that comics were originally targeted at children (Groensteen 2006: 32-47). To be precise, picture stories by Töpffer or Doré, ancestors of modern bandes dessinées that emerged during the 19th century, were intended for adults; however, once comics entered the juvenile press in the early 20th century, adult comics remained largely unknown for the next 70 years until the creation of magazines like *Pilote* and *Hara-kiri*. Intended primarily for children, French comics became the target of severe censorship under the famous *Loi du 16 juillet 1949 sur les publications destinées à la jeunesse,* which even today continues to be applied to comics for all ages in France (Groensteen 2006: 15). Because of their specific audience, French comics had not been subjected to serious criticism before the 1950s.[7] Even then, discourse on comics was monopolized by educators, most of whom, until the 1960s, were hostile toward magazines containing comics because of the magazines' religious standpoint, fear of American popular culture, and fear of the spread of illiteracy.

Antoine Roux, in his 1970 essay *La bande dessinée peut être éducative*, argued that rather than causing illiteracy, comics actually helped to encourage reading. From this time on, positive discourse on comics began to be observed in France; however, this revaluation of comics was a double-edged sword—the easy access that characterizes comics is one of the very reasons why the medium continues to be associated with childishness and artistic mediocrity (Groensteen 2006: 38-45). The situation in France can be observed in other countries as well. The fact that comics has expanded its readership to all ages can be appreciated as an accomplishment of comic art, but it can lead inversely to the criticism of adult comic readers, who are stigmatized as childish. Thus, the label of childishness has been an obstacle for those attempting to promote the cultural recognition of comics. However, childishness is not always a vice. To study the degree of legitimization of a medium traditionally targeted at children, we must consider differences in the perception of children in each culture.

The comics industry, making a huge profit on merchandise featuring popular characters, offers more proof of the affinity between comics and children. In *OCNI*, Groensteen expresses his fear that such merchandising elevates the position of comics

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7 According to Groensteen, the first theoretical work on comics in French after Rodolphe Töpffer's *Essai de physiognomonie* (1845) was Barthélemy Amengual's *Le Petit Monde de Pif le chien* (1955) (Groensteen 2006: 11).

as entertainment at the expense of an impartial view of comic works (Groensteen 2006: 71-73). However, as the profit and fame of merchandise can exceed those of the original comics, it is necessary to consider the predominance of merchandise as an inescapable reality of the modern comics market (Odagiri 2010: 22-61; Bouissou 2006).

Viewing comics as a communication tool demanding only elementary literacy, or as a source of merchandise, necessarily excludes the approach to comics through the appreciation of each work's artistic value. It is true that comics studies has developed based upon the model of literary studies or art history, which are based on the evaluation of individual works—this is why the main issues of comics studies as a discipline have been the methods of creation, criticism and appreciation, even if comics can also be the subject of sociological or economic interest. However, it seems that social sciences will become more and more important in international comics studies in the future.

5. University and academic societies as authorities

In France, a campaign for the cultural legitimization of comics, along with science fiction and detective novels, has been supported by intellectuals and artists since the 1960s. The first chair of theoretical comics studies, occupied by Francis Lacassin, was created at the Sorbonne in 1971. However, the chair was later abolished during faculty reorganization and was replaced with a chair of film animation (Groensteen 2006: 121). The foundation of a chair of comics studies, however ephemeral, was perceived in France as a sign of the recognition of comics as an academic discipline, while in Japan, the inclusion of comics studies in universities has been considered to be a sign of the transformation of the university's role.

The advance of comics in the Japanese university education system is a truly remarkable phenomenon. Universities with arts programs more and more frequently teach comics, and some departments of humanities have also begun to cover theories on comics. In France, art schools, or *écoles des beaux-arts*, sometimes include programs on comics; however, these are not "universities", so "teaching comics in university" in France means teaching comics theory in departments of humanities.

Morita Naoko

Compared to French national universities, the fees for which amount to only several tens of thousands of yen, Japanese universities depend mainly on student fees, and classes on comics are a popular way to attract students. Nevertheless, university-level comics theory education has yet to fully develop in either country.

It is worth noting that individuals working in the field of comics, especially authors, have often cautioned against the legitimization of comics studies because of the long history which has assigned comics to a low position culturally. As Groensteen argues in *OCNI,* quoting the declarations of Morris, Claire Bretécher and Art Spiegelman, authors sometimes express hostility against impractical theories and fear of losing their freedom and loyal readers in exchange for legitimacy (Groensteen 2006: 128-129). Although Groensteen argues that this might be partly an affected sentiment, he is inclined to attribute the insufficient legitimization of comics in France to those most concerned with the field who have not been completely liberated from an inferiority complex (Groensteen 2006: 129).

In Japan as well, those involved with comics are generally wary of authority. In 2001, the Japan Society for Studies in Cartoon and Comics was founded. At the moment of its foundation, the persons concerned and the media argued heatedly about the pros and cons of the Society. The main purpose of the Society is to promote constructive scholarship and exchanges based on the accumulation and maintenance of comic works, comics studies literature and related information. This nation-wide society, which has its own academic journal, has engendered a firm cultural recognition of comics studies in Japan. However, one of the unique aspects of the Society is that its foundation was based on the very idea that comics are by nature remote from authority. The same might be true for every domain of popular culture that now has its own academic society. In the case of comics, the distance from authority might be related to the medium's origin as satirical cartoons. This also explains why common readers, scholars, and comics authors tend to exercise a certain degree of caution regarding the promotion of manga as part of national cultural policy.

According to its prospectus, "the Society calls into question the very sense of value and the epistemic paradigm which has kept comics isolated from academia" (author's translation). In this sense, the academic promotion and institutionalization

of comics studies do not lead straight to a higher cultural recognition of comics, but rather reflect the society's choice to go forward with the danger of compromising the independent nature of comics. Here, I have attempted to show that the problem of the cultural status of comics is still a reality in Japan, despite the fact that comics have achieved a relatively secure place within the culture. Comics and comics studies, with their long and memorable history toward cultural recognition, must go on to profit from this dangerous relationship with legitimization.

Morita Naoko

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3

Pictotext and panels:
commonalities and differences in manga, comics and BD

NATSUME Fusanosuke
(trans. Jessica Bauwens-Sugimoto)

Introduction

This paper is a rewrite based on a fifteen minute presentation at the 2009 International Comics Conference in Kyoto. [1] In that presentation, I focused on layout as an achievement of the modern medium of manga, giving several concrete examples. In regard to the intertwining of panels, images and words, I tried to demonstrate structural commonalities shared between BD and comics. In this paper I shall revise some of the arguments that were the original premise guiding my attempt. I have included my own approach toward the analysis of manga's expressive structure. In addition, I will touch upon an issue which we might have to discuss further, that is, how the panel arrangement is differently treated in Europe, the U.S., and Japan, according to the respective intellectual contexts.

1. Manga as modern media: the importance of the panel functions

Among the long and varied historic forms that combine image and script—ancient murals, religious pictures, traditional painting both occidental and oriental and so forth—reproduction-based mass media deserve our special attention, first of all those

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1 Kyoto Seika University International Manga Research Center's First International Conference, "Comics Worlds and the World of Comics: Scholarship on a Global Scale', December 18-20, 2009, Session 2: Border-crossing Comics Studies under the conditions of globalization, *On Elements of a Common Language for Communicating about Manga, BD and Comics*.

which developed through newspapers and magazines. These media came into being thanks to such basic conditions as the development of industry, infrastructure and popular culture in the 19th-20th centuries. In this regard, Japanese manga, European BD, and American comics which evolved and influenced each other under the same societal conditions, are cultural phenomena with common ground in world history. Consequently, these forms of expression developed common qualities. One of these qualities is the narrative function of pictotext unfolding over a number of pages and panels and defined by the physical characteristics of print media (Takayama 2007).[2]

In the 1990s I attempted at deciphering the structure of manga expression by analyzing the relationship between its three basic components: images, words, and panels (Natsume 1992, Natsume and Takekuma, 1995). I thought that uncovering how these three components create a narrative through their interrelationship, would allow us to determine the distinctiveness of manga expression, as compared to cinema or literature.

What I regarded as especially important were the temporalizing functions that result from a continuum of pictotext units spreading over several stills, that is, non-filmic panels and pages. This form of expression differs not only from movies, but also from cartoons, which use a combination of pictotext in just one panel, from Japanese *kibyōshi* of the Edo period, which braid pictures into a textual tale (including partial break-ups of pages into panels),[3] and from Japanese picture scrolls of the 12th century in which a long tale is told through pictotext but without panels. Compared to those, modern manga articulates shorter time spans in panels through changes of scene and visual distance, evoking effects of temporal expression which are close to the grammar

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2 In contrast to this rough treatment, it is possible to examine, for example, RodolpheTöpffer's *M. Vieux Bois*. In this work we find a kind of articulation of time reminiscent of modern panel functions, and it is also important to note that it was distributed through print and may have been the basis of contemporary BD. Its emergence was apparently backed up by a major transformation in European visual culture. But such research is still insufficient in Japan, and will have to wait for future studies. In this paper I treat manga, BD, and comics as shaped by widely popular media of reproduction, which have determined those similar media we use today. SeeTakayama for the transformation of Western-European visual culture in the 18th and 19th centuries.

3 A book format that was widely popular in Japan during the Edo period (1603-1868), based on woodblock printing. There is a lot of printed woodblock text on every page, with corresponding pictures. See Kane (2002) and Natsume (2004) for the relationship between this format and manga in Edo period.

of cinema. Cinematic storytelling as well as the storytelling by means of panels and pages in manga, BD, and comics developed during the 20th century probably while mutually influencing each other.[4] This interrelationship could rest upon the masses' accumulation of visual experience, including movies, and their increasing visual literacy.

Equally important to manga/comics' development as a mass entertainment everywhere, were its popular characters. Consecutive panels establish a character, which may exhibit various movements and facial expressions, as one and the same person in the reader's mind. Forming a unified image of a character which actually appears as a different picture in each panel, the reader grasps what happens to this character and its life. Moreover, depictions of environment and buildings that transform these events into a scene, as well as special symbols that indicate the emotions and mood of the characters,[5] make the reader experience a rich temporality, allowing them to enter the narrative universe. Panel layout, images and script create a compound that provokes a manga-specific temporality within the reader. Precisely this ensures the reader's immersion into the narrative.

However, the temporality we experience in the images themselves is different from the immediate synchronization of time as perceived through film; it is rather an imaginary temporality created by the brain of the reader which naturally temporalizes the space of images and lines as such. For example, the speedline accompanying a thrown ball is drawn as an imaginary line not visible in reality. The reader naturally picks up how fast the ball goes depending on whether this line is curved or straight. This differs from the temporality created by the panels as a continuum of the discontinuous, and it is also qualitatively different from the temporality initially inherent in text. When these different temporalities are synthesized and imagined by the reader as living beings and places, it is possible to achieve a presence no less than that achieved by the imaginary temporality of characters and narratives interwoven by

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4 The role animated film fulfilled in influencing both printed cartoons and movies early in the history of cinema as an entertainment industry, seems important.

5 For example, the smoke and lines that represent explosions, sweat that expresses impatience, groups of broken lines that represent a budding awareness. These are covered in *Manga no yomikata* '(Natsume and Takekuma, 1995), and called *keiyu* (shape metaphor).

cinematic sequences.

In a sense, to achieve a kind of storytelling similar to that of cinema and novels in manga, BD, and comics, it is necessary to control and synthesize the units of pictotext that panels are made of. In his book *The System of Comics*, Thierry Groensteen writes about this function: "The strip, the page, the double page, and the album are nested multiframes, systems of increasingly inclusive proliferation." (Ibid: 148). Groensteen's generative system of narration, in which individual panels can be contextually read as spaciotemporal references, accurately grasps the importance of the function of pages and panels, common to manga, BD, and comics.

2. An analysis of panel functions using concrete examples

2. 1. The articulation of time in panels, and the momentaneity of the page

Fig. 1 is from Tezuka Osamu's *Hi no tori: Uchūhen* [Phoenix: Universe],[6] a scene in which, after an accident in the far reaches of space, each crew member is adrift in a small personal escape pod. Being frozen during their trip, one by one has to pilot the ship for a while, but when during an emergency all crew members are thawed, they realize that the pilot in charge has turned into a mummy. From inside their drifting escape pods, the crew members, accompanied by the very man who is now a mummy, discuss this mystery. The crew are pictured lying in their capsules, with only their faces and speech appearing in small panels strewn across the page, while a panoramatic image of the capsules drifting through space stretches over the same spread. At the start of *Hi no tori: Uchūhen* there are over thirty pages of this flashback scene in which space and humans are represented through the juxtaposition of small and large panels.

Following the 'reading' direction of manga, the reader pursues the story moving their gaze from right to left. The small panels lined up vertically on the right are literally embraced by the larger panel of cosmic space, and connected by the gutter[7] between the panels, drawn in the shape of tubes. Connecting the cosmic space and

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6 During the presentation at the symposium I used an example by Ōtomo Katsuhiro, but because it is colored it is hard to see in black and white printing, so I have chosen a work by Tezuka instead.

7 In *Manga no yomikata* (Natsume and Takekuma 1995) the spaces between panels are referred to as *mahaku* (gutter, hiatus).

Fig. 1: Tezuka Osamu Hi no tori 9 – uchūhen, seimeihen (1992) Kadokawa Publishing, (first published in 1969), p. 62.

the capsules results in a kind of simultaneity between the enormous space and distant time on the one hand and the petty human conversation, which it encompasses, on the other. The page is structured in a way as to suggest watching the panels simultaneously and thereby experience the loneliness of a mere human adrift in the vastness of space.

The closing in on individual dialogue as well as the flashbacks invite a strong feeling of empathy for the characters; however, this empathy is immediately swallowed up by the enormity of cosmic space and time, and makes the reader too feel strangely adrift. Important here is the momentaneity of a number of panels that cause a multi-layered reception of the infinite space and the characters as located both in the same temporality and apart at the same time. This momentaneity is amplified as a double spread in fig. 2, where a vast blank space emphasizes the difference between the enormity of space and the pettiness of the individual characters even more. The act of following the panels and turning the pages turns into a time of mystery reading, which makes the reader get absorbed by the story.

This kind of expression which fosters the coexistence of articulated time and

momentaneity, has been refined by turning the limitations of the printed page into advantage, and as such, it has seen a development entirely different from other media like cinema and novels. Moreover, the comparative expression of large-scale spatiotemporalities as in the above example needs more than one page, that is, narratives of a certain length, and it only works effectively in stories of a certain complexity.[8]

2.2. Panel-based identity codes for characters, and their reversal

Manga guarantees the identity of characters by drawing them with the same characteristics in different pictures distributed over several panels, and it evokes the
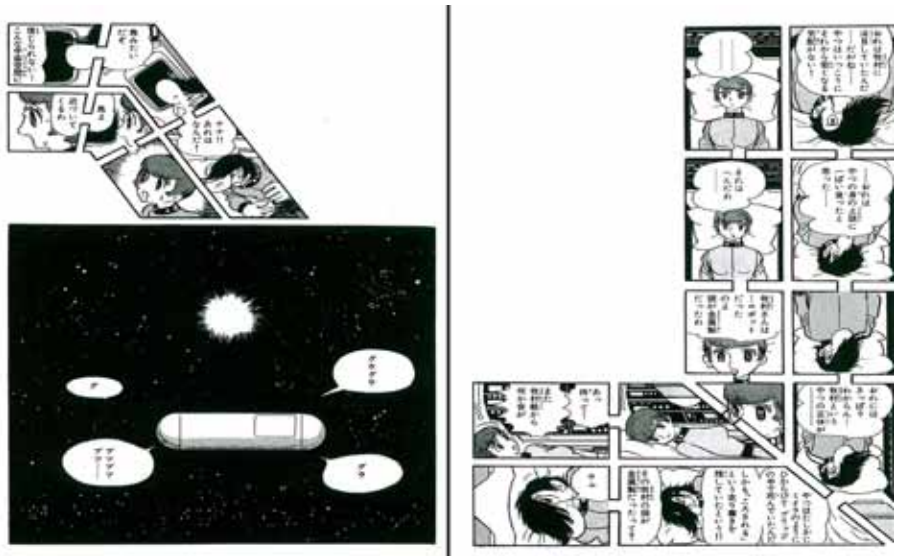
Fig. 2: Ibid.: 76--77.

impression of these characters' movement in time. Dialogue creates a time of spoken meaning and is an important narrative thread helping characters retain their identity even when drawn over several panels intermittently. It goes without saying that this identity is guaranteed by the linked continuum of panels and pages.

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8 These drifting parts were published in the monthly magazine *COM* between March and May of 1969. Expressions like this, which use plenty pages and panels as well as a lot of blank space, became possible within long-running Japanese-style manga series, because these series developed in the format of mainly monochrome, cheap, and tome-like manga magazines.

However, a character as a picture in a panel is, in a way, just a bunch of drawn lines which exist only in that panel. Acknowledging this character to be identical with characters in other panels is possible because we find (if only partially) the same markers in different pictures, and lean on the narrative context even if the character looks apparently different. In other words, identification depends on a contextual 'reading' in line with manga-specific conventions.

This contextual reading occurs within the imaginary time of the reader, which is consecutively framed by panels and pages; over and over again, it lets the reader perceive the individual panel as a manifestation of one specific time-space within the same scene, the same drama, the same narrative. Thus, a character drawn in one panel will at the same time always contain characters of a different time and space, which brings a kind of contradiction into play. In his book *Manga genron*, Yomota Inuhiko addressed this contradiction in relation to manga faces:

"The same face is never drawn twice.

But the same face can be drawn over and over again." (1994: 186) The former applies to the stage prior to codification, while the latter prevails once the character has been integrated into a personality and codified. Precisely because this code is strictly adhered to, manga allows for a variety of disguises and "ninja clone techniques" (*bunshinjutsu*),[9] Yomota puts it.

Fig. 3 is from Fukuyama Yōji's   *SCHIZOPHRENIA*, published for an overseas audience with a left to right reading direction. It shows the chaos that ensues when a character who invented a time machine comes to the same space and time from several different times.

This work subverts the manga code of character identity by surprisingly placing characters that should be in different panels within the same panel. The paradox created by the time machine idea—the same character inhabiting the same time-

9 Ninja comics from the 1950s such as those by Shirato Sanpei, which Yomota also discusses, started featuring scenes in which the face of the same character would appear multiple times in the same scene, as *bunshinjutsu*, the art of splitting oneself up. One way to do this is through very fast movement, using the art of lingering vision; then the same character appears in one panel multiple times. Another way is to use a different person in disguise, who can appear in the same panel or in different panels, and thus deviate from the rationality of the narrative, depicting a 'mystery'.

space—becomes a nonsensical violation of the manga-specific code that guarantees the character's identity. Up to a certain degree, the reader empathizes with the character, but because the same object is depicted repeatedly in the same panel, the impression is one of odd schism and integration. On the next page of this work (fig. 4), the same characters are overlapping in a group. The codes of identity and difference are mixed up even more, shaking the reader's sense of integration. This play with codes and their violation reveals the polyphonic structure potentially inherent in manga expression,

Fig. 3: Fukuyama Yōji (1983) "SCHIZOPHRENIA", in: *MANGA, Tokyo*: METRO SCOPE Co.Ltd, p. 73.

Fig. 4: Ibid.: 75.

while arousing a very contemporary and probably neurotic kind of 'laughter'.

The same character that is drawn multiple times here pushes his picture which is supposed to spread over several panels, into the momentaneity of one single frame, drawing upon a reversal of the pictorial plurality characteristic of manga panels. Such an expression folds the code of contextual manga 'reading' back into one panel. By means of this deviation, the unique narrative code resting on pages and panels has achieved an extremely manga-like aesthetic.

2.3. Image and word integrated by panels: The gaze system

Fig. 5 is a double page-spread from Kawaguchi Kaiji's action manga *Chinmoku no kantai* (The Silent Service), featuring a submarine. On the right page, impact lines and sound words depicting an explosion, the effected submarine, and close-ups of the crew inside are alternately drawn. Taking up a large portion of the top tier of the page are the scenery and the situation including the characters, while the impact on the characters inside the ship is presented as a strip of small panels. The top two panels give the

impression of heavily squashing the lower three panels, making the situation enclose the characters. Because of the panel arrangement of this page, the reader experiences an oppressive, claustrophobic space, being confirmed of the situation through the words on the right page, where a character in the last panel shouts, "A torpedo exploded at a distance of 100 meters!"

This dialogue line is connected to the shouted order inside the ship on the left page, "Don't let the ship go off balance!" In this double spread the reader can't see the commander. However, because on the left page his order overlaps with the ship going off balance due to the explosion, the reader unconsciously feels as if the order came from the submarine itself. The submarine, including its crew, seems to attain a collective personality. Indeed, in this series, submarines and battle ships look as if they had personalities, as if they embodied the will of the crew and in particular the captain. This device is a manga trick to create the illusion of being right in the middle of a battle

Fig. 5: Kawaguchi Kaiji (1998, first published from 1988-96): *Chinmoku no kantai,* Tokyo: Kōdansha Paperback Vol. 5, pp. 420-21.

between humans rather than an underwater combat with submarines at its center.

The sense of oppression felt in the panels with characters at the bottom of the

right page suddenly changes into a feeling of liberation that spreads out over the entire left page. This is one of the pleasures which entertaining action manga provide for their readers. If we assume that the panel break-up is equivalent to a cut back in film, the same should be possible in film. But the momentaneity of being able to see at one glance the break-up and layout of differently sized panels on one double spread creates a different effect. In this scene, the continuity of dialogue on the right and left pages interconnects subjects different in nature, that is, humans and the submarine, resulting in the perception of the submarine as an anthropomorphized being. In a sense the identity code of characters extends to the submarine here.

Humans have a strong tendency to focus on humans, particularly their faces, when examining moving or still images. They will look at the eyes and the mouth, at hands and then feet.[10] Likewise, manga has formed a unique code of gaze movement by combining body parts that are drawn prominently, and script (dialogue, narration, monologue and onomatopoeia) which attracts attention immediately after a character's physique, with pictorial compositions. The sometimes efficient, sometimes ambivalent moves of the reader's gaze are determined by the 'reading' direction of the spread, linking and structuring diverse visual elements like script and images (and sometimes blank spaces).

In this way consecutive panels and pages become a system that consolidates the movement of the gaze. The gaze connects diverse things such as persons and submarines with various levels of language, produces differentials between events, and works them into the time of the large narration. The time of narration inside the reader attaches new meanings to single images and words every time, contributing to the complex fabric of imagination.

This is how the panel-ruled interaction of images and words gives rise to manga-specific storytelling. This narrative function, as demonstrated with the help of the above examples, is essentially shared with BD and comics. When discussing these phenomena in an international forum, the particular forms of expression provide us with a multitude of common denominators.

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10 See Solso (1997).

3. Differences between manga, BD, and comics

As for the differences between manga, BD, and comics, we can easily give examples. There is the medium of appearance, the size of the market, and—putting diversity aside for the moment—also forms of expression. There is the difference in reading direction: East Asian manga, for example in Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, are read from right to left and contain mainly vertical script, whereas BD and comics are characterized above all by the opposite direction and horizontal lines of text. Another subtle difference, perhaps brought on by the previous element, can be found in panel arrangement and gaze movement. There is also the different amount of pages in book editions, the difference between mainly monochrome manga and richly colored BD and comics, and so on. These are issues that will probably be explored further.

However, what seems most important here are the different critical and analytical languages developed in each region, under respective historical conditions and in specific discursive spaces.

For example, in Japan, the peculiar field of manga targeted at women—shōjo manga by women for mostly female readers—has become highly significant since the postwar period. Particularly since the seventies, unique expressions initially absent from male-oriented manga have been held in high regard and greatly influenced manga of other genres.

Speaking from my own limited knowledge, there was a field of girls' comics in America too, and there were also French BD for girls. But both genres were dominated by male artists, and declined anyway in the 1950s and 1960s. Female manga, on the other hand, have been centered on female authors and readers, which seems to be unique from a global perspective. Due to these historic conditions, there are still many women authors active in Japan, who can rely on a large readership.

In Japan, the post-war baby boomers are also named the 'manga generation', and for some of them, the preferred critical object of the 1970s was shōjo manga, which they regarded as the future of manga's expressive potential. Ever since, shōjo manga has held an important and unique position in critical discourse. Also, many women who grew up reading shōjo manga claim that the genre had a major impact on their lives[11].

11 A representative work is Fujimoto's *Watashi no ibasho wa doko ni aru? Shōjo manga*

Fig. 6 shows an example of shōjo manga, taken from Iwadate Mariko's 1986 series *Tōi hoshi o kazoete* [Count the distant stars]. It exhibits a bold use of blank space, which can probably be traced back to manga's favoritization of monochrome renderings. The panels are laid out diagonally, without borders, overlapping each other. While panel arrangement in general is a configuration of closed panels, this standard has been loosened here. The characters which seem to float within a blank space void of any background, and the text free from balloons create a unique feeling of hovering. In tune with the characters' disconsolate mood, the panels' function of articulating time is suppressed here, and the blank background robs the scene if realism. In contrast with the very dense impression of *Chinmoku no kantai* in fig. 5, this expression dodges being read, rather inviting the gaze to just wander around. In spite of the simplicity of the picture, the reader becomes engrossed in the depth of this scene.

Integration through panel arrangement is a basic standard in manga, and a system that guarantees the narration's temporality. But in many shōjo manga the panel borders are frequently violated by blank space, characters, and script, making the picture look multi-layered. This layered structure of panels in shōjo manga, which I analyzed in the collective volume *Manga no yomikata* (1995), has been critically elaborated upon by Itō Gō in his book *Tezuka is dead* (2005). Itō posits that in manga it is actually impossible to say whether the reader's visual frame is formed by the page or the panel (he calls this 'the uncertainty, or indeterminability of the frame'), and that precisely this makes manga expression unique. Male-oriented manga leaned on cinematic techniques, and developed a style in which panels were supposed to play the role of the cinematic screen. Shōjo manga on the other hand pursued a strategy which Itō describes as follows: "Unlike *gekiga* and *seinen manga* [manga for male youth], shōjo manga didn't suppress the characteristic that is manga-specific in the truest sense of the word, namely the uncertainty of the frame." (Itō 2005: 228).[12]

I do not intend to discuss the validity of this quotation here. It should however be

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gautsusukokoro no katachi (1998).

12 The *gekiga* (lit.: dramatic pictures, or pictorial dramas) in the quotation appeared during the juvenilization of Japanese manga, between the fifties and the seventies, it is a name for an expressive trend that demanded more realistic and excessive depictions. I sometimes called BD and comics by this name (when talking in Japanese), but this may cause confusion over terminology here.

Fig. 6: Iwadate Mariko (1987): *Tōi hoshi o kazoete*, Tokyo: Shūeisha, pp. 78-79.

noted that this argument is widely shared in Japanese manga studies. But what happens when this framework born out of a specific discursive space, meets BD and comics theory, which do not have a peculiar area such as shōjo manga?

When Thierry Groensteen, who came to Japan in winter of 2009, was asked by Itō about the uniqueness of shōjo manga at a symposium organized by Meiji University,[13] he didn't acknowledge it as a unique system of expression. The alleged uniqueness seemed to him as sufficiently integral into his BD theory. Given the discursive space he comes from, this was perhaps a natural response. He promised to analyze shōjo manga in the near future though (and thus raised high expectations). Here we find the differences in historical conditions and discursive space of which critical analytical language is a part.

Odagiri Hiroshi, who is an expert in American comics, points out (for example in this anthology) that it is dangerous for Japanese manga criticism to treat manga as if

13 Meiji University School of Global Japanese Studies, Special Symposium: "The grammar of visual culture and comics - Welcoming Thierry Groensteen", sponsored by The Japan Foundation, December 23, 2009.

Natsume Fusanosuke

it developed solely within Japan, and to insist on manga's stylistic uniqueness without even looking at foreign examples. In his book *Sensō wa ika ni 'manga' o kaeru ka* he writes:

> Japanese manga criticism often finds the uniqueness of Japanese manga in the diverse monologues and introspective depictions which are representative of shōjo manga, but in American superhero comics, monologues are not exceptional either. Japanese manga researchers should at least know that American comics have a history of their own with respect to techniques for introspective depictions, such as monologues and panel layout. (Odagiri 2007: 233-234)

Whether shōjo manga is a globally unique form of expression, and unique to what extent, has not yet been subject to thorough comparative investigation. Yet, given this point alone, it is necessary that we relativize the history and discursive spaces we are part of, and try to alter our perspectives. We should exchange knowledge, and after careful deliberation, question whether our respective discourses still stand.

An awareness of differences, as outlined above, is necessary, when we want to engage in international debate about manga, BD, and comics, and face the task of how to bring together our respective languages. While we have things in common, we also differ. To what extent we can become aware of this self-evident fact and turn it into an opportunity for discussion is what we should be asking ourselves next.

Natsume Fusanosuke

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4

Manga truisms:
on the insularity of Japanese manga discourse

ODAGIRI Hiroshi
(trans. Jessica Bauwens-Sugimoto)

1. Japanese manga in the U.S.

Currently in Europe and the U.S., manga and manga-related topics are discussed as a subgenre of "comics", or as part of the comics business. To give one example, the "Arts Beat" section of the *New York Times* (shortened to NYT hereafter) from March 12th, 2010 (Gustine 2010) discusses the hit film *Kick-Ass*, based on a comic by Mark Miller and John Romita Jr.,[1] as well as the comics version of the TV series *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* (Espenson, Jeanty, and Whedon 2007),[2] and it goes on to mention that Kubo Tite's *BLEACH*[3] is number one on the comics' bestseller list. Consequently, it seems worth taking a closer look at the system of classification used by this bestseller list (New York Times 2010).

The Graphic Books category on the NYT bestseller list, to which comics belong, is divided by format into three subcategories. *Kick-Ass* is number one in the hardcover category, while *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is number one in the paperback category. The only difference between the two titles is format, which is easy enough to understand. However, the last category, where *BLEACH* is number one, is for manga. Looking at the structure of this list, it is easy to conclude that manga are so popular that they have a separate category devoted to them in the bestseller list. However, the list's structure is

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1 This series went on sale in 2008 under ICON, a label for original works by Marvel Comics' creators.
2 Strictly speaking, this is a sequel written after the TV series was completed.
3 Viz Media started publishing the English translation in 2004.

not necessarily an accurate reflection of reality.

It is true that to a certain extent Japanese manga are an established genre in the U.S. market, but these "manga" are not the same as Japanese manga. We can see this by looking at the work ranked fifth on the list: *Dark Hunters* (Campos and Kenyon 2009),[4] an original American work. The criteria for being included in this list are not publicly available, but it is likely that works categorized as manga here are what we in Japan call "new book editions" (*shinshohan tankōbon*, a format slightly smaller than usual Japanese manga volumes). Trade paperbacks of comics in the U.S. are mainly the same size as comic books that is, A4. So-called "digests" and "tankōbon" are relatively new forms born from and made popular through translations of Japanese manga. I assume that the art was also taken into consideration, but it does not seem to matter whether the work is of Japanese origin or not. It is more likely that because of factors like price and format, American "manga" and Japanese shinshohan were thrown together in the same category.

In contrast, there is the recent trend to promote Japanese manga published in large-size hardcover or softcover editions not as "manga," but "graphic novels" in the U.S. The works by Tezuka Osamu published by Vertical are just one example.[5] Starting with *Buddha,* they were published as large-size hardcovers and promoted in catalogues as "graphic novels". The same strategy applies to Tatsumi Yoshihiro's *A Drifting Life;* its English version was published in 2009 even before the Japanese one, by the Canadian publisher Drawn and Quarterly.

This means that in America the word "manga" has changed semantically; it no longer refers just to Japanese manga, and even Japanese comics will not always be called manga. When the word "manga" came in common usage in Europe and the U.S., it evoked also a certain kind of art style (which I will not discuss here) and narrative, but even in regard to style, in the U.S., works that resemble manga but were not

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4 It is interesting to note that a different work in this series, *Lords of Avalon*, was released by Marvel Comics in 2009 (Adaptation: Robin Furth, Art: Tommy Ōtsuka). Tommy Ōtsuka is a Japanese manga artist who does a lot of work in America.
5 Publication started in 2006 with *Buddha*. Other works were published in the same format, including *Andromeda Stories*, *Apollo's Song*, *MW*, and *Black Jack*.

produced in Japan are no longer exceptional.

This trend was pioneered by independent comics publisher Antarctic Press, owned by Ben Dunn, who has been drawing comics in manga style since the 1980s, and Adam Warren, who drew original comics and created the characters for Japanese SF author Takachiho Haruka's novel *Dirty Pair*; artists influenced by Japanese manga artists, like Adam Hughes, who started Gaijin Studio, a group of artists influenced by Japanese mangaka, and the group of creators from East Asia, Udon, who in the 1990s turned Capcom's game Street Fighter and the Takara Toy company's *Transformers* into comics, were very successful in the U.S.

After the *Pokemon* boom in 2000, a "manga generation" appeared, indiscriminately influenced by both American entertainment like Star Wars and Japanese anime like *Dragon Ball*. Debuting at new companies such as TokyoPop, which quickly grew successful publishing the English version of *Sailor Moon,* these authors did not all succeed, but some were able to produce works related to the new media-mix current. One example is the comics version of Sherilyn Kenyon's fantasy novel *Dark Hunters,* which appeared in the above-mentioned NYT bestseller list, and another one is the original comic *Scott Pillgrim* by Bryan Lee O'Malley (2004), which has been turned into a live-action movie. Works like these suggest that the manga generation is about to establish itself securely in the North American comics business.

For authors and readers of this generation, "manga" does not necessarily mean Japanese manga.[6] If stylistic hybridization continues in the same vain, the unifying force of the word "manga" will gradually weaken, and the art style and panel layout associated with it now will become just one of many technical and stylistic options.

2. Manga as a different culture

As mentioned above, at least in the U.S. and Canada, the reception and distribution of Japanese manga are now included in the domain "comics", in the sense of "all comics in North America". This is probably the same in France and other European countries. Through the reception of "manga" as a foreign culture, its differences and

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6 In contrast, there are also fundamentalists who insist that "Only Japanese manga are real manga!"; Svetlana Chmakova depicts them in her *DRAMACON*, vol. 2 (Chmakova 2006).

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commonalities with the comics from the country in question have become visible and subject to debate.

There are not only active comics artists influenced by Japanese manga, like those mentioned above. Since the 1980s, manga has been discussed in the groundbreaking books by Frederik L. Schodt *MANGA! MANGA! The World of Japanese Comics* (1986) and *Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga* (1996); in introductory articles and essays and reviews such as those published by Fred Patten in the small magazine Animerica and later collected in his volume *WATCHING ANIME, READING MANGA: 25 Years of Essays and Reviews* (2004). Around 1980s, when Schodt and Patten did introductory work in the academic field too, scholars like John A. Lent, who started up the *International Journal of Comic Art,* and Maurice Horn, who edited the *World Encyclopedia of Comics and Cartoons* (1998, first publ. 1978), began to bring manga as a research subject to the fore.

After the general comics boom of the 1990s,[7] there were more opportunities to discuss manga, last but not least due to the greater interest in comics as a whole, and thanks to the manga boom of the 2000s, manga-related publications increased exponentially. Although insufficient, there was already some discussion about the differences and similarities between "manga" and "comics".

3. Awareness of foreign comics in Japan

In Japan, the situation is quite different. Today, "manga" almost exclusively signifies Japanese manga, while foreign comics are not considered part of this category. In addition, the current manga discourse in Japan—from book reviews and introductory articles in magazines and newspapers to criticism and research—takes it for granted that "manga" is characterized by a specific form of expression, that is is "sequential art", as Will Eisner and Scott McCloud put it (1985, 1993), or to be more precise, meaning narrative comics serialized in weekly or monthly manga magazines.

Before attempting to explain why foreign comics are not regarded as manga in Japan, it should be pointed out that even from a global perspective, the domestic Japanese manga market is unusually large. The amount of works produced domestically is so large

7 For more information about this phenomenon, see Odagiri (2007).

56

that in comparision the circulation of foreign comics is dwarfed. Their relative lack of distribution is directly related to the low awareness of "foreign manga" as a whole. To make matters worse, Japanese readers will sometimes simplistically assume that foreign comics must be of inferior quality because they do not sell well in Japan.

The strange thing is that there are numerous examples of foreign comics that are actually selling well in Japan; however, these aren't seen as "manga." The Japanese distribution of Charles Schulz's *Peanuts* and Hergé's *Tintin*, representative classic comics in English and French respectively, provides the most telling example of how strangely the Japanese manga market works. Schulz's *Peanuts* maintains its popularity through the sale of *character goods,* stuffed animals, and other merchandise since its character Snoopy, the Beagle dog, is extremely famous, but its original title is almost unknown. In spite of that it has been translated into Japanese several times, available until this day in both small and large paperback formats.[8] However, these publications are rarely referred to as "manga" and they cannot be found in the manga corner of bookstores; instead, they are placed on the same shelf as self-help books and foreign literature.

In the case of Hergé's *Tintin,* the difference in treatment is even more obvious. Although *The Adventures of Tintin*, the name of the entire series, was published in Japanese by Fukuinkan shoten, it is distributed as a "picture book" and only rarely referred to as "manga".

There are countless similar cases which sold several ten thousands of copies supported by the American action-figure boom which Japan experienced in the 1990s, for example Todd McFarlane's *Spawn* (1992) and the *X-men* at the time of Jim Lee's artwork.[9] More recently, there has been Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* (2000) and Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell's *From Hell* (1999), noteworthy because they stand out as long-selling foreign works, yet are routinely ignored in Japanese manga discourse by critics as well as researchers.

In Japan it has become customary to publish ranking guides of "this year's best

8 Two examples are Kōdansha's paperback anthology *Sunūpi no motto kiraku ni* (1995) and Kadokawa publishers' *SNOOPY* (2002).
9 These comics were mainly published by Marvel from the late 1980s to the second half of the 1990s. Shōgakukan started publishing translations in 1994.

manga" in the form of so-called Mooks [a hybrid of magazine and book] by several publishers,[10] but translations of foreign comics are almost never considered, and a category for "foreign comics" simply does not exist.

The problem is not the availability or distribution level of translations, it is the attitude that "anything that isn't Japanese manga is of no relevance to us", which prevails in contemporary Japanese manga discourse, and it is my personal opinion that foreign researchers and journalists need to know about this situation.

In America, a certain amount of French-language comics (BD, *bande dessinée*) have been published, and there are also several studies about French comics (Beaty 2007, McKinney 2008). When French-speaking researchers say that BD and American comics are different, they are able to back this claim up with their experience as readers, comparing the actual differences and commonalities of the two kinds of comics.

However, to most Japanese, regardless of whether the works are from the U.S. or France, they are the same, that is, "foreign manga". Regardless of their reading experience or its lack, most Japanese wrongly assume that foreign comics are different from Japanese manga and thus of no relevance to them. Even critics and researchers are unaware that this assumption is flawed. For Japanese readers, "manga" is something so commonplace that they do not question what it actually means, but as long as critics and researchers dwell within this limited framework, it will be impossible to establish any international debate.

4. Considering foreign comics

What I said above applies to the contemporary state of manga discourse in Japan. In the past, however, foreign comics were actually read and discussed. In *Gendai manga no shisō* [Thought in contemporary manga], published in 1970, art critic Ishiko Junzō uses the words *kātsūn* and *renzoku koma manga* (lit. continuing panel manga) as equivalents to the American terms cartoon and comic strip.

In the same book Ishiko quotes from *The Comics* by Coulton Waugh (1991),

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10 Some examples are Takarajima Publishers' *Kono manga wa sugoi!*, and Freestyle's *Kono manga o yome!*

Odagiri Hiroshi

who did pioneering work in comics research. At the beginning of the book, he touches on American comics history in a manner which reveals his familiarity with contemporaneous comics and comics research. Works on manga written around 1970 by critics of Waugh's generation, such as Tsurumi Shunsuke (1973), Ozaki Hideki (1972), Satō Tadao (1973), and Kusamori Shinichi (1967), used foreign comics as a model in order to explore Japanese manga.

In his foreword to *Manga geijutsuron: gendai nihonjin no sensu to humoa no kōzai* [Manga Art: The Merits and Demerits of Contemporary Japanese Sense and Humor] (1967), published before the above-mentioned *Gendai Manga no Shisō,* Ishiko expresses dissatisfaction with the way that earlier manga critics such as Itō Ippei (1955) and Suyama Keiichi (1954) leaned on introducing foreign works in their publications, which indicates that in the past, Japanese manga discourse did in fact connect foreign and Japanese manga.

This raises the question why the consideration of foreign manga that existed in Ishiko and Tsurumi's time disappeared.

5. Two notions of "manga"

In his paper "Manga hihyō no genzai: atarashiki kagaku shugi e no tsuna-watari" [The current state of manga criticism: a bridge to new scientism], published in the anthology *Manga hihyō sengen* [Manifesto of manga criticism] (Yonezawa 1987), manga researcher Takeuchi Osamu breaks post-war Japanese manga criticism up into three phases: (1) 1955-1964, (2) 1965-1974, and (3) 1975-1984. According to Takeuchi, manga criticism until the first phase showed an "instructional attitude" criticizing manga as too commercial compared to idealistic children's literature, with authors of children's literature and educators at its center. Takeuchi disapproves of their framework, which positioned manga as vulgar.

In his paper, Takeuchi regards critics of the same generation as the above-mentioned Ishiko and Tsurumi as dominating the second phase. He positions them as "intellectuals", critics and researchers that had already gained recognition in their respective fields, who came to the fore in this period of rapid development, when manga's popularity increased by association with animated series such as *Tetsuwan*

Atomu [Astro Boy], and rental-library comics (*kashihon gekiga*)[11] aimed at the young working class flourished gaining manga an older readership.

A year before Takeuchi's paper, Kure Tomofusa had already called these critics' approach "studies of mass culture by means of the study of manga" in his *Gendai manga no zentaizō* [A Comprehensive View of Contemporary Manga] (1986), but Takeuchi is much more critical: From his point of view, these critics used jargon from their respective fields, such as "mass culture", and attempted to turn manga into a case study in order to examine the potential of existing sciences, but as with the publications of their predecessors, "the normal reader's way of reading stays invisible".

In other words, Takeuchi thinks, that until the early 1970s, manga criticism consisted of analysis from external perspectives, which took the manga reader's view very lightly.

In contrast to this external perspective, critics which had grown up reading manga, including Takeuchi himself, but also Yonezawa Yoshihiro (1980), Murakami Tomohiko (1979), and Hashimoto Osamu (1979) came to form the "manga generation's criticism" and thus the core of the third phase in Takeuchi's historical account of Japan's manga discourse.

Takeuchi's scheme has become a kind of official view within Japanese manga criticism and research, as recent works on discourse history which adhere to it, like Natsume Fukanosuke's *Manga-gaku e no chōsen: shinka suru hihyōchizu* [A challenge for manga research: the evolving critical map] (2004) and Koyama Masahiro's *Sengo nihon manga ronsōshi* [The history of manga debates in postwar Japanese] (2007), indicate. But a revisiting of Ishiko and Tsurumi's texts raises doubts about certain aspects of Takeuchi's scheme.

It is true that Ishiko, an art critic; Tsurumi, a researcher of popular culture in general; Ozaki, a scholar of popular literature; and Satō, a film critic, were renowned in their own fields by the time they started to publish manga criticism. However, contrary

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11 Produced only for rental libraries not general sale, these comics were original works or book editions which contained anthologies. Rental book stores existed in various forms until the 1970s, providing reading as entertainment mostly to blue-collar workers. Authors who are now highly respected overseas, like Mizuki Shigeru and Tatsumi Yoshihiro, created many *kashihon* originals.

to what Takeuchi pointed out, when reading their work one cannot help but notice their preferences as mere readers. In both Ishiko's passion for *gekiga* [lit. dramatic picture] and Tsurumi's statement, ''I love Sazae-san'', their tastes show themselves quite clearly, which cannot necessarily be said about contemporaries like Yonezawa and Murakami, to name just two. In these works the perspective of reader and theorist are not clearly divided which makes it much harder to decipher "the normal reader's reading."

Perhaps Takeuchi's assessment was not really based on the analysis of their actual texts, but rather originated in resistance against the "old notion of manga" of those like Ishiko. This resistance was shared by critics who like Takeuchi belonged to the postwar baby-boomers and grew up reading Tezuka's and his successors' manga.

Precisely this opposition between new and old notions of manga led to the decisive split between the manga criticism up to Ishiko's generation and the manga criticism launched by Takeuchi's generation.

6. Dis/similarities regarding the concept of manga/comics

Assumingly, what we call **manga** in Japanese, **comics** in English, and **bande dessinée** in French all signify the same medium and form of expression; however, each word refers to something entirely different. The word manga signifies a certain kind of drawing style, a certain way of drawing, as expressed in the phrase "manga picture". In contrast, the English comics comes from "comedy" and refers to content. Bande dessinée is the French translation of the English "comic strip," meaning "drawn belt", in other words, comics with several panels (sequential art), that is, a form of expression.

Among these three general terms, the most difficult to understand is probably the English "comics". It is hard to see why people would call sequential art a word that stems from "comedy". In fact, narrative newspaper comics like *Buck Rogers* and *Tarzan* were not called comic strips in English, but rather "adventure strips". The word "strip", used here to signify a comic with several panels, normally refers to cloth or a rag, but it was probably chosen as an attribute for panels.

In America, this word and the variety of its meanings have been subject to debate

for years, but the Japanese word "manga" is not easy either.

The word "manga" refers to a style of drawing; however, the usage of "manga-like", or "mangaesque" as an adjective, contains a nuance of "funny" or "comical" in Japanese, just like the English word comics. This does not come as a surprise if we remember that Japan's modern manga took so-called *ponchi-e* [Punch pictures] as its point of departure, modeled after the one-panel comics of *The Japan Punch*, a magazine established by an Englishman in 1862. The word "manga", literally meaning "funny picture", was not initially connected to an expressive form or equation with sequential art. The start of Japan's modern manga were single pictures, cartoons, so to speak, whose purpose was satire and humor. In the beginning, one-panel manga were "manga".

7. The elimination of manga for adults

The elimination of manga for adults is obvious when conidering, for example, Kusamori Shinichi's *Manga-kō: bokutachi jishin no naka no manuke no kenkyū* [Thinking manga: studying the moron inside ourselves] (1967). The kind of manga Kusamori sees as ideal is clearly not Tezuka's story manga, but rather an unconstrainted manga determined by pictures and ideas and modeled after cartoons that appeared in American magazines like *The New Yorker* or *Playboy*. In fact, until Kusamori and Ishiko's generation, there was an unwritten rule that precisely these one-panel cartoons were manga for adults, whereas story manga, including gekiga, were children's manga.[12]

In contemporary Japan, the distinction between adult manga and children's manga no longer makes sense, but as societal common sense this distinction was still alive in the 1970s when serious story manga had already become the norm in magazines for boys and young men. And this was not really strange given the fact that at the time European and American comics served as the model. Kusamori's ideal cartoonists such as Steinberg and James Thurber, who published their works in first rate literary magazines like *The New Yorker*, were highly acclaimed artists in the U.S., while comic books were seen as mere children's reading material. As long as Japanese

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12 Tezuka Osamu, the pioneer of post-war manga, stated this clearly in *COM*, the magazine from his own Mushi Production publishing company (Tezuka 1967).

critics followed this foreign standard without actually trying out the respective works, their schematic notion of "cartoons are for adults, narrative comics for children" is understandable.

Of course, from a contemporary perspective, the difference between cartoons and narrative comics is in expressive form, not content, but back then it was obviously difficult to assume the very existence of serious story manga. In fact, what Ishiko and his contemporaries had to say in this regard is rather muddled and hard to understand.

The unconscious strategy taken by critics around 1980—those who belonged to the third phase of manga discourse according to Takeuchi—upset this scheme, but without crealy distinguishing between expressive form and content. They omitted cartoons, at the time known as comics for adults, from the concept of manga, and tried to reconstruct "manga" as an extension of children's comics only. Symbolic in this regard is the five-volume anthology edited by Murakami Tomohiko and Takeuchi Osamu, *Manga hihyō taikei* [The manga criticism ompendium] (1989), which summarized the manga discourse until then. The majority of articles included are about story manga by and after Tezuka as well as their predecessors in prewar children's manga, which shows quite clearly the editors' and their generation's new notion of manga.

Thus, the word manga came to mean something completely different for Ishiko and Kusamori who saw manga as something that came from cartoons, and for the critics of the 1980s who held the assumption that only story manga published after Tezuka were real "manga". Actually, the biggest change in manga discourse around 1980 was the elimination of cartoons as manga for adults. But the use of the same word "manga" led to a lack of awareness about this discrepancy.

In Takeuchi's above-mentioned dicussion, the first phase of manga discourse is summarized as a (mainly critical) approach to children's manga by educators and authors of children's literature; however, the introduction of foreign comics by cartoonist Suyama Keiichi, whom Ishiko and Kusamori had directly in mind, as well as by Itō Ippei, the editor of the cartoon magazine *VAN*, seems to have never existed. This was already a distortion of the history of manga discourse, and precisely this distortion might have supported the present attitude of regarding foreign comics as irrelevant,

63

although at present it is still too early for such an assessment. The only thing we can say for sure is that we should not take our current views and understandings of manga as self-evident. We do still lack an understanding not only of different cultures, that is, foreign comics, but also our very own past notions of manga. This is precisely the issue.

64

Odagiri Hiroshi

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Manga/comics studies from the perspective of science fiction research:
genre, transmedia, and transnationalism

Shige (CJ) SUZUKI

Introduction

This essay was written based on my presentation at the conference "Comics Worlds and the World of Comics: Scholarship on a Global Scale" held in Kyoto, Japan, in 2009.[1] Its primary objective is to "raise questions" about methodological issues and approaches to manga studies "within Japan". One of the conference's main themes was to internationalize manga/comics studies by inviting Japanese and foreign scholars to undertake the centralized question: "whether it is possible to discuss comics beyond the scope of local comics cultures".[2] Bearing these fundamental thematics in mind, this essay first illustrates and compares the recent development of mainstream English-language comics studies and Japanese-language manga critical discourses. In doing so, I point out the achievements and problems in formalist and semiotic/structuralist approaches that distinctively emerged in the comics studies scene of the 1990s. Then, utilizing ideas taken from science fiction (SF) studies—another field of popular culture studies—and genre theory, my essay will put forward a critical methodology that would complement the limitations of formalism in light of the transnational circulation

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of comics/manga as well as the international scholarship that we are engaged in.

1. Beyond formalism

In the last two decades, the study of comics (or comics studies) has gradually formed and been established as an "academic discipline" in North American academia. And yet, it still remains in a "nascent" stage compared to other established disciplines due to confusion and contradictions regarding critical vocabulary, concepts, diction, and methodology employed by different researchers and theorists (Fischer and Hatfield 2009). As in Japan, before the study of comics became the subject of serious academic inquiry, numerous critical engagements of it were done mainly by non-academic critics and artists. In the history of English-language comics criticism, comic artists Will Eisner and Scott McCloud are pioneers. They have cultivated the field of comics studies. Above all, McCloud's *Understanding Comics* (1993) was quite successful in stimulating a renewed interest in the comics medium, which consequently attracted more scholars and researchers from different disciplines to the scholarship of comics. In fact, in 1995, two years after the publication of McCloud's book, scholars and researchers in the U.S. initiated an annual conference called the International Comics Art Forum (ICAF). Another group, led by international comics scholar John Lent, started publishing a scholarly print journal *The International Journal of Comic Art* (IJCA) from 1999. Since then, North American and European researchers have also been active in online journals such as *ImageTexT and Image [&] Narrative.* One of the fruits of recent comics scholarship was *A Comics Studies Reader* published in 2009, which anthologizes several important scholarly articles on comics. In 2009, a discussion group called the "Comics and Graphic Narrative" was founded under the established literature and language organization, the Modern Language Association (MLA), and the members of this discussion group are currently planning their first panels for the 2011 MLA annual conference.

Accordingly, comic books have been introduced and used as school "textbooks" in grade school and university classrooms. In these educational institutions, along with traditional American comics, several graphic novels such as *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, *Persepolis*, *Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth*, *American Born Chinese*, and

68

Shige (CJ) Suzuki

Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic have become popular and "canonized" textbooks used by educators (Heer and Worcester 2009: xi). These comics have been used in a range of courses, including literature, American studies, ethnic studies, art, journalism, film, and composition, suggesting that comics have sparked interest from diverse disciplinary perspectives.

　　Within Japan, paralleling the development of comics studies in North America, critical and intellectual studies on Japanese manga have also taken root.[3] Above all, the critical discourses on manga in the 1990s spearheaded the promotion of the importance of manga studies to the general public. Scholars and critics such as Yomota Inuhiko, Natsume Fusanosuke, and Takeuchi Osamu cultivated an approach called *hyōgenron* [theory on expression].[4] As Yomota remarks in his book *Manga genron* (1994), their approaches were, by and large, aimed at "examin[ing] the internal logic of what makes manga 'manga'" by analyzing the "system of expression that is unique to manga" (Yomota 1994: 15-17). Nearly simultaneously, Natsume and Takeuchi also published a series of books on manga, focusing on formal function, internal structure, and the meaning of discrete elements in the manga medium. Natsume's hyōgenron was motivated by his discontent with the previously dominant approach that, he claimed, tended to only discuss narrative themes or often treated manga merely as a reflection of the society or age out of which the comics emerge (Natsume 1992: 13-16, Natsume and Takekuma 1995). The hyōgenron approach was seminal as it enriched manga discourses by creatively providing a new set of vocabulary to discuss manga. It also claimed autonomy for the manga medium, differentiating it from textual and visual media. Some hyōgenron critics incorporated semiotic and structural approaches into the field of manga criticism.[5] Manga critic Itō Go's book *Tezuka Is Dead* (2005)

3 For a brief history of Japanese manga criticism and different approaches among Japanese language scholarship, see Natsume and Takeuchi (2009); in English see Berndt (2008).

4　As acknowledged by some scholars, criticism on manga style (*hyōgen*) such as work by Ishiko Junzō or other cultural critics existed prior to the emergence in the 1990s of manga hyōgenron. Manga hyōgenron, however, was unique and seminal enough to have a long-lasting impact on recent manga studies.

5 See, for instance, Natsume (1992) and *Manga no yomikata* (1995). Yomota (1994) is another example of a semiotic approach to the manga medium. However, it should be noted that manga hyōgenron is not limited to a narrow sense of formalism. Some hyōgenron theorists are interested in other aspects of the comics medium such as the materiality of comic production and ergonomics (i.e. what kind of writing pens and papers are used to draw manga and how they

was intended to continue and refine the hyōgenron approach while criticizing the fetishization of Tezuka by some manga critics.

The hyōgenron approach to Japanese manga studies is similar to a formalist or semiotic approach in North American or English-language comic studies.[6] Formalism is, as a rule, considered one of the critical methodologies–originating in literary, music, and art criticism–to analyze internal characteristics of formal features such as rhyme, metaphor, grammar, structure, rhetoric, and trope in literary formalism. In the field of literary criticism, formalism had a strong connection with the school of New Criticism that emerged in the early 20th century. New Critics disclaimed the romanticized idea of a "genius" that was regarded as the ultimate origin of a work and also left established social and historical approaches out of consideration by claiming the autonomy of a literary "text". The Japanese hyōgenron that became viable in 1990s manga criticism employed a similarly formalist methodology by discounting the primacy of authorship (*sakkasei*) or the cartoonist's philosophy (*shisōsei*) (Natsume 1992: 13-14), just as Scott McCloud, at nearly the same time, published *Understanding Comics*, in which he divorces "form" from "content" in analyzing the comics medium.[7]

Formalist and semiotic/structuralist approaches seem to provide a dialogical space in which international scholars can discuss comics/manga regardless of national or cultural origins because, according to them, the structure of comics can be dissected into smaller composites such as images, words, word balloons, spaces, gutters, and sequentiality, that, in turn, can be analyzed or examined. In fact, taking cues from

function with movements of the human body). In particular, Natsume's recent writings (such as Natsume 2004) show flexible approaches, critical reflection of his previous methodology, and a strong will to create dialogue with other disciplinary inquiries. Similarly, McCloud, whose approach is usually associated with formalism, uses Marshall McLuhan's media theory and Gestalt psychology.

6 In the "Afterword" for the bunko paperback edition (1999) of *Manga genron*, Yomota Inuhiko explicitly remarks that he uses semiotic structuralism, adopting especially its "synchronic" approach (Yomota 1999: 388-389).

7 The rise of the hyōgenron approach in manga criticism in the 1990s seems to coincide with the emergence of formalism in North America. Along with McCloud's book, the increasing interest in comics has perhaps come from a substantial interest in visual and pictorial media in the Western humanities, which W. J. T. Mitchell calls the "pictorial turn". On the other hand, in Japan, the rise of hyōgenron was triggered by the renewed interest in the manga medium immediately after the death of Tezuka Osamu in 1989, who is now mythologized as the "God of Manga".

formalists coming from different national contexts such as McCloud and Natsume, comics scholar Neil Cohen discusses the dominant style of postwar Japanese manga, which he calls "Japanese Visual Language (JVL)" (Cohen 2010: 187-191), by using statistics and comparing it with typical American comics.[8]

However, it would be reductive to ascribe a certain function or meaning to form in and of itself. Because comics/manga is a socio-cultural object, it is always exposed to a multiplicity of readings.[9] Readers are integral agents who play major roles in the production of meaning and the function of a text. As such, readers (as well as cartoonists) historically stand in differently situated social, cultural, and ideological positions. This also means that semantic and functional elements are dependent on the external circumstances outside of the comics/manga form. To illustrate this problematic nature of formalism, let me elaborate using McCloud's so-called "identification theory" as an example. In his *Understanding Comics*, he proposes that the "iconic" (or cartoony) and abstract depiction of face or character encourages the identification of the reader with that character in contrast to the realistic depiction of background. To make this point, he uses the example of Japanese manga style by claiming it is a Japanese "national style" (McCloud 1994: 43). McCloud goes so far as to say that, with this simple, abstract style, we, the readers of comics/manga, "don't just observe the cartoon; we become it!" (McCloud 1994: 36). His identification theory seems appealing and might be "intuitively understandable" to those who are familiar with the typical postwar manga style. However, it should be noted here that this theory needs careful examination before it is applied universally to readings of comics/manga. In "Identification in Comics", which critically examines McCloud's identification theory, Ethan Frome discreetly re-considers the nuanced meaning of identification by stating

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8 It seems problematic to me to assume that the "stereotypical big eyes, big hair, small mouth, and pointed chins of characters in manga" (Cohen 2010: 188) are something particular to "Japanese" manga style (JVL), because the dominance of such a style is the product of cultural hybridity in Japan's modern and postwar period. It is not difficult to point out the characteristic similarities between Tezuka's typical characters and those of Disney. Also, as Cohen acknowledged later, manga style "changes over time" (2010: 189), which suggests the historical contingency of certain formal features and functions.

9 This never means that a reader can read/create a "text" at his or her discretion. A reader (or a writer) is always and already situated and restricted by convention, codes, and ideology though which he or she creates a text. In other words, a reader (as well as a writer) is not the ultimate, transcendental "origin" of comics.

that "[i]dentification is not about losing yourself to a character, but about expanding your identity to include the character", and it is "best understood as the conscious or unconscious decision to care about a character's welfare as if it were your [our] own" (Frome 1999: 86). If such is the case, identification is not merely a function of form but also a mixed effect of forms and other non-formal aspects of comics/manga (i.e. plot, themes, and narratives, etc.) as well as external cultural values, conventions, and socio-historical and ideological matrices.

In addition, according to Noda Kensuke, Japanese translator of Thierry Groensteen's *The System of Comics*, the major formalists who appeared on the scene of comics/manga criticism in the 1990s had their respective and normative "artists" in mind when constructing their theories.[10] As examples, Noda named the mainstream artists in each national context: Tezuka for Japan, Hergé for France, Kirby and Eisner for America. In this respect, the 1990s formalist comics discourses were not so much descriptive as they were prescriptive and, perhaps, even normative. In the case of Japanese manga criticism, the hyōgenron theorists favored the works of Tezuka or other mainstream postwar *mangaka* (cartoonists). In that process, they tended to celebrate the "craftsmanship" (or "mastery") of what is expressed (*hyōgen*) in the manga medium as proof of the unique talents of cartoonists. Paradoxically, hyōgenron evoked again a romanticized idea of "artists" while being engaged with a formalist take on the medium. In view of this, Jaqueline Berndt is right in stating that "manga hyōgenron unwittingly inherited the modern notion of art with its claim of autonomy despite the pursuit of analyses of form that is unique to the manga medium" (Berndt 2010: 19-20).

What is more, the formalist approach tends to downplay the interest in comics as a site for cultural negotiation. Such an attitude might also diminish questions concerning the implications of media, ideology, and social power. In this regard, it is no coincidence that media studies scholar Uryū Yoshimitsu, when criticizing the hyōgenron approach, cites the critical works of Ishiko Junzō, who was active in

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10 Noda Kensuke: "Nichi futsu bei manga riron no hikaku kanōsei ni tsuite [How to Compare Japanese, French and American Comics Theory]", paper given at the First International Conference: Comics Worlds and the World of Comics: Scholarship on a Global Scale, Kyoto, Japan (December 18-20, 2009). English translation of abstract: http://www.kyotomm.jp/english/andmore/isc01_e_detail.php#01work (last access: 2010/07/10).

manga criticism before the 1990s rise of hyōgenron (Uryū 2000: 131-132). Informed by leftist thinking, Ishiko's manga criticism paid attention to both form and medium as social objects. Ishiko's concern with manga was located in the "inseparable relationship of the function or characteristics of the medium itself" (Ishiko 1994: 9). He underscored the analyses of form and content *in relation* to different forms of media such as newspapers, journals, and books, and physical locations such as rental bookshops (*kashihon-ya*).[11] To use Uryū's own words, Ishiko's approach was intended "to foreground 'the way of communication by the medium of manga' by examining the 'site' of drawing/reading manga" (Uryū 2000: 131). Concerns regarding the "sites" that Ishiko repeatedly highlighted in his writing and the question of what kind of cultural and political negotiations are conducted through the manga medium should be (re-)considered if the "tendencies of an apolitical approach to manga still prevail in Japanese manga criticism" (Berndt 2008: 305).

Be that as it may, in all fairness to hyōgenron or formalists that appeared in 1990s comics studies, their approaches might have been instances of procedural tactics meant to legitimize manga/comics as a "unique medium" different from other visual or textual media, an object of serious and/or academic inquiry, or even part of "art". In addition to this, a specific methodological inquiry is feasible by intentionally disregarding other possible approaches. The 1990s formalists deliberately withdrew their attention from considering historical or diachronic perspectives. In this regard, they followed the same methodological procedure as Thierry Groensteen did in his *The System of Comics* for a "new semiology of comics" (Groensteen 2007: 1-2).[12]

2. From the perspective of SF studies

To consider further the methodological questions regarding manga studies, I would like to utilize SF genre theory and Japanese postwar SF as examples to illustrate what is left unconsidered. Historically, the development of Japanese SF was closely related to the socio-historical condition as well as to the postwar development of manga.

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11 For a response response to Uryū's criticism, see Natsume (2003 and 2004).
12 In the introduction of his book, Groensteen declares that "comics will be considered here as a language, that is to say, not as a historical, sociological, or economic phenomena, which it is also, but as an original ensemble of productive mechanisms of meaning" (Groensteen 2007: 2).

Shige (CJ) Suzuki

The following often-quoted passage in the Japanese SF field figuratively depicts the historical development of postwar Japanese SF, comparing it to space exploration and the building of civilization.

> The planet SF was found in the Tezuka Osamu galaxy in the manga nebula. Captain Hoshi Shin'ichi on a spaceship investigated it first. Then supervisors such as Yano Tetsu and Shibano Takumi trained and sent new colonial settlers to it; then, pilot, Mitsuse Ryū, landed on the planet; engineer, Fukushima Masami, created the blueprints by conducting a location survey of the geography; bulldozer Komatsu Sakyō cleared the ground; Mayuzumi Taku trains carried the materials, and a Ishikawa Takashi newspaper was issued; liquor store Hanmura Ryō was opened; and Tsutsui Yasutaka started driving around a sports car … (Komatsu 2002: 98-99)

While enumerating the names of the major Japanese SF writers who established SF as a distinctive genre in postwar Japanese popular culture, this passage also illustrates the importance of Tezuka Osamu and his influence through the manga media on later SF writers. It is well known that cartoonists such as Tezuka Osamu and SF writers interacted through their editors, writers' clubs, and SF conventions. Moreover, one of the postwar SF giants, Komatsu Sakyō, used to create manga sometimes under the pseudonym "Komatsu Minoru" when he was a college student at Kyoto University (Komatsu 2002). Also, Tsutsui Yasutaka, one of the "three influential giants" (*gosanke*) of Japanese SF, contributed his manga to the postwar boys' magazine *Manga Shōnen* (Tsuitsui 2004). These writers, who laid the foundation for postwar Japanese SF, were the avid readers of prewar and wartime manga and "imaginary scientific novels" (*kūsōkagaku shōsetsu*) through which they nurtured their SF imagination as children. In *Sengo SF mangashi* (The History of Postwar SF Manga), manga critic Yonezawa Yoshihiro, who is also known as a co-founder of *Comiket*, remarks that "Tezuka Osamu and SF manga made up for the 15-year blank period from the prewar SF adventure stories by Oshikawa Shunrō and Un'no Jūza to the emergence ofJapanese [postwar] SF writers" (Yonezawa 2008: 14). If Yonezawa is right, SF imagination survived through

different media—books, magazines, journals, *kashihon* (rental manga), *kamishibai* (paper theater), SF *e-monogatari* (SF picture stories), and manga books—until it created its own genre in the postwar period.[13] The historical development of Japanese SF and its transmediality suggest the significance of studying multiple forms of conterminous media.

The development of postwar Japanese SF was also deeply linked with the socio-historical condition of Japan during the Occupation Period. There were economic, historical, and political reasons behind the instant rise of the SF genre in manga after the defeat of Japan. First, cost-efficient media such as *kamishibai* and *kashihon* were used for major mass-produced forms of entertainment in this time of material shortage. Second, during the occupation of Japan, the GHQ-directed censorship prohibiting period pieces (*jidaimono*) and any cultural production featuring Japanese martial arts such as *kendō* and *judō* because they were thought to emphasize "feudalistic values" (ergo, Japanese militarism) while encouraging democratic ideals. Yonezawa also remarks that "it was perhaps only the SF genre that was able to narrate adventure stories [appealing to children] while espousing world peace and democracy" (Yonezawa 2008: 54). In other words, these economic and political *restrictions* enabled *certain expression* (hyōgen). As a result, SF has become a distinctively conspicuous genre along with fantasy in postwar Japanese popular culture.[14]

Generally, SF is considered and categorized "genre fiction" along with fantasy, horror, and detective fiction. Although genre is a categorizing concept usually based on a particular style, form, or content of works, its definition is always exposed to a taxonomical conundrum as with the case of defining comics. To put it simply, there is no consensus regarding the definition of "manga" or pure "literary genre" because definitions are often overlapping and there always exist heterogeneous exceptions against any definitive statement to define a genre. Against this general concept, American SF writer and critic Samuel R. Delany proposes another way of

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13 I should add that the immense introduction and consumption of American and European SF played a major role in laying the foundation for the later development of Japanese SF.

14 Frederik L. Schodt remarks that "they [postwar Japanese manga artists] had to work in totally new genres with different story lines to avoid American censorship. It is no coincidence that in the immediate postwar years, science-fiction manga, Tarzan tales, and American Westerns were particularly popular" (Schodt 2007: 32).

conceptualizing genre. He claims that genre is a "protocol" (Delany 1980: 176), a way of reading that guides a reader's consumption of a text.[15] For instance, in reading poetry, an experienced reader pays more attention to rhythms and rhymes; in reading drama, the reader does the same to the tension and conflicts among characters; and in reading SF, the reader is more conscious of how a fictional world is different from our world. Like this, genres offer readers' different ways of reading. To put it differently, each fictional genre directs and commands its own way of reading, and the reader, who is aware of the implicit reading convention of the genre, participates in the production of meaning and text. To use Delany's example, the sentence, "her world exploded", can be interpreted as figurative to a reader of realist novels, but it might carry a literal meaning to a SF reader—that is, a woman possesses a world by some means and her world literally explodes. In short, genre for Delany is not merely defined by contents and themes, but contains a performative function that guides and regulates how it is read. In addition, according to literary critic Nancy Ellen Batty, Delany recurrently argues that genre is also an "interactive community of writers, readers, editors, illustrators, and collectors" (Batty 2003: 19), because genre as a reading protocol is shared and maintained by readers as well as challenged and reconfigured by writers and others.

Delany's conceptualization of genre can be applied to manga/comics in terms of the way in which the reading protocols, historically established by manga/comics, are shared, maintained, and negotiated by an interactive community of participants. It should be noted here that genre here means a whole complex set of codes, structures, and expectations that participants in comics/manga culture utilize in their interactions with the comics/manga medium. In contrast, "genres in manga/comics" such as science fiction, fantasy, horror, sports, superhero, etc. constitute another subset of protocols which are respectively autonomous, but often overlapping structures with each other. While the genres in manga/comics are relatively recognizable and so marketed,

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15 Samuel R. Delany has, among other things, a strong interest in comics. In his detailed essay "The Politics of Paraliterature" (1999), he celebrates and criticizes Scott McCloud's project on comics. For Delany, comics are, along with genre fiction, fantasy, mystery, pulp fiction, and pornography, "paraliterature", which is marginalized and even ostracized from the legitimized status of "Literature" with a capital L. He politicizes paraliterature as a moment to destabilize the established view on Literature.

Delany's conception of genre reminds us of the existence of the naturalized, therefore, often invisible "filters" through which we read manga/comics.

In other words, to "be able to read manga" or to "understand manga" indicates that the reader has already learned the reading protocol of manga that has been historically constructed, accumulated, and shared. This also suggests that manga, as a socially shared medium, continuously produces and updates the reading subject who has a high literacy of reading manga; and as a shared reality, manga as a social medium also constitutes a reading community. The previously quoted statement—to be "intuitively understandable"—is a response from the reader who isfamiliar enough with and naturalized to the convention of reading manga. If such "transparency" of meaning is only guaranteed by a convention, it is neither natural nor self-evident for *other* communities that do not share that convention. Historically, such communities are often demarcated not only by nations and culture but also by gender, ethnicity, class, generation, and "tastes". No matter how clear a typical manga expression seems to well-trained readers of Japanese manga, it can be very opaque and uncertain to the reader who has no shared reading protocol of Japanese manga.[16]

3. In the transnational circulation of manga

It is more important to consider the above-mentioned point in light of the current globalization of manga/comics. As frequently mentioned, Japanese popular culture— representatively, anime, manga, and J-pop—has gained international popularity in recent decades. Within Japan, the global popularity of Japanese popular culture is also widely known and, at times, disseminated through mass media and often discussed by critics in regards to its "soft power" (Nye 2004: ix-xiii) and/or its connection to issues of cultural particularities (or the concept of "Japaneseness").[17] Yet, outside

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16 It can be unclear for those who don't share the reading protocol of postwar manga, for instance, to read a manga character who closes his eyes and has a bubble coming from his nose as "sleeping" and to understand a depiction of a man whose nose is bleeding as "sexually excited".

17 Jaqueline Berndt also points out this tendency among Japanese academics in her essay, *Gurōbaruka suru manga* (2010), in reference to recent Japanese-language scholarship. Some English-language scholarship, such as Iwabuchi Koichi's *Recentering Globalization*, follows the same pattern by articulating Japaneseness in the transnational circulation of Japanese popular culture.

of Japan, particularly in the United States, Japanese popular culture still occupies a marginal, subcultural space compared to mainstream American culture. As an industry, it therefore remains a niche market. In addition, it should be noted that the patterns of global reception and consumption of Japanese popular culture are never monolithic and homogeneous. Even within a subcultural community of Japanese popular culture overseas, there is a complex heterogeneity in audience, generation, and communities. In the U.S. context, Japanese popular culture tends to appeal more to youth, and it seems important for them to embrace *subcultural differences* from the mainstream or dominant popular culture, which Japanese popular culture provides in its forms, styles, narratives, and value systems through a popular medium. This subcultural location of the globalized Japanese popular culture also offers an alternative space, often for the alienated youth, to avoid and disavow or resist a normative and mainstream culture.[18]

Additionally, in the global context, Japanese manga, generally considered within Japan a medium that comes in a wide variety of genres and styles, frequently behaves like a distinctive "genre"—often written as "MANGA" in English-speaking countries—as part of a larger category of comics. The same condition can be observed in the case of Japanese anime, a contiguous medium of manga. In the United States, the word "ANIME" is often juxtaposed with other generic names such as science fiction, drama, and horror at rental video/DVD stores. In her *God of Comics: Osamu Tezuka and the Creation of Post-World War II Manga,* Onoda Natsu Power points out that manga is regarded as "certain genres of Japanese comics that the U.S. publishers have chosen to translate and publish, characterized by particular pictorial styles and character design" (Power 2009: 6) and in the U.S. context it functions as "a new genre of story comics" (Power 2009: 11). If such is the case, manga in this global context performs like a genre which, as Delany says, constitutes a number of readers who share a new set of reading protocols of manga and, in doing so, they form a community through the manga medium.

Considering manga's increasingly transnational position, what kind of approach can be beneficial and constructive for international scholarly conversation? Although

18 See Napier (2007), particularly the section "A Composite Fan Portrait", where she introduces a female American anime fan who found a psychological "escape outlet" (Napier 2007: 145) in Japanese anime that enabled her to escape familial trouble that might have lead her to suicide.

there may be many ways to answer this question, I would like to briefly introduce an approach that comes out of recent comics studies. It is an essay entitled "The Arrow and the Grid", written by comics scholar Joseph Witek for the above-mentioned *A Comics Studies Reader*. In this essay, he demonstrates what Pascal Lefèvre calls "historicized formalism".[19] In contrast to a typical formalist analysis that often looks for the "irreductive essence of 'comicsness'" (Witek 2009: 149), Joseph Witek historicizes the naturalizing process of how comics are read and examines the patterns of narrative construction and sequentiality in early 20th-century American comic strips. He pays attention to the numbering of panels and the directional arrows that supposedly guide the reader's navigation of the comics strips. According to Witek, the numbering of panels and the directional arrows—which seem unnecessary to contemporary readers— suggest the "fossilized holdovers" (Witek 2009: 150) of the past in which the reading protocols of comics were, in fact, unfamiliar and sometimes confusing to the readers. By revealing both the historical process of normalizing the formal functions and the reading protocol to the readers, Witek states that the formal features in earlier comic strips indicate the "traces of the process by which the Western comics reader has been constructed" and these formal devices reveal "the path still trod by readers and creators alike" (Witek 2009: 155). Witek's essay points to the historical contingency of formal features and functions. In other words, the reading protocols of the comics (and, of course, manga) medium have been constantly changed, revised, and adjusted through a series of dialogues between readers and creators while implicitly educating and constituting the readers who have advanced the literacy of reading comics/manga.

This methodology also carries with it the potential to suggest that formalism and an historical approach are not so much mutually exclusive as they are complementary to each other. While providing an account of an analytic description of formal elements and internal structure, it also pays a lot of attention to the socio-cultural condition from

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19 I learned about this methodology in the email exchanges with Joseph Witek and Pascal Lefèvre. In his email to me, Pascal Lefèvre mentions that he used it his essay "The Conquest of Space: Evolution of Panel Arrangements and Page Lay Outs in Early Comics" anthologized in *European Comic Art*. Lefèvre also suggested that he took a cue for this approach from film scholar David Bordwell's analysis of cinema. (Witek, Joseph, 25/01/2010: "Re: Your MLA Presentation". Email to the author; and Pascal Lefèvre,13/04/2010: "Re: Kyoto manga conference [last Dec]". Email to the author.)

which comics are produced and consumed. As long as comics exist as socio-cultural and historical objects, it is impossible to separate an analysis of formal function from its context. It is necessary to (re-)consider the history of comics in relation to society, culture, institutions, industry, and a variety of media without narrowly limiting our approaches to the intrinsic structure of the comics medium.

4. Conclusion: cultural politics of comics/manga

Given that comics/manga are not merely a commodity to be consumed or enjoyed as entertainment but also a medium, hence, a form of communication, they are also a social, historical, and cultural object. Without doubt, formalism or semiotic/structuralist approaches that claimed the "autonomy of comics" cultivated the field of comics studies by enriching the critical vocabulary used to discuss this medium and perhaps contributed largely to comics studies establishing itself as an academic discipline. However, it is also true that these approaches tended to avoid examining the problematic nexus of culture and power. Comics exist not only for academic inquiry but also for the people who experience them as part of their everyday life. Their interactions with comics/manga are deeply related to culture, history, ideology, and social power. From his neo-Gramscian perspective, cultural studies scholar Graeme Turner states one of the objectives of studying popular culture:

> Popular culture is a site where the construction of everyday life may be examined. The point of doing this is not only academic—that is, as an attempt to understand a process or practice—it is also political, to examine the power relations that constitute this form of everyday life and thus reveal the configurations of interests its construction serves. (Turner 2002: 5)

This perspective of cultural politics is to be remembered and/or (re-)incorporated in the critical discourses of comics/manga studies, particularly at the moment of conducting and promoting an international conversation about this media in the current transnational condition, in which comics/manga constantly create and recreate different readers and constitute communities. It is beneficial for manga/comics studies to undo

and re-situate the "autonomy" of comics in the multiple interlocked relationships of readership, history, economy, and ideology in order to re-theorize it as a "site" for competition, mediation, and negotiation of social, cultural, economic, and political powers. To critically examine the implications of the cultural politics of the comics/manga medium is part of our task as scholars with social responsibility in the field of comics studies.

Shige (CJ) Suzuki

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84

6

Researching comics on a global scale

Pascal LEFÈVRE

Historically and geographically, the comics medium seems to exhibit an enormous variety in production, distribution, consumption, and formal and thematic characteristics. Unlike cinema, with its international co-productions and its outsourcing practices, production of comics is still dominantly a local enterprise.[1] Though countries such as Japan, the U.S., France and Belgium cultivate a proper national production, their output is in itself quite diverse and heterogeneous. For instance, in the U.S., publishers, critics and readers alike generally make a distinction between *comic strips* (or *funnies*) published in newspapers, the serial volumes of comic books (nowadays associated with superheroes), the one shots, called *graphic novels*, and translated manga. Moreover each category has known a considerable development in time; for instance, the popularity of particular genres can be quite volatile. In 1950, a quarter of the comic books published were romance comics (Goulart 1991: 172, Robbins 1999: 54), yet today they are almost extinct. So each publication format (Lefèvre 2000) should not only be considered in its local situation, but also in its historical context. Furthermore a comics author usually works on only one type of comic[2] and a publisher

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1 Exceptional examples of transnational productions are the comic book *Silver Surfer* (1988) written by the American Stan Lee and drawn by the French Moebius, and *Ikaru* (2000) written by Moebius and drawn by the Japanese artist Taniguchi Jirō. Arguably the only really important transnational creation enterprise in the comics field is Disney with various local European editions, in which artists from the Netherlands, Italy, Germany and France are producing Disney-like comics or comics with famous Disney characters adapted to their national cultures.

2 The term "comic(s)" is used in this text as a general term involving drawn sequences from every nation, including thus not only English comic strips, comic books and graphic novels but also *bande dessinée*, *manga*, *fumetti*, *historietta*, *Bilderbogen*, *tebeos*, *beeldverhalen*, *manwha*, etc.

often specializes in one particular publication format. For example, some writers such as Stan Lee have always worked for the comic book industry, and press syndicates such as King Features are specialized in comic strips, just as alternative publishers like Fantagraphics are in graphic novels. This division among comics at the production phase is also reflected in the later phase of reception. Different publication types of comics have always occupied a different cultural space and served a different audience (Duncan and Smith 2009: 6-7). It is uncommon for readers to like buying or reading comics of various types; rather, they generally stick to a certain type (Smeets 2009: 75). Likewise, most critics and comics scholars are similarly divided according to particular types of comics, because only an extremely small proportion of secondary literature on comics deals with the comics medium in general or compares various types or national traditions. Even so-called comics specialists are knowledgeable in only a fragment of the total production.[3]

To form a better balanced view of the comics medium we certainly need more comparative research, but there are several obstacles. Since everybody is raised within a particular culture and language that he or she knows well, it takes a lot of effort to learn about other cultures and understand their language. There are on the whole not enough translations available to have a representative idea of another national production. For instance, almost no manga from the prewar period have been translated into other languages. Thus, except for the especially interested Europeans and Americans who can read Japanese, those prewar manga remain largely unknown outside Japan—though they are shortly mentioned in non-Japanese introductions to

3 This became very clear in the international survey among comics specialists to make a list of the 100 most important comics and comics authors of the XXth Century, organized by the Portuguese Amadora comics festival in 2004. Among the 100 elected comics of the 20th Century were 50 from the United States of America, 19 from France, 10 from Belgium, 6 from Great Britain, 5 from Argentina, 4 from Italy, 3 from Spain and only 3 from Japan. Given the fact that Japan has been the biggest producer of comics for the last decades, this is a remarkably low number. This result can be partly explained by the way the survey was compiled. By and large, the panel was dominated by representatives of two large comics cultures, North America (18) and France (19); then came Italy (7), Brazil (6), Spain (5), Belgium (4), Great Britain (4), Argentina (2), Norway (2) and only one representative each from Canada, Germany, Hungaria, Switzerland, Finland, Japan, Sweden, India and Singapore. So, among the participants there were only three Asians of whom just one was Japanese. Therefore, it was clear that manga did not rank high among the European and North American comics specialists who took part in the survey (Lefèvre 2006).

manga (a.o. Schodt 1983, Groensteen 1991, Gravett 2004, Koyama-Richard 2007). However, even if every comic was translated into other languages, the totality of published comics would simply be too large to be read and studied by one individual. A solution therefore is more international collaboration between researchers from various countries. For instance, for an entry of 3000 words on the broad issue 'European comics' for an American comics encyclopedia, I not only based my text on primary and secondary sources in six different European languages, but I also sent my first draft to various colleagues from different European countries (Lefèvre 2010). Thanks to the remarks and suggestions of those comics specialists from France, Portugal, Italy, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Poland and Slovenia, the text gained in quality and became better balanced. Though the basic concept and structure remained mine, it became a text that was impossible for solely one person to deliver. While it is impossible for one person have a perfect view on all these different national comics productions in Europe, a group of collaborating researchers can thus clearly surmount this problem—that is if they are open to such collaborations, which is certainly not always the case. Really international interactions and exchanges between scholars are still quite rare. There are, of course, plenty of international compilations of articles, but generally they don't involve any intense collaboration or interaction. International comparisons can also make the position of one's own national production clearer, because not only will variations or contrasts become visible, but similarities among various national productions will also surface. Finally, thanks to such comparisons, a better balanced idea of the comics medium will be obtained.

For a start, this article proposes a model that can serve in comparative comics research. It is crucial to understand that a medium such as comics involves not only aesthetic or thematic aspects but also economic and social ones; hence comics should be studied from three complementary angles. Firstly, on an institutional level, one can look at how comics are produced and consumed. Secondly, comics themselves can be compared on a formal level, by focusing on their formal properties. And finally, the contents can be analyzed by looking for similarities among genres, themes and characters, etc.

Firstly on an institutional level we can find many similarities in the way comics

are produced and consumed in various countries. For instance, all around the globe the creative work on a comic is generally done by a very limited number of people. Contrary to other media such as film or theatre, a small team (or even one individual artist) can suffice to produce the work in making a comic. Though in essence comics involve only a small scale creative enterprise, the authors themselves do not operate in a vacuum. To a certain extent they typically take into account the wishes of their public and their employer, the publisher. The system of editors controlling the line of a particular comics series is for instance well established in the American comic book industry (Rogers 2006: 511) and the Japanese manga industry (Kinsella 2000: 55-61). Except in the case of one shots, a comics artist is generally limited by the publication format in which his comics are published (Lefèvre 2000). A publication format poses not only formal and thematic constraints, it also implies a particular cultural space, but one does not have to consider this influence as purely deterministic because within certain limits enormous variations are still possible. Making a funny newspaper comics strip, a superheroes comic book series, or an autobiographic one shot implies by and large different products aimed at quite different types of readers.

Also on the level of distribution of comics one can see not only many similarities but also some important differences. Before the popularization of the internet in the late 1990s, some larger organization was needed to publish and distribute comics nationwide—and even more on an international scale. In the pre-internet era the two main ways of publishing comics were on the one hand, integrating them as part of a general daily or periodical (sold in press shops and drug stores or mailed directly through a subscription) and on the other hand, producing comics as autonomous commodities (e.g. trade paperbacks, albums, tankōbon) which were mainly sold both in general book shops or in specialized retailers. The first type is quite similar in various countries; one will find, for instance, the same type of short gag strips (of a few panels) in newspapers around the globe. By contrast, the second big publication type, the book edition, varies strongly in its material shape and its visual appearance. For instance, in the French region the dominant format is of forty-eight full color pages with a hard cover. But in Japan, tankōbon, a softcover pocket format of about 200 pages (mostly in black and white) is the dominant type of comic book publication. Yet regardless

of these important production differences, most comics from various nations share a fundamental characteristic, namely the importance of series. Unlike the field of novels or movies, the idea of a comic as work of its own is remotely inferior to the idea of comics as a serial product. In some countries such as the U.S. or France one shots may be growing in numbers these last decades, but they still remain only a very small part of the complete production (*The Comics Chronicles* 2010, Ratier 2009).

In fact there is also a third type of comics distribution, and that is the specialized comics magazine, which consists mainly of various serialized comics. These magazines are sold in press stands or mailed directly through subscription. In the middle of the twentieth century they were the most common way of publishing comics. In the U.S. they were comic books, while in Europe and Japan they were the various specialized comics magazines (in Europe famous titles were *Tintin*, *Spirou*, and *Pilote*; in Japan *Weekly Shōnen Sunday* and *Weekly Shōnen Jump*). Today the situation is quite different. While in Europe only very few comics magazines are still being published and in the U.S. comic books became a niche product (Rogers 1997), in Japan magazines are still going on quite strongly. So with the exception of some countries like Japan, in most comics-producing countries the market has shifted or is shifting from periodicals to book publications.

In addition to the way comics are being produced and distributed, comics research should also look at the role comics play in a society. In less democratic or developing countries comics may be used more as an educational or propaganda tool (Douglas and Malti-Douglas 1994, Lent 2006), but in more developed countries, comics account for more than 95% of the entertainment business; however this does not necessarily exclude propagandistic or educational effects. Although in a few countries such as Belgium and France the government is subsidizing the so-called artistic part of the creation, and countries such as South Korea and Japan are actively promoting the international distribution of their comics, publishing comics remains largely a capitalistic enterprise. When the sales of a series are not profitable, a publisher will most likely cancel the publication. In modern times publishing comics alone no longer suffices for an ambitious company; thus the role of merchandising and the adaptation of comics into other media (such as film, animation or game) is of growing

importance to maximize profits. Moreover there are also some very particular practices limited to some countries; for example the system of lending comics in Japan (*kashihon*) and Korea (*manhwabang*) never had an equivalent in Europe or the Americas, except for book cafés becoming trendy in the 1990s.

Linked to the ways comics are distributed, it is also worthwhile to research how comics are consumed. What are the profiles of the readers? What are their motivations? How do they make sense of the comics they read? Though comics production has never been a one-way communication from sender to receiver, the interaction between readers and producers has become more direct and intense in recent decades. Think of fanzines, amateur comics reusing characters, blogs, conventions, cosplay, and communities on the internet.

Though the early comics of the 19th century were destined for an adult readership, comics have mostly been viewed as something for children since the 20th century. It is only in the last decades of the 20th century that more adult oriented material was produced and the medium received more serious artistic recognition. After waves of the foremost comics criticism, the medium became more accepted by the 1970s, and in the 1990s governments began to acknowledge the cultural role of comics, typified by a boom of stamps with comics characters, several campaigns supporting international distribution of national productions, official awards for famous artists, the construction of comics museums (a.o. Brussels, Angoulême, Groningen, Kyoto), and organized courses at universities. This all happened quite simultaneously in the U.S., various European countries and a few East Asian countries (such as South Korea and Japan). Of course there are always variations between different countries, but on the whole one can see some remarkable international parallel evolutions. For example, before the start of television, comics reading was a major leisure activity for children in all the comics-producing countries, but some national comics businesses reacted differently to the growing popularity of television. For instance, Japan saw a strong collaboration between manga and the anime business in the sixties, supporting each other (Kinsella 2000). This was, however, not the case in various other countries. While comics weeklies and monthlies in Europe lost readers in the last decades of the 20th century, in Japan there was still a growth in the sales of manga magazines until

1994 (Kinsella 2000: 40-43). In Europe the album market started to flourish from the 1970s, in the States the so-called graphic novels had started selling by the 1980s, and from the 1990s onward Japanese manga started invading the comics markets of various countries throughout the Americas and Europe, while only very few American or European comics are translated into Japanese.

Summing up this first level of comparison between productions and reading habits of various nations, it has become clear that it is already worthwhile making comparisons on the institutional level, because not only similarities and parallel evolutions can be detected, but also very telling differences or variations between various types of comics or various national productions of comics.

A certain publication format not only occupies a particular cultural space, it is also typified by some formal characteristics concerning the arrangement of panels or page lay-out, the way the scenes are represented, the way texts are combined with visual elements, and the way short gags or longer stories are constructed. Formal analysis is thus the second level of comparative comics studies. Indeed, each publication format contains an aesthetic system with a set of norms that offers a bounded set of alternatives to the individual creator of comics (Lefèvre 2000, Lefèvre and Meesters 2008, Hebert & Lefèvre 2008). Today's publication formats such as the daily strip, the Sunday page, the comic book, the European album or the mangazine use conventions not only regarding the dimensions of the publication or the arrangement of panels, but use also conventions regarding drawings styles or narrative structures. For instance, let us take a closer look into the aesthetic system of the comic strip or *koma manga*. Nowadays the typical comic strip in a newspaper or weekly consists of just a limited number of panels (usually three to four panels), and these panels are arranged in a horizontal direction (U.S. and Europe) or in a vertical direction (Japan). The Japanese use four identical panels of the landscape type, while the panels in American and European gag comics prioritize the portrait or square type. In fact various American, European or Asian creators (a.o. *Peanuts*, *Ferd'nand*, *Sazae-san*) work with identical panels. Sometimes this makes it possible to print the gags in two tiers (of two panels) or as a vertical row of four panels. Some (such as Bill Watterson for *Calvin and Hobbes*, or Alfonse Wong for *Old Master Q*) use the four identical panels quite often but not

Pascal Lefèvre

systematically. On the whole, these days there are two big groups within this category of newspaper strips; the largest group has always been the gag comic, the smaller group consisting of continuing stories. The prototypical core of each type consists of proper stylistic and thematic elements. For instance, gag comics are usually rendered in a uniform and sober but caricatural clear line drawing style, and backgrounds are only minimally represented. Furthermore, most are long-running series based around a limited cast of recurring protagonists. Though originally conceived for publication in a newspaper, the one tier gag comic can be also published in other types of periodicals. For instance, there are Japanese *yon koma manga* (lit. a four panels gag comic) such as *Azumanga Daiō* (Azuma Kiyohiko 1999-2002), which was conceived for the monthly shōnen magazine *Gekkan Komikku Dengeki Daiō*. Almost all contemporary comic strips in newspapers use the concept of the balloon to incorporate dialogues of the characters. Concerning the narrative structure of comics in the case of gag comics, a joke is prepared in the first panels and the punchline is reserved for the final panel. In the case of a continuing story comic, each episode will present a part of a developing story and the last panel of an episode will generally be reserved for some kind of cliffhanger, so that the reader is motivated to look for the next episode (and to buy the daily or weekly again). Such formal analyses could be conducted about other types of comics as well.

On a third level, international comparative comics analysis can also focus on the content, because it can be very fruitful to analyze to what extent similar types of protagonists or antagonists are applied, to determine the favorite locations or time periods of stories, and to see which themes are more often played on than others. One can try to find out if the *kyara* is just a typical characteristic of some Japanese comics (Ito 2005), or if there are traces of *kyara* in other national traditions too. One can also compare the international similarities or differences within a particular genre. For instance, some genres such as the funny family comic are quite universal. Some very famous titles are *Bringing Up Father* and *Blondie* in the U.S., *La Familia Burron* in Mexico, *Sazae-san* in Japan and *Andy Capp* in the UK. It is interesting to determine which aspects they all have in common and to what extent they are very different from each other. Such comparisons can also be made for many other widespread genres such

as the funny animal comic or the mischievous child comic.

By way of conclusion I would like to stress again that for a better theoretical and historical understanding of the comics medium, far more transnational comparative research is needed. Though I have pointed out the importance of looking for similarities between various national productions, this must not be interpreted as a classic reductive structuralist approach, because variations and historical context should also be taken into account. It would be especially interesting from a historical viewpoint to find out how some genres or styles traveled from one country to another and to see what kind of variations this global evolution has produced. For this kind of global comparative research, international teams of researchers should closely work together, hence it seems evident researches will have to conduct some original archival research, and some empirical, quantitative methodology seems appropriate as well. These are two definite fields where comics scholarship is still particularly weak and underdeveloped, since quite personal close readings based on a limited number of comics are still prevalent in the field.[4] In any case, historical and international contextualization, both in the narrow sense of comics history and in the broad socio-political sense, seem to me of paramount importance. To learn more about ourselves, we will have to cross borders!

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4 However, there are also signs that things may be changing. The European Commission's Culture Program 2007 is subsidizing an international research program about the popular roots of European culture through films, comics and serialized literature. This sounds very promising, but we still have to wait for the first round of publications to evaluate the results.

Pascal Lefèvre

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PART II:

Authorships and Readerships in Manga/Comics

7

How creators depict creating manga:
Mangaka manga as authenticating discourse

SAIKA Tadahiro
(trans. Jaqueline Berndt)

1. The prosperity of manga about "drawing manga"

In 2009, a big issue within Japanese media discourse on manga was the boom of stories which depicted manga artists (*mangaka*) as their protagonist and/or the manga industry as their scene of action. Not rarely called *mangaka manga* (lit. manga-artist manga), the abundance of such works showed itself, among other things, in the 2010 edition of *Kono manga ga sugoi!* (This manga is great!), an annual ranking book based on critics' nominations, which was launched in late 2005. In the male-manga category, "Bakuman" written by Ōba Tsugumi and drawn by Obata Takeshi came first, while Kobayashi Makoto's "Seishun Shōnen Magajin 1978-1983" (*Shōnen Magazine of my youth* 1978-1983) was in third place.[1]

These two works are slightly different insofar as the former takes the form of complete fiction, and the latter presents itself in the form of memoirs by the author himself, but they also have one thing in common: their serialization in boys' weeklies, widely read within the Japanese manga market, namely *Weekly Shōnen Jump* and *Weekly Shōnen Magazine*. In other words, these mangaka manga are not only popular with a limited readership—that is, readers who have a profound knowledge of manga

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1 As works with *mangaka* as their main motif, the ranking book introduced further Tatsumi Yoshihiro's retrospective *Gekiga hyōryū* (A drifting life), and Yamada Naito's *Beatitude*, a Boys'-Love style retelling of the *Tokiwa-sō* legend (which refers to the apartment house of the same name, the site of collaboration between Tezuka Osamu and younger manga artists in the mid-1950s).

(including manga history) and critically assess both the model behind the depicted mangaka image and its manner of depiction—but also a much broader readership which usually consumes manga as entertainment.

In an essay published at the end of the 1980s, Ōtsuka Eiji pointed out the emergence of "industry (*gyōkai*) manga", i.e. insider stories to be enjoyed on the condition of familiarity with the "industry" = "behind-the-scene circumstances for creators" (Ōtsuka 1988: 87-91). Ōtsuka spoke of the "age of industry" with respect to the fact that artists and editors came to the fore of manga works in particular and the media in general, and that persons related to manga as cultural commodity were commodified themselves. Here, consumers began to "share information, values and even illusions with the industry's insiders" (Ōtsuka 1988: 74). When related to Jean Baudrillard's theory of consumer society, this current may indicate the emergence of a production space which has turned into a simulacrum, reproduced in the manga media by its commodified agents and shared by its consumers. In his analysis, Ōtsuka demonstrated that the success of *Weekly Shōnen Jump* rested upon commodifying its own "system" by disclosing its mode of production to the reader, especially the regulation of manga series in proportion to their print-run and by means of questionnaires (Ōtsuka 1988: 10-11).

Kono manga ga sugoi! approximates Ōtsuka's argumentation when it suggests that the popularity of "Bakuman" can be traced back to its reception as a kind of quasi-virtual "society watching" (2009: 8-9). This authenticity effect is supported by the fact that the manga depicts behind-the-scene episodes and editorial meetings of a manga magazine (the *Weekly Shōnen Jump* of Ōtsuka's analysis, to be precise), and that it refers to Jump artists, works and editors by their real names. So, mangaka manga like "Bakuman" can be regarded as manifestations of a certain imagination and its commodification, an imagining of the production of culture which has been raised by the media as part of manga's shift into a cultural industry.

Yet, the authors of "Bakuman" as well as their editor in charge are quoted in *Kono manga ga sugoi!* with the comment that their depiction of the manga industry was "completely fictional", and that they did not want readers to take their series at face value (2009: 5-7). They suggest authenticity by the implication of continuity with

the real manga industry on the one hand, but on the other hand, they deny this claim of authenticity by emphasizing that their story was merely a fabricated commodity. This inconsistency reveals an aspect which cannot simply be settled by calling mangaka manga a simulacrum, or an accomplished copy without any original. That is to say, mangaka manga are not just simulacrum commodities, but processes of "articulation" in which numerous elements related to the authenticity of manga production and especially the mangaka are being assorted and intertwined. The above-mentioned ambiguous attitude toward reality and representation, fiction and nonfiction may emanate precisely from such articulation, and this is the issue at the center of my discussion below.

2. Mangaka as "exemplary agents" constructed by autobiographical elements

With respect to why music journalism is so engaged in discourse about the life of popular musicians (interviews, documentations of privacy, biographies etc.), popular-music researcher Jason Toynbee (2000) assumes that musicians are expected to serve as "exemplary agents" onto whom a variety of values are projected. Such projections include the pop musician as an extraordinary artist and creator of outstanding works, a representative voice of subcultural communities, and a popular hero resisting the tyranny of capital and market. Multilayered expectations toward the musician as an exemplary role model give rise to discourses of "authorship", that is, exemplary conditions of what a musician (or author) is supposed to be like. And these discourses are incessantly cast back onto the artistic practice of actual musicians and their life, in pursuit of their authorship's authenticity.

The role of exemplary agent expected from people called artists or creators, which Toynbee discusses, does not only apply to popular music.[2] In comics culture, it is not uncommon for artists to respond to the expected role of exemplary agent by portraying themselves as authentic "authors" with the help of autobiographical elements. One example is the boom of autobiographical elements in European graphic

2 For example, Howard S. Becker (1982) points out that artists are required to exhibit attitudes and abilities appropriate to ensuring the *raison d'être* of their specific collaborative network for cultural production which he names "art world", and that they are required to do so by agents of other "worlds".

novels, as introduced by Bart Beaty (2009). According to him, in recent works released by independent European publishers, some artists tend to employ narratives about the creation of comics as signifiers of authenticity. Leaning on Thierry Groensteen's characterization of such works as "the chronicle of the professional life, the *mise-en-scène* of the author's trade in comics", Beaty makes out a respective trend in *bande dessinée,* raising David B.'s *L'Ascension du Haut Mal* as his example (Beaty 2009: 233). In this work (available in Japanese under the title *Daihossa*, Akashi shoten 2007), fragmentary childhood memories are crossed with stories about the author's family as well as the origin and development of "David B.," the comics artist.

One of the forerunners of David B.'s attempt can be found in Art Spiegelman's well-known *MAUS*. Held in high esteem among American underground and alternative comics, *MAUS* is a milestone in regard to deploying elements of daily life and autobiography within comics, but it focuses not only on family relations—first and foremost the relation between Spiegelman and his father—narrated parallel to recollections of the holocaust. One of the characters is Spiegelman himself, as the "author" who writhes with creating his work out of painful memories and private anecdotes.[3] Furthermore, previous work by Spiegelman is inserted into the main narrative, as material related to the story of his family. Thus, *MAUS* provides also a self-interpretation and reconstruction of Spiegelman's artistic career.

Beaty gives the following explanation for the boom of autobiographical elements within graphic novels: Drawing upon the 1970s boom of autobiography in painting, photography and film, young comics artists have been deploying such elements since the 1990s on the one hand in order to warrant the legitimacy of their "authorship", and on the other hand as an aesthetic opportunity to develop a "personal voice" (Beaty 2009: 229). In other words, autobiographical elements are not just one sort of material which may widen a work's range, but means of legitimization which allow for maintaining that this work was created by an "artist".[4]

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3 See for example sequences where the character Spiegelman is not depicted as an anthropomorphized mouse but as a human wearing a mouse mask. These parts demonstrate clearly that, even as representation, the character Spiegelman is placed on a level different from diegetic characters, namely, that of a self-reflexive "author" (Spiegelman 2003: 201-207).

4 According to Odagiri Hiroshi (2007), the 9/11 shock also disillusioned U.S. mainstream comics artists with respect to their creative activities. Odagiri calls the sort of charity comics,

Saika Tadahiro

3. Mangaka as "professionals"

It is noteworthy that the process of expecting and confirming the role of exemplary agent affects the distribution of symbolic rewards, such as reputation. Consequently, the expectation of creators to embody this role is bigger in markets of small-scale production where creators address small-scale communities giving more importance to symbolic than economic rewards (Bourdieu 1996). The American and European examples mentioned above belong mainly to this market of small-scale production.

But what about manga in Japan, where the mass market's impact is particularly strong? When discussing the representation of authors in manga, Yomota Inuhiko treats works by Tsuge Yoshiharu and Nagashima Shinji as exemplary for the deployment of autobiographical elements (Yomota 1999: 268-271). As he points out, "stories about how passionately they attempted to come to terms with the difficult issue of what constituted a true manga, when they were young" (Yomota 1999: 268-270), are at the center of their works.

But whereas for example Nagashima's "Mangaka zankoku monogatari" (The harsh story of a manga artist, 1961), one of the representative works of the 1960s, features a whole range of young "artist-like" mangaka engaged in theoretical discussions about their ideal comics, Tsuge's later short stories, such as "Yoshio no seishun" (Yoshio's youth, 1974) and "Aru mumei no sakka" (An unknown author, 1984), emphasize the rigors of a mangaka's life, accompanied by scepticism and a disillusioned attitude toward idealistic, ivory-tower conceptions of art. As a contemporary example of such autobiographical manga, Yomota mentions the 1980s short stories, in which Okazaki Kyōko recollects her years as an assistant. "There is no idealist sermon of the kind Nagashima's generation got so enthusiastic about, and no realist scent of life à la Tsuge either. Just stories about how she began to use the G-pen which would later determine her style, told in a modest and humorous manner by means of this very G-pen." (Yomota 1999: 272)

in which artists depicted the event itself as well as their responses and emotions in order to cope with the shock, "comics for healing". This phenomenon can be read as suggesting artists' scepticism toward the role of exemplary agent, the loss of this role, but also its rediscovery and reconstruction.

Saika Tadahiro

Recently, Natsume Fusanosuke investigated how the mangaka's image itself, as depicted in Japanese manga, has changed historically from the pre-war years to this day.[5] Summarizing his account briefly, this transformation can be regarded as follows: Due to the rapid industrialization and expansion of scale in manga production since the 1960s,[6] the mangaka's image changed from an autonomous and self-contained individual painter or artist, as symbolized by Tezuka Osamu's self-portrait with beret, to a professional collaborator within an industrial organization, reflecting the complexity of a production system which included, among other things, the division of labor between script and artwork.

The differences in the autobiographical works by Nagashima Shinji, Tsuge Yoshiharu and Okazaki Kyōko also reflect this transition. From the angle of the autobiographically represented role of exemplary agent (where the authenticity of "being a mangaka" has its roots), this transition appears as a shift from depictions of an artistic attitude aimed at the realization of abstract ideals (see the young Bohemians and their coffee-house debates in Nagashima's work) to depictions of the practice of professional life, linked to facts such as techniques, tools and workplace. By mastering tasks of professional life through acquiring technical and professional standards, mangaka come to embody the normative role of a "professional".

An extreme example of such mangaka manga is Aihara Kōji and Takekuma Kentarō's "Saru de mo egakeru manga kyōshitsu" (abbr.: Saruman; Even a monkey can draw manga, 2001-02). This work about two guys who form a team in order to become mangaka, makes the techniques and attitudes required from professionals itself subject to parody. As distinct from Fujiko Fujio's "Manga michi" (Manga road, 1970-72, 77-82, 86-88) which Aihara and Takekuma probably had in mind, "Saruman" shows interest in the small aspects of technique and professional life, rather than the temporal and spatial journey of its protagonists (who stay in their apartment most of the time and do not talk about their past anyway). In contrast, "Manga michi" focuses on the individual development of the later artists, including autobiographical elements such as their initial encounter with Tezuka's work and their life in Tokyo.

5 In his lecture at Hanazono University, Kyoto, July 31, 2009. The Japanese handout is available here: http://blogs.itmedia.co.jp/natsume/2009/08/post-dc4b.html (last access: 2010/8/1).
6 For the historic transformation of the manga industry see Nakano (2004).

Even if less extreme, many mangaka manga, for example the above-mentioned "Bakuman", accentuate occurrences of professional life, such as deadlines, meetings and the variable popularity of magazine series, instead of delving into the artists' initial background and outset. In such manga, people's imagination of the mangaka's role as exemplary agent is being re-articulated within the cultural industry, through elements of professional life. Precisely this is characteristic of mangaka manga as commodifications of manga production itself.

4. Mangaka as personality figures

Above, I have related the articulation and representation of the role of exemplary agent (as expected from mangaka) to autobiographical and professional elements. In this final section, I wish to draw attention to the fact, that the conditions which structure the role of exemplary agent, are actually set as values shared within (sub)cultural communities, values which precede individual creators and their work.

As distinct from Toynbee's approach, Jean-Luc Nancy and Federico Ferrari (2004) focus on how conditions for this role materialize in single works. Drawing on Roland Barthes' pronouncement of the "death of the author", they try to recapture the relation between work and author by separating the notion of the latter from the actual person who precedes the work. While Barthes criticized the notion of "author" as personal origin and thus the authority which precedes the work and governs its particularities, Nancy and Ferrari regard the "author" as impersonal, as both a concept deduced from the semantic properties of the work, and the mechanism for realizing its particularities. This figure is also called creativity.

But in the process of its recognition by the reader, it often happens that the "author" leads the reader to ascribe properties of the work to the character of a clearly imagined person. According to Nancy and Ferrari, such cases are mediated by the "author's portrait" (ranging from literal picture to biographical fragments and derived from the creator as an actual person). In other words, the "author's portrait" lends a face, a personal corporeal image originating in the creator, to the character which supposedly reveals itself in the work's specific meaning. People incessantly project their desire of authorship—their wish to actually see the impersonal concept of "author"

Saika Tadahiro

and thus the representation of creativity—into the author's portrait as a personal figure ("Whoever created such a work must be an appropriate person like this one!").

One important aspect of mangaka manga is that these comics give rise to the mangaka figure, or character as the author's portrait within the work itself. Mangaka manga do not only imply that expectations toward the role of exemplary agent are represented by creators themselves; through the mangaka character which is a figure of pseudo-personality, they also bundle up readers' desires to fix the image evoked by the work into a personality, while projecting this desire onto social relations including the creator. Thus, the beret in Tezuka's self-portrait curbed the self-awareness of later mangaka who grew up reading Tezuka's manga.

According to Ōtsuka Eiji, Tsuge Yoshiharu's attempts at fragmentarily commodifying his private life through photos and texts, and Kajiwara Ikki's scripts which suggested to be "true stories", last but not least by diegetic appearances of the writer himself, have one thing in common: both blur the boundaries between work and person by reproducing in life the "author's portrait", that is, an image actually evoked by the work (Ōtsuka 1988: 236-240). Tsuge Yoshiharu who became famous as a writer of autobiographical manga (which, in reference to the modern Japanese "I-Novel" are not rarely called "I-Manga" in Japan), has proven to have a special knack in his real life for dealing with the authorship readers deduced from his work and fixed through diegetic characters who seem to be his alter ego.

Shimamoto Kazuhiko's mangaka manga titled "Hoero pen" (Comic bomber, since 2001) provides another interesting example. Drawn as a parody of the passionate strokes of male-oriented "hot-blooded" (*nekketsu*) manga, this story about the fictitious mangaka Honoo Moyuru tells about overcoming various tasks and crises typical for a mangaka's professional life. Its fascination owes as much to the depiction of the protagonist's astonishing skills as to his jokes about professional standards.

In this case too, readers tend to equate the protagonist Honoo with its creator Shimamoto. However, what readers try to find in Shimamoto through the figure of Honoo are not traces of autobiographical elements, but skills and standards available whenever difficulties and tasks of a mangaka's professional life are to be faced. Shimamoto himself seems to accept this authorship which readers find in Honoo,

strategically linking it to his behavior as an actual person. In addition, it is noteworthy that the public unemployment office's website "Hellowork for 13year-olds" which gives advise on how to take up your favorite career, recommends Shimamoto's "Hoero pen", along with autobiographies and collections of interviews, as a reference book for becoming a mangaka.[7] Thus, the image of authorship fixed by the readers with respect to Honoo, returns to them, taking on the form of a discourse on the role of exemplary agent.

On closer inspection, we find the "mangaka's portrait" in various places, not only inside works, but also on flaps and book jackets, in postscripts to book editions, and in the table of contents of manga magazines. These "author" figures fragmentarily evoke and personalize a certain image of authorship. In tandem with the mangaka's image as exemplary agent, this image of authorship is being shaped through imaginations of manga production which appear in the form of mangaka manga.

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7 See the mangaka section of the public Japanese website: http://www.13hw.com/job/02_02_03. html (last access: 2010/8/1).

Saika Tadahiro

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108

Saika Tadahiro

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8

Fieldwork in aesthetics:
on comics' social legitimacy

Thomas BECKER

A sociology of comics that includes the analysis of their aesthetics deviates from conventional studies of comics. It is usually limited to the analysis of distribution and circulation, and above all the readers' market. In a nutshell, it is the analysis of comics' social function but not their aesthetics. This naturalized understanding of the sociology of comics is confirmed by aesthetics. For instance, Maurice Horn writes in the introduction to his *World Encyclopedia of Comics* (1999: 55) that it is vital now to develop an understanding of the aesthetics of comics in order to dismiss the mere sociology of comics. Indeed, sociological analyses of cultural goods that tend to inundate their readers with statistics exhibit a limited conception of aesthetics.

Every field of cultural production holds the possibility to create an aesthetically unique position with strong influences upon the whole field. Such an impact is not to be understood solely by quantitative, statistical methods (Bourdieu 1979: 16). In this regard, a sociology of cultural production needs qualitative research as well, making use of interviews with authors, distributors and critics in combination with statistical and historical methods. Even a unique position is relative, that is, socially related to other positions, and thus requires a methodology which allows for its objectification in a sociological way.

Both Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu agree (Bourdieu 1994: 63-65) that strategies and conflicts are *intrinsic* aspects of cultural goods. Whereas in Foucault's theory of power there is no place for discursive autonomy, Bourdieu maintains that

Thomas Becker

autonomy in cultural production is an effect of strategies and conflicts. According to Bourdieu, a 'field' is not a semantic field of discourse but of symbolic strategies (Bourdieu 1996: 185-186, 313-321). His 'field sociology' suggests understanding aesthetic creation as something fundamentally *social*, which means that not only the reception of artworks but even before that, their production is determined by *social conflicts*. Every single artwork is the manifestation of a strategy in relation to other artworks within the same field. But these strategies are not characterized by a complete freedom in position-taking; rather, they are historically determined by a specific range of possibilities. For instance, it is not likely that an author like Art Spiegelman would hold a job in Walt Disney's workshop because their positions within the field of comics are too different.

Every position within a field is characterized by a specific distribution of symbolic capital in relation to other positions. The fact that one actor in the respective field has more cultural capital than another may play a trump in the struggle over positions. This implies that no one is completely dominated because the power within the field is not constructed like a pyramid. On the pole of economic capital (fig. 1), actors hold positions with greater cultural capital, and
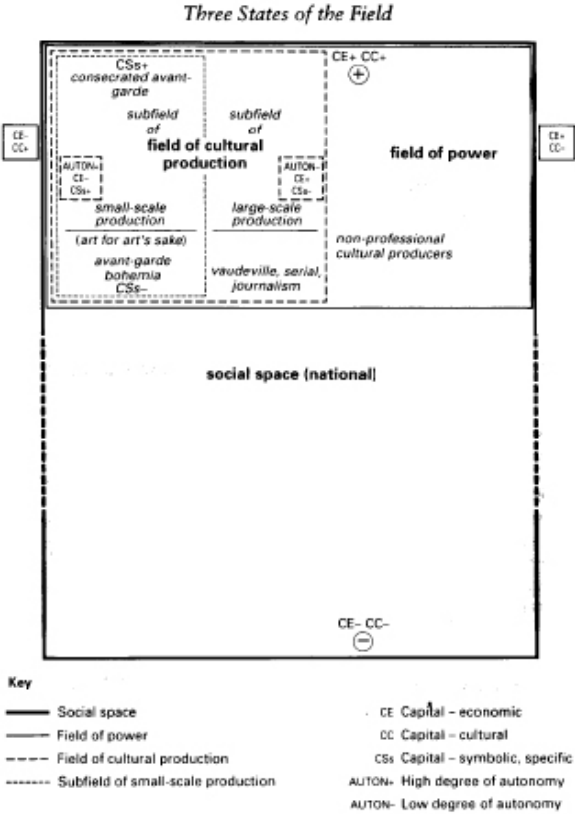

Fig. 1: Pierre Bourdieu, The Rules of Art. Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field, Stanford: University Press

Thomas Becker

on the pole of cultural capital they hold positions of greater economic capital. Needless to say, there can be many gradations between the two poles. Proximity or distance to other positions forms the structure which serves as the precondition for strategies to enhance or to preserve one's position in the field (Bourdieu 1994: 69-72). Every position must be seen as a structural distribution of symbolic capital in relation to other distributions or structures of symbolic capital. After having realized this structure of symbolic capital, the researcher can investigate the homologies of these positions with symbolic forms, that is, their aesthetics.

In the mass market, the demand for profit dominates everything. In the market of small-scale production, the demand for innovation is crucial; therefore, this pole can be called a *symbolic* market. In the 1980s, when Art Spiegelman brought together American, Japanese and European comics artists in his avant-garde journal *RAW*, Jerry Moriarity experienced the following:

> We all worked for nothing because Art (Spiegelman) made no money after production costs. […] The point wasn't the money or the career, but the desire to see your work published in the best possible way (Kartapoulos 2005, internet).

A statement like this indicates the existence of two different markets and therefore two opposing poles of economic and cultural capital in the field of comics production. But such a statement in an interview can also be traced back to the strategy of the interviewed person. It is quite possible that the interviewee pretends to be on the pole of the symbolic market in order to get acknowledged by the interviewer. There is only one possibility to objectify the interviewee's statement, by considering sales figures as well as the existence of social groups within the small-scale production market. Spiegelman's *RAW* obviously fostered the formation of such a social group. The journal triggered the mutual recognition of artists within the market of worldwide avant-garde creators.

During the first half of the 20th century, there was no clear distinction between the two markets. Nevertheless, it is possible to discern positions inclined towards either cultural autonomy or profit. Especially noteworthy is the *relation* between

positions, which changes according to the antagonism of economic and symbolic values. Although Winsor McCay's *Little Nemo* and George Herriman's *Krazy Kat* were appreciated as aesthetically innovative comics, both artists depended on syndicates, as did so many of their colleagues prior to the 1960s. Consequently, McCay as well as Herriman should be regarded as individual cases rather than as typical representatives of a symbolic market. In contrast, a comics author like Robert Williams, who in the 1960s contributed to Crumb's magazine *Zap* (that can be seen as a first step of comics production towards small-scale production) remembers:

> When I got to meet *Zap* artists, for the first time in my life I had run across spirits who went through the same thing I did. They could draw but were denied any standing in art schools. (Williams: internet).

His words confirm that the network characteristic of American underground comix must be regarded as a social group, whose members recognized each other as distinct from the legitimate institutions as well as the mass market.

To diagnose a position, it also helps to know the sales figures. For example, Art Spiegelman's avant-garde journal *RAW* had a print run of only five thousand copies. It belonged to a small-scale production, a symbolic market rejecting the aesthetics of superheroes. Yet, it should not be assumed that a small circulation always indicates high quality and, reversely, a mass-market distribution low quality. In other words, the success of *MAUS*, with a circulation of half a million copies in the U.S. alone does not substantiate poor quality. However, neither is success an argument against the difference between cultural and economic capital, because the artist's position-taking must be seen as a dynamic habitus-related process. If that is the case, we have to take into account the trajectory of the author's career. One should not forget that the accumulation of symbolic capital (see the vertical axis in fig. 1) forms the temporal axis of the habitus, that is, the specific course of an individual's career in the field. Art Spiegelman, for example, began publishing *MAUS* in his journal *RAW* in 1980, but its success did not set in before 1987. Within the symbolic market, immediate success is rare. Will Eisner's *A Contract with God* had been ignored by the mass market for a

long time; it was first published by independent publishers and only 20 years later by a major company.

An example of misinterpretation, which fails to consider the dynamism of strategies, is the French journalist Didier Pasamonik. He suggested that there cannot be comics beyond the mass market (2008: 13-19). As an example he took Marjane Satrapi's famous *Persepolis* published by the alternative publisher L'Association, yet surprisingly successful on the mass market. Pasamonik argued (without indicating any sources) that the editorial department did not unanimously accept Marjane Satrapi's comic, allegedly because it looked too popular. With this argument he sought to make his claim that comics were always tied to the mass market. According to him, the editors' rejection of *Persepolis* was against the intrinsic value of comics and therefore a faulty strategy in light of the fact that all the other comics published by L'Association were not profitable at all; comics proper could eventually function only as a media of entertainment. This certainly is a projection of his taste on the editors' position which he seemed to describe. During interviews with some of them, I was told that the editorial board unanimously accepted Satrapi's work. Noticing only the successful result and not the dynamic strategies which lead to it, Pasamonik passed over the difference between the two markets.

Interviews in combination with documents make it possible to reconstruct the *double* history of both the comics field and its authors. Otherwise the strategies which generate innovations could not be understood. How specific capital is accumulated is indicative of a career's *dynamic trajectory*, not just a static position. One has to ask, when an individual entered the field, how long he or she worked within it, and what she or he did before. Did he or she work only in this specific field, or was it initially a subsidiary project? What kind of strategies made it possible to reach the present position or hindered that progress? Such questions allow one to understand the dynamics of professionalization in relation to other positions and their timing.

A common error concerning the theory of habitus is to think that a specific position in the field completely determines a habitus (Bourdieu 1984b: 211). The habitus is a system of several elements, and a specific position in the field provides only a high probability to discern certain elements of a disposition at a certain time.

Thomas Becker

Some elements may be missing, or very individual elements, which cannot be found elsewhere, do exist. Habitus is neither a habit nor a completely determined structure; otherwise, the concept of habitus would be nonsense. Bourdieu created this concept in order to understand more clearly how innovations are possible within given structures which precede each individual. A productive habitus is determined by its position, and at the same time it is able to redetermine its position in a new way. Once this is admitted, the opposition between a theory of system and a theory of action becomes obsolete.

The above-mentioned case of Pasamonik, the journalist who misread L'Association, shows that a consideration of authors is not sufficient. The habitus and taste of the researcher, who interprets another habitus, must also be taken into account in sociological terms. We do not simply understand a position by interpretation, but by interpreting other interpretations, something which Anthony Giddens termed 'double hermeneutics'. Double hermeneutics, however, do not allow for unlimited constructivism. During interviews, there will always be the risk of projecting the interviewer's habitus on the interviewee's habitus. It goes without saying that projection cannot be avoided, simply because prejudices are a prerequisite of any understanding. What can be done is to objectify the difference in habitus in a dynamic way. Bourdieu calls not only for a participant observation but an *objectified* participation; in field research, the researcher has to be aware of his own position in relation to the position of the investigated person. The same methodology used to investigate other persons must be applied to oneself (Bourdieu 1984a: 69). Like a psychoanalyst, the sociologist has to objectify himself and to realize that his own position and his own habitus is the source of projections on the habitus of the interviewed person.

This leads us to the main difficulty in understanding comics in both an aesthetic *and* social way. It derives from the different social status which is attached to education and scholarship on the one hand, and the production of comics on the other. The hierarchy of legitimacy created by the general and long-term power of institutional education in the modern nation-state cannot be circumvented (Bourdieu 1979: 21-31). For example, it is notable that literature and theatre, which usually take the highest position in culture, do not require any justification of their specific aesthetic

experiences (Bourdieu 1979: 367-381). Legitimate art forms such as these tend to exclude popular art from educational and academic consideration. A lesser legitimacy in art production means that there is no support by academic consecration. However, it is precisely this which makes such art forms readily accessible.

Comics (like other cultural goods of industrial production) provide immediate pleasure. Fans do not need to know the *history* of comics or the specific techniques of their creation in order to enjoy them. By contrast, people who want to be taken seriously within the institution of art are expected to have art-historical knowledge. Because of its long tradition of history-construction, legitimate art is able to dominate the way in which the history of the 'illegitimate' arts is being written. For example, when, in the 1960s, the first comics exhibition based on thorough historical research was held in France, its display was fundamentally influenced by the contemporaneous Pop Art. Single panels were blown-up to large-sized pictures deprived of their context, that is, the respective narrative sequences (Martin and Mercier 2005: 90). Apparently, a symbolic similarity of legitimate art and popular art tends to trigger a misunderstanding of the aesthetics of the latter. It produces a false recognition of so-called 'high art' which leads to misjudging the specific value of lesser legitimate art. Thus, 'illegitimate' art has to struggle not only in publicizing the knowledge of its history, but also for its own way to construct this history. The difference between the levels of legitimacy is therefore an objective structure determining normative judgments and practices. Some comics authors try to avoid every contact with scholarly field research because they fear the legitimate status of a scholar, or they have no interest in a purely academic interview that gives them no possibility to accumulate symbolic or economic capital. Lewis Trondheim for example, one of the best known authors of independent comics in France, wrote to me that he refuses to give interviews because he thinks himself not to be representative.

But a reserved attitude of comics artists towards scholars is sometimes justified. Not rarely do intellectuals use less legitimate art for a distinction in their own legitimate field of scholarship. The knowledge of less legitimate symbolic forms can serve as a means to distinguish oneself from academism. This is actually an aesthetic strategy which was first used by Pop artists quoting comics. They took over forms of

less legitimate art in order to distinguish themselves from dominating positions in the art world. By emphasizing popular taste as good taste, they declared the good taste of the elitist position in their field to be bad taste. In this way, they claimed to be a new avant-garde beyond the conventional system of academia but still accepted by the field of power.

This genuinely aesthetic strategy does not include an objective approach towards why the artists were interested in popular aesthetics. Art production does not need an objectification of its own practices, as distinct from scholarly research for which it is indispensable. With such awareness, research strategies of investigation would get confused with aesthetic strategies. Ethnological studies know the problem of the researcher's fear in front of the otherness of his field. However, facing less legitimate art forms of one's own society involves an inverse danger; that of exaggerating the otherness of these forms in order to distinguish oneself from the naturalized academic notions in one's own field. Such a confusion can be found very often in postmodern discourses, especially when avant-garde positions are aspired. For example, the late Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida claimed to diminish the difference between art and art theory in order to become prophets of a new theoretical avant-garde.

Scott McCloud, who is well known for his semiotic theory of comics, may serve as a good example of such postmodern errors. In his book *Understanding Comics*, he presents a system that is supposed to work for both legitimate art, such as paintings by Claude Monet, and comics (McCloud 1993: 45-57). This results in the avant-garde comic *MAUS* holding almost the same position as the mainstream comic Mickey Mouse (McCloud 1993: 56). McCloud himself acknowledges that this is strange, because he knows of course that comics for children and the comics of the American underground are quite different things. By denying the difference of legitimacy between comics and oil paintings of the 19th century, the specific value of the avant-garde in comics production is left unexplained. Semiotic theory often treats comics as a system in order to give them more weight. The more the analysis follows a logical system, the more it seems to support institutionally legitimized scholarship. By omitting the strategic struggle for qualification, definition and legitimacy, semiotics may easily make comics appear like a system without any historical evolution.

Thomas Becker

But there is another problem with 'double hermeneutics' in interviews. Every biographical storytelling shows an inclination to a consistent view of life. If an author is asked about the influence of his family, it can happen that he reconstructs a continuous biography at the very moment of his answer (Bourdieu 1994: 81-89). The famous pianist Horrowitz, for example, claimed that he destroyed a fiddle when he was a young child. Maybe he did, but he said this in an interview in order to justify the continuity of his artistic life from his childhood onwards. This is precisely what is called the illusion of an 'uncreated creator' (Bourdieu 1996: 185). It would be completely wrong, however, to objectify this illusion during an interview. Because the habitus is an implicit understanding of the world, the goal of the interview cannot be to interrogate the interviewee directly about this disposition of his own habitus. Only after the interview, the interviewer has to break with these illusions.

Because the vertical axis is a temporal one which shows the accumulation of symbolic capital (see fig.1), we must include family contacts or other persons that could have encouraged the progress of a career. Are there contacts within the field favored by family? Bourdieu calls this reproduction of cultural capital a 'social heritage' because it does not appear as a reproduction at first sight, thus fueling the illusion of the 'uncreated creator' (Bourdieu 1984a: 75). The transfer of symbolic capital within a family seems to be an act of intimate communication. At school this accumulation of capital is appreciated very often as innate talent. In less legitimate art, we rarely find such social heritage, and it is a specifically democratic element of popular culture that such a social heritage does not exist.

In the biography of present comics authors, at least in the present generation of the independent comics authors in France, there is a perceivable element of social heritage. The French author David B. said that his parents were graphic artists. Even if he denies any direct influence on his career, they certainly gave him some information about the formation of an artist at graphic schools. The pre-school reproduction of cultural capital plays another role here that it doesn't in the case of legitimate art; it increases the self-confidence of an author against the hierarchy of legitimacy.

Fields of lower legitimacy are more easily accessible, because a specific historical knowledge is not necessary. But this accessibility involves the risk of a very low

income for many in the early stages. The main way to accumulate a specific knowledge in fields with little institutional backup is to create one's own social contacts and to observe how other actors manage to earn their living. This kind of learning serves as a quasi-institution. The lack of institutionalization forces authors in less legitimate fields to work not only for their cultural, but also social capital. Consequently, the time of daily life without art production is very small for every author, sometimes to such an extent that intimate contacts become completely impossible. Nothing is as volatile as social capital. It is the most risky capital. That is, the capital with the highest rate of inflation because of the continuous possibility of ungratefulness. In interviews, time and biography of formation deserve special attention. As a general principle, one should not look for *rules* of a biography, but strategies to be recognized in a specific field.

How does the distinction of the two markets determine aesthetic strategies? I can give only some short examples here. Autonomy does not simply mean freedom. Although the autonomous pole of the comics field is able to restrict the influence of economic demands, it also establishes a symbolic force. To be in the field is to distinguish oneself from others by means of symbolic production. Every new avant-garde generation is therefore forced to distinguish itself not only from the mass market but also from the former avant-garde generation as well.

Whereas Robert Crumb, the representative of the first generation of the American comics avant-garde in the 1960s, attacked the mass market with shocking cartoons, Art Spiegelman, a representative of the second generation, has refused to do this in his comics since the 1980s. He avoided Crumb's subjective empathy by focusing on the narrative structure and thus reinvented a 'cool description' for *MAUS*. This program of 'cool authorship', which is his achievement in regard to pictorial narratives, can truly be called a reinvention because it has been characteristic for modern narratives since Gustave Flaubert 'invented' the social novel (although Flaubert as distinct from Spiegelman strictly refused the addition of illustrations to novels). Chris Ware, a representative of the third generation, added the color of the *ligne claire* style to the cool description in order to distinguish himself from Spiegelman. Although Spiegelman belongs to Ware's generation in terms of his biological age, his symbolic age according

to his position and its aesthetic effects in the field is clearly different.

When I asked a L'Association French comics author whether comics were literature or art, he replied, *"literature, because there are signs"*. This answer cannot be accepted at face value, but should rather be regarded as an effect of his aesthetic strategy in the field. Generally speaking, it is clearly mistaken, since images provide signs as well. But from the standpoint of an author's position in the field which favors a certain strategy, his answer can be understood as a disposition to affirm the value of independent production which aims programmatically at *readable* comics. This is a distinction against the previous avant-garde generation, especially Moebius, Enki Bilal and other artists of the magazine *Métal Hurlant* who favored the visual aspects of comics and their intermediality with cinema.

But the above-mentioned answer reveals a second strategic dimension on closer inspection. Bearing in mind that discourse theories have dominated aesthetic theories of legitimate literature since the 1970s, the author's answer obviously tries to enhance the status of comics as legitimate literature. At the same time, it points to the aesthetics of the new avant-garde in France. The comics of L'Association are in black and white as if they were nothing but the text of a written book. This may serve as an example of how constitutive strategies are for the meaning of cultural goods. Semiotic analysis is a new method to understand comics but it does not allow an understanding of their aesthetics in a dynamic way, which necessarily includes an analysis of social strategies and historical struggles for legitimacy.

Since the 1960s, there have been three generations of comics authors in the symbolic market, at least in the U.S. and in France. They have been able to reproduce their knowledge about the innovations of comics production continuously. This evolution has been accompanied, of course, by specialized critics, magazines such as *The Comics Journal* in the U.S. and *Cahiers des Bandes Dessinées* in France, and by publishers such as the French Futuropolis which first re-edited George Herriman's *Krazy Kat*. Such re-editions were vital to the creation of a recognizable history of the comics field. The more autonomous a field of symbolic production is, the more it can exclude persons without a specific expertise of the field-history. This leads finally to another social difficulty which needs to be overcome.

Thomas Becker

In the U.S. and in France, a clear distinction between the above-mentioned two markets of comics production did not exist until the 1960s. During the first half of the 20th century, the knowledge of the pioneers of independent comics was distributed only in an oral way. However, it was rediscovered in the 1960s when the symbolic market emerged, and in the 1970s critics generated a historical awareness of outstanding independent comics. To Art Spiegelman, for example, elaborated comics of the early 20th century, such as Lyonel Feininger's works, formed the basis of contemporary independent comics. On closer inspection, his view can be described as an aesthetic strategy to select elements for a complex language of comics from the field's history. But here again, we have to differentiate between scholarly research and aesthetic strategies. An artist's aesthetic reference to the field's history is necessarily different from a researcher's account. Seen from a sociological standpoint, there is no continuous series of elaborated comics from the beginning to the end of the 20th century. However, field sociology trace a strategy such as Spiegelman's to construct a continuity of elaborated comics throughout the 20th century back to his break with the social conditions of producing comics for a mass market. A semiotic analysis without sociological objectification sees only the symbolic similarity and therefore the continuity between the pioneers of elaborated comics and the authors of independent comics in our time. But in order to understand comics as a *dynamic field*, it is necessary to consider social strategies as constitutive elements for symbolic forms. If we interpret these strategies as constitutive elements of a process of autonomization and struggles for legitimacy, we do not disapprove of them. We rather try to take them seriously by objectifying them as genuine aesthetic practices.

Thomas Becker

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Dōjinshi research as a site of opportunity for manga studies

Nele Noppe

Fanworks are creative works that explicitly make use of characters and/or settings found in a copyrighted work. They are created by fans all over the world and range from fan-made manga (*dōjinshi*) to pieces of fanfic (*shōsetsu*), narrative texts from a few dozen words to novel-length, fan art (*ichimai irasuto*), individual pictorial depictions, musical pieces (*dōjin ongaku*), for instance, songs based on characters, and many other media. In this paper, I focus on fan-made manga such as those most often published in dōjinshi fanzines.[1] I have two purposes: to examine the current position of dōjinshi within manga studies in general, and to describe several key areas in which more extensive dōjinshi research might offer distinctive contributions to manga studies.

1. The current status of dōjinshi research within manga studies

Comiket (Comic Market), the largest of the many dōjinshi sales conventions (*sokubaikai*) held in Japan every year, attracted 35,000 groups of dōjinshi creators[2] and over half a million visitors in December 2007.[3] The dōjinshi market in that same year

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1 Amateur literary magazines containing texts that are not fannish remixes of existing copyrighted works are also referred to as "dōjinshi". A dōjinshi containing fannish remixes may contain a variety of media, from text to single illustrations to manga. For the sake of brevity, I use the word "dōjinshi" in this paper to mean "fan-made manga".
2 These groups are called *sākuru*, from the English "circle". A *sākuru* may also consist of a single creator (*kojin sākuru*).
3 I use the attendance data of the December 2007 event, "Comic Market 73", as reported by

was estimated to be worth up to 50 billion yen (Yano Research Institute Ltd. 2008), with the total value of manga sales (*tankōbon* and magazines, dōjinshi excluded) being estimated at about 450 billion yen.[4] Clearly, amateur publications are an economically very significant segment of the manga market and an important part of manga culture in general. The many dōjinshi that are distributed for free either in print or online are of course not visible in these market estimates.

Both in Japanese and non-Japanese-language research, however, content analysis of dōjinshi (as opposed to that of commercially published manga) is extremely rare.[5] Dōjinshi do feature in English-language research on occasion, but they are almost always discussed because of their legal significance, not as objects of literary study.[6] Also, the academic works which discuss the legal ramifications of dōjinshi are often published within the fields of law or economics, outside of the usual scope of manga studies.

There is more dōjinshi research in Japanese than in non-Japanese languages, which may be explained in part by issues of accessibility of the source material that I will describe later in this paper. Manga scholars in Japan seem to display more awareness of dōjinshi-related issues, such as problematic areas of copyright legislation (*chosakukenhō*) and the rights of fans to remix and to a certain extent lay claim to their creations (Yonezawa 2001: 6, 9). References to dōjinshi are also quite common in discussions of manga readers' experiences, particularly in works about boys' love manga, who have strong roots in and ties with dōjinshi. Japan has also seen

Comiket (COMIKET 2008, 4), because the latest available data on the size of the amateur manga market, also referenced in this paragraph, are for the year 2007.

4 *Komikku hanbaigaku* [Value of the comics market] (The Research Institute for Publications 2009). Another report, *2008 Otaku sangyō hakusho* [2008 White Paper on Otaku Production] (Media Create 2007), is said to contain a lower estimate of around 27 billion yen (Nozu 2007), but I have not been able to verify this.

5 One aspect of dōjinshi narratives that has recently been discussed in some English-language pieces of scholarship is the importance of characters relative to the story (Galbraith 2009).

6 Of the sixteen English-language scholarly works I have identified that devote at least several paragraphs to dōjinshi, five do so solely in the context of copyright-related discussions. Discussion of dōjinshi contents in the remaining ten remains mostly limited to explanations of *yaoi*, with only a few attempting to go into detail (Noppe 2010). Because this list is still regularly updated, the numbers stated above may change over time. As the purpose of this exercise was to identify published academic sources on dōjinshi authored in English, I have not included translations into English of originally Japanese-language scholarship on dōjinshi.

considerable critique of areas of manga scholarship that seem out of touch with the experiences of "ordinary" manga fans that make up dōjinshi culture, with manga critic Itō Gō's *Tezuka is Dead* (2005) being a prime example.

Even in Japan, however, no comprehensive scholarly works about dōjinshi have been published, and the number of scholarly articles remains limited.[7] A large proportion of the existing research focuses on the sokubaikai such as Comiket that form the primary distribution site of dōjinshi. Research on otaku (used to designate fans in general, but often only male fans) and fujoshi (female fans of boys' love/ yaoi , Galbraith 2009) psychology, communities, and economic systems[8] is gaining traction. However, the actual contents of the works these fans produce remain largely unexamined except in the broadest of terms. There seem to be similarities with research into non-Japanese-language fandom here: while a fairly large volume of fan studies research has been devoted to non-Japanese-language fan communities, analysis of the actual content of non-Japanese-language fan-created media is still comparatively new (Hellekson en Busse 2006: 27).

As a consequence of this lack of research into dōjinshi content, little is known about dōjinshi among most non-Japanese-speaking manga researchers beyond the fact that dōjinshi exist and have a precarious legal status. This lack of knowledge makes it easy for manga scholars to assume that dōjinshi are somehow different from and of limited relevance to commercially published manga (referred to as *shōgyōshi* when contrasted with dōjinshi), because little research exists that suggests otherwise. For now, research into dōjinshi both inside and outside Japan appears scattered and not proportionate to the importance of dōjinshi in the manga market.

In this paper, I will examine two related concepts that influence academic attitudes about dōjinshi and also hinder dōjinshi research in practical ways: copyright legislation, and the concept of the original, single author as the only possible creator of

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7 A search in the CiNii scholarly database (CiNii 2010) turned up 983 items mentioning "dōjinshi" in Japanese. However, the vast majority of these appear to concern amateur original texts rather than manga dōjinshi based on existing media narratives. Cultural policy scholar Kawashima suggests that this lack of scholarly attention towards amateur creativity is not limited to dōjinshi or manga studies, but is characteristic of academic research on the creative industries in general (Kawashima 2010: 6).

8 A significant number of non-academic volumes on economic issues related to fans, for instance on how to market products to otaku, have been published in Japan.

truly valuable literary works. While these are certainly not the only factors responsible for the seeming lack of dōjinshi research, I will attempt to show that concepts of copyright and authorship offer very useful clues at the very least, and indicate key areas in which dōjinshi research could be of great benefit to manga studies in general.

While discussing concepts of copyright and authorship, I will make heavy use of research conducted in connection with English-language fanwork. Fan studies is a rapidly evolving discipline in the English-language academic world and offers an interesting and useful framework within which to discuss dōjinshi research. Also, because most English-language fan studies material concentrates on non-Japanese fans, insights offered by fan studies are often very relevant to the situation of dōjinshi in non-Japanese scholarship.

2. Legal status of dōjinshi: the disconnection between law and an evolving cultural landscape

The legal standing of dōjinshi is the most researched aspect of these amateur manga. Questions of legality and illegality also have the most significant practical impact on dōjinshi research and are the most obvious distinction between "regular" manga and dōjinshi, and strongly influence attitudes towards dōjinshi in general. Any exploration of the reasons for the lack of dōjinshi research should probably begin with dōjinshi's legal status.

A very brief overview of the history of copyright will help clarify the role it plays today in the positioning of dōjinshi as literary works. The English Statute of Anne was enacted in 1710 and is considered to be the first true piece of copyright legislation. The Statute of Anne was instituted at the request of printing and distribution companies (not individual book authors), who felt that copying of works first printed by them by other printers harmed their business model. The purpose of copyright legislation was to mediate between producers of cultural goods trying to make a living, and the public's need to make use of these cultural goods so a creative, vibrant culture could develop.[9]

Copyright legislation was introduced in Japan after the Meiji restoration. Since

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9 The motivations of various parties involved in the creation of copyright legislation were more complex than I can describe here. For an extensive discussion, see Rose 2003.

the second half of the nineteenth century, gradual changes in Japanese copyright legislation have drastically expanded the kinds of media whose use is governed by copyright legislation, and for how long use of these media is regulated by copyright until they pass into the public domain and anybody can use them to create new cultural goods. Copyright law in Japan currently protects virtually all media on which dōjinshi are generally based (manga, books, games and so on) for fifty years after the death of the author. Films are an exception and are protected for seventy years. The aim of contemporary Japanese copyright legislation is described as "(to) contribute to the development of culture" (Copyright Research and Information Center, the CRIC, n.d.), in line with the age-old stated purpose of copyright legislation in many parts of the world.

Today, new technological developments make it very difficult for media companies to control the distribution of the copyrighted cultural goods that are their prime source of income (Bardzell 2006: 12; Lessig 2004). Increasingly sophisticated software and the internet make it easy for anyone to digitize any medium, be it a manga, film, book, or anything else (Hughes et al 2007: 4). This is not a new phenomenon; newly-developed technologies have challenged copyright legislation multiple times throughout its history, for instance when copy machines or video recorders came into general use. In all these instances, copyright legislation was eventually adapted so it could continue to fulfill its stated function of encouraging cultural development within new technologicalrealities.

However, many legal scholars such as Lawrence Lessig and Rebecca Tushnet claim that today, copyright legislation is not evolving to adapt to the potential unlocked by new technologies (Lessig 2004; Tushnet 1996). It is growing more reactionary instead, as media companies try to counter the effects of new technologies by strengthening their legal control over the ways consumers can distribute, remix, and engage creatively with copyrighted content.[10] The net result of this is that copyright

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10 This is exemplified, for instance, by negotiations about the proposed Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) treaty, of which Japan is a major sponsor (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry—METI, n.d.). While the exact positions of negotiating countries are hard to pin at the moment of writing due to lack of public transparency of the negotiations, leaked documents indicate that Japan supports several measures that would drastically tighten intellectual property law (Tōen 2010).

legislation ends up as a tool for media companies to protect their profits, instead of a tool to mediate between the rights of companies and consumers with the end goal of promoting creative culture.

Free remixing of existing cultural goods by amateur creators is increasingly being proscribed both in Japan and worldwide. Paradoxically, this development is taking place in tandem with the emergence of amateur communal remix culture as an important mode of cultural production (Hughes e.a. 2007; Azuma 2009; Jenkins 2008), as shown by the way the economic value of the dōjinshi market continues to rise while that of the commercial manga market drops.[11] It should come as no surprise, then, that fanworks of legally questionable status are so common in the cultural landscape today. The law and the technological reality experienced by those whose activities it regulates are simply pulling in opposite directions (Tushnet 1996: 651; Kawashima 2010: 1).

3. Legal status of dōjinshi: obstructions to dōjinshi research stemming from copyright issues

Fanworks such as dōjinshi do constitute copyright infringement, even though they are generally tolerated by Japanese rights holders (Noda 2008: 15; Yonezawa 2001: 5). Dōjinshi creators are keenly aware that their actions may not be legal (see below), and the committees that organize sokubaikai review materials offered for sale to ensure that none contain blatantly copied material, because such copies could provoke a reaction from rights holders that might negatively impact the great majority of dōjinshi. According to Lessig, the vast majority of dōjinshi are clearly not mere copies but rather "derivative works", a category of cultural goods that is recognized and regulated by Japanese copyright law.[12]

The strong influence of copyright legislation on perceptions of dōjinshi hinders

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11 The report *Otaku shijō ni kansuru chōsa kekka 2008* [Research on the otaku market 2008] claims that the total value of the dōjinshi market in 2007 was 13.5% larger than that in 2006 (Yano Research Institute Ltd. 2008).

12 A "derivative work" (*nijisōsakubutsu*) is "a work created by translating, arranging musically, transforming, or dramatizing, cinematizing or otherwise adapting a pre-existing work" (Copyright Law of Japan, Chapter 1, Section 1, Article 2). Regulations regarding derivative work are contained mainly in Chapter 2.

research into these amateur manga in several very practical ways.[13] For one, non-Japanese-speaking researchers will find it almost impossible to study dōjinshi. Official translations of dōjinshi cannot be published for legal reasons, and while scanlations exist online, these are scattered and do not form a large and reliable body of primary sources.

Researchers fluent in Japanese face difficulties in obtaining primary research materials. Dōjinshi creators fear endangering themselves and by extension the whole dōjinshi community by "inviting" legal problems; although Japanese companies are generally tolerant of dōjinshi production, there have been several incidents of varying severity in which dōjinshi creators clashed with rights holders.[14] Creators go to great lengths in order not to draw attention from people who are not involved in dōjinshi culture and might not be understanding of its activities.[15] One consequence of this is that distribution of dōjinshi is quite carefully controlled, and a researcher may have trouble even laying hands on a print dōjinshi outside of sokubaikai or specialized dōjinshi resale shops (*dōjin shoppu*) inside Japan.[16]

The obstacles for a researcher do not end after printed dōjinshi have finally been obtained. Most countries forbid the moving of copyright-infringing goods across their borders in accordance with international copyright treaties, making it illegal for a dōjinshi researcher to remove materials from Japan and bring them into another

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13 It should be noted here that some hurdles caused by copyright legislation cause problems for research into commercially published manga as well, and are merely magnified in the case of dōjinshi research; problems in obtaining rights to use images from manga in scholarly publications, for instance, are common (Noda 2008: 15, Yonezawa 2001: 5).

14 Examples include the "Pokemon dōjinshi case" (Noda 2008: 16; Yonezawa 2001: 8), the "Doraemon dōjinshi incident" (ComiPress 2007), and several minor incidents (Tsukasa n.d.) including the "Harry Potter copyright problem" (Tsukasa n.d.). The latter refers to an online rumour started in December 2001 that the overseas and Japanese copyright holders of the *Harry Potter* franchise were about to crack down on *Harry Potter*-based dōjinshi, prompting *dōjinshka* (dōjinshi creators) to lock down websites and cancel *ibento* [events] for several months afterwards. (The crackdown did not materialize.)

15 For instance, *sākuru* attempt to prevent search engines from indexing their websites, so that only those who have found the URL in a dōjinshi can find the sites (*kakushi*). Many also admonish readers not to offer the dōjinshi for sale on general-purpose auction sites, or even show them to anyone who is not a dōjinshi reader or creator.

16 It must be noted that a few *dōjin shoppu* that also sell dōjinshi through their websites, such as Mandarake and K-BOOKS, offer shipping outside of Japan. Purchasing dōjinshi through this channel does not eliminate problems regarding a dōjinshi's legal status or potentially illegal content that may arise as packages are inspected by customs.

131

country.[17] If a translation of the source work of a dōjinshi exists in a country outside Japan, the sale of dōjinshi based on that source work is probably even more explicitly illegal in that country, because the companies that published the translation tend to retain rights to the work. Given the large amount of manga translations available today, a large proportion of source works is most likely in this category.

Copyright legislation may also be putting a damper on amateur manga research through the influence of the idea of copyright on researchers who lack understanding of the problems inherent in the concept. Contemporary copyright legislation alone is not an appropriate scholarly argument to distinguish "regular" manga from dōjinshi, certainly not while conducting content research on the medium manga. It is a purely legal argument, and not a very convincing one; as I discussed above, the purposes to which copyright legislation is put today suggest that it is outdated, often misdirected, and too far-reaching (Lessig 2004).

The way copyright legislation hinders dōjinshi research is only a very concrete expression of broader trends that seriously endanger scholars' access to and right to use various kinds of primary sources (Jaszi and Woodmansee 1995: 775). More extensive awareness of and resistance against these trends is not only beneficial to academics,[18] it may also be an ethical obligation. Law scholars Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi point out the complicity of academia in the over-development of copyright legislation, claiming that it was academia which helped create a concept of "proprietary ownership (which) shapes the law governing our textual practices as scholars, teachers, and students" (Jaszi and Woodmansee 1995: 772, 782), and so it is the responsibility of

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17 Regardless of whether or not dōjinshi legally constitute copyright infringement in a country, their often sexual contents make it forbidden to take them across national borders in many cases. Particularly the transport across borders of works depicting characters that might be interpreted to to be minors may lead to criminal investigations in several countries that include depictions of virtual children in anti-child pornography laws. For instance, in February 2010, U.S. Citizen Christopher Handley was sentenced to six months in prison for possession of child pornography (io9 2009) under the PROTECT Act of 2003, which criminalizes possession of, among others, drawings or cartoons that depict "a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct" (US CODE n.d.).
18 While the practical hurdles mentioned harm free scholarship, challenging them directly poses genuine legal dangers. Individual researchers may be able to make headway without putting themselves on the wrong side of the law by remaining informed about copyright-related issues in academia and publishing, being supportive of attempts to legalize fan activities, and adopting open research methodologies and tools that also offer many practical advantages (examples of this are open access publishing and use of open source research tools).

academia to resist further problematic developments in copyright law.

I will now turn our attention to the genesis and implications for dōjinshi research of this concept of "proprietary ownership" of literary works by their authors.

4. Authorship of dōjinshi: the single author concept and ideas about women's writing

Dōjinshi are problematized not only on the basis of their legal status, but also through arguments that target their creators and their modes of creation. Many scholars will instinctively make a sharp distinction between professional authors and amateur (fan) authors. This distinction relies on a stereotypical image of an "author" that has long been discredited in literary theory, but continues to influence other disciplines. A professional author operates mostly alone to create original work, for the sake of art, that is validated by legal standing. In contrast, an amateur crafts derivative work of questionable legal position, mostly for private consumption and often in conjunction with other amateurs.[19] The reputation of a creator influences the reputation of the work. Blatant ad hominem attacks on fans as a community, such as the pathologization of otaku as disturbed, socially maladjusted or even dangerous individuals, are easily countered. The division between "amateur" and "professional" authors is more ingrained and subtle, and deserves more extensive consideration here.

According to Martha Woodmansee, who specializes in the history of copyright in relation to literature, the concept of the individual author as a generator of "original ideas" to which he can claim ownership began being developed in the eighteenth century. Writers seeking to establish a livelihood by selling books to a newly enlarged reading public redefined writing as the original creation of one author solely responsible and "exclusively deserving of credit" for the work (Woodmansee 1984:

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19 The words "original" and "derivative" are regularly used in scholarship and legislation (Japanese copyright law, for example) and have significant connotations that express a value judgement about the works designated. Original works are thought to be "new" and of a certain quality (because the creator was judged talented enough to warrant publication). Derivative works are considered glorified copies by creators clearly not talented enough to create something "original". It should be noted here that while "derivative" is a convenient term to indicate that a work is explicitly based on another, the word "derivative" is not very useful as a means of categorization. All creative work is derivative. Some forms of derivativity are legally sanctioned, while others are not.

426). This new Romantic author ideal contrasted rather sharply with earlier ideas of the writer as a craftsman who did not "own" his words in any literal sense, as one might own a table or a chair, and who was not considered a "genius" capable of generating entirely "original" ideas.

The eighteenth century was also the time when copyright legislation began to take shape, starting with the Statute of Anne in 1710. This period saw literary theory and legal theory cooperating to create the sort of copyright legislation that fitted well with the new author concept. In the second half of the twentieth century, on the other hand, there is a clear disconnect between the evolution of concepts of authorship in modern literary theory (away from the ideal of the all-powerful single original author) and the evolution of copyright legislation.[20]

An important consequence is that regardless of changes in the way literary theorists tend to construct authorship today, in practice, the Romantic author concept is still accepted as the most valid in many parts of academia. Scholars with no connections to literary theory take their cues about authorship from the copyright legislation that regulates how they may consume and distribute academic content. Contemporary copyright legislation makes heavy use of the single author concept, disregarding other forms of authorship such as participatory creation which are growing more and more important (discussed in detail later). Japanese copyright law, for instance, accords various levels of "moral" (*jinkakuteki*) and "economic" (*zaisanteki*) rights to individual authors (*chosakusha*) immediately upon creation of "creative expressions of original thoughts or sentiments of the creator which are not copies of others" (Copyright Research and Information Center (CRIC) n.d.).

The single-author concept influences views on the authorship of dōjinshi, and thereby dōjinshi research, in multiple areas. I will briefly describe two of these areas: the fact that a majority of dōjinshi creators are female, and the collective nature of the process of dōjinshi creation.

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20 Jaszi and Woodmansee claim that "After the divergence of literary and legal theory it was possible to overlook the substantial contribution of Romantic aesthetics to our law of texts, with the result that while legal theory participated in the construction of the modern "author" , it has yet to be affected by the structuralist and post-structuralist critique of authorship that I have been witnessing in literary and composition studies for two decades now." (1995: 771).

Nele Noppe

The development of the author concept in the eighteenth century was distinctly gendered. Fan studies scholar Kristina Busse states that at the time when authorial genius began to be foregrounded,

> (...) the way women created art was wrong on several counts: they didn't do it for money or to share in the public space and the emphasis was on craft and amateur status rather than any sense of original genius. Their work effectively had to be ignored because the ideological context in which it was created spoke directly against the aesthetic models men needed to create, in order to justify owning and selling their words. (Busse 2010)

In *Translation and Gender*, literary theorist and gender scholar Mizuta Noriko asserts that in Japan as well, "original creation" and "authorship" were constructed as "a masculine occupation" based on the idea of authorial genius developed by Romantic writers (Mizuta 2006: 162). The gendered nature of this authorship concept is relevant because a majority of today's dōjinshi creators and readers are women (Orbaugh 2009: 175). Women's writing has a long history of being considered non-normative, lacking in universality, and concerned with trivialities, and still carries these associations today inside and outside Japan (Saito 2006: 181). Recent research into modes of reading of female readers in Japan appears to confirm the continuing marginalization of women's literature (Aoyama and Hartley 2009: 2, 25), in spite of the fact that Japan's literary canon appears to include a relatively large number of female authors. One specific example of this in manga studies may be the pathologization of fujoshi readers of boys' love manga (which, incidentally, are closely tied with their dōjinshi counterpart, yaoi).

As noted above, the concept of single authorship, one of the concepts underlying present-day dismissal of fanworks, is an arbitrary construct that was created in order to facilitate monetary gain. Still, the arguments used to build this construct became "common sense" knowledge in many academic fields. Today dōjinshi, a medium created primarily by women, is problematized on the basis of its "amateurish" authorship. I could conclude that there is a very real possibility that gender still plays a role in the dismissal of dōjinshi as of little relevance to the broader category of manga.

Nele Noppe

5. Authorship of dōjinshi: the rise of communal creation

The issue of gender points to another aspect of the single-author concept that influences views on dōjinshi today. Women's interactions with reading material have often been described as communal rather than solitary. Japanese literature scholars Tomoko Aoyama and Barbara Hartley argue that their book, *Girl Reading Girl in Japan*,

> (...) demonstrates the tendency of many girls in Japan to read in groups. Collective reading practices, as contributors to this collection repeatedly demonstrate, greatly enhance the pleasure of the text while also providing girls with the opportunity to consider more pragmatic issues of everyday life. (Aoyama and Hartley 2009: 5)

The concept of original authorial genius relies on the generation of supposedly new ideas by a single, inspired mind, whose function is to limit the possible meanings of texts and point readers towards a single appropriate interpretation or limited set of possible interpretations (Bardzell 2006: 16). Yet it seems that communal, participatory production and consumption of cultural goods is currently gaining ground over solitary production and consumption, in Japan and elsewhere. The technological advances that enable fan remix culture greatly encourage, indeed rely upon, community-based creation (Hughes et al 2007: 25). Additionally, this remix culture takes place largely in online hypertext, a medium whose characteristic interconnectivity does not encourage traditional linear narratives controlled by one single author (Hayles 2001: 21).

In his analysis of the postmodernist aspects of otaku culture, cultural critic Azuma Hiroshi points out that "traditional authorship plays an extremely small role" in the way fans consume and interpret cultural goods (Azuma 2009: 88). Otaku culture scholar Patrick Galbraith adds that Azuma's description of the motivations of male otaku is applicable to female fujoshi as well (Galbraith 2009). Nowhere is the rise of participatory culture more evident than in fan communities, where communal production and reading are characterized as normative by researchers focusing on Japanese fandoms as well as English-language fan studies scholars. Dōjinshi, for instance, are often created by a group consisting of two or more persons. They are

distributed online or at sokubaikai, where direct interaction between readers and creators is easy. They are read by a community of readers who, even if they read on their own, are united by common fascination for a particular source work and common understanding of the particular codes expressed in fanworks based on that work. The communal nature of fanwork production is expressed by the very term that is attached to various media to denote them as fanworks: "dōjin", meaning "same person", in the sense of "person with similar interests". A "*dōjin-shi*" is a magazine created by and for like-minded individuals.

The example of dōjinshi suggests that participatory and communal modes of production deserve more attention within manga studies. I could probably characterize not only the creation of fanworks, but almost any form of participation in manga fandom as "communal": meta discussion on online message boards, blogs, LiveJournal communities and mailing lists, creation of scanlations and fansubs, participation in conventions, and so forth.

Fannish activities are not the only part of manga culture that is distinctly communal. While commercially published manga are usually identified as the work of a single author, many mangaka [authors of manga] work with a team of assistants in order to keep up with stressful publication schedules. Editors play a large role in the shaping of manga's stories. Interaction with readers through reader suggestions to manga magazines and author's notes in manga is a regular part of manga creation. Perhaps the value that is still being accorded to single authorship within manga studies on an academic level is disproportionate to the importance of that concept within manga culture itself (Jaszi and Woodmansee 1995: 769).

In conclusion: towards continuing relevance of manga studies

The legal framework in which "original" authors' rights are heavily favored over those of readers, and in which copyright is assumed to constitute holy writ, seems eminently unsuited to contemporary and developing cultural realities. Technological developments are causing drastic changes in modes of cultural production. In the case of dōjinshi, technology—both print technology and more recent software and hardware innovation—is having a tremendous influence on dōjinshi development. In

the seventies, the proliferation of various technologies for copying enabled a boom in dōjinshi production (Nishimura 2002: 25), and dōjinshi creation is continually made easier and transformed through technology today. Indeed, many dōjinshi are now published online, and an increasing number of those published in print format are produced by *sākuru* who interact almost exclusively over the internet (Aoyama and Hartley 2009: 175).

In this paper, I have touched only briefly upon the particularities of dōjinshi creators as members of a fan culture with a distinct function within postmodern society. As suggested by Umberto Eco as early as 1960 (Eco 1989: 13) and maintained by Azuma in the context of contemporary Japanese fan cultures, scientific and technological changes have extremely far-reaching consequences as to the ways consumers interpret media. Fujoshi and otaku are said to be forerunners in this evolution of consumers (Azuma 2009: 25), and for this reason, the advantages of more intensive study of the media they produce in the process of consuming manga and other source media are not to be underestimated.

There may be other, socially problematic consequences to academic neglect in manga studies of works published outside legally acceptable channels that were created to fit the single authorial genius mold. Works by creators belonging to a minority or traditionally unprivileged social group are often branded as non-normative and therefore not of interest to a very wide audience, greatly diminishing the likelihood that a publishing company with commercial goals will invest in the work, and increasing the chance that the creators will turn to non-standard modes of publication. I have briefly touched upon the potential influence of gender on views of dōjinshi; inquiries into other factors such as race or sexuality of creators might yield similar results. Avoiding these issues in manga studies would be socially irresponsible, and dōjinshi may be an excellent starting point for productive discussion.

Contemporary copyright legislation and aesthetic ideals such as the concept of the original author are still assumed by authorities to be modern and advanced; the Japanese Copyright Research and Information Center states that "The protection and people's awareness of copyright are said to reflect the degree of cultural development of the country" (Copyright Research and Information Center (CRIC) n.d.). In direct

opposition to this kind of rigid adherence to existing copyright conventions, many scholars in law, economics, and new media studies now argue that contemporary copyright legislation is in fact outdated, because it is totally unsuited to contemporary modes of cultural production as determined by scientific and technological advances, and harmful to scholarship and the development of creative culture. Lessig and other legal scholars argue that further tightening of copyright legislation runs counter to principles of freedom of expression (Lessig 2004). From an information theory perspective, scholars Jerald Hughes, Karl Reiner Lang, Eric Clemons and Robert J. Kauffman contend that in an economy where a majority of cultural goods are either digital or easily digitized, perceptions of what is harmful copyright infringement are not only passé but actively detrimental to economic development (Hughes et al 2007: 21). Cultural policy scholar Kawashima Nobuko agrees that legal changes to accommodate amateur cultural production are a must in order for governments to encourage cultural development (Kawashima 2010: 4). Many English-language fan studies scholars have also argued that fan activities should enjoy some form of legal protection (Noda 2008: 20; Kawashima 2010: 19; Organisation for Transformative Works n.d.), with some even proposing that it would be appropriate for fan creators to receive some form of monetary compensation for their fannish labour (De Kosnik 2009: 124).

Continuing to do research within a framework created largely out of the economic concerns of a certain group of creators is is not only bad scholarship. Uncritical acceptance of outdated ideas on copyright and authorship may also perpetuate the idea of a growing "irrelevance" of the humanities, of which manga studies is a part, and make manga scholars appear increasingly out of touch with the way their research subject is being experienced by consumers. Manga studies focus on a medium with a large proportion of young and tech-savvy readers, a considerable number of whom are involved in some form of online fannish interaction and directly experience the disconnect between legal restrictions and technological realities. A stronger focus on fans and their media could help manga scholars avoid dismissing dōjinshi with the same arguments that were employed for decades to keep manga and comics marginalized as academic subjects, and assure the continuing relevance of manga studies. Examining dōjinshi and other fannish media brings into stark focus

Nele Noppe

several important aspects of new economic and technological realities that greatly influence the consumption of manga inside and outside Japan.

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10

Theorizing comics/manga genre as a productive forum:
yaoi and beyond

Mizoguchi Akiko

It's not a "hobby"! To me, reading manga is a synonym for "living"! (Miura 2006: 13)

It's about being able to see how the other person's brain and her desire work. We both develop fantasies based on just a little bit of information we gain from observation. We'd say to each other something like, gee, your antennae are way too sensitive! It's a pleasure to observe each other. The only word that can describe what lies between such buddies and myself is "love," I think. (Miura 2007: 3)

The *yaoi* genre consists of male-male romance manga (narrative comics) and illustrated novels created by women for women. Its history spans 40 or 50 years, depending on whether we locate its origin at the "beautiful boy" manga within the *shōjo* manga genre of the 1970s, or at Mori Mari's 1961 novel, *Koibitotachi no mori* [The Lovers' Woods]. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to survey this history,[1] it is significant to note that today in early 2010 the wider *yaoi* genre mainly consists of the commercial "boys'

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1 For a survey of the history of the larger yaoi genre, see Mizoguchi (2003 a, b).

love" genre, also called BL (pronounced *bii eru*, and hereafter written BL), and the fanzines, or *dōjinshi*. The commercial BL publications have been central in the larger yaoi genre since 1991.[2] The first era of BL publications was largely defined by *June* (pronounced "juné," close to the Japanized pronunciation of "Genet") because this magazine led the larger yaoi genre as the only commercial publication during the 1980s until it was discontinued in 2004. The second era of BL publications emerges after 2004. While many of the changes were gradually occurring during the first era, we can list the following as the characteristics of the second era of the BL centered period: (1) With the BL-focused labels starting in the U.S., globalization of yaoi becomes even more prominent than in the first era. (2) In addition to drama CDs and OVA, original video animation (animation works designed for personal viewing at the consumers' households and not to be broadcast or theatrically released) that were produced during the first era, BL content starts to be made into animation for television networks.[3] Also, productions of live-action films based on or inspired by BL begin to appear.[4] (3) The number and visibility of BL authors who branch into other genres or those who publish in both yaoi and other genres increase.[5] (4) The publishers started to re-publish the past works that had been out of print either in the *bunko*, smaller and cheaper paperback formats, or hardcover, so-called *aizōban*, or to-be-cherished-for-long formats. (5) The term *fujoshi*, literally meaning a "rotten girl," was coined by the mass media, and much

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2 For the reasons why the year 1991 is identified as the beginning of the BL era, see Mizoguchi (2003 a, b).

3 As an example, see the anime *Junjō romanchika* [Pure Heart Romantica] (dir. Kon Chiaki, 2008) based on the manga story of the same title by artist Nakamura Shungiku. This anime was broadcast on the AT-X network.

4 As an example of the former, see *Boys Love* (dir. Terauchi Kōtarō, 2007). As an example of the latter, see the film series based on the novel series "Takumi-kun Series" by Gotō Shinobu. The titles of the live-action films are as follows. *Takumi-kun siriizu: Soshite harukazeni sasayaite* [Takumi-kun Series: And Then, Whisper to the Spring Breeze], *Takumi-kun siriizu: Nijiirono garasu* [Takumi-kun Series: The Rainbow-Colored Glass], and *Takumi-kun sirīzu: Bibôno diteiru* [Takumi-kun Series: The Details of the Beautiful Countenance] (dir. Yokoyama Kazuhiro, 2007, 2009, 2010). The fans' comments online and what my yaoi fan friends have told me both suggest that the audience for these so-called "BL movies" does not overlap with BL readership very much.

5 As examples of the former, see Nishi Keiko and Yoshinaga Fumi. For the latter, see Nakamura Asumiko, Aniya Yuiji, and basso who uses a different penname, Ono Natsume, for her non-BL works.

reportage of yaoi women fans under this term increased their visibility.[6] (7) Although many second-era yaoi continue to follow the first-era conventions, their styles and approaches are becoming more diverse. For example, most second-era yaoi stories continue to assign fixed gender roles of the aggressive character (*sémé*) and the passive one (*uké*) who play top and bottom in sex and these stories continue to function on the level of both romantic and buddy narratives.[7] Nevertheless, post 2004, the graphic styles, settings, and storylines have become more diversified and the presence of what I define as the fantasmatic "yaoi formula" such as "homophobic homo" characters and "rapes of love" have significantly decreased.[8]

Since late 1998 I have taken a dual approach to the field of BL publications as a researcher and fan of yaoi. My critical examination of yaoi begins with the premise that yaoi does not represent any person's reality, but rather is a terrain where straight, lesbian, and other women's desires and political stakes mingle and clash and where representations are born. My research is informed by Teresa de Lauretis who has written in relation to her analysis of the feminist debates on pornography (produced for heterosexual men). She writes, "Feminist analysis and politics have always proceeded concurrently with—indeed have been prompted by—the social injury suffered by women, but the strength of feminism, or what social power it may have, does not disprove that injury" (de Lauretis 1994: 146). In other words, de Lauretis suggests that neither the pro-pornography position that pornographic representation occurs in the realm of fantasy, nor the anti-pornography position that pornography equals violence against women is entirely appropriate. By theorizing the female subject as a complex amalgam of conscious and political subjecthood and private and psychoanalytic subjectivity, she has shown that the seemingly contradictory double movement is inherently necessary in feminist work on representation (de Lauretis 1994: 147). As

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6 Initially, many yaoi fans openly resisted against the term *fujoshi* as a negative stereotype that was coined by the mass media. By today in 2010, however, many yaoi fans have come to use it as their own. For fans' opinions on and discussions about *fujoshi*, see Natō (2007).

7 For a detailed analysis of the yaoi formula, see Mizoguchi (2000)

8 For analyses on the reasons why homophobia and rapes have come to appear less often, see Mizoguchi (2007). A detailed analysis of the recently diversified styles of BL fiction needs to wait for a future opportunity. As for recent examples of popular works and trends, guidebooks such as Next henshūbu ed. (2008, 2009) are useful.

Judith Butler argues, theoretically a female subject is not restricted to identify with the female position in a fantasy scenario, but is also capable of identifying with the male position or the scenario as a whole. However, as the female subject always also functions at the level of social subject, she—who de Lauretis calls "Dworkin"—may not be able to secure enough distance from the pornographic text, since such a text is a public representation that depicts women's debasement. This double movement is clearly manifest in the context of the yaoi phenomenon. The fact that women have engaged in reading these male homoerotic representations as representing their fantasies for several decades attests to the efficacy of the theory of the psychoanalytic subject of fantasy; that is, the fact that the subject is not restricted to identifications with one position (usually equivalent to their own position in real life) in the fantasy scenario. At the same time, however, the fact that so many Japanese women continue to need male homoerotic representations that are significantly remote from their own reality also indicates the injury suffered by women.

Such a double movement has been criticized as an escapist trope and evaluated as a system of pleasure, as critics such as Kaneda Junko have surveyed (Kaneda 2007a, b). This paper will examine the way in which the discursive battlefield of yaoi functions as a forum or community of women through the representations of beautiful male characters. First, I will discuss the special sense of community yaoi has come to constitute. I will also discuss the way in which the yaoi genre operates as a "virtual lesbian" space. BL fictions are public representations since they are commercially produced and sold. At the same time, however, BL fictions nurture extremely private bonds among women fans. Nearly twenty years into the BL centered period of the larger yaoi genre, a few hundred women, many of them veterans with over a decade of experience, make their living as professional BL authors,[9] while at the same time these professionals have functioned as fellow yaoi fans within the intimate "virtual

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9 A recent guidebook on BL manga, Next henshūbu ed. (2009) lists 314 manga artists as the authors of major manga paperbacks (*tankōbon*) published between October 2008 and September 2009. A guidebook on BL novels, *BL shōsetsu pāfekuto gaido* [The Perfect Guide to Boys'-Love Novels] lists 151 BL authors. Both lists do not claim to be comprehensive. It is impossible to find out how many of the listed authors are full time professional writers and artists. However, it should be fairly reasonable to assume that these figures are close to BL authors who make their living at the profession.

lesbian" space inhabited by almost all women. In this paper, I will suggest that such a dunique combination of public and private spheres has given birth to the possibilities of productive queer forum[10]. The examples of feminist, lesbian and queer activist moments which this paper can only briefly touch upon will be further developed elsewhere in the near future.

As award-winning literary author Miura Shion,[11] who is arguably the most famous yaoi fan in Japan, has declared in the earlier quote, "reading" yaoi means "living" yaoi, that is, to live the life of a yaoi-community member. In addition, what Miura calls "love" between her fantasy buddies also exists among many yaoi women fans. This paper aims to explicate such "love" in the preparation of analyzing the possibilities of that "love." By doing so, it also attempts to present a possibly new approach to genre studies of comics and manga from and beyond the realm of yaoi.

As I noted in the beginning, this paper defines male-male romantic manga and illustrated novels as the constituents of the larger yaoi genre. The reason why I include the illustrated novels even though the venue is specifically designed for comics and manga studies comes from the yaoi genre itself. Sagawa Toshihiko, while editor-in-chief of both the manga-centered and novel-centered volumes of *June* magazine, replied to the question why the novel-centered ones sold more copies as follows. He said that most of the novel authors who sent in their works to *June* had been raised on manga and when writing text-only stories, "they are merely creating manga with words." (Schodt 1996: 121) Sagawa's theory applies to the contemporary BL novels as well. In fact, it seems fair to say that the BL novels are not complete until the seme (aggressive) and uke (passive) protagonists (sometimes along with other major subsidiary characters) are visualized in illustrations drawn by manga artists of the same

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10 Kurihara (1993: 338) has suggested, as early as in 1993, that yaoi women fans resemble lesbian separatists and perhaps are spiritually lesbians. This paper is inspired by Kurihara, but is also motivated by my feminist awareness that economical independence and activities in the public sphere are crucial for women in capitalist society. This is the reason why this paper focuses on professional BL authors and their readership in contrast to Kurihara who observed amateur fanzine creators and readers. Of course, some professional BL authors do engage in the fanzine world and many readers of BL fiction participate in the fanzine world as well, including myself. Recent scholarship on yaoi fanzine (dōjinshi) practitioners, for example, Kaneda (2007), Natō (2007), Azuma (2010), does not seem to relate to Kurihara (1993).

11 Miura Shion received the Naoki Award in 2006 for *Mahoro eki mae Tada benriken* [The Handyman Shop Tada in Front of the Mahoro Station].

Mizoguchi Akiko

genre (there are some illustration-only artists as well, but their drawing style is the same as the manga artists'.) For example, author Sakiya Haruhi describes one of her passive characters as a 30-year old plain looking and very skinny man whose narrow eyes have eyelids that are only slightly double-edged. The image of this character that moves around in the minds of the readers is the guy on the left in this illustration (fig. 1). While admittedly he looks a little more plain and slimmer than the aggressive *sémé*

Fig 1: Sakiya Haruhi, *Shinzô ga fukaku hazeteiru* (The Heart Is Deeply Bursting). Gentôsha ruchiru/Rutile bunko, 2010. Cover illustration by Shimizu Yuki.

character on the right, I suggest that he belongs to the category of "beauty" from the general point of view. Author Sakiya writes in her postscript: "In fact, it occurred to me, 'Ms. Shimizu would surely draw even the plain character nicely,' and I created this character" (Sakiya 2010: 344). In other words, manga artist Shimizu Yuki's style and skill spawned the creation of the "plain" passive character in question. In this sense, even though Shimizu and Sakiya may not have conferred, they can be said to have collaborated on this illustrated novel. In addition, since a BL manga artist tends to be assigned the job to draw illustrations for novels that share

settings and subject matter with her own manga works, BL manga and literary works often organically interact with each other. For example, upon seeing the cover of Matsuoka Natsuki's novel *Hanayakana meikyū* [Gorgeous Labyrinth] (fig. 2), drawn by artist Yoshinaga Fumi, many readers would correctly expect the story to be related with the French court as depicted in Yoshinaga's period manga stories such as *Jerāru to Jakku* [Gerard and Jacques] (fig. 3). For those readers who have only been familiar with either the manga artist or the literary author, the new combination can

Fig 2: Matsuoka Natsuki, *Hanayakana meikyū* (Gorgeous Labyrinth). Shinshokan diapurasu/Dear+ bunko, 2004. Cover illustration by Yoshinaga Fumi.

and does introduce them to a formerly unknown artist or author. In addition, there are

always some fans of Yoshinaga who decide to read Matsuoka's novel for the first time because of the illustration, and some fans of Matsuoka who liked Yoshinaga's illustrations would purchase her manga books for the first time next time they shop. For these reasons, especially for the purposes of this paper that examines the community and forum of yaoi fans, it is not appropriate to only discuss BL manga.

Fig 3: Yoshinaga Fumi, *Jerâruto Jakku* (Gerard and Jacques). Biblos Super Be Boy comics, 2000. (The currently available version from Hakusensha in bunko format has a different illustration for the cover.)

1. The Sense of Community of Yaoi Fans

In order to show the special sense of the yaoi community, I will discuss the incident in which X, my co-worker at the time, contacted me via the author of the BL novel *Rimuresu no sora* [The Rimless Sky] after I was thanked in the postscript to that novel as follows: "Especially in the latter half of this series, I have received precious advice from Mizoguchi Akiko, Grass-Roots Cultural Lesbian Activist and my dear friend, about issues of sexuality" (Eda Yūri 2002: 306).[12] X emailed the author, Eda Yūri, to ask if the "Mizoguchi Akiko" in her postscript might be her own colleague by giving the name of the institution where she worked. Eda replied to X after she confirmed with me that it was okay to let X know. Thus I came to be re-introduced to X as a yaoi fan who liked the same novel I did. This episode suggests that yaoi women fans feel psychologically closer to another member of the yaoi community than to someone who she suspects to be an outsider. For X, it was easier to email Eda, the author of her favorite novel, whom she had never met in person, than to simply ask me with whom she shared the community of the workplace, because X was sure that Eda shared membership with herself, while she was not sure about me.

This sense of membership is strengthened by participation in fanzine (*dōjinshi*) conventions. As is well known, the fanzine conventions are conducted in

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12 The story can be found in the currently available combined *aizōban* volume *Natsu no kodomo*, which does not contain the postscript. In her publications and website, Eda writes her first name as "Yuuri." In this paper, I employ a more usual spelling, "Yūri," in order to avoid confusions for English-language readers.

a decidedly non-hierarchical manner in which all persons, whether professional or amateur, famous or obscure, are equally considered voluntary participants. Thus, at fanzine conventions one feels equal to one another in the yaoi community. It does not really matter if one is too shy to actually say hello to her favorite author and ends up wondering which person among those manning the author's booth might be the author herself. The fact that the famous author is basically indistinguishable from her friends and assistants actually enhances the sense of community to which all the yaoi fans, including the popular commercial authors, equally belong. Thus the fans come to feel psychologically closer to professional authors in general including those one has not actually "met" at the convention. It is this "feeling" that is extended to the authors who one only knows through their works.[13]

2. Mini-Comments

What bridges the fans' experiences of sharing the same physical space with professional authors are the authors' personal mini-comments and postscripts.[14] First, there are the mini-comments. When a reader picks up a BL paperback (*tankōbon*) edition, she sees a cover that usually portrays two male protagonists (sometimes one), and then, when she flips the book open, she sees the mini-comment on the flap on the right hand side, usually facing a color illustration on the left page.[15] In other words, the mini-comment is the first textual information written by the author that the reader sees before reading the story itself, immediately after reading the title and the blurb on the cover that

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13 This argument has been developed from Mizoguchi (2007: 60).

14 There are yaoi fans who never participate in fanzine conventions, but they extend their experiences of face-to-face communication with their fellow fans to their favorite professional authors. Most yaoi fans communicate with other fans online on a daily basis. While it is technically possible for some fans to "talk to" other fans solely online for a long period of time without seeing them in person, I have never met such a fan in my field work as a fan and researcher for longer than a decade.

15 For example, the paperbacks (*tankōbon*) published under the label "Bamboo Comics Reijin" from Take shobō print the plot summaries instead of the mini-comments. This does not necessarily mean that readers are less encouraged to form the sense of community with authors and other readers, because the volumes of this label often print the authors' comments and bonus manga episodes directly on the cover of the book itself, that is, beneath the "official" cover. The "official" cover is made of a sheet of paper that wraps the book. When the reader unwraps it, she finds the bonus comments or manga on the surface of the book itself. Many readers are aware of this and take the cover off before reading the story.

152

readers know is written by the editor. In the mini-comments on the flaps, most of the authors include chatty, trivial comments about such topics as diet, food, shopping, and even laundry from their everyday life as women, not as professional authors, usually under the profile section giving her name, date of birth, constellation, and blood type.

For example, on the cover of Takaido Akemi's manga story *Ren'ai no kamisama ni ie* [Tell It to the God of Love Affairs] two slim beautiful boys are portrayed with blue as the dominant color, befitting the story in which water plays the important role as the setting and the visual motif as the two boys fall in love with each other (fig. 4: right). When the cover is flipped open, we find an illustration in which the torso of an androgynously beautiful passive character is depicted. To its right, that is, what is inserted between the cover and the color illustration is Takaido's mini-comment. Accompanying a simplified self-portrait is Takaido's hand-written comment

that reads: "There's something I remember when summer comes." It is followed by her name both in roman letters and Japanese, and the word "PROFILE" (in English capital letters) and her comment in printed types: "Summer is approaching again this year but I have not lost any weight. / I realize I am writing the same comment every year. / I'm in trouble" (Takaido 2007: the flipped side of the cover). Decidedly unrelated to the content of the story, Takaido here is chatting with her readers as if they were her girlfriends.

Fig 4. Takaido Akemi, *Renaino kamisama ni ie* [Tell It to the God of Love Affairs]. Hôbunsha hanaoto comics, 2007. Cover and flap.

When the story is gloomy, the gap between the author's comments and the content of the story may seem almost absurd. Konohara Narise's novel *Well* is a psycho-drama set in a futuristic world where only a few human beings, including the protagonists, have survived catastrophe that turned everything on the ground into white sand. Konohara's mini-comment reads:

I knew that jeans fade in the wash, so I always used a special detergent for

delicate clothes to wash them. But recently I felt I could not bother any longer and used a regular detergent. And well, fine, they did fade. I've told this to my mother and she said, "I'll dye them for you." But I have mixed feelings about it. (Konohara 2007: the flipped side of the cover)

Just before the story begins, the reader is assured that no matter what will follow in the fiction part of the book, the author is an ordinary Japanese woman next-door. In other words, even though the BL comics and illustrated novels all depict romance between impossibly beautiful male characters and sometimes even extreme situations in which they fight, through repeated reception of such fictions, what is cultivated among the fans is the sense of membership to the yaoi community, which is the community of their fellow women fans.

3. Postscripts

In addition to the mini-comments on the flaps, most of the BL paperbacks have postscripts that are usually two-to-four pages in length and much more substantial than the mini-comments on the flaps. Besides nearly obligatory phrases such as "Thanks for reading my story," "Hope to see you again soon in a future volume," and acknowledgments to the editors, assistants, friends, and family who helped, postscripts usually include two other elements. The first consists of discussions of the production of the story that often include how the story was conceived. The second element consists of the author's reflection on what she has discerned about her own tastes in the story, characters, settings, and so forth. This shows BL creators as fans who are on a journey, as it were, of pursuing their

Fig 5: Machiya Hatoko, *Mata ashita* (See You Tommorow). *Biblos Super Be Boy comics*, 2006, 201.

pleasure by trying out the possibilities of male-male narrative fantasies. They make it a point of sharing that experience with other fans to show that they consider themselves fellow fans.

Mizoguchi Akiko

For example, manga artist Machiya Hatoko writes in the postscript of her first paperback *Mata ashita* [See You Tomorrow] (fig. 5):

> I came to realize my own "taste" (shikō) through this volume. I noticed that all my passive characters are *sasoi uké* [literally meaning 'inviting bottom,'] (And all of them are unaware of their making the initiative.) Well, I myself had not been aware of my liking such characters before. [sweat mark]   (Machiya 2007: 201)

On the left side of this comment, we find the three passive characters from the stories in the volume. Drawn in an extremely simplified and comical style, the three male characters look at the reader as they take off their shirts with the flushed cheeks, with the line: "Eat me/us [heart mark]." While all forms of narrative fiction reflect the creator's "taste/liking" in the characters, story lines, settings, and so forth, at least to some extent, it is significant that in BL fictions, such favorite elements are not only reflected in the representations but also being discovered by the creator herself during—or afterwards as in the case above—the process of creating these stories. While new artists tend to present such "discoveries" and "reporting/sharing" activities in succession, even the experienced authors continue to engage in an ongoing process of discovering her "taste/liking" throughout their career. And they share that discovery with their readers.

For example, artist Yorita Saemi whose first professional paperback volume was published in 1997, relates such a "discovery" in the postscript of her 2004 book *Buririanto burū* [Brilliant Blue].

> After an entire volume, all they have done is kiss on the forehead…/ In addition, this story/ must be like hell for those who hate stupid bottom (*aho uké*) characters…./ But then, before creating this work, I myself had not been aware that I had the attribute (*zokusei*) of liking the stupid bottom. / Since I started drawing Nanami, I have made a succession of discoveries. It was fun.
> (Yorita 2004: 171-172)

Aho uké literally means a silly passive character, but in this story, Nanami is no simple ninny. An electric specialist, Nanami is a unique amalgam of extreme good looks like a pop idol, an exceptional ability to calculate numerical figures, and a simple-minded, innocent way of thinking and speaking like a small child, despite the fact that he is in his mid-twenties. It is artist Yorita herself who has created such a complicated character and has the power to move him around in the story. At the same time, however, through her creative process, Yorita loses some control of herself by making an unexpected discovery of her previously unconscious "self." And once again, Yorita does not only disclose this personal discovery to her close friends but makes a point of sharing this discovery with her readers through her postscript. Because of that, a reader who has just finished reading Machiya's and Yorita's manga stories and is now reading the postscripts would feel as if she were participating in the moment of these artists' discoveries for their formerly unrecognized tastes for "inviting bottom" and "stupid bottom" characters. If this reader herself has read the story with such characters for the first time and has just realized that she is fond of them, she would strongly sympathize with the artists. In this way, receiving the romantic narratives with male characters and communicating with female authors of such stories always happen simultaneously in the yaoi community. By repeating this process, veteran fans often come to build such relationships with many more authors as fellow fans.

4. Shikō/shikō（Taste/Orientation）

The concept of "taste" (*shikō*) is important in this context. Each fan is considered to possess a certain propensity towards favorite patterns, and such a propensity is called shikō which literally means "taste." But what yaoi fans really mean by "shikō" is closer to the concept of "orientation," as in "sexual orientation." The Japanese words for "taste" and "orientation" are homonyms, " 嗜好 taste (shikō) and " 指向 orientation (shikō)." As a homosexual person recognizes his/her sexual orientation towards members of the same sex, yaoi fans recognize their orientation towards first, male-male narratives, and second, such types as the "inviting bottom." Although, of course, a fan might very well manifest various orientations, for example, liking the "inviting

bottom" characters as well as regular "bottom" characters who never initiates sex and/or "feisty bottom (*yancha uké*)" characters who are full of childlike energy. Even so, many yaoi women fans generally share the understanding that serious fans should have, and be aware of, their own "orientations."[16]

Such an idea about one's "taste" as similar to "orientation" has an interesting parallel to the popular discourse surrounding women's sexual orientations in Japan. Yaoi women fans call non-fans "general people" (*ippanjin*) and consider them "normal" in contrast to themselves. Yaoi fans consider themselves "abnormal" for two reasons that both deal with a sense of taboo. Firstly, yaoi fans regularly create and read pornography in a society in which women are not supposed to act as subjects of sexual desire. Secondly, yaoi fans like male-male romance even though they are themselves women. Even though most yaoi women fans are straight in their real-life sexuality, they consider themselves a sort of sexual minority.[17] Just as non-heterosexual people in contemporary Japanese society are expected to be aware of and declare their non-normative sexual orientations, yaoi women fans expect to be able to determine and declare their own tastes/orientations. It is as if serious yaoi fans are supposed to "come out." What is important is that yaoi fans have mixed feelings of pride and shame about being abnormal and special, as opposed to normal yet simply ordinary non-fans. In this sense, it should be fair to say that yaoi fans share the identity of the minority sexuality (sexual orientation) of yaoi.[18]

5. Virtual Lesbian

16 I thank Kakinuma Eiko for having suggested that the way yaoi fans tend to know and continue to pursue what they like is similar to many homosexual individuals. A detailed analysis of the similarities between the two needs to wait for a future opportunity.

17 One such example can be found in a yaoi fanzine practitioner's comment as quoted Natō (2007: 74): "I feel that to publicly declare that I am 'fujoshi' is a bit similar to publicly declare one's sexuality." The context of this quote makes it clear that what she means by "sexuality" here is the same as the "minority sexual orientation."

18 Kaneda Junko states that for each practitioner of ani-paro yaoi fanzines (dōjinshi) to reveal her favorite coupling, that is, which of the two protagonists borrowed from the original non-yaoi fictions to be assigned the aggressive/passive roles in the fanzines, functions at two levels. At one level, it is to reveal one's own code of interpretation. At the other, it is to "reveal what kind of sexual aspiration (shikō 志向）she has." What Kaneda (2007a: 174) refers to by the term "sexual aspiration" seems to overlap the concept of "sexual taste/orientations shikō: 嗜好／指向 " in this paper.

Mizoguchi Akiko

As a person of yaoi sexual orientation, yaoi women fans exchange their sexual fantasies. The reason yaoi fans can comfortably discuss their sexual desires in a society where women are conditioned not to behave as subjects of sexual desire is that, in the mind of the fan, she is merely talking about her favorite representation, not discussing her own sexuality. Because she can count on the fact that her fellow fans have read the same fictions, she usually does not even have to employ a sexual vocabulary to discuss her sexual fantasy. For example, a dialogue about Yamane Ayano's manga story *Faindā no hyōteki* [You're my love prize in my viewfinder] such as the following is very common among the fans: "Isn't it great how the uké (passive character) runs off with all that cheerful vigor the morning after?" "Yeah. A feisty bottom (*yancha uké*) is the best!" (Mizoguchi 2007:59). This dialogue refers to a frame on the last page of the episode called "Fixer," which portrays the upper half of the passive character's body as he is running (fig. 6). No sexual vocabulary is used in this dialogue.[19] However, as the fans talk, they surely have in mind the graphic sex scene on the previous pages as well. The fans share the assumption that of course they have enjoyed the entire story, including the sex scene. But especially notable, in a sense of being different from many other BL stories and of providing bonus surprise at the end of the episode, is that portrayal of a beautiful and slender passive character energetically running off.

The yaoi community is similar to other sexual subcultures in which the participants exchange sexual fantasies and that exchange itself is part of sex with other people. Sherry Turkle quotes a seventeen-year-old male high school student who engages in netsex on MUDs (Multi-User Dungeons) as follows:

> With netsex, it is fantasies. My MUD lover doesn't want to meet me in RL[real life]. With *Playboy*, it was fantasies, too, but in the MUD there is also the other person. So I don't think of what I do on the MUD as masturbation. Although, you might say that I'm the only one who's touching me. But in netsex, I have to think of fantasies she will like too. So now, I see fantasies as something that's

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19 The fact that the term uké refers to bottom in sex is only instantly clear to yaoi fans since uké primarily means a "receptor" or "receiving" in Japanese. Gay men use uké to refer to bottom, but the combination with the adjective yancha successfully makes the term yancha uke foreign enough to them.

part of sex with two people, not just me in my room (Turkle 1997: 21).

The yaoi community, including the commercial BL industry, is the virtual space where all the participants, professionals and amateurs alike, must always function as fellow players of the game, as this young man and his MUD lover do. Unlike netsex in the MUDs, the yaoi community is fundamentally promiscuous, and the "lovers" do often meet each other in RL (real life). While the lovers of netsex can act raunchily with each other based in the safety of anonymity, yaoi women fans feel comfortable engaging in virtual sex with each other precisely because they know each other to be "fellow regular women next door" and "women who share the identity of the minority sexuality of yaoi" in an almost women-only space.

Fig 6: Yamane Ayano, *Faindā no hyōteki* (You're my love prize in my viewfinder). Biblos Super Be Boy comics, 2002, 70. (The re-print is currently available from Libre shuppan.)

The majority of yaoi women fans are heterosexual. Some might argue that calling those fans who are in heterosexual relationships in real life "lesbian" is inaccurate. Of course, they are not generally considered lesbians nor are they lesbian-identified themselves. But, if their sexual fantasies are filled with male-male homosexual episodes, is it still accurate to call them completely heterosexual? A friend, a happily married woman in her 30s with two kids, told me, "Not so much these days, but until a few years ago, I could not really recognize sex with my husband as a male-female act. In my mind, I transformed what I was doing to the male-male act in the BL fictions." Is it adequate to call her completely heterosexual?

From the point of view of defining sex as genital activity, the answer is yes. At the same time, however, we know that fantasies are deeply involved in human sexuality. My friend's male-male fantasy, which happens simultaneously with her heterosexual genital act, is as important as the act itself. In this sense, it is not accurate to consider her 100% heterosexual. In addition, I would argue that a person's sexual fantasies, accompanied by her genital act with another person, a masturbatory act, or

no act at all, are equally significant for the subject of such fantasies to such an extent that calling such fantasies "virtual sex" is appropriate (Mizoguchi 2007: 56-62).

Of course, at the most overt level, my friend was engaging in sex with her husband as "virtual gay men," just like the male characters in yaoi narratives in her mind, but at the same time she was aware that the characters were women fans' agents and not really representations of real-life gay men. Thus she was psychologically in the company of her fellow female fans in the yaoi community while physically she was with her husband.

Kitahara Minori, who has run a retail business of sex toys for women for 12 years and who has sold a total of over 30,000 dildos and vibrators, has recently called many of her customers the "athletic types" (*tai'ikukai-kei*, literally meaning 'the sports-oriented types') and explained that they "do not feel that they need fantasies. What they need is the switch", and "the batteries, not the erotic episodes." She differentiates such "athletic types" from the "cultural types" (*bunka-kei*) who "can enjoy eroticism through fantasies" including yaoi manga and novels (Kitahara 2008). Within the yaoi community, sexual fantasies are created, provided, and exchanged among yaoi women fans. Therefore I should add the following to Kitahara's explanation: Yaoi women fans need each other, not the switches and batteries. Just as the above-quoted male teenager can be called a "virtual heterosexual person" even though he never touches his sexual partner's body, yaoi fans can be called "virtual lesbians". Needless to say, being a "virtual lesbian" and being a heterosexual woman are completely compatible. [20]

6. Towards the Possibilities of Activism

This community of women who are bonded through the pleasure of "virtual lesbian sex" has increasingly been functioning as a discursive space that points towards lesbian, feminist, and queer activism. While more detailed and comprehensive analyses need to wait for a future opportunity, let me briefly discuss two points.

First, the BL genre in recent years has constantly produced manga and illustrated novels which portray characters who come out. In many of such works, the

20 Also, it is possible to praise "love" as a "virtual lesbian" simultaneously as one denounces lesbians/lesbianism. For an example, see Emikuri (1989: 40).

processes in which gay characters go through conflicts against and negotiations with their families, friends, colleagues and local community and are eventually accepted by them are depicted. Of course, the genre still produces stories in which the protagonists' homosexual orientation/taste is defined as "shameful disposition" (*ushirogurai seiheki*) which is used to make the story more dramatic. But at the same time, the genre also produces stories in which coming-out episodes and the ensuing events are portrayed in such a way that is a few steps ahead of reality in contemporary Japanese society, in the direction of equal rights for homosexual individuals. For example, I was recently surprised to read a story that was set in contemporary Japan where, if an employer terminates a contract with an employee because the latter is revealed as gay, such an employer would surely receive severe social sanctions (Akizuki 2006: 144). Also, BL produces such gay characters that are not really found in other genres. Here are two examples. One twenty-something character responds to his co-workers' teasing comment about his gay sexuality with humor (Yorita 2005: 176-177). (In this story, the protagonist works for his father's construction business in a rural city and many of his co-workers are middle-aged.) There is even a gay "parent" who raises "his" two children of his late lover, who had been married prior to engaging in a homosexual relationship (Takeuchi 2003). (His lover had adopted him. He is legally the older brother in law to the teenagers.) The fact that this protagonist is gay and a good "parent" is accepted not only by his "children" but also by his supportive neighbors. As I "meet" these gay characters almost every week, I cannot help but think that the BL genre today is constantly holding a workshop, as it were, that pursues and experiments with case studies on gay-friendly society and gay citizens, even though the genre is mostly populated by heterosexual women. These BL stories with gay characters are different from those fantastic ones in which the fact that the two male protagonists fall in love is not even recognized as homosexual by the other characters. Rather, these stories pursue and present the realistic strategies homosexual individuals can take in contemporary Japan in order to overcome the existing discrimination and negative stereotypes. Needless to say, representing the better future constitutes activism in itself even if only at the level of representation.

I do not mean to suggest that these gay characters are free of yaoi formulae.

Rather, such formulae as top/bottom (semé/uké) roles in sex and the straight male characters fall in love with the members of the same sex still persist in the majority of the stories. In addition, as the number of gay-identified characters has increased, the following strange episode is increasingly seen in many stories. "The protagonist finds out that his new business associate is his ex whom he dumped. As he is surprised at the coincidence, his ex goes ahead and outs him as gay to his colleagues." (Does this mean that the protagonist's ex has told his colleagues that he used to date the protagonist? How would he explain that he was able to penetrate the protagonist's closet without coming out himself?) Such unrealistic yaoi formulae and the representations that reflect the authors' activist imagination coexist within the BL genre today, and sometimes even within one story. The fact remains, however, that many BL authors have been seriously thinking of what might happen to gay (homosexual) people in contemporary Japanese society from the minority position of yaoi sexuality (though many of them would not be conscious of it.) From this involved position, they have been coming up with possible scenarios in which the gay characters can live a better live in a society that seems slightly advanced than, but is feasibly extended from, the real one. The mixture of such an activist impulse and fantastic tropes is admittedly complicated. Nevertheless I suggest that the activist power of such representations does not disappear despite the yaoi formulae. Of course, the readers who are unfamiliar with such formulae might find it difficult to continue reading the stories and end up giving up before they get to the activist-oriented contents. For this reason, as an example I refer to a non-BL novel, *Yōkian yawa: sono tantei, hito ni arazu* [The Story of the Strange Ghosts: That Detective Is Not a Human]. Written by BL author Eda Yûri（榎田尤利）under her non-BL penname that is pronounced the same but is differentiated by the first name written with *kana* syllabary instead of Chinese characters（榎田ユウリ）, the story is set in a fantastic world where human beings and various kinds of *yōjin* (subspecies of humans that are endowed with special abilities) coexist (Eda 2009). As far as the appearances go, yōjin can usually pass as humans. The way this story portrays discriminations against yōjin in a highly political manner resembles homophobia in reality so much that it enables the reader to interpret yōjin activism as a metaphor of gay activism.

162

Secondly, the BL genre has increasingly been producing works that problematize or provoke examinations of the existing gender system and human sexuality more broadly, that is, marriage, reproduction, heterosexuality, the relationship between romantic love and the institution of marriage, and the traditional concept of family versus non-biological family. One recent powerful example is Kotobuki Tarako's manga story *Sex Pistols* (Kotobuki 2004 a, b, 2005 a, b, 2006).[21] Set in a world where 30% of humans belong to the *madararui* (brindled kind), which evolved from various animals, while 70% belong to *enjin* (monkey people), which evolved from apes just as men in reality, the story is dramatic and unpredictable. Significantly, in this fantastic story's world, complex strategies are necessary for the "brindled" individual's effective reproduction, and a variety of reproductive technologies are available to make them reproductive regardless of their genders. The reproductive couples include five male-male ones, one female-female one, and a three-some heterosexual one.

Sex Pistols offers numerous topics for discussions among fans because it both subverts and enforces heteronormative assumptions concerning love, sex, reproduction, and family. On one level, the fact that male-male couples and even a female-female couple get married and have children seems to subvert the heteronormative system. It is simply refreshing to see, even in representation, a renowned male English architect of aristocratic origin clad in a perfect suit recounting his days of nursing his son as his "mother" (fig. 7). But at the same time, this is a world in which everyone lives to fall in love and reproduce. There is no question that through a complicated double movement, "Sex Pistols" manages pleasurable narratives that are appealing and provocative at the same time. And it generates lively conversations among fans.

A comment such as, "I so love that Norio is cute and Kunimasa manly," and "I think it's a great work. All the characters are so attractive. But, I just can't stand that everything resorts to making a child and a marriage," "Well, yeah, but isn't it natural?" are made freely among the fans. Discussing the characters' charms is common among fans of any genre. However, such fundamental discussions about reproduction, romantic relationships, marriage, and family are usually avoided as "too serious," especially among women of different marital status, sexual orientation, educational and

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21 As of the summer of 2010, the story is serialized in *Magazine Be-Boy*.

political background. As we fellow fans share the minority "taste/orientation" of yaoi sexuality and primarily form bonds through pleasure as the subjects of sexual desire, or through "virtual lesbian sex" in the yaoi community, we are comfortable enough exchanging thoughts on numerous issues related to the broad concept of sexuality. In this sense, it seems reasonable to call the contemporary yaoi community an effective arena for feminist discourse even though only a small number of women have proclaimed themselves feminists.

Yoshinaga Fumi's *Ōoku*, or *The Inner Chambers*, is arguably the most critically acclaimed manga work by an artist who started her career as a BL author. The story is still ongoing, but it has already won several prizes including the very prestigious 13th Tezuka Osamu Cultural Prize Grand-Prix Award. In addition, it has been dramatized into a live-action film, which is to be theatrically released in Japan in October 2010. It is a science fiction period story set in the parallel world of Japan during the feudal Edo era, where the male population has diminished to one forth of the female one due to a strange epidemic. Thus, the shōgun in this feudal Japan as well as the other lords ruling the country are all women, while the inner chambers are populated by young and beautiful men whose job is to be the "stud" to the female shōgun. Artist Yoshinaga and aforementioned author/fan Miura Shion have agreed that this work is queer to an extent that has become possible only via shōjo manga (girls' comics) and BL (Yoshinaga 2007: 86). If I may add an explanation to their comment, what they mean by "via BL" does not refer to the love scenes between beautiful male characters of the inner chambers. (Though some of my undergraduate students who are unfamiliar with BL tend to assume that the existence of male-male scenes automatically

Fig 7: Kotobuki Tarako, *Sex Pistols*. Libre shuppan Super Be Boy comics, 2006, 14.

gives the story the status of a BL work, as I have seen in their book reports.) Rather, examining the fundamental question of sexuality, reproduction, and gender as shown above within the framework of entertaining fiction with sexual depictions itself is the practice cultivated within the BL genre in recent years. *Ōoku* is a shōjo manga work and as such, it does not include graphic sex scenes. However, it does convey the characters' sexuality. That is, the way they experience pleasure and pain by engaging in sexual acts involving membranes and bodily fluids is portrayed, through deft elliptical and symbolic techniques typical of shōjo manga, with a sense of physical immediacy. In addition, the extremely dynamic and intense female shōgun characters make a strong impression on the reader, because their emotional range greatly surpasses that of shōjo manga heroines. Yoshinaga has portrayed, in her BL stories, a number of male characters who are tossed around by and indulged in love and sex as both subject and object of sexuality, who suffer in the conflict between his identity as a male social subject and his newly assumed passive (uké) role (and thus a feminine position) in a romance with another man, and who put in all his energy for his profession which he feels is his vocation, all of them with an uncompromising vigor, sense of humor, and sometimes with splashes of bodily fluid. Through portraying such male characters for over a decade as a BL artist, Yoshinaga has undoubtedly gained such representational skills that I would liken to the well-trained musculature with a much wider mobility range than that of a regular woman. It is such a musculature that is mobilized in the creation of *Ōoku*. Once again, I have to stress that *Ōoku* is not a BL work. Judging from the magazine in which it is serialized, it is a shōjo manga work. Its story line suggests that it belongs to the context of feminist science fictions. Unlike Yoshinaga's BL stories, it is read by a cross-over readership of both genders. All this does not deny the fact, though, that *Ōoku* is an offspring of BL, or rather, the larger yaoi genre including the yaoi fanzine (dōjinshi) world, if we recall that Yoshinaga has been its active participant for many years.

7. The Potential of the Unconscious Queer Continuum

I have effectively claimed *Ōoku*, authored by the openly feminist artist Yoshinaga,[22] as

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22 Yoshinaga has "come out" as feminist in a published dialogue with Miura Shion. Yoshinaga

the fruit of yaoi as a feminist and queer forum. But I want to add that we should not be wrongly directed to the developmental schema in which yaoi women fans need to grow out of yaoi in order to become overt feminists. Rather, I repeat that the fact that many yaoi fans think that they are only having fun by reading, chatting, and enjoying their fantasies and not engaging in activism at all is exactly why the yaoi community has functioned and still functions as an unprecedented, effective political arena for women with the potential for activism. Some might criticize me for thinking too highly of a forum that after 20 years of commercialization has presented only such changes as I have described in this paper and only a few openly feminists. But I would argue that the quick, clear-cut feminist activism is an impossible dream to begin with.

Artist Watanabe Ajia has published an essay comic in which she relates her experience of attending the Pride March in New York City (fig. 8). In the last frame, her monologue goes: "It does not matter whether one is homosexual (*homo*), lesbian (*rezu*), or heterosexual (*hetero*). / Gentle feelings./ Let's live powerfully." At one level, Watanabe identifies with the position of the heterosexual in this sentence. But if we remember how yaoi fans consider themselves as members of the minority sexuality of yaoi as I have shown, the sentence should be interpreted as referring to the queer continuum that consists of gay, lesbian and yaoi sexuality. The gentle feelings here should refer more to the gesture to affirm Watanabe herself as a member of the queer continuum than to tolerate gays and lesbians from the position of the majority. Significantly, I participate in this queer continuum both as an out lesbian and a person of yaoi sexuality. In effect we, fellow yaoi fans, say to each other "Let's live powerfully," everyday and exchange "love."

Fig 8: Watanabe Ajia, "Watanabe Ajiaga iku honba NY geiparêdo (Watanabe Ajia Goes to the Gay Parade in NY, a Mecca [for Gays])" *Boy's Piasu*/ Pierce, November 2008, 109.

(2007a: 70)

Mizoguchi Akiko

It is then very unfortunate that this community of "love," and by extension the possibility of productive queer activism involving over a million women, is in danger of diminishing today due to problems such as the so-called "new second-hand bookstores",[23] "scanlation",[24] and censorship. As a fan, researcher and educator, I have come to strongly feel the need to address these imminent problems. For example, I have started to lecture in class how buying used books contributes to the diminishing of the BL industry. I have seen many startled faces when I explain to the students that only when they buy new copies their favorite authors and their publishers can gain some part of the money they pay for the books. (In their minds, they were just engaging in the "virtuous acts of recycling and saving money.") While my primary commitment lies with the larger yaoi genre which today mostly consists of the commercial BL industry and the fanzine world, I wish to start dialogues with the fans, researchers, educators, and industry representatives of other genres, as I am certain that many of us face similar problems regardless of genre. I hope that publishing this paper in the venue for global researches of comics and manga will encourage such conversations.

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23 This seemingly contradictory term, the "new second-hand bookstore" was coined to refer to such second-hand bookstores as *Book Off* and *Amazon Marketplace* that emerged in recent years in order to differentiate them from the traditional second-hand bookstores that usually carry the titles after a significant duration has passed since their publication. On the contrary, "new second-hand bookstores" often carry the titles shortly after their publications, sometimes even on the same day, and in much larger quantities. Several people who work at the regular bookstores have informed me that the number of shoplifting cases had obviously increased after the "new second-hand bookstores" proliferated.

24 "Scanlation" is an illegal act of scanning manga works, giving translations, and putting them on the web without permission. As for the "scanlation" in the English-language world, a number of participants including Nicole Nowlin gave me information at the Yaoi-Con 2009 (October 29-November 1, San Mateo, U.S.) I learned about the recent situation of the "scanlation" problem in South Korea from Yoshihara Yukari's presentation whose title can be translated as "Report: About Copyright Problems in the Korean Comics Industry, Based on an Interview with Won Soo Yeon." Yoshihara's presentation was given at a mini-symposium in conjunction with the *She Draws Comics* exhibition (Kyoto International Manga Museum, February 14, 2010).

Mizoguchi Akiko

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*Label names are given for the BL ("boys' love") books.

*Approximate meanings are given within the brackets for the Japanese language books.

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11

When a 'male' reads shōjo manga

ITŌ Kimio
(trans. Miyake Toshio)

My research field is sociology. In particular, my work so far has been about inquiring into cultural phenomena in a wider sense by tying them to politics, including power relations in everyday life, and masculinities studies in particular. Since the second half of the 1970s, one of my research topics has been the interrelationship between culture and masculinity, as well as masculinities and politics in a wider sense. In this paper, I should like to reflect on *shōjo* manga (or Japanese girls' comics) from the stance of men and masculinities studies. In what kind of situation do men read shōjo manga? What is it that makes shōjo manga attractive to men? And what kind of influence does the contact with shōjo manga have on men and masculinity? These issues also relate to what men and masculinity mean to shōjo manga.

Below, I focus on readers of shōjo manga; in particular, on the shōjo manga experience from the 1970s to the early 1980s. This experience involves internationally simultaneous and universal issues. In the summer of 2009, Oguma Eiji's book *1968* attracted wide attention in Japan. As evident from its title, it discusses the youth rebellions of 40 years ago. Recently, interest in the young generations' protests which broke out simultaneously all over the world in the economically developed nations, is spreading in the academic field. My presentation too is deeply related to that period's events.

I began to seriously read shōjo manga at the beginning of the 1970s, right in the

middle of the aftermath of the explosion of counterculture and in the continuing wave of political youth rebellion. From the late 1960s to the 1970s I was living in the middle of left-wing student movements. During my time as a student activist, there were two 'rumors' about me; not widespread, but shared amongst some activists of the Women's Liberation Movement whom I knew. One rumor was that 'Itō had a huge number of shōjo manga under his bed and that he masturbated reading them'. The other rumor was that 'Itō had a life-sized mirror in his room, and that every evening he undressed in front of it and was filled with rapture looking at his image reflected in the mirror'. Actually, the first thing that a women's liberation activist and lesbian friend of mine said, when visiting my room, was, "Where is the life-sized mirror?" There was a mirror in my room, but it was not that big. And I had never masturbated with shōjo manga. In the first place, shōjo manga of that period had almost no erotic scenes. Maybe my lesbian activist friend was imagining that I was not masturbating with manga about love between man and women, but those about so-called shōnenai, that is love between boys. As I shall explain later, eroticism in shōjo manga of that period was more explicit in boys' love stories than in romances between men and women. The two rumors were nothing more than rumors, but one thing was true: I had a huge number of girls' comics under my bed. In that period, I was reading the manga magazine *Shōjo Margaret* every week as well as the supplementary edition of *Shōjo Friend* and the magazines *Nakayoshi*, *Ribon*, and I bought every monthly I could lay my hands on, my favorite being the supplementary edition of *Seventeen*.

I began with this story in order to point out, that we must take the counterculture of the late 1960s and early 1970s into consideration when discussing Japanese shōjo manga. In that period, young people of the whole world started to move, aiming towards their own culture and their own politics. Of course, this affected Japanese society heavily. The New Left Movement, a pillar of protest, became the point of departure for the Women's Liberation Movement which in Japan, not unlike other countries, criticized male-dominated leadership.

However, youth rebellion and the new counterculture activities began to decline rapidly from 1972-73 onwards. Of course this happened in other countries too, but in Japan it was particularly tragic. Already in the early 1970s, the Women's Liberation

Movement had attracted media attention. But by turning women's voices who were asking for freedom into objects of ridicule, the media suppressed their claims, and the Japanese movement lost its strength rapidly. One of the reasons was certainly the armed uprising's failure of one part of the Japanese New Left and its internal mutual killing. At the same time, there was also a new move in Japan to absorb counterculture and youth rebellion; to put it simply, the expansion of the commodification of culture. In this period, other countries too were undergoing great changes towards a consumer society and media society. I have called this the "1970 problem". Around 1970, in most of the economically developed countries, cultural change in a wider sense occurred, including the way of looking at things, thinking, speaking and behaving. In the case of Japan, this change was extremely huge. It was characterized by young people and women being pushed to prominence as protagonists of consumer culture.

At present, according to the gender empowerment index of the United Nations, Japan is ranked at 58th place, and according to last year's gender index gap of the World Economic Forum at 98th. Contemporary Japan is known for women's little participation in society. However, in 1970 the proportion of working women was very high. Among the 24 most economically developed OECD member nations, Japan's female labor force percentage was at second place, between the top ranking Finland and the third ranking Sweden. As is well known, since the 1970s, women's participation in society has expanded in many nations. But in Japan, the percentage of working women has only increased by 5% in the last 30 years. So, what has been the obstacle to women's participation in society? To put it simply, men's long working hours.

My analytical focus on gender aims at explaining the maturation of women's consumer culture. From the 1970s onward, women's participation in society has been restrained. But as distinct from other countries, strong opposition by women against this situation has been strangely rare, first of all, because married women have been in control of the household budget, a phenomenon that may only exist in Japan and Italy. Married women gained relative freedom of spending money, due to their husbands' incomes obtained through long working hours. This gave rise to a huge consumer culture targeting women. However, the maturation of this women's consumer culture

has been achieved through men's long working hours and women's exclusion from society.

Youth culture matured in the same period. As in other countries, countercultural leaders became leaders of consumer culture. Moreover, due to the rise of their parents' incomes, young people emerged as protagonists of this consumer culture. The end of the political era in Japan is connected to the coming of age of youth consumer culture.

Precisely this growth of women's and youth's consumer culture in Japanese society triggered the upswing of Japan's popular culture. In this period, the young generation began to distance itself from politics and culture, getting instead absorbed by anime, manga, videogames, and showing more and more interest in the details of their stories and characters. But as receivers of popular culture they did not completely lack creativity and imagination. In some sense they managed to preserve their own space, by enjoying a commodified world through their own point of view, or by manipulating the commodified objects of consumption and adopting them to their own needs. That is to say, *otaku* culture was born, and the receivers' maturity facilitates the further maturation of popular culture. This has become one of the sources of today's 'Cool Japan'.

The maturation of women's culture has followed a similar route. They were excluded from participation in society, but became important consumers of culture as they gained relative autonomy by receiving money from their husbands or parents. A symbol of this is the sudden growth of women's magazines from the 1970s to the 1980s. In particular, in the second half of the 1970s, shōjo manga magazines increased rapidly in a market that had been completely dominated by shōnen manga or boys' manga magazines. Women's manga magazines which are the equivalent of men's manga magazines, began to appear one after another. When entering a Japanese bookstore today, you may notice that women's manga magazines are by far much more numerous than men's or boys' manga magazines. This tendency began around 1980.

However, from the 1970s, one may find aspects which distinguish Japanese women's and girls' culture form male youth culture, because they offer glimpses of the point of view of those who have been expelled from society. In his recent publication *Democracy and Shōjo Manga*, the photography critic Iizawa Kōtarō commented on

shōjo manga artist Ōshima Yumiko in the following way:

> "Her heroines feel at the beginning out of place in their surrounding situation, without having an affirmative sense of themselves. That is why confusion occurs, but at the end the heroine expresses the will to life on her own, by affirming the relation between themselves and their surroundings just as they are" (Iizawa 2009: 46).

I am a little older than Iizawa, and was involved as a male in youth's rebellion and counterculture of the 1960s, but even I can find his point very easy to understand. In shōjo manga which had somehow experienced the voice of the Women's Liberation Movement, the sense of incongruence against a male-dominated society was not rare. Feeling out-of-place in regard to this kind of situation was always present in the works by Ōshima Yumiko, Hagio Moto, Takemiya Keiko, and Yamagishi Ryōko, who opened up the new scene of shōjo manga. However, this did not lead to a clear expression of feminism. A direct assertion of women's liberation would have been incomprehensible to most of the female readers. That is why the expression of feeling out of place, is followed by a feeling of affirmation. However, a certain 'truth' is represented visible only to those who are on the fringes of society, that is "the clarity of the excluded", as Pierre Bourdieu theorized it in his *Masculine Domination*. In other words, shōjo manga mirrors the power of women who have been excluded from the majority of the male-dominated society, to see things which are precluded to the male majority.

At that time, I was an enthusiastic reader of shōjo manga. Retrospectively, I see that I was strongly attracted by its expression of feeling out of place. For example, let us consider *Lady Oscar* (or, *The Rose of Versailles*) and *Aim for the Ace*, serialized in weekly shōjo manga magazines back then. One is a historical narrative with fights and battles, and the other one is a sports story, which are both themes often seen in boys' manga. But the heroines of both stories constantly have a sort of discomfort about themselves and their surrounding society, and this discomfort comes from the very fact that they were women.

My encounter with shōjo manga has been of great importance to me. I suppose

it has brought about one of the starting points for my research into masculinity. In a male-dominated society, most men belong to the majority. Therefore, research into masculinity is essentially research into the majority. This is fundamentally distinct from women's studies, which rest on the standpoint of a minority. Having always been put into the margins, the minority is forced to face itself. To be excluded from the mainstream generates various feelings of alienation and discrimination. The majority though does not become aware of its own majority-ness, unless something extraordinary happens. Being majority means having almost no opportunity to sense social alienation or discrimination. This makes majority studies conducted by persons belonging to the majority more difficult than minority studies.

In a certain sense it is through the circuit of shōjo manga that I have been able to reflect upon male-dominated society from a male point of view. Above all, it was of great importance to me that the development of shōjo manga at the beginning of the 1970s started with boys' love stories, because the marginal male/homosexual perspective (as opposed to the heterosexual majority of society), turned my eyes to the indifference of the social majority hidden in gender and sexuality.

This must have been of equal significance for shōjo manga authors, as a magazine interview with Hagio Moto in 1991 reveals. There she stated, "I turned to the topic of male homosexuality because it was very hard to depict the problematic distortion in gender structure of those days by resorting to a direct male-female contrastive plot". In any case, whether those authors of the 1970s were conscious of this or not (actually, there may be a little bit of hindsight in Hagio's statement), there is no doubt that gender issues were reflected in their works at least unconsciously. In the last phase of the countercultural wave, when I was feeling a kind of alienation from the so-called male culture, shōjo manga offered me the opportunity to reconsider masculinity and to critically review the present situation of gender.

I was an enthusiastic reader of shōjo manga for just ten years, from the early 1970s to the 1980s. Interestingly, the boom of shōjo manga among young male readers lasted from the late 1970s through all the 1980s. Mutsu A-ko was especially popular then. Many young men favored the *otome chikku roman* (girlish romances) by her and other manga authors. From the stance of male and masculinities studies, this was a

very interesting trend. It may have started from a small sense of discomfort towards the contemporaneous male-dominated society. But this discomfort, that I myself had experienced, would not necessarily lead to a fundamental criticism of the given gender structure. What deserves attention here is the existence of a stream which led to an affirmation of the status quo on a larger scale, while embracing small-scale discomfort.

This sense of incongruency occurred against a specific backdrop, that is the move towards a male-dominated society which follows slogans like 'fight and win', and the enormous increase in men's working hours. Precisely because male readers felt out of place in view of the sudden male-dominated growth and reinforced competition, they found a kind of 'healing' in the different world of shōjo manga. Young men began to realize more and more that the male way of living in the labor market was much more monotonous and hard than the female way of living. Human relationships and their kindness were in the process of being expelled from male culture. Moreover, there was also a sense of envy in regard to the heterogeneity of consumer culture targeted to women. Following the development of youth consumer culture, young men began to be increasingly involved too. As mentioned before, this was one of the reasons for youth's political apathy. But from a gender point of view, it is evident that the women's side offered a much more abundant variety and a wider range of choices.

The phenomenon of especially young men's 'feminization' is a topic which has been picked up over and over again by the Japanese media since the late 1970s. Phenomena such as the *femi otoko* ('girlish boys'), the *hitsuji otoko* ('sheep men'), and the recent *sōshokukei danshi* ('grass-eating men') are the same thing in a different shape. There may be many reasons for this, but one reason is apparently the sense of alienation among men against the Japanese or the international male-dominated society, together with some envy of women culture's heterogeneity and humanity.

At present the romanized term SHŌJO is becoming increasingly internationalized not only with respect to manga, but also fashion and life-style. SHŌJO culture, which began in 1970s Japan, reflects past, present and future issues of gender and sexuality which apply to women in Japan and throughout the world. But in relation to this shōjo culture, the direction of men's gender issues deserves equal attention, which as a researcher involved in men and masculinities studies, I will continue to investigate.

Itō Kimio

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BD in young girl-oriented magazines in France

Inomata Noriko

(trans. Gan Sheuo Hui)

Overview

Since the mid-nineteenth century, child-oriented publications in France have developed steadily. Among those were periodical magazines for young girls which eventually also published French comics or BD (*bande dessinée*).[1] Those magazines became a dear companion for French children over a long period of time. This paper studies the BD which appeared in those young girl-oriented magazines. Even though these magazines were widely popular from the beginning of the twentieth century, most of them were either discontinued or integrated with other magazines by the 1970s. In Japan, on the other hand, shōjo manga that published shōjo-oriented magazines was proliferating. Although they were magazines of a similar nature, they experienced a contrasting fate in its development. What kind of medium were these young girl-oriented BD magazines in France? In this paper, three magazines (*La Semaine de Suzette*, *Fillette* and *Lisette*) are selected and categorized according to their publication years and contents. The percentage of BD that appeared in these three magazines is analyzed, alongside a comparison of their distinct characteristics to the situation in Japan from a media-historical perspective. Even though the sampling size in this research is relatively small,[2] this preliminary research wishes to stimulate and shed more light onto young

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1 For convenience, "BD" is referring to French comics and "manga" is referring to Japanese comics in this paper.

2 The samples in this research are limited to the collections in the National Library of France

Inomata Noriko

girl-oriented BD, shōjo manga and the comparative study of both which has scarcely been conducted.

1. The Layout of Young Girl-Oriented BD Magazines

A quick glance at contemporary BD immediately reveals its differences from Japanese manga. There is no publication of standard weekly or monthly magazines prior to their appearance in a *tankōbon* or a separated volume as in Japan. Instead, freshly commissioned works, printed directly into "album" format is the more common flow for publishing BD.[3] Moreover, BD has a strong image as being male-oriented reading material.[4] For a long time, females were not even considered as potential readers of BD. Nonetheless, historically speaking, it is too abrupt to conclude the lack of BD works or magazines that catered exclusively to female readers. Indeed, some evidence has demonstrated that there were publications of girl-oriented BD magazines which had been popular since the early twentieth century.

Subscription of child-oriented periodical magazines has a long history in France. *Journal d' Education*,[5] an educational magazine that was first published in 1768, is considered to be the pioneer of this type.[6] Being a small-sized monthly magazine, no

and those obtained privately by the author during her stay in France. Unfortunately, only one weekly magazine per every ten years could be included in this study. The author is well aware of the difficulty to reach any generalization with these limited samples. However, this should not undermine the value of this research as to date, statistical content analysis of the girl-oriented BD magazines has still hardly been conducted. This research is carried out based on the available materials and it is the author's immediate priority to include a bigger sample in following research. See *9e ART: Les Cahiers du Musée de la Bande Dessinée*, vol. 6, 2001 for further reference about young girl-oriented BD.

3 The standard format for an album is slightly bigger than A4 size, forty eight pages, fully colored and hardcover. The overall pace for the publication is about one volume per year. See Inomata 2006 for further reference on the comparison between the circulation of manga and BD.

4 According to Groensteen (2005), female readers of BD in 2003 were just roughly 20 percent of the overall total. However, it seems possible to estimate a higher number due to the spread of Japanese manga in France from the year 2000. An estimation of the number of female readers will be included in future research.

5 *Journal d'Education* has been translated as "educational magazine" in Japanese in this context. According to Suematsu's research of mid-nineteen century French children's magazines, most of the titles contained terms like "journal", "gazette", "revue", "presse" or "courier" which mean "the record of a day" or "everyday's publication". However, over the years, the word "journal" slowly expanded from its original meaning, where it also referred to monthly or even periodical publications (Suematsu 1997: 64-67). Due to this reason, the term "journal" has been widely translated as "magazine/*zasshi*" in Japanese.

6 It is often believed the publication of *Emile ou de l'éducation* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in 1762 stimulated new thoughts toward children, whereby children became considered different to adults, which influenced the emergence of child-oriented magazines. *Journal d'Education*

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illustrations were used in the beginning. Some illustrations were added to the main texts only much later. The period from 1857 to 1904 was often assumed to be the era where child-oriented magazines flourished in France as big publishing companies began to compete in the market (Kisaichi 2001: 136). It is difficult to trace exactly when BD was first published in those child-oriented magazines. Nonetheless, even though there was no evidence of speech balloons, usage of multiple panels to convey a story was first observed in 1889 (Filippini 1980: 13). In 1905, *La Semaine de Suzette* (Suzette's Week), a young girl-oriented weekly magazine was published by Gautier-Languereau. For 55 years, *Suzette* continued to publish many representative young girl-oriented BD and among them was *Bécassine*, a serialized BD which still enjoys its fame today. *Suzette* also stimulated the establishment of other young girl-oriented magazines.[7]

The next few paragraphs will focus on analyzing the three most representative magazines. Suzette (1905-1960),[8] a magazine mostly read by the girls from middle-class families, *Fillette* (1909-1964),[9] a comparatively mass oriented magazine which produced *L'espiègle Lili*, another widely popular BD, and *Lisette* (1921-1973),[10] another symbolic magazine which was established slightly later than the other two. Interestingly, the content and layout of most early young girl-oriented magazines looked alike due to the success of *Suzette* that inspired other magazines to follow its style and format.

Suzette, *Fillette* and *Lisette* were selected for this study because they all published BD for a relatively longer span than the other magazines. In particular, their establishment between the 1910s and 1920s and the continuation after the war are valuable parameters to trace their transformation from before to after the war. For the research method employed, one issue was selected from each magazine across a ten-year span.[11] All the contents were broken down according to genre and

contained grammar, mathematics, science, art, history, religion and other topics which made it compacted with educational materials. This magazine was actually more youth-oriented than child-oriented (Ishizawa et.al. 2009: 54).

7 These magazines include *Anette*, *Benjamine*, *Bernadette*, *Blondine*, *Capucine*, *Cendrillon* and *Mireille*.

8 *Suzette* was momentary discontinued from issue 27 (6th June 1940), but resumed on the 30th of May 1946. Issue 144 (25th August 1960) was the last issue of *Suzette*.

9 *Fillette* was momentary discontinued from issue 1755 (8th March 1942), but resumed on the 2nd of May 1946. After publishing its issue 600 in 1963, *Fillette* restarted its numbering from no.1, but ended with issue 42 in August, 1964.

10 *Lisette* was momentary discontinued from issue 11 (15th March 1942) and resumed on the 12th of May 1946. Issue 44 was the last issue printed in 1964.

11 Wherever possible, the samples were selected from the first issue of the month. See reference

calculated for their percentage in each magazine. The contents of these magazines were divided into seven categories such as, "BD", "novel", "handicrafts" which included cooking and sewing, "correspondence section" which sent out invitations to readers or published editorial messages, "information column" which published everyday tips or reprinted articles from overseas, "games" which contained crosswords puzzles and "advertisements" which promoted the subscription of the magazine or advertised commercial products such as stationery. In this analysis though, special focus is given to the changing percentages of BD.

Masuda Nozomi pointed out the importance for entertainment purposes of the visualization aspect in young girl-oriented magazines in Japan. She presented the transition of the percentage of manga in *Shōjo Kurabu* (Girls' Club) through various graphs (Masuda 2004: 1-16). Adopting her methods, three figures that represent *Suzette*, *Fillette* and *Lisette* respectively were created to show the percentages of BD in comparison to the percentage of illustrated novels, which was once the main content in these magazines.

According to the figures, the percentage of BD (*Fillette* and *Lisette*) was leading in the beginning and slowly decreased over the years but regained dominance after the war. At some point, BD in these three magazines surpassed the percentage of illustrated novels, which was once the dominant content. All three magazines were discontinued during the war. After the war, in some magazines BD had either completely disappeared from print, or the number of pages had been shrunk due to the lack of paper supply. In 1960, BD in *Suzette* overtook the percentage of novels by reaching up to almost 35 percent of the magazine (fig. 1). A similar tendency could also be observed in *Fillette*, whereby in 1953, the percentage of BD reclaimed the larger percentage over novels. Even though the percentage slightly slipped back in the following years, BD occupied almost half of the contents percentage of magazine in 1964 (fig. 2). The percentage of BD in *Lisette* was slightly lower than novels in 1953. But it was reversed in 1960 whereby almost 50 percent of *Lisette* was BD and similar trend continued until 1970 (fig. 3). After the war, with the progress of time, the growing percentage of BD had become a common trait among *Suzette*, *Fillette* and *Lisette*. Indeed, a similar tendency was also observed in Japan around the same period, whereby in 1958, manga constituted over 50 percent of *Shōjo Kurabu*, which made it the main content of the magazine (Masuda 2004: 8).

From the late 1950s, photographs were being used in a similar way as single

for the complete list of issues that have been studied in this research.

panels of BD, with the addition of speech balloons, giving raise to picture novels, commonly addressed in French as "roman photos". Furthermore, written descriptions of recipes and advertisements were replaced by pictures and illustrations. Some even employed pictorial sequences as in BD to convey their messages. By the late 1960s, publications of idols' pictures increased. A similar tendency was also observed in Japan where pictures of idols and small number music bands escalated in shōjo manga magazines such as *Shōjo Kurabu*. This overall tendency to emphasize visual representation is common to both France and Japan at that time.

Thus, the following conclusion can be made: BD had become the main content of those magazines around the 1960s. These magazines steadily became more illustrated, demonstrating a similar tendency to the shōjo manga magazines in Japan around the same period. Yet, despite the similarity, these girl-oriented BD magazines had disappeared in France by the 1970s. What were the reasons that led to such an outcome? The following section discusses various distinct characteristics of these magazines that differ from Japan.

2. The Transition of the Number of Pages in Young Girl-Oriented BD Magazines

From here on, the discussion will focus on various aspects of the differences between young girl-oriented magazines in France and Japan, such as the number of pages, size and frequency of publication. Similarities are found in both media in terms of their structure and contents. However, girl-oriented magazines in France were thinner, more like a pamphlet when compared to the girls' magazines in Japan. This huge difference is no doubt due to the historical influence of the magazines' format in France.

A mass-produced publication called *La Bibliothèque bleue* emerged in Troyes, located in northern France in the seventeen century.[12] These small books only consisted of a few pages. From the contemporary point of view, *Bibliothèque bleue* is more like a booklet than a book. Concerning the form of *Bibliothèque bleue*, Mandrou described that "there were ink stains, papers were rough and could hardly be considered white. Blue paper was used as a cover and everything was sloppily tied together with a string. There were no such things as a heading or spine of a book" (Mandrou 1988: 24). Setting aside this imperfection, "the success of these publications had stimulated other cities to imitate it before long" (Mandrou 1988: 24). As a result, *Bibliothèque* became widely popular and was circulated extensively in other major cities of France. *Journal*
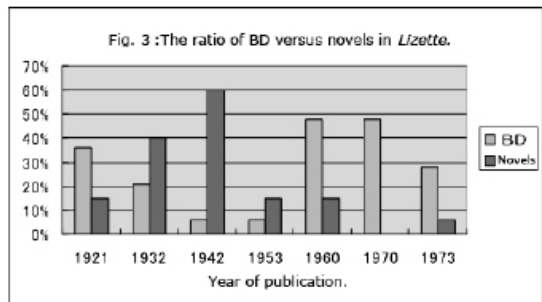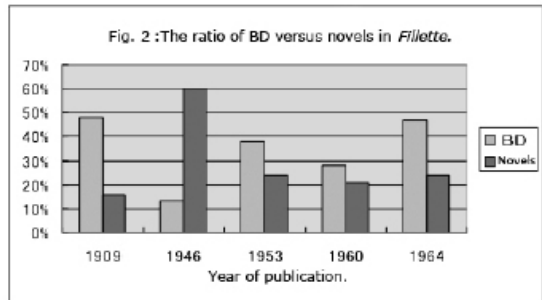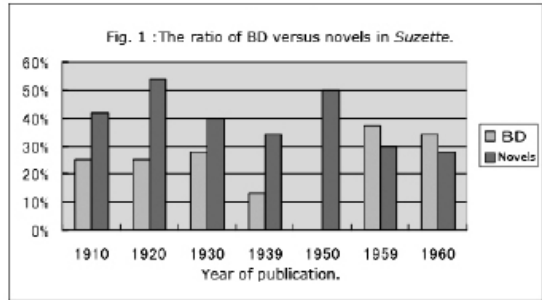
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12 A bookseller and publisher in Troyes started *La Bibliothèque bleue* and it was sold by peddlers to peasants. The booklet was very cheap, priced at about one or two sou (Mandrou 1988: 24).

d' Education, the first child-oriented periodical in France published in 1678 consisted of 32 pages, and its small-sized format could be seen as an influence of *Bibliothèque*.

The thin booklet format of *Suzette* (1905-1960) and other young girl-oriented magazines that mainly consisted of 12 to 16 folded loose pages was very likely the influence of such a tradition too.[13]

On the other hand, when Kinkōdō published the first shōjo magazine in Japan, *Shōjo Kai* (Girls' Association) in 1902, the magazine consisted of 126 pages. Meanwhile, when *Shōjo Kurabu* was established in 1923, it had 232 pages. The dimension of both magazines was approximately 23cm x 15cm, similar to a standard A5 size paper. The difference regarding the thickness of these girl-oriented magazines between Japan and France is noteworthy.

Figures 4, 5 and 6 demonstrate the transition of the number of pages in *Suzette*, *Fillette* and *Lisette*. Starting with 16 pages, the number of pages of

Fig. 1 : The ratio of BD versus novels in *Suzette*.

Fig. 2 : The ratio of BD versus novels in *Fillette*.

Fig. 3 : The ratio of BD versus novels in *Lizette*.

all these three magazines was increased by double, and became roughly 32 pages by the 1960s. Yet, there was limited space allocated for BD. In many cases, the maximum pages allocated for each work per publication were only 6 pages. Concerning the allocation of panels from 1910s to 1930s, the most frequent approach was to organize

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13 Britain had a similar book form called chapbook since the 17th century. From the late 18th century to 19th century, the common form of a chapbook resembles the size of *bunkobon*, and usually contained about 16 pages. By the 19th century, many chapbooks were published where the paper was just folded, and looked like pamphlets (Kobayashi 1988: 21).

them in a vertical 3 x 3 arrangement. There was hardly any sign of speech balloons and it was more common to have explanatory texts printed below the panels. Moving into the 1940s, the individual use of speech balloons started, but the combination of speech balloons and explanatory texts was equally employed. By the 1960s, the mixture of speech balloons and explanatory texts had not disppeared yet. In the same period, the panels were basically square-shaped and positioned sequentially. When making changes to the panels in a standard manner, the vertical length was usually maintained while the horizontal length was altered.

The percentage of manga in magazines was about 10 percent in Japan until the 1940s. Comic strips in rectangular panels arranged neatly over 1 or 2 pages were the mainstream. After the 1950s, the number of pages of manga increased rapidly (Masuda 2004: 8). Many works became longer due to the popularity of story manga. The number of pages of each manga per publication also increased to 16 pages and later to 32 pages (Masuda 2004: 9). Entering the 1960s, the adaptation of different techniques such as close-up and arrangement of the panels in a looser layout could be seen.[14] Panels arranged in similar shapes and consecutive pages were no longer popular and experienced a huge transformation in layout. It is generally agreed that this is the period where significant changes had

Fig. 4 : The change in the number of pages in *Suzette*.

Fig. 5 : The change in the number of pages in *Fillette*.

Fig. 6: The change in the number of pages in *Lisette*
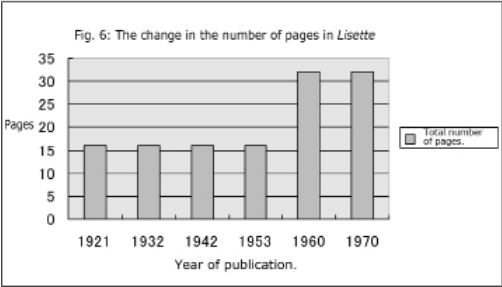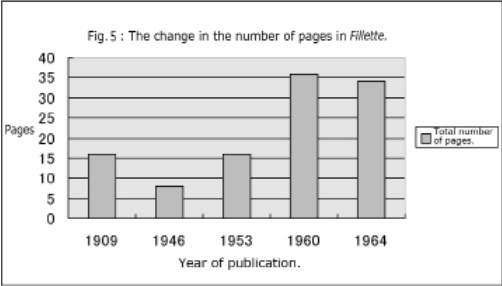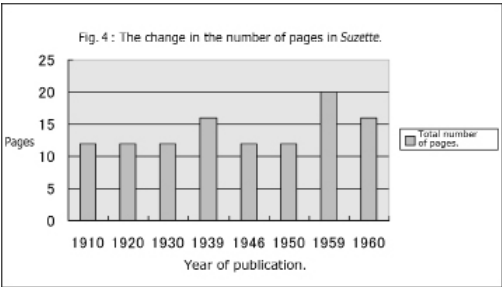
14 Masuda examined two different versions of Tezuka Osamu's *Ribon no kishi* (Princess Knight) which were published separately in *Shōjo Kurabu* (serialized from 1953) and *Nakayoshi* (serialized from 1963). Her finding suggests that the 1963 version in *Nakayoshi* contained more story-manga expressions, close-ups of the characters as well as more freedom in term of the structure of organizing the panels (Masuda 2002: 57-60).

taken place in manga expression. Simultaneously, the late 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s are also considered as the primary period in the development of shōjo manga expression. Yet contrary to this, the scenario was different in France. It was impossible to extend the length of the works in their limited allocated space. Furthermore, it was also hard for the artists to develop new expressions under such conditions. One of the main reasons that contributed to the decline of the girl-oriented genre in France was that it did not have the same options to experiment and develop distinctive features as in Japan.

3. The Transformation of the Dimensions of Young Girl-Oriented Magazines

Regarding magazine format, *Shōjo Bukku* (Girls' Book) and *Shōjo Kurabu* (Girls' Club) expanded their size from A5 to B5 in 1951 and 1955 accordingly. Other publishers such as *Ribon* (Ribbon) and *Nakayoshi* (Good friends) also launched their magazine in B5 format in 1955. Around the same time, many magazines and reading materials that did not expand their sizes were discontinued. It became obvious that whether a magazine is capable of offering visual enjoyment to its reader had become a core factor to its sustainability. However, the situation was different in France. When *Suzette* was launched, its dimensions were 32cm x 22cm. Later, the dimensions were reduced to 27cm x 21cm. As for *Fillette*, its initial dimensions were 29.5cm x 19.5cm and at one time increased to 39.5cm x 29.5cm before the war. After the war, the size was reduced to 26cm x 20cm. The earliest dimensions of *Lisette* were 26cm x 19.5cm which was later increased to 28.5 x 19.5cm. However, the dimensions were reduced to the original 26cm x 19.5cm after the war (Bera 1988: 583, 547, 566). Overall, these girl-oriented BD magazines were mainly altered in their sizes to around A4 or in some cases, even shifted to a smaller size. In brief, the magazines in France did not share Japan's situation where the magazines were transforming into bigger and more visually attractive format as time progressed.

Yonezawa Yoshihiro has asserted that the tendency of expansion in these shōjo magazines also signified "the transformation of shōjo magazines to shōjo manga magazines" (1991a: 15). According to Yonezawa, "the modification of the sizes of these shōjo magazines had led them to be the main medium to publish post-Tezuka story manga, which eventually turned into shōjo manga magazines" (Ibid.: 36). The matter of altering the size from A5 to B5 of these shōjo magazines determined the direction and the development of Japanese shōjo magazines. Contrary to this, even though the

percentage of BD in French girl-oriented magazines had increased, it did not motivate any changes to those magazines.

4. The Publication Frequency of Shōjo Magazines

The frequency in which magazines are published is also noteworthy. In Japan, *Shōjo Kurabu* and *Shōjo Kai* were initially published as monthly magazines. However, the popularization of TV had ushered a weekly rhythm into the daily life of most people, including children (Yonezawa 1991b: 4). In order to cope with the demand to deliver information and news quicker to the consumers, many monthly magazines eventually turned into weekly. On the other hand, the girl-oriented magazines in France were first established as weekly magazines, due to the influence of the weekly magazines tradition continued from the nineteen century. Figure 7 demonstrates the publication frequency of child-oriented periodicals from 1801 to 1987. From 1801 to 1850, 60 percent of those child-oriented magazines were monthly and about 20 percent were weekly.[15] Until 1900, the percentage of weekly magazines exceeded the monthly magazines.

Fig. 7: Publication ratios of French periodicals for children by year.

	Monthlies	Weeklies	Other	Sum total of magazines
1801-1850	60%	21%	19%	61
1851-1900	34%	44%	22%	41
1901-1950	9%	68%	23%	111
1951-1987	66%	15%	19%	151

By 1950, about 70 percent of the magazines were weekly and only 10 percent were monthly. However from the 1950s, the situation reversed. Monthly magazines became dominant by rising up to about 70 percent. On the other hand, it was not until 1959 that *Shūkan Shōnen Magajin* (Weekly Shōnen Magazine) became a topic of discussion in Japan, when it was launched as a weekly magazine. The appearance of *Shūkan Shōnen Magajin* in the weekly format was indeed an influence of the prosperity of the general weekly magazines in the mid 1950s (Kure 1997: 148). The weekly shōjo-oriented manga magazine came slightly later, that is, in 1962.

The shift of magazines from monthly to weekly in Japan was mainly a response to the demand from consumers that required more information to be delivered at a quicker pace. Contrastively, magazines in France were mostly established in weekly format following tradition. Such a fundamental difference certainly led to a diverse development. In the end, those girl-oriented BD magazines in France which were first printed more frequently as a weekly and the thin booklet format faded out in the same format. Since there was no demand to go beyond their current status, it was natural that

15 Figures compiled based on information from Fourment 1988.

those BD magazines had no need to change their publication frequency, change the number of pages, or to look for new possibilities and expressions as in Japan.

5. The Disappearance of BD Magazines for Girls

There were efforts to save these girl-oriented BD magazines by merging them with other magazines, but unfortunately it did not work out. *Suzette* was stopped in 1960, followed by *Fillette* in 1964 and finally *Lisette* in 1973. A statement appeared in the last issue of *Suzette* which declared "recently most girls prefer magazines which cater to both girls and boys"[16] as the reason they discontinued the magazine. Another announcement added that *Le Journal de Mickey* would be sent as the replacement for those who subscribed to *Suzette* periodically. *Le Journal de Mickey* was advertised by *Suzette* as "appropriate for most age groups and we believe it will be a success".[17] *Suzette* tried to highlight *Le Journal de Mickey*'s mixed readership of boys and girls as its advantage to attract new attention. *Suzette* also commented that "girls are now attracted to TV idols and they are no longer interested in the morality tales depicted in *Suzette*" (Filippini 1980: 113). "The magazine itself did not match with the lifestyle of these contemporary girls. The stories about magic or spirits hidden in the roof were no longer needed" (Fourment 1988: 371). In the meantime, it can also be assumed that these young girls did not find the educational aspect of the magazines inspiring but old-fashioned and outdated. *Fillette* turned into an pop star magazine and *Lisette* was combined with *Nade*, but was also discontinued later (Fourment 1988: 371-372). According to Fourment (1988: 339), the disappearance of these girl-oriented BD magazines was believed to be the result of the emergence of the unisex magazines, and girls also more interested to read those ready-to-wear high class fashion and make-ups magazines which were initially aimed at mothers and teenage girls. In any case, when these girl-oriented BD magazines were no longer able to grasp the hearts of their young readers, their necessity could no longer be sustained and they were discontinued.

In contrast, new titles were emerging and many young shōjo manga artists continuingly debuted in the shōjo manga industry in Japan, forming a utopia where young female readers could easily get what they desired (Yonezawa 2007: 323). While shōjo manga became an established genre, BD still remained at its thin booklet format and did not experience the same development as in Japan. As for the decline of this girl-oriented BD genre, the comparison of different circumstances and complex situations

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16 *La semaine de Suzette*, n 144, 25 aout 1960, pp. 1-2.

17 *La semaine de Suzette*, n 144, 25 aout 1960, pp. 1-2.

188

such as the scale of the market and boy-oriented media from the same period are helpful to provide another perspective,[18] but certainly the distinct form of these magazines is one of the main reasons.

6. Conclusion

This paper focused on the magazines that published girl-oriented BD and surveyed the changes of their structure through time. According to this analysis, the percentage of BD increased with the progress of time, overtook the percentage of novels and eventually became the main content of these magazines. In addition, the comparisons also revealed that these magazines became more visual-oriented over the years. Similar tendencies were also observed in the shōjo-oriented magazines in Japan from the same period. In order to fully understand the circumstances that led to such a diverse development of these girl-oriented magazines in Japan and France, the format of these magazines, the number of pages and the frequency of their publications were compared. The result of the survey showed that the format of the France girl-oriented magazines was influenced by the *Bibliothèque bleue* from the 17th century. These diverse criteria were also among the reasons that directed different developments between Japanese and French girl-oriented magazines. In many ways, such backgrounds provide a significant clue to understand the contemporary girl-oriented BD arena in France.

As for future research, more detailed data analysis will be conducted. Researching the unique characteristics of "girls' culture" in Japan from a gender perspective could also be important. Besides that, it is also possible to do a comparison from a gender perspective between girls in Japan that continue to form their shōjo culture and identity through utilizing girl-oriented magazines, and the French perspective in which girls more promptly enter a society of romantic attraction with the opposite gender. When conducting girl-oriented BD research, manga research and comparative research of both, it is important to take into consideration and be sensitive to the complex issues of different cultural climates and the contexts of each country.

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18 Boy-oriented BD magazines in France were established for adolescences on the verge of puberty. Interestingly, the content of the magazines also changed accordingly, becoming more adult oriented as their readers grew up. In some cases, magazines were discontinued due to the result of questionnaires from their readers. See Inomata (2007: 6-13).

Inomata Noriko

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190

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Magazines

La Semaine de Suzette 5 August 1910 , 6 January 1920, 2 January 1930, 3 January 1939, 26 December 1946, 5 January 1950, 3 September 1959, 25 August 1960.

Lisette 17 July 1921, 25 December 1932, 11 January 1942, 16 August 1953, 30 January, 1960, 4 January 1970.

Fillette 21 October 1909, 31 October 1946, 29 October 1953, 7 January 1960, 6 August 1964.

Drawing the ideal modern woman:
Ms. Lee Wai-Chun and her Ms. 13-Dot

Wendy Siuyi WONG 黃少儀

The Chinese term manhua (漫　畫) is used in Hong Kong to refer to satire and caricature, political and editorial cartoons, and all other genres usually called cartoons (卡通) or comics (漫畫) in English. Up until the 1980s, only a handful of women artists (女 漫 畫 家 manhua-jia) made names for themselves producing Hong Kong manhua. The first and ultimately most successful of these female artists was Lee Wai-Chun (李 惠 珍), creator of the siu-nu manhua (少 女 漫 畫 girls' comics or shōjo manga) 13-Dot Cartoon (十三點漫畫).

Fig: The first issue of Ms. 13-dot (1966).

This 56-page comic debuted in July 1966 (fig. 1), with each 6-panel page depicting an independent story revolving around the main character, Ms. 13-Dot (十三 點). The comic ran continuously until early 1980, with a total of 178 issues. The artist's prolific drawings of Ms. 13-Dot's ultra-fashionable outfits garnered a great deal of recognition for the comic and its creator, with Lee becoming known in Hong Kong as the "master of girls' comics" (少女漫畫掌門 人) and a "fashion designer on paper" (紙上時裝設計師).

13-Dot was created at a time when Western popular culture had begun to influence Hong Kong's local cultural production. Prior to the mid-1960s, the drawing technique of most Hong Kong comic artists closely followed the traditional Chinese style. The arrival of 13-Dot in 1966 provided a new artistic direction for the local comics and complemented the rising youth culture in Western popular music and movies (Wong and Cuklanz 2000). With full-color cover designs to inspire readers, Lee's detailed drawing style and the dazzling array of outfits worn by Ms. 13-Dot, readers often used

the comics as a fashion reference for making clothing for themselves, since ready-to-wear Western outfits were still too expensive for most people at the time. A reader once counted 1,728 separate pieces of clothing in issues 1 through 28, with an average of 62 pieces appearing in every 56-page issue. This focus on fashion along with the Westernized lifestyle depicted in the stories became an educational tool not only to teach readers about how to dress like a modern woman, but also to present an ideology of an ideal modern woman, one with an independent nature and active lifestyle (Wong and Cuklanz 2002).

Lee Wai-Chun's Ms. 13-Dot is a beautiful high school student living in a fictional Asian city called Fada Shing (發 達 城 Fortune City) along with her banker father, Chow San-Ngan (周申銀 Mr. Cash) and mother, Lo Lai-Que (魯來嬌 Mrs. Lovely). The name 13-Dot (十三點), from the Shanghainese dialect, refers to an empty-headed but cute young woman who overdoes things, like a pendulum clock that bangs 13 times for twelve o'clock.

According to Lee, it was her personal preference for creating modernized comic characters, rather than the old-fashioned traditional Chinese drawings, that led her to draw Ms. 13-Dot with 'colorless' hair (achieved by not inking the hair color in the drawings). It was fashionable to wear wigs in the 1960s, and this technique enabled Lee to play with the character's hairstyles to match Ms. 13-Dot's trendy and seemingly infinite wardrobe.

In addition to the modern imagery and adventurous protagonist, many 13-Dot stories conveyed the idea of gender equality through their narratives. The stories did not embrace traditional Chinese values, which assume that men are always more important than and superior to women. For example, issue number 55, "Preference for daughter rather than son", depicts a father who is uninterested in taking a second wife, a practice which was still legal in Hong Kong at that time. Through Ms. 13-Dot's carefree, independent adventures the artist managed to break away from the traditional image of feminine behavior favored by 1960s and 1970s Hong Kong society (Wong and Cuklanz 2002).

Because Ms. 13-Dot's wealthy father provides her with a comfortable, carefree lifestyle, she is able to have and do everything she wishes, although the character also frequently uses her fortune to help people in need. Each 56-page issue includes an individual story where Ms. 13-Dot's actions convey good will and positive social messages in addition to the underlying theme of gender equality.

13-Dot ceased publication in early 1980 and, for almost two decades, was nearly forgotten by its readers while Lee was working for a children's magazine. Interest in Lee Wai-Chun and 13-Dot was rekindled in 1986, when a former reader, Tina Lau, interviewed Lee for an article in City Magazine (issue no. 114). Lau's article portrays Lee as a shy woman who hides behind her husband and the author's disappointment with Lee as the creator of 13-Dot is apparent in the article. In reality, Lau's perception is evidence of the changes Hong Kong women have undergone since 13-Dot was launched. Lee is part of the older generation of Hong Kong women, which did not encourage the concept of self-promotion and belief in themselves (Wong and Cuklanz 2000).

Her former-fan-turned-writer, Tina Lau, is of the younger generation, who grew up under the influence of Western values and the independent Ms. 13-Dot. Fans of 13-Dot grew up to embody the boundless spirit of Ms. 13-Dot; they are largely educated, adventurous, forward thinking and Westernized women who have embraced modern values. Whether or not they ever read a 13-Dot, younger Hong Kong women who grew up in the 1970s later matured into a generation of women with confidence beyond what Hong Kong had experienced before.

Thirty years after 13-Dot's debut, Publications (Holdings) Limited (博益出版社) reprinted the comics (with the artist's permission) in July 1996. This 168-page reprint consisted of three stories selected by the artist from the original version and published without alteration. This first reprint did not receive much publicity, but still achieved very good sale records (fig. 2). This reprint not only recaptured the memories of 1960s readers who were in their 30's and above, but also attracted new readers who missed 13-Dot while growing up in the 1960s or 1970s. By 1996, most of the significant Hong Kong artists from the same period had retired or passed away, leaving Lee's 13-Dot one of the few comics and creators left from before the 1960s and '70s. The pleasant themes in 13-Dot were representative of the positive social and cultural memories of Hong Kong people, and the publication of this 30th-anniversary reprint brought recognition of the important legacy of 13-Dot and Lee Wai-Chun in the history of Hong Kong comics.

The 1996 publication date of 13-Dot coincided with the period just before the British government handed sovereignty of Hong Kong over to the Chinese government. This was an era in which Hong Kong people actively sought out local cultural history and artifacts to help construct their impending post-British identity. Thus, the printing of the 30th-anniversary edition of 13-Dot was not a coincidence; in fact, it helped fulfill

Fig 2: Ms. 13-dot, the first reprint (1996).

Fig. 3: The cover of *An Illustrated History of 13-Dot: The Work of Lee Wai-Chun* (2003).

some of the public's need for nostalgia as they contemplated the end of British colonial rule and the unforeseeable future to come under Communist rule.

Admirers of 13-Dot, the Hong Kong public's quest for nostalgia did not end after Chinese control began on July 1, 1997; it continued because of the economic downturn the city endured after the handover. I co-authored a retrospective book, An Illustrated History of 13-Dot: The Work of Lee Wai-Chun with the artist in 2003. After the book was published (fig. 3), Lee organized her second solo exhibit in February 2003 at a design bookstore, and was interviewed by numerous popular magazines later that year. Those interviews, like the previous ones, focused mainly on the comic's nostalgic importance.

In August 2003, 13-Dot was reprinted in a trade paperback size, with a total of 20 issues printed over approximately two years (fig. 4). Unlike the 30th-anniversary version, Lee altered the stories' dialogue with new typesetting and cleaned up the artwork via computer. With these minor updates, this paperback-size reprint was treated as a new title for young girls. This 2003 version also provided an alternative for Hong Kong readers who wished to read locally produced manhua (in a market heavily dominated by Japanese material) with positive, non-violent themes. This time, with the inclusion of new young readers, the comic was being read as a classic Hong Kong comic, strictly for entertainment purposes. Ms. 13-Dot was no longer an ideal modern woman for her readers to look up

Fig. 4: The second reprint of *Ms. 13-Dot* (2003).

to, but rather a nostalgic icon representing the 'good old days' of Hong Kong.

The world of 13-Dot was, until very recently, confined to paper. In July 2006, Lee Wai-Chun collaborated with figure design artists Ricky Lam and Andy Lau to produce three different versions of Ms. 13-Dot figure doll, effectively changing the two-dimensional comics character into a three-dimensional form (fig. 5). The figure doll was never intended for mass circulation. Diehard 13-Dot fans and collectors purchased most of them. As a skilled seamstress, Lee enjoyed the new creative possibilities this medium offered, and soon began photographing the Ms. 13-Dot figure dolls wearing tailor-made outfits she sewed herself.

One of her fans from the 1960s, now head of the publicity department of the

Fig 5: Ms. 13-Dot fashion dolls (2006).

Fig 6: *Love in Paris* (2008).

French Tourism Board (Hong Kong), invited Lee to Paris and commissioned her to produce a series of 13-Dot postcards for promotional purposes. Lee brought along her figure dolls and created a series of photographer Gina Garan's "The Art of Blythe Dolls" style work. Later, she added new drawings of Ms. 13-Dot done by computer to the photos she took in Paris and produced a set of eight promotional postcards for the French Tourism Board. The promotion was well received and, to a certain extent, this new creation by Lee transformed the 40-year-old comics character by adding a contemporary touch.

Using Photoshop, Lee expanded the work she produced for the French Tourism Board (Hong Kong) into a full-color, 152-page graphic novel, Love in Paris 戀戀巴黎, which she published in February 2008 (fig. 6). With modern advancements in computer and printing technology, the artist no longer had to restrict her work to black

and white line drawings. She collected hundreds of fabric samples, scanned them into her computer, and then transposed the fabric patterns onto the outfits that she drew. This graphic novel continues the depiction of Ms. 13-Dot as a diehard fashionista, but now in full color and with real fabric patterns. Love in Paris is a travel journal documenting a 7-day trip to Paris taken by Ms. 13-Dot and her friends, basically a guide to shopping and entertainment in Paris without the hardcore "how to get there" travel information.

This graphic novel was published by Cosmos Books Limited (天 地 圖 書), one of the biggest publishers in Hong Kong, which organized a traveling exhibit in

Fig. 7: The Ms. 13-Dot Travelling Exhibition (2008).

collaboration with a big property development company as part of its book promotion (fig.7). The original 13-Dot, the reprinted versions of 1996 and 2003, the figure dolls, and a miniature house Lee created were among the items unveiled in displays at four major shopping malls in Hong Kong. Perhaps there is no better place than a shopping mall filled with fashionable clothing to dedicate an exhibit to 13-Dot; visitors can bring the fantasy to life by doing what Ms. 13-Dot would undoubtedly do: go shopping! The character embodies a lifestyle that would make many women envious. Forever frozen in adolescence, Ms. 13-Dot will always be young and beautiful.

The traveling promotional exhibits were a huge success, bringing the 40-year-old comics back to life for former readers and a new generation of fans, although sales of the graphic novel can never compare with those of Japanese manga. Hong Kong's comics market had changed dramatically, to one dominated by Japanese manga with locally produced manhua on the decline. Contemporary comics fans in Hong Kong have grown accustomed to reading Chinese translations of the ubiquitous Japanese manga simply because the locally produced material is too weak to compete. Lee's 13-Dot is the only girls' comic originally created in Hong Kong to be found among the many titles of shōjo manga available today.

For Lee, 13-Dot was a playground, a world of self-expression and a temporary escape from reality. In light of the gender ideology embedded in the comics, it is ironic to learn that Lee never intended Ms. 13-Dot to be a feminist symbol of equality. She merely wanted to create a positive, non-violent comics for girls, and maybe even for boys as well. Within the unique social and cultural environment of 1960s Hong Kong,

Ms. 13-Dot was born as a cultural product symbolic of the city's emergent materialism.

But it has not always been easy for this 40-year-old comic to survive, when virtually all of the work has been done by one person (fig. 8). 13-Dot is not just a series of comics, but also a true story of an independent woman artist struggling to keep her dream alive, to share her Ms. 13-Dot with the world over a span of four decades. The comics has transformed from an accidental symbol of an ideal modern woman into a nostalgic icon representing a passage in the lives of Hong Kong women, then, ultimately, into a legendary surviving icon among original Hong Kong comics.

Fig. 8: A self-portrait by Lee Wai-Chung (2008).

In the current age of diversification and globalization, many comic titles have moved into new mediums such as movies, games, and various licensed by-products. With the one-woman operation of Lee, 13-Dot will likely never develop in these directions without licensing the comic title to investors. Because the readership of girls' comics is a relatively small market, it would be difficult to convince potential investors to develop Ms. 13-Dot into a collection of licensed products. While a major jewelry company, Just Gold, did release a series of 13-Dot jewelry in 2009, production never reached full scale because of the worldwide economic downturn that began in September 2009.

So the question of where 13-Dot can go from here remains. While Hong Kong's government is good at promoting the original work of Hong Kong's artists and designers, they still must face unforeseen local, regional, and global competition. Locally produced manhua in Hong Kong reached its peak in the 1980s and early 1990s, dominated by the fighting and violence genre, but local manhua production is now a dying industry in Hong Kong. This girl's comic now represents something much larger than issues of gender or genre. 13-Dot has become an icon and representative of original Hong Kong manhua, just as the industry faces an uncertain future.

Wendy Wong

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PART III:

Manga/Comics as Media of Historical Memory

Lest we forget:
the importance of history
in Singapore and Malaysia comics studies

LIM Cheng Tju 林增如

In a recent volume on the use of cartoons as historical evidence (which I contributed a chapter to), the editors advocated a closer reading of cartoons by considering their historical contexts, in order to avoid the misinterpretations committed by writers unfamiliar with the historical development of comics, their production and reception. They argued that "modern historians have learnt to read written documents as complex texts, whose meaning is rarely self-evident, but cartoons and other visual sources still escape critical analysis… a critical historical reading of a cartoon, or a body of cartoons, must look to understand the conditions both of its making and of its reception". Thus one needs to read a cartoon as a "cultural artifact which is neither a passive reflector of reality, nor passively received by readers" (Scully and Quartly 2009: 1).

We are products of our own experience and history. As a student and now a teacher of history, I have always been concerned in my approach to the study of comics and cartoons, about viewing them through a historical and socio-political-economic lens. Such works cannot and should not be read in a vacuum. A sense of history is important and its application in our reading of comics and cartoons provides insights to present politics and society, especially the impact of globalization and the progress of democratization. I will use examples from Singapore and Malaysia to illustrate this.

Singapore
The following are some of the comic books that came out of Singapore in 2009:
1. *The Illustrated Men In White*, a graphic adaptation of the bestselling book

about the victorious history of the People's Action Party (PAP), the ruling political party of Singapore since 1959. This is a mainstream retelling of the postwar political history of Singapore in a comic book format.

2. *Fixed!*, a free comic book put out by the Competition Commission of Singapore (CCS) to help Singaporeans "identify possible cartel activities and… how to bring them to the attention of the CCS". It was explained that the CCS was set up to administer and enforce the Competition Act (2005) and to maintain and promote competitive markets.

3. *Loti* Vol. 1 by Troy Chin. Chin is one of the best comic artists working in Singapore today. But his new book, about the adventures of a bunch of primary school students and a dog, is a homage to the popular manga, Azumanga Daioh by Azuma Kiyohiko in terms of format (four panels) and treatment (light humor).

A reader browsing through these books will most likely go away with two conclusions:

Firstly, that comic books are used by the Singapore government as part of its public outreach to inform people of its policies such as the *Fixed!* comic book. In the case of the *Illustrated Men In White*, a publication by the Singapore Press Holdings, the story it chooses to tell is a pro-government one.

Secondly, that the local comics are heavily influenced by manga, mainly humorous in content, with limited reference to the present political or social realities of Singapore. Comic books, like other components of popular culture in Singapore, are very much divorced from the everyday life of the country.

Even the political cartoons that appeared in the major newspapers in Singapore, especially those drawn by Dengcoy Miel in The Straits Times and Heng Kim Song in Lianhe Zaobao, seldom deal with the actual politics, much less caricaturing the politicians. At most, they poke fun at the 'softer' government policies, because race, language, religion or competence/governance in general are out of bounds topics. Though Miel and Heng are two of Singapore's most accomplished cartoonists in terms of technique and winning international awards, the irony is that they hardly draw cartoons about national topics. Other countries' leaders are made fun of but never our own. In that sense, their cartoons are not so much political or editorial cartoons, but rather illustrations accompanying the lead articles (Lim 2000).

But the history of comics and cartoons in Singapore shows that it was not like that in the past. Since the beginning of the last century, the medium has been used as a force for change in society. The cartoons drawn and published in the newspapers then were shaped by ideological and political undercurrents to reflect and in turn affect some of the changes happening in society.

Singapore in the 1900s was under British colonial rule. But larger political forces were at work which brought satirical images to the Chinese public in Singapore in 1907. It was the emergence of radical politics and revolutionary Chinese newspapers, namely Chong Shing Yit Pao, that brought forth cartoons and established their historical role in Singapore, a role that cartoons would play for the first half of the 20th Century.

Chong Shing Yit Pao (1907 – 1910) was the organ of the Singapore Tung Meng Hui, the revolutionary party set up by Dr Sun Yat-Sen to overthrow the Ching government in China. The Chinese revolutionaries saw the potential of cartoons in getting their message across to the public. The mass media, words and pictures, were meant to serve the propaganda purposes of Dr Sun's vision for a new China. Dr Sun himself wrote articles in Chong Shing Yit Pao under a pen-name (Chen 1967).

The first Chinese cartoon in Singapore appeared in the September 1907 edition of Chong Shing Yit Pao. This was the first time a Chinese newspaper in Singapore carried pictorials other than those in advertisements. A total of 41 cartoons were published from 9 September 1907 to 21 March 1908, when the cartoons were dropped, possibly as a result of a change in editorship. All the cartoons were anti-Ching Dynasty cartoons, attacking its rule in China (Yeo 1995: 83).

There were attempts to engage local Chinese merchants as reflected in the cartoons depicting the restrictions that the Ching government placed on the trade of the overseas Chinese, especially the high taxes imposed on them. These cartoons were obviously meant to rouse anti-Ching sentiments among the Chinese population in Singapore and sway them to the revolutionary cause of Dr Sun and the Tung Meng Hui.

As shown above, the appearance of Chinese cartoons in Singapore was not accidental, but a deliberate effort on the part of the revolutionaries to use cartoons as a tool for agitation against the Ching government in China. The cartoons were geared towards shaping the mindset of its readers with regard to the tyranny of the Ching Dynasty. As a result, most of the cartoons were left unsigned in order to avoid persecution by the Ching Dynasty and the British colonial government in Singapore. The danger of persecution was a real one as in 1908, the British threatened to use the

Lim Cheng Tju

Banishment Ordinance to deport Dr Sun and the editors of Chong Shing Yit Pao from Singapore for advocating seditious agitation against China (Yong 1991: 31).

While Chong Shing Yit Pao's circulation of 1000 copies was nowhere near the actual Chinese population in Singapore then (219, 577 in 1911), one cannot discount the fact that newspapers had a life span and distribution beyond its actual sales and circulation. A single copy could be passed from reader to reader. Cartoons had the added advantage of having graphic properties which allowed them to be understood by people who were illiterate. Writer Yeo Man Thong argued that the Chong Shing Yit Pao cartoons were important in educating the illiterate and influencing their opinions about the political situation in China (Yeo 1995, 82).

Despite the fall of the Ching government in 1911 and the establishment of the new Chinese republic, Chinese politics continued to dominate the content of Chinese cartoons in Singapore. The new Chinese republic was threatened by the imperial ambition of a former Ching government general, Yuan Shih Kai, who harbored thoughts of reviving dynastic rule in China. The successor to Tung Meng Hui, the Kuomintang, also established by Dr Sun, opposed Yuan. In 1914, the Singapore branch of the Kuomintang started Kuo Min Yit Poh (1914 – 1919), another Chinese newspaper to further its cause, and made use of cartoons to attack Yuan. Again, these cartoons were signed with pseudonyms/ pen-names as there were threats of deportation by the British (Yong 1991: 31).

The death of Yuan in 1916 did not improve things as the next 10 years saw China entering a dark period of warlordism, a decade of lawlessness and disorder that would last till 1927, when the Kuomintang under the leadership of General Chiang Kai Shek managed to reunify China (Hsu 1990: 482, 523).

Fig. 1: Kuo Min Yit Poh's "Pleasures of a Rich Drunkard" (1918)

Cartoons continued to reflect the turbulent political situation during this period. What is interesting is that there were signs of globalization at work here. This 1918 cartoon from Kuo Min Yit Poh shows Western influences on Chinese cartoonists in Singapore. In "Pleasures of a Rich Dunkard", the figure drawn to caricature a corrupt Chinese government official looks suspiciously like Jiggs of George McManus's Bringing Up Father (fig. 1). The famous American comic strip was first published in 1913

and could have made its way to Singapore by 1918. This cartoon is revealing in its use of Jiggs as a symbol of decadence and corruption – showing what the Chinese thought of the West, and specifically America, reflecting a view that is still prevalent among some quarters in China today. Therefore, history does not just inform us about the cartoons we are studying, but also reveals much about cartoon history as well.

As we have seen, cartoons were in the service of politics and society in early 20th Century Singapore. It was art for the masses, to serve a political cause and to rouse public sentiments. In the 1930s, many of the cartoonists subscribed to the dictum of the Chinese writer Lu Xun that cartoons should be tools for social change. Lu Xun's essays on cartoons and caricatures emphasized the honesty of cartoonists' intentions and satire in the service of the people (Lu 1982).

We see this at work when cartoons became part of the anti-Japanese campaign from 1937 onwards after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident of 7 July. As Japan started its formal invasion of China, cartoons in China and Singapore were drawn to rally the people's support for the war effort against Japan.

Cartoons were printed on the front page of newspapers and focused completely on the war effort. In December 1937, the first issue of the Fund-raising Special Magazine was launched. It contained articles and cartoons about the Sino-Japanese war.

Cartoons were not restricted to the print medium; there was a major exhibition featuring cartoons in 1937. The National Salvation Cartoon Exhibition, organized by the Society of Chinese Artists from 4 to 6 December 1937, was part of a fund-raising event by the Singapore China Relief Fund Committee.

In 1939, there was another war cartoon exhibition by the Kunming Literary Branch Society. Its agenda was to raise funds for the war refugees in China and it managed to collect S$1486.70 (Yeo 1992: 177).

There was a price to pay for all these activities. The Japanese embarked on their invasion of Southeast Asia in December 1941 and the British defense of Singapore crumbled in February 1942. The fall of Singapore was one of Britain's darkest moments and the Japanese Occupation itself was the darkest period for Singapore cartooning in the 20th Century. Several cartoonists were killed during Sook Ching, the Japanese Army operation to purge suspected anti-Japanese elements among the Chinese population conducted in February 1942. Many prominent cartoonists, notably members of the Society of Chinese Artists who contributed to the war effort, were killed.

With the end of the war in 1945, cartoonists took up their pens again to depict

their lives under the Japanese Occupation. The prime example is *Chop Suey* by Liu Kang. *Chop Suey*, a collection of cartoons about life under the Japanese Occupation, was drawn and released very quickly after the war ended. Liu Kang, who had gone through life and death situations during the war, wanted to put out a cartoon book to document the Japanese atrocities, and expose the "twisted culture" of the Japanese to the outside world (fig. 2). He chose the cartoon format to present his experience as well as those of others because "cartoons were the most direct and popular form of expression and medium" (Interview 2001). There were both English and Chinese editions of *Chop Suey* printed in 1946. Two thousand copies were printed, and despite being priced at S$2 (a hefty price back then), it sold out quickly. The book was reprinted in the 1990s, after it was rediscovered by a Japanese academic.

Today, the *Chop Suey* cartoons are used as part of the Singapore government's National Education efforts, appearing in history exhibitions and school textbooks, with the message "never again" and that Singapore should always defend itself against invaders and not be dependent on colonial rulers like the British. In this case, Liu Kang's cartoons have been co-opted to serve the political agenda of the day. They help Singapore to remember the wartime past, but they are also part of a master narrative selected and constructed by the state to serve its purpose (Lim 2004).

Indeed, things would never be the same again for the Western powers after WWII. The winds of change were blowing across Asia and Africa and the spirit of independence was in the air. Cartoons would be on the side of the anti-colonialists in this struggle. Such works graced the covers of many

Fig. 2: A scene portraying Japanese atrocities in Liu Kang's *Chop Suey* (First edition 1946).

Fig. 3: The cover of *Shi Dai Bao* nr. 8 (1956/11/05). It draws attention that in Singapore different races fight for independence together.

magazines in the 1950s (fig. 3) and they helped Singapore to gain self-government from the British when the PAP came to power in the 1959 general elections.

But with self-government came the inter-party political struggles. The 1960s saw cartoons being used by both the ruling party, the People's Action Party (PAP) and its main rival the Barisan Sosialis to demonize each other. The PAP won the fight and continues to be the ruling political party of Singapore today. From then on, cartoons were in the service of nation-building and have lost their contentious nature. In many ways, they have become less political as the government felt that politics was a serious business and should not be made fun of by cartoonists. Cartoonists should only make jokes on matters of no importance. If a cartoon was drawn of a government policy, it was usually positive. Commentary was not encouraged.

This was evident from 1959 onwards. One of the best artists in the annals of Singapore cartooning history is Tan Huay Peng. He drew many biting political cartoons for The Straits Times in the 1950s, drawing blood whenever an emperor (eg. the British) decided to show off his new clothes. But there was a distinct shift in the tone and treatment of his cartoons after the General Elections of 1959 which brought the PAP to power. Tan's cartoons became more muted and less satirical. In 1961, he left The Straits Times to work for the Economic Development Board of Singapore (Lim 1997).

The Chinese writer, Lu Xun, once said that politics and art are fellow travelers in times of revolution, but once the peace is won, they will go their separate ways (Lu 1982). The Minister Mentor of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, who was Prime Minister from 1959 to 1990, did not like to be caricatured in cartoons and subsequent Prime Ministers like Goh Chok Tong and Lee Hsien Loong have reiterated the same message of leaving politics out of the cartoons. A bestselling cartoon book on the handing over of power from Lee Kuan Yew to Goh Chok Tong in the early 1990s was frowned upon (Nonis 1991). The message is clear: If you want to comment on the policies or actions of the government, you should join a political party and get into the ring and not snide at the sidelines. The role of cartoonists as political commentators is very much limited.

The Singapore government is well aware of the potential of the cartooning medium in reaching out to the masses through newspapers and magazines. A cartoon with its combination of words and pictures is more powerful than a long intellectual essay in many ways in its terms of outreach. The decision to publish a free comic book to fight cartel activities (*Fixed!*) published by the Competition Commission of Singapore in 2009 is proof of that.

Lim Cheng Tju

Thus cartoonists in Singapore do not draw cartoons about Singapore politics. Instead they win awards for drawing cartoons about international politics and criticizing/making digs at other countries' political leaders. Comic books by the current crop of artists prefer to tell humorous or adventure stories. A certain amount of self-censorship exists in Singapore cartooning today.

Such an overview of the history of cartooning in Singapore gives us an insight to present-day politics and society and raises question about the progress of democratization. If one of the indicators of democracy is whether we have political cartoons and caricature, then the report card is not very encouraging. The culture ministry has issued statements in the past forbidding political caricatures. The only cartoon depictions of politicians that we have today are graphic biographies, which do not portray their subject satirically (such as *The Illustrated Men In White*).

Taking a historical approach, a long view can give us a clearer picture of the historical role of cartooning in Singapore and how that role has diminished over time. It can also reflect the story of democracy, press liberty and censorship. Hopefully, by telling this story, future generations of cartoonists will be inspired to revive the socio-political role of cartooning in Singapore.

Malaysia

If Singapore suffers from amnesia with regard to its own cartooning history, Malaysia suffers from a neglect of a different kind. While political comics and cartoons are still alive in Malaysia due to its vibrant political scene, (a recent political comic book was banned because it made fun of the Prime Minister) the issue here is that the younger artists are consciously turning their back on their own cartooning tradition and style; a style pioneered by Malaysia' most famous cartoonist, Lat.

On 5 March 2010, Lat celebrated his 59th birthday with close friends and family (New Straits Times 15.03.2010: S7). Lat's series of cartoon books about Malaysia in the 1950s and1960s, *Kampong Boy* and *Town Boy*, have made him a household name in the country and won him fans worldwide. These two books have also been translated into different languages (including Japanese) and in recent years, been repackaged for the North American market by First Second books.

His best book is *Town Boy* (1980), an ode to his secondary school years (Anderson School) and is about his friendship with a Chinese boy in the Malaysian town of Ipoh. Lat was honored as the "Andersonian of the century" at the recent 100th

anniversary of the school. During that occasion, more than 120 of Lat's classmates from the class of 1969 traveled from the other states of Malaysia to attend the get-together in Ipoh. Among those who attended were retired civil servants, senior police officers, ex-military officers and businessmen (New Straits Times 15.03.2010: S7).

While many have enjoyed Town Boy's tale of growing up, high school jinks and friendship, most have missed out on the larger significance of the story.[1]

The fact that Lat and his friends graduated from Anderson School in 1969 is important as that was the year Malaysia was rocked by its worst racial riots since independence in 1957. The May 13 1969 riots were a result of the Alliance Party, the political party that had ruled Malaysia since independence, losing ground in the general elections that had been held earlier. The Malay population felt that they were losing control of the country and that their supremacy was being threatened by the Chinese population. The Malay-Chinese relationship was very strained in 1969. Immediately after the riots were quelled, a state of emergency was declared and parliament was suspended for the next two years (Butcher 2001).

This was the background of *Town Boy*. While Lat did not make reference to the racial riots between the Malays and the Chinese in his story, the fact that all these were happening in his final year of high school would have been on his mind when he started to work on this story in the late 1970s.

Lat was born in 1951, during the early years of Malaysia's anti-colonial movement when the different races of Malay, Chinese and Indian worked together to

Fig. 4: From Lat's *Town Boy*.   Fig. 5: Ibid.

1 As seen in the North American reviews of the First Second editions http://joglikescomics. blogspot.com/2007/10/what-lovely-weekend.html and http://www.comicsreporter.com/index.php/briefings/cr_reviews/9958/

gain independence from the British. Those were times of cooperation and trust, but the close relationships forged among these ethnic groups started to fray in the 1960s as the economic disparity between the Malays and the Chinese became wider.

In *Town Boy*, friendship is not about money or class. Lat's best friend in high school was a Chinese boy by the name of Frankie. Their friendship was forged over a love for rock 'n' roll music and Hollywood movies. Frankie was the richer boy in class but he remained firm friends with Lat because of their common interests and the many escapades they engaged in. Understanding each other's culture, likes and dislikes is not difficult when you are younger and life's a lark.

The following dialogue reveals how ethnic differences were glossed over in Lat's friendship with the Chinese boy:

When Lat first visited Frankie at his home, he was offered a pau (bun).
Lat: What is inside this pau?
Frankie: Open and see laaa!
Lat: Mmmm! It has "kaya" (sweet cream) in it…! I like!
Frankie: How come you cannot eat pork?...if I may ask…
Lat: Because my religion says cannot.
Frankie: What else you can't eat?
Lat: Elephant, dog…cat…
Lat: Hindu (Indian) people cannot eat cattle.
Frankie: Yes, Hindus can't take beef.
Lat: Is there anything that you can't eat?
(Frankie paused)
Frankie: Mutton!
Lat: Why?...because of religion?
Frankie: No…because I cannot tahan (stand) the smell…
(fig. 4 and 5)

The above is an example of Lat's gentle humor. But having a knowledge of what happened in 1969 adds to the depth and poignancy of *Town Boy*. Although the latter ends with Lat and Frankie going their separate ways after high school, there is a sense of hope that they will remain friends for life. This is a much more powerful message about the importance of racial harmony than most government campaigns in Malaysia

in the 1970s and 1980s.

It is unfortunate then that, as in Singapore, a sense of history is lacking in today's Malaysian comics. Not just in terms of story content, but stylistically as well. Lat's nostalgic stories about the past and his concerns with history are seen as passé as the younger artists prefer to tell sci-fi stories or fantasy. Artwise, they are influenced by foreign comics, especially Japanese manga.

Looking at the recent publishing history of Malaysian comic books, such as those by the successful Gempak Starz, one can detect a strong manga influence. Set up in 1998, Gempak is a Malaysian comic/gaming/hobby magazine published by Art Square Creation. Formed after the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, the development of magazine parallels the influence of globalization of local culture.

The success of Gempak as an info-comic magazine on ACG (Animation, Comics and Games), especially those of Japan, has led to its own line of comic books, published in Malay and later translated to Chinese and English. The art style is distinctively manga.

Recent interviews with Gempak Starz artists show that they wear their influences on their sleeves.

> Keith: "Japanese comics rule! When I was young, I read Japanese comics before I even started schooling! It's hard to condense how I feel about this comic industry that has produced such great work in only a few words. All I can say is that the success of the Japanese comics reflects the persistence, tenacity and intensity of the Japanese people. Malaysians just do not feel so strongly about things. There is no comic culture in Malaysia. So perhaps we need to carve out a niche in the local comic scene first."
>
> Kaoru: "I believe I'm like one of many, who got involved in the comic industry after being influenced by Japanese comic artists."

When asked about the Malaysian comic industry, most artists felt that it has still got a long way to go. Although the artists said it was unfair to compare Malaysian comics with Japanese manga, most of them are comfortable about drawing in the manga style, hoping to develop their own style in time to come. They see no conflict between adopting a foreign drawing style to tell stories of local content (Popcorn 2009).

The fact is that Malaysia already has its own style as developed by Lat. But

with the popularity and spread of manga worldwide and market demands, younger Malaysian artists are charting their own progress and developing their own style within the manga style.

This trend is not just true of the Gempak artists drawing in the style of manga. Other Malaysian artists who have broken into the American comic industry and drawing for DC and Marvel comics like Tan Eng Huat and Billy Tan draw in the house style of the Big Two American comics companies. Even the style of alternative comics like the titles published by Drawn & Quarterly (Canada) and Fantagraphics Books (USA) is evident in the works of younger Malaysian indie artists like Chin Yew and Ming. Such is the reality of the comics industry and globalization.

By just looking at the recent publishing history of Malaysian comic books, we can get a sense of the impact of globalization on the comics industry in Malaysia. We can see how global forces are affecting local culture and economy as the local artists adapt to the market demands for foreign comic art styles.

Again, I am presenting this chapter with the hope that having a sense of history would inspire the local artists to embrace their own tradition and style, so that even if they adapt to a more international format and art style, there is still room for local content and concerns. So far, there has been a preference, on the artists' part, for the fantastic and the weird, rather than a concern with reflecting what is happening in society. Two of my favorite Malaysian artists, Leong Wan Kok and Slaium, have produced works of science fiction and urban horror, rather than on the political changes in Malaysia today.

The context determines the text in both Singapore and Malaysia today. The lack of political cartoons in Singapore is a result of present political realities. The prominence of manga style comics in Malaysia is a result of the impact of globalization.

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Lim Cheng Tju

Lim Cheng Tju

Lim Cheng Tju

15

War comics beyond the battlefield:
Anne Frank's transnational representation in sequential art

Kees RIBBENS

Introduction

In May 2009, the press in India welcomed what they considered to be one of the first graphic novels in the country, *The Hotel at the End of the World* by Parismita Singh. This multi-layered story portrays a hotel in Northeast India run by Pema and her husband. The graphic novel reminds the reader of a nuanced Buddhist fable in which travellers on their way to neighboring China, as well as the couple who own the hotel, all have a story to tell. Pema's husband, a fan of the British *Commando* war comics, recalls World War II in the Manipur region and speaks of homesick Japanese soldiers in the Naga Hills during the war. Among the various sources of inspiration, including local folklore and personal experiences of the author, comic books representing World War II have played an undeniable role.

Although India generally does not stand out as a stronghold of comic book aficionados, there has been a notable comics production based on ancient Indian mythologies. And, as the appearance of the *Commando* comics in this country shows, war comics are no unknown phenomenon in the world's largest democracy. In fact, this specific genre saw a rebirth in 2008, when Aditya Bakshi, son of a high-ranking military officer, launched a series of Indian war comics. These books portray outstanding military heroes from recent decades and the storylines are high on adventure and adrenaline. The purpose of these comics is not only to entertain and inform. The producer was also hoping to restore the general audience's respect for the

glorious Indian army, especially among youngsters.

This Indian excursion shows us several things. First, war comics are a strongly established genre of comic strips that even appear in countries with not such a well-known tradition of reading and publishing comic books. And even there, World War II, functions as content or inspiration for such comics. Secondly, the use of the label 'graphic novel' in societies such as India shows a worldwide awareness of relatively new developments or distinctions in the comics field. Regardless of the variety of form, content and regional specificities in comics, this might suggest that, up to a certain level, comics culture is a truly global phenomenon (Sabin 1996).

Thirdly, the distinction that is made between comic books on the one hand and graphic novels on the other hand—whether we agree or not about a strict border between these two—indicates that all forms of sequential art are surrounded with expectations, usually more implicit than explicit, concerning its social and cultural value, its impact on and relation to specific audiences and the development of the medium. That a respectable literary publishing firm like Penguin Books India ventures into the field of sequential art, targeting a well educated adult audience, is a rather different thing than addressing kids with smoking battlefield images, hoping to strengthen the position of the Indian army.

However, what these Indian examples have in common is the presence of war scenes. Although not all comics mentioned refer explicitly to World War II, this conflict remains an often occurring theme in many comic books, and not only within the genre of war comics. The character of World War II as a truly global conflict is reflected in the fact that representations can be found in comic books from around the world. Its character as a total war is obvious when reading the many comic book representations that are situated outside the strictly military framework. In that sense it can be stated that the portrayal of war in comics has gone beyond the actual battlefields.

1. Development of war comics

Nevertheless, the general idea of what 'war comics' are, is very much based on the portrayal of battle scenes and male heroism, especially in American comic books since the 1940s like *Jeep Comics* and later on in *Two-Fisted Tales* or *Frontline Combat*

which developed the representation of war to a more realistic, less glorifying level (Riches 2009, Conroy 2009). Europe has seen somewhat similar comics from the 1950s onwards, such as *Garry* in France, the *Hazañas Bellicas* in Spain and so on. Some of these were translated editions of the British Commando series, launched in 1961, which appeared across Western Europe and Canada, while the original copies in English were also distributed in countries as diverse as South Africa, India and Australia. Parallel initiatives can be traced in Japan and Chile, where manga and historietas portrayed the experiences of air force pilots and tank battalions in World War II as well. Thousands of these comics have entertained large numbers of readers, fostered their ideas of heroism, encouraged their patriotism, taught them about the experiences of war, and shaped their expectations of comics in general.

As a result of this steady and global production, the general idea of what 'war comics' are, is very much based on what can be called the British model. This underlines that it obviously is a strong phenomenon within the UK, one of the few countries where this traditional comic continues to exist. But while the use of the label 'war comics' often remains limited to this action-packed, heroic military narrative of the British model, the development of the genre—also including the portrayal of more recent armed conflicts—has continued.

Especially from the 1960s onwards, comics in general have shown an increasing variety of protagonists, situations and narratives, presented in both traditional and more pioneering ways and going far beyond the adventurous and humoristic elements and the (perceived) audience of children. One of the outcomes of this process is what, in the Western world, is nowadays distinguished as the 'graphic novel'.

Two outstanding well-known works, Art Spiegelman's *Maus* and Nakazawa Keiji's *Barefoot Gen*, have played an important international role to show the potential of the graphic novel. The way in which they received recognition was, however, remarkable. First of all, these works have often been regarded as so exceptionally intriguing that readers and reviewers who were rather unfamiliar with comics emphasized the literary qualities, while underestimating their comic book roots and by doing so largely separating them from the wider world of comics. Secondly, despite its unmistakable common historical topic—World War II—these books were hardly-

ever described as war comics (Ribbens 2010). I want to make a plea for a more inclusive definition of the war comics genre, to open it up beyond the (largely military) depictions of the battlefields. Any serious attempt to oversee the large worldwide production of World War II-related comics from 1939 till today shows a wide variety in the ways in which aspects of this war were represented. Violence is shown, although not uncommonly, in more abstract ways. War events are usually made visible by focusing on the experiences of individuals, but they can be either soldiers or civilians. And the stage on which their actions took place was not by definition the battlefield. Also the home front, where protagonists were faced with the restrictions of a war society, was portrayed, sometimes very subtle and at other times in simplistic black and white-schemes. Political and otherwise ideological messages were represented in various ways (Witek 1989, McKinney 2008).

Maus and *Barefoot Gen* are significant contributions to this. But an assessment of their role requires a better awareness of the variety in which historical experiences in general, and World War II in particular, are represented in graphic narratives. As representations of World War II can be found in comic books from around the world, the possibility is created to do comparative research regarding the ways in which comics from different countries and continents have dealt with this total war, both during and after the conflict. To what extent can transnational influences be observed and if so, can a common, global comic tradition in representing this war be identified?

2. Anne Frank in sequential art

As a modest attempt to get a grip on the transnational representation of this historical conflict beyond the battlefields, I will focus on graphic narratives representing Anne Frank, the Jewish girl from German descent who lived in Amsterdam when the German army occupied the Netherlands in 1940. She became a victim of the Nazi persecution of the Jews during World War II and from 1942 onwards she and her family lived in a secret annex. During this fearful two year period she kept a diary in which she expressed her day to day observations and hopes for peace. After their hiding place had been discovered in 1944, Anne and her relatives were sent to die in a concentration camp. In the post-war period she became famous after the publication of

her diary (Wertheim 2009). Her biographical narrative embodies the atrocities of the war (in particular the Holocaust), somewhat comparable to the individual experiences portrayed in the works of Spiegelman and Nakazawa.

Despite the lack of a good bibliographical research infrastructure in the field of comics studies, more than fifteen different comic representations of Anne Frank from around the world could be traced.[1] Some of these have been distributed internationally, sometimes in translated editions. As it is hard in the field of popular culture, especially when talking about globalized popular culture, to get a really good overview of what has been produced—in particular when speaking of stories that were not published as separate books—it is difficult to say whether this corpus is complete. But it may certainly function as a solid impression of Anne Frank's legacy in the medium of sequential art.

The comics were published between 1961 and 2009, covering almost five decades of comic book history. The first appearance of Anne Frank in the universe of comics was in the spring of 1961. Anne Frank was represented in the well-known American comic book series *Classics Illustrated*, in a volume called *Teens in War: Famous Teens* (AFc I). In fact Anne herself was not turned into a regular comic book character, but in the context of this comic book her life was described in words, supported by a few drawings. This modest start in comics probably indicates the publishers were aware that certain critical observers—even within the more widely accepted frame of educational comics—did not consider comics to be a very suitable medium for treating such an extremely tragic and recent past, which had been personally experienced by many postwar European immigrants in the United States.

The American awareness of the Holocaust during World War II had recently been stimulated by the 1959 movie *The Diary of Anne Frank* by George Stevens. This was in fact a follow-up of a popular theatre play on Broadway in 1955—by the same title—which was Frances Goodrich's and Albert Hackett's first creative adaptation of Anne Frank's book that had been published in the USA in 1952, five years after the original Dutch edition had appeared. The movie was very successful in informing large

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1 This article was finished before the publication of Sid Jacobson & Ernie Colón (2010), *Anne Frank: The Anne Frank House Authorized Graphic Biography*. New York: Hill & Wang (AFc XVIII).

audiences worldwide about Anne's experiences and reflections. [2]

Popular media, in this case a movie and a play, have definitely increased interest in the Holocaust, while at the same time stimulating the awareness of the fact that this tragedy from the Nazi-era was everything but distant from a temporal perspective. Furthermore, it was an historical event which certain newly arrived citizens of the USA had experienced themselves. It is therefore no surprise that comic book publishers in the USA, over the years, have shown a certain cautiousness in presenting the story of Anne Frank in their medium.

This hesitation was absent from a nearby country like Mexico, where World War II and the Holocaust were considered distant phenomena, but where comics were as popular as in the USA. Against that background it was less complicated to publish comics devoted to Anne's life. Between 1963 and 1972 no less than three Mexican publishers thought Anne Frank to be an interesting topic for their biographical comic book series (AFc II, III, IV). Like many of these popular pulp comics, often created by anonymous artists, they were a mixture of educational publications and entertainment products. Anne Frank's experiences were shown as an exemplary life, like the Saints and other inspirational Christians whose lives were presented in religious publications for a wide audience. In fact, in the series on 'Famous Women' the Jewish Anne was placed in an environment that had catholic characteristics like the painting of the Holy Virgin in Anne's hiding place (mistakenly situated in a basement).

The publication of these three comics was partly the result of the Mexican fascination with good and evil, and of the popularity of various World War II themes, even though it was considered to be mainly a European affair. At the same time, the large production of Mexican comics simply seemed to run out of suitable topics for new comic books. Yet, instead of reprinting or plagiarizing the first Mexican Anne Frank comic, new comics were made. Undoubtedly they were all inspired by the US movie and theatre play, but not so much by the previous Mexican comic book portrayals.

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2 Although Anne Frank's father Otto, who had survived the Holocaust, wanted his daughter to be played by Audrey Hepburn, the teenage character was eventually played by the actress Millie Perkins.

Kees Ribbens

3. Spreading towards other continents

The next Anne Frank comic appeared in Asia, around 1973. This Filipino edition of *The Diary of Anne Frank* by Rodolfo Lofamia was framed in an American way (AFc V). The US concept of *Classics Illustrated* had already reached the Philippines in the late 1940s where it was adapted to meet local needs and tastes under the name *National Classic Comics*. The Anne Frank comic in this series strongly creates the impression of a romantic story with characters dressed up in fashionable post-war clothing. Although World War II was part of the national history of the Philippines, the Holocaust remained a far away phenomenon. Against this background the comic became a somewhat a-historical narrative based on clichés about 'an impossible love under difficult circumstances'. The result was a comic that was less educational than entertaining.

Despite the increasing number of translations of her diary, only one Anne Frank comic was published in the 1980s. In the beginning of this decade the first European Anne Frank comic appeared in Italy (AFc VI). In a Christian inspired collection of pacifistic biographical sketches of famous people, Anne Frank was represented amidst Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi. This idealistic and educational framing differed from the rather entertaining aim of two more Anne Frank comics that appeared in Mexico from 1991 onwards (AFc VII, XIII).

From then on, Anne Frank also made a threefold appearance in Japan. The first Anne Frank manga, titled *The girl Who Lives Forever in the Hearts of Peace Loving People*, was published in 1992 (AFc IIX). The title alone suggests a kind of pacifism reminiscent of the comic in that other former Axis-country, Italy.

The important role Anne Frank played in the Japanese perception of World War II, partly due to her positive and pacifistic outlook and her position as a victim, was also underlined in a world history text book created in the manga medium which was devoted to *World War II and Hitler the Dictator* (AFc IX). Her appearance on the front cover—and elsewhere—in the book as the only 'ordinary citizen' among war leaders like Hitler, Stalin and Churchill emphasizes not only her appealing qualities as an individual symbolizing the human costs of man-made atrocities, but also explains to the reader that the Holocaust, even from an Asian perspective, was not just an ordinary

detail in the history of this global war. Any hesitation on illustrating the Holocaust with a comic book character was absent here.

The strong educational aim of this book is as obvious as in the so-called Edu-Manga, a publication by Tezuka Production that appeared in 2001 (AFc XI). In this book, Astro Boy shows up from time to time to help young readers understand Anne Frank's experiences. When this *Atomu Poketto* was published in an American edition in 2006 (AFc XIa) the success of this book was rather modest despite Tezuka's increasingly appealing status on the American comics market. The combination of a fictional hero with a historical character who is connected to such a painful, still very prominent episode, may explain its limited popularity. Different from the situation in the early 1960s - and more than a decade after Spiegelman's groundbreaking graphic novels - the problem does not primarily seem to be that comics are not considered suitable for representing the Holocaust, but simply that the reality of the Holocaust is not to be mixed with characters from a fictional background.

Perhaps that makes it understandable why two other publishers in the very same year, 2006, decided to come up with two new educational comic books on Anne Frank for the American market. The first one, simply titled *Anne Frank* was a joint effort of two writers and three illustrators (AFc XIV). Its publisher, World Almanac Library in New York State, integrated it in its Graphic Biographies series, which obviously tried to profit somewhat from the recent popularity of the *graphic novel-phenomenon*. The second competitor to the Astro Boy mediated comic was *The Life of Anne Frank*, originally a British comic by Nicholas Saunders (AFc XV) that also appeared in a parallel US edition (AFc XVa). According to the publisher this full-color 'factual look at story of Anne Frank' was presented in 'a fast-paced, edgy graphic novel format including bright, action-packed scenes'. However, additional 'fact boxes' and a timeline, glossary and index strongly overshadowed the action-packed scenes, turning the book into a not-so-attractive reading experience.

A less formal and more successful attempt to present her to a young audience, using subtle humor while respectfully trying to represent some central issues of Anne Frank's Holocaust experience, was Gary Northfield's two page comic strip 'Anne Frank. The young girl whose famous diary has inspired millions' (AFc XVII). It

appeared in 2009 as part of a comics series on "The world's greatest heroes" in the UK magazine National Geographic Kids.

4. An icon in popular culture

In Northfield's approach Anne is introduced to young readers who have probably not heard of her before, and are unlikely to know much about the history of World War II. That may be characteristic of historical comics with an educational aim (be it in various degrees). However, a new development can be observed when studying Anne Frank comics representations from the last decade. In the examples from this latest wave, Anne Frank no longer needs an introduction. She is now easily recognized as an icon in popular culture, whose meaning has grown beyond her own existence. And perhaps equally remarkably here are the cross-media references.

The French *bande dessinée* author Frédéric Boilet was the first to approach her in this way. In 1999 he contributed *Hohoemidô—La Cérémonie du sourire—Smile Ceremony* to the prestigious collection Comix 2000 from the progressive Paris-based publisher l'Association (AFc X), a world wide state of the art comics collection without any written dialogue. The transnational frame was explicitly visible in Boilet's comic narrative, who as a French artist benefiting from his current residence in Japan, also referred to the historical work of Katsushika Hokusai. Later on, this story was integrated into the collaborative comic book *Mariko Parade* by Boilet and Takahama Kan, which first appeared in Japanese (AFc Xa).

Boilet's comic focuses on the smile—or at least: on the lips—of a number of people whose faces are shown in some well-known photographs and illustrations, redrawn by the artist and gently presented here by a Japanese woman in the intimacy of what appears to be a private home. The pictures include portraits of an anonymous French soldier of World War I, the pilot of the Enola Gay Paul W. Tibbets, and Anne Frank. This comic episode ends with some panels inspired by work of Hokusai from the early 1840s in which the female Japanese presenter transforms into a lion dancer with a sword, holding up a fan with a smile on it, hiding the woman's face as well as her emotions. The story, apart from playing with the tension between private and public, suggests that a smile, despite its public attractiveness that is generally

225

interpreted in a positive way, can very well hide the tragic historical circumstances of these people's lives. This underlines how much Anne Frank has become a global iconic character, easily recognized, but also reduced to a rather simplistic message of hope despite the circumstances.

Boilet's Anne Frank, reduced to a photograph, was a kind of passer-by in this story, one of several characters each with only a limited number of frames. A somewhat similar appearance occurred in a comic book from 2009 called *Le groom vert-de-gris* [The Verdigris Bell-Boy] by the French authors Yann and Olivier Schwartz (AFc XVI). These comic artists were given the opportunity to make a one shot story of the classic Belgian comic characters Spirou & Fantasio, who in the post-war Franco-Belgian comics universe, had been strong competitors to the famous Tintin.

Yann and Schwartz's retro-oriented story was loaded with tongue in cheek references to the rich history of Belgian comics. Their story took place in and around the Belgian capital in 1942 and 1944, in the middle of the German occupation of Brussels and immediately after the liberation by the Allied forces. The protagonists Spirou and Fantasio are resistance fighters against the Nazis but as Spirou is performing an under cover operation, he appears to be collaborating with the Germans. Once the Germans find out that Spirou is betraying their secrets, they try to arrest him. While escaping over the rooftops of Brussels, he discovers a young Jewish girl, apparently hiding from persecution, who helps him to stay out of sight from the Nazis. Never having kissed a boy, she asks him a favor. After their kiss, she wishes him good luck and they part. Two years later, right after the liberation, Spirou returns to the house where they met, only to find out she was deported to the east and killed. Thinking of her he walks away sadly, among ignorant crowds celebrating the liberation. Once he runs into his old pal Fantasio, the girl isn't mentioned any more.

Although the fifteen year old Jewish girl is named Audrey in the comic—referring to the actress who was supposed to play her character in the 1959 US movie—she is easily recognisable as Anne Frank. The artistic freedom of the creators to rename her, as well as to move her from the Dutch to the Belgian capital, expresses how much she has become an icon in popular culture. Her meaning reduced to a few elements, she can now easily be placed in a different context. Nevertheless, this mixed

presentation of an indirect reference to a real life Holocaust victim in a fictional story caused a certain amount of unease among critical observers, somewhat comparable to the lack of American enthusiasm for Astro Boy's involvement with the Anne Frank story in the US.

The most far-reaching example of placing Anne in a different context, finally, is the underground web-comic *Anne Frank Conquers the Moon Nazis* (AFc XII). This US production by Bill Mudron remains unfinished up to this day, but started to appear on the Internet in 2003. In this what-if narrative Anne Frank's remains are discovered in the former concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen and flown to a US laboratory in 1955. A mad German scientist working for an unnamed American agency receives the order to bring her back to life, but his secret goal is to turn her into an invincible robot that will destroy the United Nations assembly, so that Hitler can return to earth to conquer the world. In the 1980s Anne Frank is finally resurrected as a killing machine, although that does not stop the lab's young janitor from falling in love with her. This fictitious and politically incorrect web-comic goes way beyond the facts and established interpretations of Anne Frank, but can still be placed within the regular narrative scheme of good American citizens versus the evil Nazis.

Conclusion

Exploring the comic book representations of Anne Frank shows how creators and publishers have ventured beyond the battlefields in their portrayal of World War II events. Atrocities like the Holocaust have been dealt with both before and after Spiegelman's *Maus* and Nakazawa's *Barefoot Gen*. This case study also makes us aware of the diversity in aims, such as entertainment, educational purposes or a mixture of both. More recently, a more distanced and liberal approach can be noted, characterized by literary elements, intertextuality and cross media references. The reception of these diverse graphic narratives indicates a variety in expectations vis-à-vis comics, concerning what is possible and suitable. That is an important cultural phenomenon which is developing over time and shows national and regional differences. The continuously changing expectations concerning what (both mainstream and subcultural) comic books can present and should present deserves further attention.

Topical cross sections—such as the representation of global events like World War II—may help us to understand the transnational developments in comics history. Yet, this case study indicates a rather limited awareness among comic creators of previous and foreign Anne Frank graphic representations. Apart from exceptional characters like Tintin, Superman and Astro Boy, the comics universe does not seem to have a strong historical consciousness of previous characters and narratives. Up to a certain degree comics have been a medium without a memory. But the recent examples by Boilet and Yann suggest that this is changing somewhat, though it remains to be seen whether this is a worldwide development. Transnational influences in comics are still hard to identify. Nevertheless, the references that comics make to other media emphasize the wider international context of both popular culture and high culture in which they operate. Analysing the meaning and role of comics, including the transnational similarities and differences, demands attention for this larger context, in order to establish its ever changing position as a cultural phenomenon.

Kees Ribbens

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16

Barefoot Gen and 'A-bomb literature'
re-recollecting the nuclear experience

Kawaguchi Takayuki
(trans. Nele Noppe)

Introduction

The Pacific War was as much a society-wide experience as it was experienced on a deeply personal level. The A-bomb experience in particular was central to the war experience, to such a degree that it became a foundational "communal" topic in the postwar rebuilding of society. Sixty years have passed since the fall of the A-bomb, and memory has begun to erode as new generations replace the old. However, recently, an A-bomb manga by an artist from Hiroshima, Kōno Fumiyo's *Yūnagi no machi, sakura no kuni* (Town of Evening Calm, Country of Cherry Blossoms, Engl. trans. 2008) became a bestseller and was even adapted into a movie.

The expressions of these war and nuclear experiences, their "representations", so to speak, have exerted at least some degree of influence on the formation of the postwar political and economic order not only in Japan but in all countries and regions involved. Moreover, they have contributed to the construction of the cultural, ethical, and aesthetic frameworks of the people living there.

As we know, the word "representation" is a combination of two elements: re (again) + presentation. Representation is thus nothing but the reconstruction of a particular occurrence, necessarily with a "delay". This posteriority applies to any representation, and no retelling of events, whether by witnesses or otherwise, can escape this. Any representation carries a burden, that of the historical and social conditions at the time of its creation and at the time of its reception. We might characterize this burden as specific significations from a very limited standpoint, in other words, interpretative codes. Without these codes not only the representation of the war and the nuclear experience would be impossible, but the whole world of representations we

inhabit. Precisely therefore, theoretically speaking, critical readings are possible from any imaginable standpoint, but this freedom also makes us confront various ethical and political questions.

Simply put, these ethical and political questions boil down to relationalities. Representations of the violent experience of the atomic bomb, precisely because they were post factum, profoundly influenced the formation of the subjectivity of those who created and received them. We should not forget that subjects are formed through the rejection of everything that is considered not part of the subject. Conducting critical readings of representations comes down to examining the surplus of representations, which can be called "others" or the "outside", and through such examinations, ask ourselves about the nature of one's associations and dissociations.

Furthermore, the gradual fixation of representations of the war and the nuclear experience as well as the terminology used to describe them indicates that certain dominant interpretative codes are strengthened and even privileged. The memory of an experience which is actually fluid, gains a fixed form in order to reduce its instability, and this process eventually leads to society's recording of a public history. Not surprisingly, the memory of the war and the nuclear experience cannot be sufficiently gained from fixed representations. Any attempt to bring light to tendentially ignored representations cannot help but be an act of resistance against dominant interpretative codes. Nevertheless, I do not mean to imply that newly created individual representations are entirely uninfluenced by these dominant codes.

Drawing attention to representations of the war and the nuclear experience cannot be confined to the evaluation of single works' expression. That is only one part of our work; to disclose the forces of social resistance contained in any representation may be equally important. How are representations of the war and the nuclear experience constructed through expressive acts, and how do they achieve certain meanings? What conflicts between various interpretative codes can be seen in this process? By examining the views and narrations in such representations, we must before anything else reconsider the conceptual frameworks we use consciously or unconsciously, and learn to imagine the possibility of other recollections.

1. The formation of "A-bomb Literature" as a genre

From the second half of the 1940s until the beginning of the 1950s, all information pertaining to the damage wrought by the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings was

thoroughly censored by the occupation authorities. However, many A-bomb survivors as well as artists resisted the efforts of the censors and went public, for example Maruki Iri and Toshi with their series of paintings named *The Hiroshima Panels*, Hara Tamiki and Ōta Yoko with their novels *Summer Flowers* and *The City of Corpses*, and Tōge Sankichi, Kurihara Sadako, and Shoda Shinoe with their poems and *tanka*. The term "A-bomb literature" was already in use at this time, although it began to be recognized as the name of a literary genre only by the latter half of the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s. While I have already discussed this topic in detail elsewhere (Kawaguchi 2008), in this paper, I want to question the construction of A-bomb literature from a different angle by examining the manga *Barefoot Gen*.

The serialization of *Barefoot Gen* in the magazine *Weekly Shōnen Jump* began in 1973. (A single-episode piece was published the previous year in *Monthly Shōnen Jump* as part of a series of autobiographical shorts by several authors.) 1973 was also the year in which Matsuji Ibuse's novel *Black Rain* was first included in Japanese textbooks intended for senior high school students (by the publishers Tokyo Shoseki and Chikuma Shobō). In 1975, Hara Tamiki's *Summer Flowers* (in a textbook by Sanseidō) followed. Inclusion in the high school curriculum of Japanese language is considered a clear indication that a work has achieved a "canonical" position in the field of public education. Black Rain may have been included because of the uniformly positive reviews it received upon publication, being generally regarded as the peak of a large number of other works expressing/representing the nuclear experience. 1966, the year that *Black Rain* was published in book format, was also the year in which Nakazawa Keiji created an account of his nuclear experience for the first time in *Struck by Black Rain* (even if that was published two years later).

Also in 1977, Nagaoka Hiroyoshi published his *History of Atomic Bomb Literature*. Nagaoka had been tirelessly gathering literature about the atomic bomb and writing a historical account of such literature from 1966 on. He later described the situation in this period as follows. Firstly, the word *A-bomb literature* was not found in special-issue titles of literary magazines or dictionaries. Secondly, there was one exception: *Iwanami kojiten nihon bungaku: kindai* [The Small Iwanami Dictionary Japanese Literature: Modern Period] listed authors Ōta Yoko, Hara Tamiki, and Tōge Sankichi under the header "A-bomb and literature". Thirdly, even there, the word A-bomb literature was not applied as an accepted literary term, but merely described as "what is referred to as 'A-bomb literature' in the vernacular". Fourthly, it appeared

that the word A-bomb literature was not accorded a place in either histories of postwar literature or in literary dictionaries (Nagaoka 1997: 163). The book *History of Atomic Bomb Literature* was an attempt to convince the publishing industry as well as the literary establishment that the writings disdainfully referred to as A-bomb works should be recognized as a true literary genre. Possibly, Nagaoka's historical account did as much for the establishment of the genre A-bomb literature as *Black Rain*, adding a historiographic dimension to the literary work.

As is evident from for example the appraisal of *Black Rain* as an outstanding expression and crystallization of the nuclear experience, a piece of "national literature, finally appearing, twenty years after the war" (*Asahi Shinbun*, 8.11.1986), the canonization of this novel also helped to picture "Japan" and the "Japanese", the actual subjects, as atomic bomb victims. Nagaoka praised *Black Rain* in his History of Atomic Bomb Literature, but at the same time he was critical of the tendency to treat *Black Rain* as the site of convergence for all individual nuclear experiences. The formation of A-bomb literature as a genre of its own was accompanied by a struggle between various interpretative codes as to how representations of the atomic bomb should be interpreted, and we might say that the genre of A-bomb literature grew through this struggle. And the creation of Barefoot Gen was not entirely unrelated to the formation of the A-bomb literature genre. What issues become visible when we attempt to reposition *Barefoot Gen* within this context? I will approach this question by discussing three topics in *Barefoot Gen*, namely, the Hiroshima Maidens, the Korean A-bomb victims, and the wartime responsibility of the emperor and the imperial system.

2. The Hiroshima Maidens

Yasuko, one of the characters in *Black Rain*, is a typical Hiroshima Maiden who bravely endures her horrible fate. She was received as "a girl who was good through and through" and "a gentle maiden who symbolized the people of beautiful sun-drenched Geibi", a human being who "never spoke a word of resentment or complaint even as the black rain ate away at her. She passively endured her pain and continued with her simple life" (*Mainichi Shinbun* 1971: 60). Needless to say, the beautified representation of female A-bomb victims facilitated many people's sentimental empathizing. This image of the Hiroshima Maiden was widely popularized through the TV series *Yume Chiyo nikki* (1981, 1982, 1984, screenplay by Hayasaka Akira), in which Yoshinaga

Sayuri played the character of Yume Chiyo, who bravely struggles with leukemia.[1]

Many female A-bomb victims appear in Barefoot Gen, but here I want to take a closer look at Katsuko and Natsue, two friends of Gen who play an important role in the story. Katsuko and Natsuo are both disfigured by some degree of keloid scarring on their faces. Their hideous injuries cause them to be treated as "ghosts" by those around them, and sometimes they return their own feelings of uncontrollable resentment and anger. In their determination to persevere in life in spite of their injuries, Katsuko and Natsue certainly bear a certain resemblance to women such as Yasuko from *Black Rain*. However, it is clear that they do not fit comfortably into the stereotype of the pure, courageous, ephemeral Hiroshima Maiden. Their keloid scars resist attempts at beautification and are a form of visible damage from the nuclear experience that is extremely difficult to gloss over.

Through their interactions with main character Nakaoka Gen and his friend Ryūta, Katsuko and Natsue begin to dream of opening their own clothing store. This plan is their hope for the future. Actually, the combination of female A-bomb victims and a clothing store is a classic element in the story of the Hiroshima Maidens.

In 1955, the story of some Hiroshima Maidens traveling to the United States to have their keloid scars treated captivated public attention. Media in Japan and in the United States eagerly portrayed the event as a symbol of reconciliation between the two countries. When the Hiroshima Maidens returned to Japan after the conclusion of their treatments, newspapers attempted to paint the trauma of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a thing of the past by turns of phrase such as "The Hiroshima Maidens are home, the wounds in their hearts healed" (*Asahi Shinbun*, 18.06.1956), or "Last night, the Hiroshima Maidens returned from America to their homes, so healed in heart and body that their weeping families barely recognized them anymore" (*Chūgoku Shinbun*, 7.11.1956).[2] Later, in 1959, Minowa Toyoko became famous when she returned from the United States, where she had studied to become a fashion designer after undergoing reconstructive facial surgery. Among all stories of reconciliation, that of this very Hiroshima Maiden who wanted to open a clothing shop in Tokyo was considered the most beautiful and inspiring by her countrymen. Minowa finally opened her store in

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1 For more information on Yasuko from *Black Rain*, see the first section of the first chapter of *Genbaku bungaku to iū mondai ryōiki* (Kawaguchi 2008). For more information about *Yume Chiyo Nikki*, see Ishikawa (2008).

2 For more information on the emergence and development of the Hiroshima Maiden image in the fifties, see Nakano (2002).

1961, not in Tokyo but in Hiroshima, and created her own school of dressmaking.

In children's literature, a genre related to manga, there is the example of Ōno Mitsuko. She borrows the Hiroshima Maiden framework for her book *The Girl From Hiroshima* (1969), but creates a profoundly different narrative. In The Girl From Hiroshima, a girl named Tsuji Kiyoko (who is clearly inspired by Minowa) travels to the United States to have her keloid scars treated and later opens a clothing shop in Hiroshima. Her visible scars may be healed, but she continues to suffer from intangible "keloid scars" embedded in her heart. She refuses to marry her lover because he comes from a *burakumin* (social minority group in Japan) area . Unlike Yasuko in *Black Rain*, she is no victim of marriage discrimination, but rather presented as someone who cannot help but hurt other people.[3]

Of course, Katsuko and Natsue from Barefoot Gen are not explicitly ascribed such personality. However, as their their keloid scars which cannot be healed suggest, their dream of opening a clothing store is not realized within the series (Natsue dies; Katsuko eventually leaves for Tokyo with Ryūta, leaving this possibility open). Apparently, *Barefoot Gen* partly co-opted the popular narrative of the Hiroshima Maidens, while weaving a decidedly different discourse into it.

3. Korean A-bomb victims

The fixated image of the Hiroshima Maiden is closely related to the feminization of the memory of the nuclear experience. Traditional gender dichotomies that position males as subjects and females as objects clearly played a significant role in the re-casting of subjects as objects of violence. Returning for a moment to *Black Rain*, we might say that many readers confirmed the subjectivity of "Japan" and the "Japanese" as war victims by empathizing with Hiroshima Maiden Yasuko. Particularly relevant to this process is oblivion in the war experience with respect to the "perpetrator" issue.

The characters in *Barefoot Gen* are set apart from the representation of Japan and the Japanese as war victims. This is most clearly expressed by the character Mr. Pak, a Korean who was forcibly taken to Japan along with his father. The manga shows that after the bombing, Pak's father perishes after being denied food rations because of his Korean nationality. The problem of Korean A-bomb victims was first raised at the 27th World Conference against A&H Bombs, held in 1972, a year before

3 I learned of the importance of Ōno Mitsuko's *The Girl From Hiroshima* from a presentation by Roberta Tiberi at the 29th conference of the Society for Genbaku Literature in November 2009 (Tiberi 2009).

Barefoot Gen began serialization. The issue of compensation for Korean A-bomb victims had started appearing in the media in the second half of the 1960s, when the anti-war movement was spurred on by the Vietnam War. This led the Japanese anti-A-bomb movement to change course and become a movement aimed at preventing the Japanese from becoming perpetrators of war once more, rather than a movement for victims. The influence of this shift in historical awareness is visible in the fourteenth painting in Maruki Iri and Maruki Toshi's *The Hiroshima Panels* (1972). Entitled "Crows", it depicts a scene in which crows feed on the abandoned bodies of Korean A-bomb victims. It is said that the Marukis painted it after having been introduced by Nagaoka Hiroyoshi to the collection of wartime accounts from Korean A-bomb victims *Chrysanthemums and Nagasaki* (Ishimure 1968).

"Crows" and *Chrysanthemums and Nagasaki* avoid hiding behind society's one-sided take on the issue; they do not adopt the style of blaming the perpetrator from an absolutely safe position. Both works attempt rather to approximate the victims as closely as possibly and compassionately share their suffering. This is different from a strict division between victims and perpetrators, based on which one simply identifies with the former. Here, we can rather find traces of a movement to fundamentally re-interrogate the nuclear experience, to face the "perpetrator" within oneself, by continuously revisiting a site of memory where victim and perpetrator are intertwined in a complex and fluid way.[4]

Compared with the depictions in "Crows" and *Chrysanthemums and Nagasaki*, *Barefoot Gen*'s representation of discrimination against Koreans as well as of Japan's colonial rule are close to a style of simple indictment and blame. It is difficult to decide whether to attribute its lack of complexity to the characteristics of the manga medium, or to the author himself and this work in particular. Here, one episode is noteworthy, the one in which Mr. Pak, who tells so passionately about the discrimination of Koreans, amasses a fortune in the postwar black market. Pak says that money was the only thing he could rely on in order to survive in Japan, and the reader is led to imagine that he has engaged in activities more typical of *yakuza* (Japanese gangs). Depicted as victims' representative, the character Mr. Pak suggests, behind its clear surface, a depth of the human condition which cannot simply be split up into good and evil.

Pak's restart after the war was fueled by the self-blame and grief he felt after

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4 I discuss this topic in more detail in chapter 2, section 4 of my 2008 book, taking Ishimure's *Chrysanthemums and Nagasaki* (1968) as an example. On "Crows", the fourteenth painting of *The Hiroshima Panels*, I found Inaga (2005) particularly informative.

having failed to save his father. Although he is furious at the Japanese for letting his father die, he also blames himself for not having prevented the tragedy and suffers greatly from this feeling of guilt. While his story appears to highlight the different experiences of Korean and Japanese victims, his experiences actually seem to run parallel to those of main character Nakaoka Gen, who could not save his father, sister and brother immediately after the dropping of the bomb (or his baby sister, mother, and many of his friends later on). Many A-bomb victims undoubtedly share this kind of experience. Here, feelings of shame and guilt burdening those who had to sacrifice someone else in order to stay alive, or failed to save a loved one, become visible.

Some readers of *Barefoot Gen* may like to interpret the story of Mr. Pak as an easily understandable tale of righteousness in which the distinction between victims and aggressor is clearly articulated, and I definitely do not mean to suggest that such readings are overly simplistic. However, I think it is just as likely that *Barefoot Gen* fascinates precisely because it helps readers to get some idea of the complicated and sometimes warped emotions that A-bomb victims had to live with, emotions that cannot be presented in an easily understandable way. For many readers, the opportunity to feel even just a tiny sliver of those emotions may be a rare chance to question for themselves the distinction between victim and perpetrator or between good and evil, as well as the realities of war and peace that lead us to re-evaluate those concepts.

4. Criticizing the wartime responsibility of the emperor and the imperial system

The wartime responsibility of the emperor and criticism toward the imperial system (*tennōsei*) are two themes that run through the entirety of *Barefoot Gen*, and it is obvious that the political intentions of the author or the respective medium (especially those after the *Shōnen Jump* serialization, such as in *Shimin*, *Bunka Hyōron*, and *Kyōiku Hyōron*) become very clear particularly when criticizing the imperial system. From this point of view, it is possible to interpret *Barefoot Gen* as a manga that was used as propaganda for a particular ideology. However, we must also entertain the possibility that the manga itself was received as a work which utilized propaganda and ideology for its own purpose. And the societal background which supported such a reading, deserves attention here.

Weekly Shōnen Jump stopped the serialization of *Barefoot Gen* in 1974. Already published chapters were gathered into four manga volumes by Chūbunsha Publ. in May 1975, and in August of that year, *Barefoot Gen* was awarded an honorable prize

by the Japan Congress of Journalists. In September, serialization resumed in the magazine *Shimin*. A month later, after returning on October 31st, 1975 from his first visit to the United States, the Shōwa emperor gave a press conference, where he was also asked about his "wartime responsibility". He gave the famous reply: "I have not examined this figure of speech from a literary point of view, so I do not understand it very well, and I am unable to answer this question". As a cultural studies scholar who makes a living out of the study of figures of speech, I certainly cannot deny that the phrase "wartime responsibility" is a figure of speech. However, during the same press conference, the Shōwa emperor touched also on the nuclear experiences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: "I believe it was regrettable, but a war was going on, and although it was a great pity for the people of Hiroshima, I believe it was unavoidable". This attitude may not come as a surprise, since an emperor with a purely symbolic function is urged to avoid any discussion of political issues. However, that does not change the fact that by seemingly condoning the use of the atomic bomb by the United States, the emperor was sidestepping his own political and ethical responsibilities.

Precisely this emperor stated in his war-ending imperial edict on August 15th, 1945 that "The enemy has killed and injured many innocents through use of a cruel new bomb," by which "our country was torn to pieces"; that is, he compared the land to a single body that had been torn asunder by the atomic bomb. In other words, the conceptualization of the defeated country as a homogenous body set in here. However, stressing the wounds inflicted on the body of the state goes little way towards recognizing the pain inflicted on individuals who experienced the A-bomb. Lamenting the tragedy of "innocent people" on the one hand while calling what happened "unavoidable" on the other is rather absurd. The words of the emperor were politically careful, but we still have to ask ourselves how to confront them when thinking about the nuclear experience.

If we examine from this angle the constant criticism of the imperial system in *Barefoot Gen*, we cannot help but understand it as the manifestation of the attempt to forcefully deconstruct the dominant interpretative codes (symbolized by the Shōwa emperor) surrounding the representation of the nuclear experience in postwar Japan. This attempt rested on the tenacity to somehow re-recollect the area of countless personal experiences which cannot be acknowledged by the grand narrative.

Conclusion

Kawaguchi Takayuki

From a transdisciplinary perspective, I have examined the historical and social topology and significance of *Barefoot Gen* as a work that is closely entangled with A-bomb literature, a genre which evolved within one of the fields adjoining manga, from the end of the 1960s through the first half of the 1970s. To a certain extent, I have managed to establish that the manga *Barefoot Gen* represents a form of resistance against the turning of A-bomb literature into a genre and against the A-bomb discourse as present in *Black Rain*, which was canonized at that time. It seems safe to say that *Barefoot Gen* attempted to picture the recollections of things and people which were excluded from the then dominant narrative. This issue may also be important for discussions of the subversive potential that manga as a "subcultural" medium had around 1970.[5]

But in reality, as later developments indicate, the matter is somewhat more complex. *Barefoot Gen*, which during its creation was leaning closely on the formation of the generic awareness of A-bomb literature, cannot have been entirely free from the field of "literature". Shortly after *Black Rain* began to be taught in Japanese classrooms, *Barefoot Gen* was also designated as a "superior literary work" and was added to school libraries and reading lists. Many children may have experienced *Barefoot Gen*, rather than *Black Rain* or *Summer Flowers*, as the main representative work of A-bomb literature. Should Barefoot Gen be seen as an indication that manga managed to enter the mainstream without losing its subversive potential as a countercultural medium? Or was *Barefoot Gen* instead swallowed up by and integrated into the dominant narrative about the nuclear experience and the war? Perhaps neither of these positions accurately represents the role played by *Barefoot Gen*. The *Barefoot Gen* boom that began in the late 1990s and continued into the new millennium should encourage more detailed consideration of these questions.[6]

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5 This highlights the need for more discussion of *Barefoot Gen* based on its medium-specific mode of expression and the respective reading experience, which involves a peculiar corporeality, a discussion that should be opened toward related contemporaneous modes of expression, and also by those related modes of expression.

6 For a pioneering investigation of these topics, see Fukuma and Yoshimura (2006). In a second addendum to Kawaguchi (2008), I describe the trend to re-interrogate *Barefoot Gen* that has emerged online since the 1990s.

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How emotions work:
The politics of vision in Nakazawa Keiji's Barefoot Gen

KAJIYA Kenji

Introduction

Nakazawa Keiji's autobiographical manga *Barefoot Gen* [Hadashi no Gen] is known for its traumatic depictions of the devastations caused by the atomic bomb in Hiroshima (Itō 2006: 161-163, Yoshimura 2006, Itō and Omote 2006: 34-37). This article investigates the ways in which this manga utilizes visual representations to arouse emotions among readers and, by doing so, to pass down the memory of the war to the younger generation in postwar Japan. It will pay attention to the role of the painters who had a crucial role in the growth of Gen to show how the manga's imagery functions in a performative way. In this graphic novel, visual images are often conceived not so much as representations of reality but rather as moments that trigger various emotions and actions. Characterized also by its frequent use of point-of-view shots, this manga establishes complex relationships among images, emotions, and memories.[1] By examining the functions of performative images and point-of-view shots, this article argues that *Barefoot Gen* urges younger generations in postwar Japan to share in the event of the atomic bomb as an alternative to the officially produced memories of the event.

1. Four Painters

Four painters appear in *Barefoot Gen*: Nakaoka Daikichi, the father of the protagonist Nakaoka Gen; Yoshida Seiji, whom Gen is employed to take care of; Amano Seiga,

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1 In this article, I use the words "point-of-view shot" in a broader sense to refer to a variety of shots expressing the subjectivity according to Izumi (2008: 39-42).

who teaches Gen how to paint; and Gen himself.

The first painter, Nakaoka Daikichi, is a Japanese-style painter. He studied Japanese-style painting and lacquer decoration techniques in Kyoto, and during the war he earns a living for his family by decorating *geta*, Japanese wooden clogs (fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Nakaoka Gen often remembers his father making a painting.
Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen*, trans. Project Gen, vol. 9, 117.

Fig. 2. Yoshida Seiji tries to depict the victims of the atomic bombing by holding a brush with his mouth.
Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen*, trans. Project Gen, vol. 3, 119.

Killed by the atomic bomb, Daikichi frequently appears in Gen's later recollections and makes Gen vow to live "as strong as a weed".

Yoshida Seiji is an oil painter from a relatively wealthy family. Seiji has to give up his career as a painter after his entire body is burned in the atomic bombing; his arms are completely disabled and he is confined to his bed. At first bitter towards Gen, who takes the job of caring for him, Seiji gradually comes to trust him. One day, Seiji, Gen and Ryūta go to the fields outside the city to draw the landscape and come across many burned corpses from the atomic bombing. This scene makes Seiji determined to paint his "last piece". He desperately tries to draw the scene by holding a brush in his mouth instead of in his disabled hands, but, in the end, he falls down, vomiting blood (fig. 2).

Amano Seiga is also an oil painter. He meets Gen by chance and begins working with him at a signboard shop. While painting signboards together, Seiga teaches Gen the fundamentals of painting, including composition, perspective, and preparatory drawing (fig. 3). Seiga tells Gen about a dream he once had (Nakazawa 2009: vol. 9, 134), which later inspires Gen to become a painter. It is also Seiga who tells Gen to go to Tokyo to improve his skills in painting and drawing.

To be precise, at this point in the story, the fourth painter, Nakaoka Gen, is not yet a painter. He decides to pursue painting towards the end of the story. Through his

encounters and experiences with three painters—Daikichi, Seiji, and Seiga—Gen matures and decides on a path to take. Whenever he encounters painters, Gen experiences a special feeling towards them as they remind him of his father, who was also a painter. When Gen sees Seiji trying to draw the victims of the atomic bomb, he realizes that painting can serve as a

Fig. 3. Amano Seiga teaches Gen the fundamentals of painting at a signboard shop where they work together. Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen*, vol. 9, 195.

kind of mourning for the deceased. Gen's encounter with Seiga pushes him not only to learn painting techniques but also to cherish artistic ideals. Gen repeats Seiga's words in a soliloquy: "Art has no borders… I like those words! I feel like I've found my path… […] I wanna make art that travels around the world! I wanna break down the narrow-minded barriers that people call national borders!" (Nakazawa 2009: vol. 9, 136). Gen is now determined to become a painter, an artist active beyond national borders. In another scene, Gen says, "I will make a painting that will bring peace to the world" (Nakazawa 2009: vol. 9, 138-139). This is how Gen seeks to be a painter who, through the act of painting, aims to bring about peace.

In this way, the three other painters in *Barefoot Gen* play a crucial role in Gen's decision about his future. Their influences instill Gen with a spirit of independence in the midst of postwar turmoil and encourage him to go to Tokyo to become a painter.

2. Performativity of Painting

As we have seen, four painters including the protagonist appear in *Barefoot Gen*. The following question arises: Why do painters have such an important role in this manga? Taking into account that the author Nakazawa Keiji's life was quite similar to that of Gen—Nakazawa suffered from the Hiroshima bombing, worked for a signboard shop, and then came to Tokyo—we can think of Barefoot Gen as a manga on manga depicting the first half of a manga artist's life. Because pictures on pictures (meta-pictures) show how the artists and their contemporaries regard imagery (Stoichita 1997), this manga not only reveals the autobiographical story of a manga artist but also his way of thinking about manga expression. When Seiji witnesses the cremation of the Hiroshima victims, he says, "I have to draw every one of these wretched people… blasted by the bomb and thrown away like so much garbage…" "I have to show them…

to the bastards who started the war, the bastards who dropped the bomb…" (Nakazawa 2009: vol. 9, 118). Here we can see how Seiji feels an obligation as a witness to the atomic bombing and its victims. He is obsessed with depicting them because he regards himself as a witness. Seiji's idea of making paintings in the role of witness is taken up by Gen. In other scenes in Barefoot Gen, visual images often appear as something beyond mere representations: they serve to trigger some sort of action and emotion. Both Seiji and Seiga shred the ordinary still-life paintings they had previously made, because the paintings represent their inability to cope with the reality after the bombing (fig. 4). A mediocre signboard picture is destroyed, and Seiga's superb painting leads the signboard company's boss to question his feelings (Nakazawa 2009: vol. 9, 150-151, 190-191). A signboard depicting a rainbow brings hope to another character (Nakazawa 2009: vol. 9, 242-245). Gen and his friend Musubi beat to shreds the portrait of a prefectural assembly politician, who insisted on militarism during the war (fig. 5). Gen's affection for a girl is crystallized in a painting, and the painting in turn becomes a means to communicate his love (Nakazawa 2009: vol. 10, 104-105). In this way, the paintings frequently depicted in this narrative do not so much represent something but rather they function as triggers that urge characters to take action and feel particular emotions.

It is not merely characters in the story who are impelled to take actions and experience emotions. If we extend our analysis beyond the world of the narrative, we

Fig. 4. Ashamed that he cannot support his family, Seiga shreds his paintings.
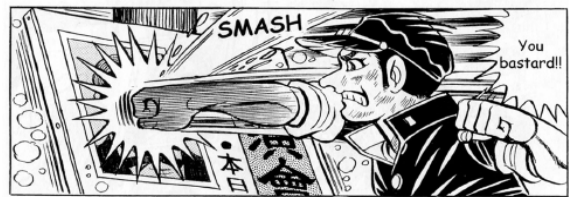Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen*, vol. 9, 121.

Fig. 5. Gen beats to shreds the portrait of a prefectural assembly politician, an ex-militarist who now talks about "love and peace".
Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen*, vol. 9, 252.

can see how the visual images in *Barefoot Gen* have a performative impact on its readers. As scholars have discussed, the artwork of *Barefoot Gen* often includes many shocking images. The author Nakazawa insists that he chose to depict graphic images to reveal the

atrocities of the war and the atomic bombing rather than to show less shocking images modified for children. He says, "It is my aim that the brutal scenes of the atomic bombing would make more and more children in Japan scared and disgusted, and make them say, 'I don't want to see it ever again'" (Nakazawa 1994: 211). *Barefoot Gen* does not aim to record the historical facts in a moderate way, but rather to emotionally affect its readers through the performative power of its visual images, and thus deliver the message of world peace. In this way, the visual images in *Barefoot Gen* have a performative effect not simply on the narrative's characters but also on its readers, arousing their deep emotions.[2]

3. Visual Grammar of Barefoot Gen

In order to consider how these emotions are awakened, let us turn to the visual grammar of *Barefoot Gen*. As critic Kure Tomofusa points out, *Barefoot Gen* has been read in such a strange way: conscientious intellectuals have expressed their great admiration for it and, for the very reason, manga fans have registered their objections by largely ignoring it (Kure 1997: 251). Barefoot Gen has been regarded as providing too little reading pleasure for a manga. But taking into account that many people remember this work—made in the 70s and 80s and still in print—we can say that it excels not just as a message of peace but also as a work of manga.

To think about *Barefoot Gen* as a manga, let us compare it with "The Tragedy of a Planet" [Aru wakusei no higeki], Asaoka Kōji's 1969 manga depicting the atomic bomb in Hiroshima.[3]

Fig. 6. The scenes just after the bombing are depicted in relation to the protagonist's movements. (Asaoka and Kusaka 1969: 36).

2 On the performativity of visual images, see Bolt (2004).

3 "The Tragedy of a Planet" was drawn by Asaoka Kōji based on Kusaka Tatsuo's memoir. It created a sensation after it was published in *Shūkan Shōnen Magazine* in the three issues of

Fig. 7. The panels depict A-bomb victims through Gen's point-of-view shots.
Nakazawa, Barefoot Gen, trans. Project Gen, vol. 1, 253.

Fig. 8. Three women are put in the frontal setting of the pictorial composition: they stand between a wooden box and a water tank in the foreground, and houses in the background. The frontality of the composition is emphasized by the plane of the tank with the words "Beware of fires." (Asaoka and Kusaka 1969: 68).

For the scene of the situation just after the bombing, "The Tragedy of a Planet" reveals how the protagonist escapes his collapsed house and shows the disasters of the scene as background for the protagonist (fig. 6); whereas *Barefoot Gen* depicts not only Gen's acts but also what he sees in point-of-view shots (fig. 7).

We can also regard the scene where a mother finds her dead child and makes him/her eat a peach, which we can find in both pieces. "The Tragedy of a Planet" puts three women in the frontal setting of the pictorial composition (fig. 8). It may be a point-of-view shot taken from the protagonist's vantage but because the composition is so well organized it is close to an objective shot. The three women thus remind us of the Three Graces in art history. On the other hand, *Barefoot Gen* depicts this scene by looking down on the mother and her child on the ground, which is a point-of-view shot from the eyes of Gen (fig. 9).

"The Tragedy of a Planet" unfolds according to the protagonist's acts and depicts

250

Fig. 9. A dead child and his mother, surrounded by flies, are depicted through Gen's point-of-view shot.
Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen*, trans. Project Gen, vol. 2, 63.

Fig. 10. Gen and his mother often have a conversation without seeing each other.
Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen*, vol. 2, 13.

the scenes after the bombing in an objective way, whereas *Barefoot Gen* focuses more on Gen's emotions than on his acts and shows what he witnessed mostly by point-of-view shots. Used frequently throughout *Barefoot Gen*, the point-of-view shot is one of its most salient characteristics.[4]

Another feature of *Barefoot Gen* is its frequent rendering of characters who turn away from the people they are talking to. For example, take the scene (fig. 10) where Gen speaks with his mother Kimie after seeing a dream in which his dead father is still alive. Talking with his mother, Gen does not keep her in his line of vision, and just looks to the right of the panel. It seems unnatural that he does not look at her during their conversation; but this shows Gen's turning his attention to the world of his dream outside the panel. His face turning to the right implies the possibility of the future development of the story.[5] To Gen, who thinks that his father might be alive

4 Due to insufficient space we cannot discuss it further, but there are other visual devices for inviting the readers to the depicted spaces than point-of-view shots. For example, see Fried (1988).

5 Izumi Nobuyuki argues that Japanese manga include many ingenious expressions utilizing the flow of reading from right to left. See Izumi (2001: 6-17). It can also be found in Japanese art works. See Etō (1980:163-222). Recent translations of Japanese manga tend to keep the reading direction the same as the original (from right to left) but there are other translations, including Barefoot Gen, which flip the pages horizontally so that you can read manga in the western way. One of the problems in the flipped translation here is that not all the images are flipped; some of the images maintain their original orientation. For example, among the Barefoot Gen images in this article, figures 1, 4, and 5 are not flipped whereas all other images are. These three images are intact probably because they depict actions by a right-handed person against a background that includes Japanese letters (although figure 4 does not include letters), but this excessive care

Fig. 11. Neighbors cannot see the inner consciousness of Gen's mother. Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen*, vol 1, p. 49.
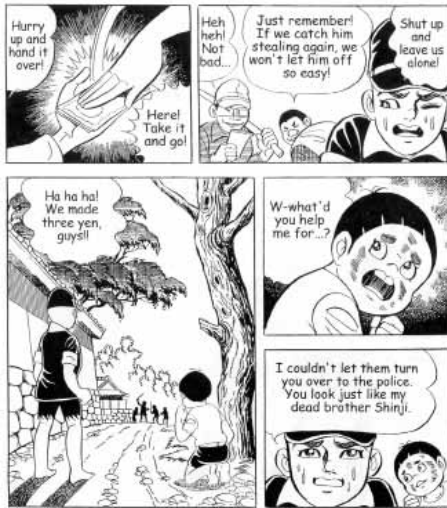

Fig. 12. The page depicts Gen's inner sorrow and his outward courage (second panel), Ryūta's change of mind (fourth panel), and Gen's regret (fifth panel). Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen*, vol. 3, 70.

somewhere, Kimie says, "How wonderful it would be if your dream were true…," turning her back on Gen. Taking into account their positions in the first panel, it is unnatural that she would turn her back to Gen, but her posture of withdrawing into herself is necessary to show the depth of her grief and to portray the inner consciousness reflected in her gloomy facial expression. By adopting this posture, Nakazawa conveys Gen's innocence and the mother's sorrow simultaneously in just one panel and emphasizes the difference in emotion between the two, which makes the unfolding story easier to understand. In other scenes, this posture is also used to portray Kimie's unconveyed emotions when neighbors talk behind her back (fig. 11), and Gen's conflicting emotions (outward courage and inward sorrow) in the second panel in figure 12. The fifth panel of figure 12 depicts the gap between emotion and thought (regret and determined will) when Gen watches the children who he gave his money away to walk away, and answers Ryūta's question decisively. Nakazawa thus renders communication with subtle emotions by depicting characters who turn their eyes away from the people they talk to.

The characters not only turn their eyes away from people they talk with but also direct their attention to them by turning round. For example (fourth panel in figure 12), when Gen rescues Ryūta from a group of wicked boys, Ryūta turns to Gen and asks,

sometimes diminishes the visual power derived from reading direction as discussed by Izumi. Gen's leftward punch in figure 5 would look more powerful if you could read this panel from right to left, which is the opposite way of reading on the otherwise flipped page in the translated version.

"What'd you help me for…?" (Nakazawa 2009: vol. 3, 70). Up to this point, Ryūta has ambivalent feelings toward Gen because Gen treats him as if he were his dead little brother, Shinji, but Ryūta feels closer to Gen after this episode. It seems unnatural that Ryūta looks around to his right in this panel because Ryūta is sitting to the right of Gen in the previous panel. Nonetheless, Ryūta's act of looking back effectively indicates his new feelings toward Gen. Here, Ryūta is "looking back"—literally to his right and figuratively to his previous attitude toward Gen.

In this way, *Barefoot Gen* twists the gazes and postures of the characters, depicting the gaps between gazes and their objects, images and emotions. At first the gaps seem awkward as a representation of the conversations, but they attain what could be called manga's reality,[6] which creates the character's inner consciousness and makes the reader's emotions more complex via performative images and point-of-view shots. That is how the dynamics of visual images and consciousness take the reader into the deep seas of the characters' emotions, leaving an unforgettable impact on the reader's mind.[7]

4. Prehistory of Barefoot Gen

What makes possible visual expressions such as performative images, point-of-view shots, and the twist of gazes and postures? Although it may be a digression, let us trace them back to Nakazawa's earlier works. It is necessary to note that *Barefoot Gen* is not exactly an autobiography of Nakazawa, though it is mostly based on his experience. Gen decides to become a painter in order to deliver the message of world peace (Nakazawa 2009: vol. 9, 139), but this was not the case with Nakazawa. He did not become a manga artist because he wanted to advocate for world peace. After working as an assistant for popular manga artists such as Kazumine Daiji and Tsuji Naoki, Nakazawa was working on various types of boys' manga (Nakazawa 1994). According to his autobiography, he found that atomic bomb survivors were the subject of prejudice in Tokyo, and he made sure people did not know he was one of them. It was his mother's death in October 1966 that made him decide to depict the theme of the atomic bombing and publish "Struck by Black Rain" [Kuroi ame ni utarete] in May 1968. So, unlike the hero of Barefoot Gen, Nakazawa's decision was not caused by his encounters

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6 On the limit of manga's modern realism based on the filmic expression, see Itō (2005).

7 There is no space to discuss it here, but parodic songs, sung by the characters, especially by children, play an important role in arousing emotions among the readers. Now we are losing the tradition of parodic songs they cease to function in an emotional way for today's readers.

with painters.

4. 1. Early Works

In fact, the process whereby Nakazawa began to depict the atomic bombing in manga is more complicated. Nakazawa, who made his debut at "Spark One" [Supāku wan] in *Shōnen Gahō*, has often depicted episodes that remind us of the atomic bombing.[8]

"Universe Giraffe" [Uchū Jirafu], which was published in *Shūkan Shōnen King* in 1964, has an episode of mutated plants.[9] They exhaust oxygen and kill many men and animals, which evokes the massacre of the atomic bomb. "The Eleventh Spy" [11 nin me no supai], a piece published in *Bokura* in 1966, is the story of an attempt to rescue Dr. Murata, a nuclear physicist working on "a new-type bomb" who was captured by the American Army during the war.[10] "Godzilla's Son: Battle on the Monster Island" [Gojira no musuko: Kaijū tō no kessen], made in 1968, is about Godzilla's son, who was born on an island blanketed by 70°C heat due to

Fig. 13. Scientists are bathed in a dazzling light. Sekizawa, Shiba, and Nakazawa, 1968: 7.

a scientific experiment gone awry.[11] It is probably in this work that the onomatopoeic world "pika" first appeared in Nakazawa's manga (fig. 13).

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8 "Spark One" was published in *Shōnen Gahō* in a nine-part series between December 1962 and August 1963. The February and the June issues were published as a supplement to the magazine.

9 "Universe Giraffe" was written by Kitamura Akira and drawn by Nakazawa. It appeared in a thirteen-part series in *Shūkan Shōnen King* from May 17, August 9, 1964. For a science fiction manga, he also published "*Time Tunnel*" [Taimu Tonneru] in the special summer issue of *Bōken ō* (September 15, 1967).

10 "The Eleventh Spy" was published in the January 15 issue of *Bokura* in 1966. For a spy manga, he also published "Bide Knows It" [Bide wa shitteiru] in the September 15 issue of *Bokura* in 1965.

11 "Godzilla's Son: Battle on the Monster Island", written by Sekizawa Shin'ichi and drawn by Nakazawa, was published as the supplement to the new year issue of *Shōnen* (January 1, 1968). For a monster manga, Nakazaka also published "Big Monster Gappa" [Dai kyojū Gappa] in *Bessatsu Bōken ō* (April 15, 1967). These manga were both made in conjunction with the screening of the movies with the same titles.

4.2. "The Super Battleship Fujimi" (1968)

It has been said that "Struck by Black Rain" is Nakazawa's first manga dealing with the atomic bombing, but this is not true. In February 1968, three months before "Struck by Black Rain" appeared, Nakazawa published, in the monthly manga magazine *Shōnen*, a manga that refers to the atomic bomb and Hiroshima entitled "The Super Battleship Fujimi" [Chōkan Fujimi].[12] It is set at a naval arsenal in Kure, where the super battleship Fujimi, larger than the Battleship Yamato, is secretly being readied. The workers who built the Fujimi are drowned by the battleship's captain because its construction has to be cloaked in absolute secrecy. The Fujimi is launched and heads to Waiki Island in America. A crew member, protagonist Dan Kazuo, learns that a new type of bomb, one of which could easily wipe out all

Fig. 14. Suicide plane attacks to an A-bomb factory cause the explosion of the atomic bomb. Nakazawa, 1968: 49.

of Japan, is now being mass-produced on this island. Dan and his colleague Kurokawa carry out suicide plane attacks on the underground factory (fig. 14). After the flash of light is depicted with the onomatopoeic word "pika", the narration says, "The bombs that Dan and Kurokawa guided themselves led to the explosions of the atomic bombs, which blew up the island." "This incident delayed America's production of atomic bombs for two years. Then, on August 6 of 1945, one of the newly made bombs was dropped on Hiroshima."

The fictional name of Waiki Island reminds us of Waikiki in Hawaii and therefore the attack on Pearl Harbor. Also, the onomatopoeic word "pika" suggests the flash of the atomic bomb dropped in Hiroshima. Thus, several historical events of the Pacific War, namely the attack on Pearl Harbor, the battle of Okinawa, and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, are incorporated into one episode in this manga.

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12 "Super Battleship Fujimi" was published as the supplement to the February issue of *Shōnen* in 1968. For a war manga, he also published "Wings of Friendship" [Yūjō no tsubasa] in the special new year issue of *Shōnen* (January 15, 1966) and "Phantom # 36" [Maboroshi no 36 gō] in the April 15 issue of *Bessatsu Manga ō*, 1968.

It is important to note that although "Super Battleship Fujimi" might contribute to the glorification of war, it is not a manga precisely aimed at glorifying war, but rather one aimed at being true to the genre of war comics; it is a narrative that a little too emphatically depicts the mechanical details of air planes and battleships, the rivalries and friendships among fighters, and the spirit of self-sacrifice, which shows how important it is to follow the convention of the genre in this manga.[13]

4. 3. "Struck by Black Rain" (1968)

"Struck by Black Rain", which followed "Super Battleship Fujimi", also falls within the conventions of the manga genre.[14] The protagonist is a xenophobic hit man in a trench coat who assassinates only Americans. His suffering from the atomic bombing is his justification for murder. Rather than being a vehicle for an anti-A-bomb message, the narrative of this manga is that of the hard-boiled story. The title thus refers to the blackness of film noir as well as to Ibuse Masuji's novel *Black Rain*.[15]

And yet, "Struck by Black Rain" offers an independent message about the atomic bombing, which was subordinate to the convention of the genre of war comics in "Super Battleship Fujimi". Towards the end of "Struck by Black Rain", the dying protagonist promises to give his eyes to a blind girl named Heiwa, meaning peace, and appeals to her to be a witness to a peaceful world. In addition, the last panel conveys a direct message from the author: "If you become more aware of the atomic bombings through this manga, I, as one of the atomic bomb survivors, will be very grateful."[16] This line clearly declares Nakazawa's strong intention to tell many people about the fact of the

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13 See Takemiya (2003: 17-48) about the significance of imitating senior manga artists' works in the development of the manga genres.

14 "Struck by Black Rain" was published in the May 29 issue of *Manga Panchi* in 1968. Before *Barefoot Gen* started from the June 11 issue of *Shūkan Shōnen Jump* in 1973, the following manga dealing with the Hiroshima bombing appeared in *Manga Panchi*, *Shūkan Shōnen Jump*, and *Bessatsu Shōnen Jump*: "Kuroi kawa no nagare ni", "Kuroi chinmoku no hate ni", "Kuroi hato no mure ni", "Aruhi totsuzen ni", "Kuroi hae no sakebi ni", "Nanika ga okoru", "Aka tonbo no uta", "Warera eien ni", "Kuroi tsuchi no sakebi ni", "Ore wa mita!", and "Kuroi ito". They are included in Nakazawa (1971) and its different version "Kuroi ameni utarete" (2005).

15 In this regard, Miyamoto Hirohito kindly told me that that "Struck by Black Rain" is probably inspired more directly by action *gekiga*, or drama pictures, which, from its beginning, have depicted protagonists' strong emotions towards social injustice, such as "Man with a Black Scar" [Kuroi kizuato no otoko] (1960-61) by Satō Masaaki. This is one of the topics I would like to investigate in the future.

16 In the book version, this line accompanies the signature and the date, "Nakazawa Keiji, April Shōwa 43 (1968)," although it lacks the month when it first appeared in *Manga Panchi* (May 29, 1968). This indicates that the date of publication was not yet decided when it was sent to the printer.

atomic bombings. This is how the anti-A bomb message is delivered independent of the hard-boiled story in "Struck by Black Rain".

5. Barefoot Gen as a Manga Expression

It is in this context that *Barefoot Gen* appeared. "I Saw It!" [Ore wa mita!],[17] published as one part of an autobiographical series on manga artists, recounts the first half of Nakazawa's life with restraint, whereas *Barefoot Gen* depicts the same subject with strong emotions.

Of course, *Barefoot Gen* is also made within the convention of existing manga genres. After the autobiographical work "I Saw It", the anti-A-bomb message was, for the first time, fully incorporated into the world of the narrative in *Barefoot Gen*. Of course, *Barefoot Gen* also appropriated existing manga work to some extent. Two years prior to the appearance of Barefoot Gen in *Shūkan Shōnen Jump*, Nagashima Shinji ran a serial manga piece called "Barefoot Bun" [Hadashi no Bun] in *Shūkan Shōnen Sunday* (fig. 15).[18] "Barefoot Bun" is a story about growing up in the countryside and concerns the high-spirited Bun and his friends.[19] *Barefoot Gen* shares this coming-of-age plot with "Barefoot Bun". Barefootedness implies the revival of Japan's society as well as the liveliness of the boys, but because this theme is not developed in the story of *Barefoot Gen*, it seems to be

Fig. 15. Cover of Barefoot Bun, which portrays the growth of boys and girls in a countryside branch school. Nagashima, *Hadashi no Bun*, vol. 2.

inspired by Nagashima's boys' manga. As many scholars argue, *Barefoot Gen* is a manga that tackles the issue of the atomic bomb in the format of boys' manga such as "Barefoot Bun" (Omote 2006: 59-86).

In his early works, Nakazawa was dealing with a wide range of genres such

17 "I Saw It!" [Ore wa mita!] was published in the October issue of *Bessatsu Shōnen Jump* in 1972.

18 "Barefoot Bun" appeared in a nineteen-part series in *Shūkan Shōnen Sunday* from July 25 to November 28, 1971

19 The protagonist Bun in "Barefoot Bun" is a fast runner and aims to become a marathon runner towards the end of the story. The character seems to be derived from the Ethiopian marathon runner Abebe Bikila, who was popular in Japan as "Barefoot Abebe [Hadashi no Abebe]" after the 1960 Rome Olympics. The character of "Barefoot Gen" can thus be traced to barefoot Abebe via "Barefoot Bun".

as spy stories, science fiction, and war tales;[20] the atomic bombing was thus just an episode within the larger story and its inclusion lacked a political agenda. "Struck by Black Rain" distinguished itself from his previous works for its clear anti-war, pacifist message, but such a message did not quite fit in the hard-boiled setting of the story. It was not until *Barefoot Gen* that Nakazawa incorporated the anti-war message seamlessly within the narrative world. In this masterpiece, Nakazawa successfully immerses young readers in the narrative world by making them experience what he actually went through in his childhood. In addition, this boys' manga depicts characters similar in age to its target audience, thus allowing its young readers to better identify with atomic-bomb survivors. Gen's strength and resilience symbolize that of the atomic-bomb survivors, and this makes it possible to deliver the anti-war message via the world of boys' manga. As I discussed above, manga's visual devices also help readers become effectively absorbed into the story.

Barefoot Gen uses visual devices such as performative images, point-of-view shots, and twists in gaze and posture, but they are probably not Nakazawa's inventions. We can find similar expressions in manga works by his contemporaries, such as Motomiya Hiroshi's "King of the Castle" [Otoko ippiki gaki daishō]. And yet it was Nakazawa who made the best use of them and incorporated them into his own style. Nakazawa's arrangement of the panels is orthodox; no character goes beyond his or her frame, which are almost all rectangles.[21] Nakazawa was interested in depicting strong emotions within a seemingly monotonous arrangement of panels. He provides characters with an inner consciousness by depicting the gaps between images, emotions, and thoughts. Of course, his style is scarcely comparable to the various psychological depictions developed in the field of girls' manga in the 70s, especially through their multi-layered arrangement of the panels, but as far as I know Nakazawa's visual grammar in *Barefoot Gen* was unparalleled in boys' manga at the time. As Ōtsuka Eiji argues, Kajiwara Ikki bestowed an inner consciousness upon heroes like Hoshi Hyūma and Yabuki Jō so that they could reflect on themselves.[22] But the inner consciousness

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20 Nakazawa also made a cowboy manga. "Ninja Sheriff" [Ninja hoankan] appeared in the special summer issue of *Bōken ō* (September 15, 1966).

21 In the sketches for the unfinished part two of *Barefoot Gen*, Nakazawa first divides a page into four rows with a pencil and further divides each row into two or three panels. He sometimes uses a big panel two rows high but because the erased pencil lines can be discerned in the middle of the panels, it is safe to say that he first divides a page into four.

22 About the discovery of the inner consciousness in manga, see Ōtsuka (1994: 56-90). Ōtsuka writes that the depiction of the inner consciousness, which was popular in girls' manga, was not conventionalized in the field of boys' manga. According to him, Hoshi Hyūma and Yabuki Jō

of characters in *Barefoot Gen* is less a reflection than a site of emotions not acted upon, thereby transferring powerfully emotional burdens onto the reader. It is in this context that we should view the intense emotions *Barefoot Gen* activates in its readers.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the ways in which Nakazawa Keiji's *Barefoot Gen* arouses strong emotions in its readers. First, I have highlighted four painters appearing in this manga in order to clarify the critical role of the act of painting in this work. The visual images depicted in *Barefoot Gen* possess a performative effect not simply on the narrative's characters but also on its readers, arousing their deep emotions. Utilizing point-of-view shots that show what the author actually witnessed as well as twisting the characters' gazes and postures to indicate their emotions and their inner consciousness, *Barefoot Gen* urges the readers to share the unforgettable memories and emotions Nakazawa had in Hiroshima in 1945. Multi-layered relationships among images, emotions, and memories, combined with the shocking depictions of the disasters, encourage an emotional ambivalence, in addition to complex and intense states of mind that could even be traumatic for young readers.[23]

To Nakazawa, the atomic bombing he experienced at the age of six was a traumatic event, one he has sought to confront through *Barefoot Gen* and other works in his career as a manga artist. By the time this manga was made, however, a new generation of readers had little knowledge, let alone experience, of the atomic bombing. Through *Barefoot Gen* and Nakazawa's other works, they have seen a different side of the atrocity of the atomic bomb from the one they learn in history class at school, which in many cases is nothing more than dry historical data absent the emotions felt by wartime witnesses. By reactivating these emotions among younger readers, *Barefoot Gen* successfully passes down the memories of the bomb and the war to the younger generation of postwar Japan.

In the world of boys' manga, *Barefoot Gen* is a tale that ingeniously depicts the interior lives of its characters. The portrayal of characters' states of mind was actively developed in girls' manga around the time *Barefoot Gen* appeared. In contrast to the multi-layered arrangement of panels in girls' manga, Nakazawa unveils a variety of

come to reflect on themselves just before the story ends.

23 Although we cannot discuss it here for want of space, we can think of traumatic emotions in *Barefoot Gen* in terms of the shock effect discussed in the field of early cinema studies. See Gunning (l990: 56-62). I would like to investigate this issue in my forthcoming article on Nakazawa.

emotions in a relatively monotonous arrangement of frames. In spite of *Barefoot Gen*'s impressive depiction of the atomic bombing, it is sadly underappreciated. But when we read *Barefoot Gen*, we feel the emotions of its characters as keenly as we do physical sensations. What arouses these feelings is less the political fact of the atomic bombing than the politics of vision made possible by Nakazawa Keiji's art.

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18

Manga Bomb:
between the lines of Barefoot Gen

Thomas LAMARRE

"The line is the relation"
—William James

The challenge of *Barefoot Gen* (*Hadashi no Gen*, 1973-1987) lies in its use of a conventional manga style to depict an event that is often deemed to be unrepresentable in its violence and trauma—the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima on August 8, 1945. *Barefoot Gen* invites us to address not only the experience of survivors of Hiroshima but also to consider what manga expression brings to our understanding of the atomic bomb, war, and trauma. I propose to pay particular attention to the dynamics of the line, as the key to an analysis of the composition of forces in manga. I also propose to show how *Barefoot Gen* works through the dynamics of the "plastic line", which contributes to its articulation of a politics in which vitality and resilience do not appear to reside outside historical violence but seem to emerge with it.

1. Barefoot Gen and Shōnen Manga

Nakazawa Keiji, the author of *Barefoot Gen*, is a survivor of Hiroshima. At the age of six on August 8, 1945, Nakazawa lost his father, his older sister, and younger brother: their house collapsed on them, and unable to escape the wreckage, the three were burned alive in the fires that raged through the city. Nakazawa, his mother, and two elder brothers survived, suffering not only from the privations of postwar Japan but also from trauma and radiation illness. His manga, today compiled in ten volumes, not only shows the dropping of the bomb and the immediately ensuing horrors but also

recounts the severe difficulties faced by the remaining family members over the next years.

Because Nakazawa is an atomic bomb victim and survivor, it is possible to read his manga as an eyewitness account of the atomic bomb. The manga is full of historical references that invite us to read it as such. At the same time, *Barefoot Gen* is faithful to the conventions of *shōnen manga* or boys' manga. As such, the manga disappoints certain expectations vis-à-vis trauma and representation, particularly if readers expect the experience of Hiroshima to defy our received ways of ordering words and images. At the same time, in its fidelity to shōnen manga, *Barefoot Gen* is somewhat idiosyncratic in the broader context of atomic bomb literature and cinema.

There are currents in film and fiction dealing with traumatic experiences that encourage us to expect signs of the inability of ordinary perception and received forms of representation to come to terms with the indescribable violence and unbearable suffering unleashed on Hiroshima. In *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, for instance, the Japanese man continually admonishes the French woman who claims to have seen everything in Hiroshima: "You have seen nothing of Hiroshima". The experience of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima remains unknowable, unspeakable, unrepresentable. Similarly, in Hara Tamiki's devastating short story of Hiroshima, "Natsu no hana", words and temporal sequences buckle and break under the pressure of efforts to convey an experience of hell that ultimately defies comprehension and narration. In a manga about the atomic bomb, readers might expect the very forms and conventions of manga to undergo radical mutation in the effort to grapple with violence and suffering on a scale that defies understanding. Yet *Barefoot Gen* is ordinary and unselfconscious in its usage of manga conventions. It is not an experimental work at the level of form, in the sense of staging a confrontation with the material limits of manga, and forcing readers to question the very ability of the manga medium or manga form to deal with serious historical issues. *Barefoot Gen* assumes that shōnen manga is, in itself, with its basic conventions, as qualified as any other medium or form to grapple with the atomic bomb, historically and experientially.

Not surprisingly then, given that comics, particularly those deemed "for children", are not commonly taken seriously as contributions to art, history, thought, or

Thomas LaMarre

politics, the "shōnen-manga-ness" of *Barefoot Gen* generates its share of consternation vis-à-vis its political effects. Critics and readers do not necessarily share Nakazawa's confidence in the expressive capacity of shōnen manga. There is, in fact, a tendency to forget or ignore the shōnen manga dimension of *Barefoot Gen* in discussions of it. Nonetheless the pages that today constitute the first four volumes of the book edition of Nakazawa Keiji's manga were initially serialized in *Shūkan Shōnen Jump* (June 1973-September 1974), popular weekly shōnen manga publication. Subsequent installations appeared in magazines such as *Shimin*, *Bunka hyōron*, and *Kyōiku hyōron*, more associated with public education than with boys' entertainment.[1] Yet the manga does not change stylistically. It sticks to its shōnen-manga-ness. Consequently, as Itō Yū and Omote Tomoyuki have pointed out, *Barefoot Gen* shares a number of features with the manga for boys of the sort featured in the initial publication, *Shōnen Jump*. They note, for instance, how Barefoot Gen shares with the other manga in *Shōnen Jump* a "boys' fascination for war-related items" (Itō and Omote 2006: 26). *Barefoot Gen* calls on the conventions of war-related manga for boys in two other respects: "first, the striking prevalence of depictions of violence, and second, the main characters' resolute fighting for their beliefs" (Itō and Omote 2006: 28).

In sum, Itō and Omote call attention to how *Barefoot Gen* is faithful to the conventions of shōnen manga, reminding us that those conventions have implications for how readers respond to it, and for how we assess its impact. For Itō and Omote, Nakazawa's use of shōnen manga conventions results in a fundamental ambiguity. They caution readers, "Any assessment of the degree to which readers received this manga's 'anti-war' or 'anti-nuke' messages should be complicated by the fact that *Barefoot Gen* had its starting point in a magazine that aimed less at enlightening and more at entertaining boys" (Itō and Omote 2006: 23). Similarly, they write of "the fundamental ambiguity of manga that later came to characterize *Barefoot Gen*—being both a story by a witness about the atomic bomb and an impressive comic at the same time". In other words, there is, in their account, a distinction to be made between entertainment and education, or between comic art and the art of the witness. They

1 For an overview of the publication venues see Itō and Omote (2006: 22-23). See too Omote (2006).

worry that fascination with war necessarily runs counter to serious history, possibly undermining the validity of pro-peace or anti-war statements in popular manga.

It is interesting to note that Art Spiegelman, in his introduction to the English translation of *Barefoot Gen*, calls attention to some of the same features. But the result is not ambiguity. Spiegelman first describes the two-fold nature of Nakazawa's manga: "…the vividness of *Barefoot Gen*… emanates from something intrinsic to the comics medium itself and from the events Nakazawa lived through and depicted".[2] In other words, the power of the manga derives from its combination of historical witnessing *and* the medium of comics. Spiegelman also notes the prevalence of violence, but where Itō and Omote associate it with the conventions of shōnen manga, Spiegelman attributes it broadly to Japanese comics: "The degree of casual violence in Japanese comics is typically far greater than in our homegrown products. Gen's pacifist father freely wallops his kids with a frequency and force that we might easily perceive as criminal child abuse rather than the sign of affection that is intended".

The cuteness of characters also strikes Spiegelman, albeit in a negative way: "The physiognomy of characters often leans to the cloyingly cute, with special emphasis on Disney-like oversized Caucasian eyes and generally neotenic faces. Nakazawa is hardly the worst offender, though his cartoon style derives from that tradition". Subsequently, in my discussion of the cartoon line, I will return to this problematic, not in terms of cuteness but in terms of plasticity. At this juncture, however, I would like simply to note how, for Spiegelman, these apparently excessive conventions of manga expression (violence and cuteness) do not undermine the capacity of Nakazawa's comic to bear witness. On the contrary, for Spiegelman, the comics medium triumphs over its excesses. He concludes, "The drawing's greatest virtue is its straightforward, blunt sincerity". Similarly, Robert Crumb writes in his endorsement for the book jacket of *Barefoot Gen* that Nakazawa "tells the truth in a plain, straightforward way, filled with real human feelings".

2 Art Spiegelman's remarks initially appeared in the 1990 English translation of *Barefoot Gen* (three pages unnumbered). They also appear in the new full translation of the entire ten volumes: Keiji Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen: A Cartoon History of Hiroshima* (2004-2009). The volumes and pages of this translation correspond to those in the Japanese edition, Nakazawa Keiji, *Komikku-ban Hadashi no Gen* 10 vols. (Tokyo: Sekibunsha, 1975-87).

Thomas LaMarre

Both Spiegelman and Crumb are comic artists, and what's more, it is their job to endorse the translation of *Barefoot Gen.* It is not surprising that they highlight the ability of comics to take on serious issues. Still, the terms in which they endorse the manga are of interest: blunt, straightforward, plain, sincere, and honest. Such terms stand in contrast to those terms that play a key role in Itō and Omote's account, such as entertainment, fascination, and ambiguity. Beyond the obvious differences between the demands of endorsement (Spiegelman and Crumb) and those of criticism (Itō and Omote), there are different orientations toward the medium of comics that merit attention. On the one hand, in Spiegelman, there is a confidence that comics are equal to the task of bearing historical witness, but this depends on the ability of the medium to erase its excesses, to become plain and honest. On the other hand, in Itō and Omote, there is a lack of confidence in the medium of comics, expressed at level of suspicions about the fascination with war and violence in shōnen manga.

For my purposes, while I don't share Itō and Omote's distrust of shōnen manga and their fear that entertainment will undermine education or history, their exploration of media tensions within *Barefoot Gen* strikes me as the crucial first step toward reading manga in terms of the composition of forces, because they go beyond reading manga as transparent depiction of a message. At the same time, while I don't share Spiegelman's endorsement of the comics medium in terms of sincerity or transparency that overcomes its sites of technical excess or allows us to read past them to get at historical witnessing, I agree that there is a sort of overall coordination in *Barefoot Gen*. Yet I prefer to look at the overall composition of forces (such as violence and cuteness), rather than assume that a plain or honest style transcends such forces.

An image appears at the opening of volume eight that for me directly poses the question of how *Barefoot Gen* composes forces (fig. 1). In the foreground is our hero Gen, holding a stalk of wheat, which serves as symbol of vitality and resilience throughout the manga. In the first volume, when Gen's family is deprived of their allotment of rice in punishment for their father's anti-war activism, the father encourages them to plant wheat, telling them to grow strong and tall like the stalks of wheat, which springs back even when trampled. The wheat stalk thus becomes a symbol of strength, vitality, and resilience in the face of adversity. I should also

Thomas LaMarre

mention in passing that, as a symbol, wheat carries broader connotations: it stands in contrast to rice, which is historically associated with the emperor and a system of centralized sovereign control of the people. Wheat thus signals a sort of autonomy and resistance to centralized authority as well.

Especially striking in this image is the appearance of the cast of characters from *Barefoot Gen* in front of the mushroom cloud, posed in theatrical gestures, smiling, happy, full of life. Even those killed by the atomic bomb appear vital and triumphant before the mushroom cloud, as if cheering on the Gen who runs toward us brandishing a bamboo staff.

This composition of the forces of human vitality with the deadly forces of mushroom cloud may initially encourage a simple reading of the image and of the manga: the forces of life, nurtured through family and friends, overcome the horrors of the atomic bomb. We might read the relation between atomic bomb and cast of characters in terms of a triumphant superimposition of human resilience upon deathly powers of military destruction, a superimposition through which the forces of life successfully defeat those of war. Such a reading is not entirely out of keeping with Barefoot Gen. Throughout the manga there is indeed a sense of resilience in the face of adversity, and defiance vis-à-vis authority, which allows Gen not only to survive under horrible conditions but also to emerge stronger than ever. Indeed in the same volume, page 253, Gen's resilience and defiance culminate in a scene in which he writes, in the ground with a sharpened stick the characters for "self-reliance" (*jiritsu*) in large bold strokes. It is almost as if the entire experience of the war, the atomic bomb, and the poverty, indignities, and deprivations of postwar Japan have culminated in the triumphant autonomy and defiant vitality of Gen.

While such a reading of *Barefoot Gen* does justice to the life-affirmative anti-authority humanism of the manga (namely, humans can emerge from the experience of war and destruction with greater commitment to opposing all powers that threaten to oppress, exploit, and destroy human lives), it also runs the risk of turning the atomic bomb into an entirely positive transformative experience, as well as turning the manga into a linear presentation of a unified progressive statement. The atomic bomb risks appearing manageable and productive, rather than traumatic and disabling. Clearly, however, even in the image of the cast of characters in front of the atomic

bomb, the relation between the forces of life and the forces of destruction is not so straightforward. The image is somewhat jarring, because it juxtaposes atomic bomb and comic characters, without fully defining the relation between them. In other words, there is a composition of forces, and even an overall coordination of them, yet there is also a disjuncture or gap. *Barefoot Gen* defies the modernist paradigm of trauma in which representation proves inadequate to the task of depicting and conveying the unrepresentable, which encourages strategies of formal decomposition and dissolution. Yet, even though *Barefoot Gen* leans toward the composition of forces rather than toward the decomposition of representation, there is a disjuncture. This is where we might speak of trauma in a more localized and specific way (in contrast with totalizing gestures that frequently appear in analyses that begin and end with trauma).

Following Itō and Omote, we might add that the disjuncture in *Barefoot Gen* is to some extent between historical reality (the atomic bomb at Hiroshima) and shōnen manga conventions (lively manga characters and a defiant boy).[3] But the result is not ambiguity or ambivalence. The disjuncture allows for a transformative relation without linear causality. It constructs a relation that cannot be qualified as entirely positive or affirmative, nor as negative in the common causal sense of one thing erasing or destroying the other. This is where the specific techniques and material orientations of manga become important. Nakazawa is working this relation in manga, after all. Gen's experiences may roughly parallel those of Nakazawa Keiji, yet Gen is not him, as the author frequently reminds readers in his prefaces, commentaries, and interviews. Nakazawa works through his experiences in manga with a shōnen character named Gen, and, as I will show, manga techniques for compositing forces lead Nakazawa toward a very specific take on the atomic bomb. To understand how these manga techniques work, we need to begin with the most basic gesture of manga, the line.

2. Line, Form, and Structure

Manga begins with the movement of the stroke that marks the surface, with the

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3 I have in mind here the almost paradigmatic shōnen manga scenario in which an angry boy or youth enters into a violent situation or world of violence, and the expectation is that adding this shōnen violence to a violent situation will somehow resolve the violence or transcend it.

pressing of pencil to paper, with the pressure that digs into the surface of the page, flattening fibers and leaving graphite embedded in the paper behind it. As Jacques Derrida was fond of pointing out, the moment of the stroke or trait brings with it a kind of oscillation and uncertainty: with a dark line drawn in pencil upon white paper, for instance, it is not perfectly clear which is foreground and which is background. While there are conventions that encourage us to take the dark line as a figure in the foreground that stands out against a white background, we can also take the dark line as the remnant of a dark page that was almost completely covered with white, or as a tear in the page revealing a dark background behind the white paper. The simplest stroke on a page generates an oscillation between foreground and background, where the force of the stroke lingers in a vibration between white and dark. We might think of the stroke that marks the page—the line—as a "first synthesis".[4]

The act of resolving that oscillation, of assuring that this is a dark line upon a white page, entails, in Derrida's manner of thinking, a sort of violence in which the white is effectively ignored or "negated" in favor of the dark stroke. We suppress the foreground/background oscillation in order to "read" or attend to the stroke. The white page becomes the ground, and the stroke becomes the figure. At this second level of synthesis, the ground is at once a condition of possibility and impossibility—what Derrida glosses as a condition of (im)possibility. Without the white page, we don't perceive the stroke, and yet in perceiving the stroke, we ignore the page.

Despite the fact that Derrida encourages us to think about the emergence of a distinction between ground and figure in terms of something like negation and violence, it is important to note that this generation of a ground is not yet an act of metaphysical violence in which the materiality of the ground is negated to assure a foundation for universal knowledge. This happens at a third level of synthesis. Derrida often addressed this third synthesis in context of the privileging of speech or logos over writing and gesture. For instance, when we take the dark stroke on the page not merely as a figure but as a sign to be read logographically (as *ichi*) or ideographically (as the idea "one"), two syntheses come into play. We use our literacy or competency,

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4 While I use the terms first, second, and third, I do not intend an absolute temporal order. Such syntheses never occur in isolation. I am using synthesis roughly in the manner of Deleuze (1994).

detaching figure from ground (second synthesis), and then detach sounds or ideas from figures and gestures (third synthesis). For Derrida, the second synthesis of literacy or competency in reading presents a rather ordinary, inevitable, *de facto* set of material relations. But a long tradition of metaphysical thinking has transformed it into a *de jure* relation. This third synthesis insists that, in reading, what matters is the content, the idea, what is said. In effect, when we read manga entirely in terms of its content or message, we transform our basic literacy into a metaphysical relation to the world, not only suppressing the materiality of manga but also insisting that it doesn't really matter. Thus we move from the de facto situation of the second synthesis (ground/figure) to the de jure situation of the third synthesis (foundation/knowledge).

As my hedging with such philosophical terms as negation and synthesis indicates, I am not primarily interested in a deconstructive reading of *Barefoot Gen*, in the sense of deconstructing its metaphysical moments, or in the sense of evoking it to deconstruct the ways in which the atomic bomb has become a foundational narrative; or at least I am not interested in doing deconstruction in the usual sense. What concerns me is getting a better sense of the material orientation of forces specific to manga, and the deconstructive account of the emergence of ground and figure is a useful point of departure. Naturally, a deconstructive question arises about the possibility of a metaphysical relation to the line, a "line-centrism", in which the de facto competency of using lines to make manga turns in a foundational position that imposes a line-centered order of things.[5] Still, if we don't explore the dynamics of line, we cannot broach such questions.

There is a common sense understanding of lines that subordinates their dynamics to forms. Which is to say, lines are taken primarily as tools to construct shapes or, more broadly, forms. If the force of the line is acknowledged, it is only insofar as it imparts a tonality to the form, making the form feel weaker or stronger, thicker or finer, for instance. The emphasis falls on the form over the line, and we end up reading forms

5 In his study of Chinese calligraphy, Nakatani (2006) addresses the question of universal graphism. A similar question about ordering capacity of the calligraphic line in early Japan appears in LaMarre (2000). While I don't wish to suggest an unbroken lineage from *sho* (calligraphic writing) to manga, I think that the dynamics of traditional calligraphy at once mesh with the cartoon line and shift it considerably in the context of modern manga.

rather than lines. The result is formal analysis. Formal analysis is very useful, and in my opinion, it is one of the more promising trends in contemporary comics analysis. I am thinking of Natsume Fusanosuke (1997), Fuse Eiri (2004), Ōtsuka Eiji (1994; 2008), Scott McCloud (1994), and Thierry Groensteen (2007a; 2007b) in particular, but there are a host of other discussions of comics, manga, and BD (*bande dessinée*) that go beyond a simplistic account of content or narrative description by taking in account the dynamics of panels, strips, characters, speech balloons, and other forms. Such analyses make us pay attention to the materiality of comics, opening avenues for considering at once the specificity of comics in relation to other media and their potential sites of intersection and overlap with other media and forms of expression (cinema, animation, theatre, radio, and literary fiction). Nonetheless, I would like to challenge the subordination of line to form that characterizes such approaches, in the spirit of building on, enlarging, and shifting their insights.

Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics* provides a good point of departure. In his account of abstraction in comics, McCloud establishes three tendencies in comics. There is a tendency toward the realistic depiction of entities, and two abstract tendencies away from it. One is toward the art object or picture plane where "shapes, lines, and colors can be themselves and not pretend to be otherwise", and the other tendency is toward "iconic abstraction… where every line has a meaning" (McCloud 1994: 51). He suggests that comics generally pursue this tendency toward iconic abstraction. His primary example is the iconic abstraction of character depiction, with an emphasis on the face of characters being rendered abstractly as a circle with two dots for eyes and a slash for a mouth.

On the basis of these three poles, styled as a pyramid, McCloud shows how different kinds of comic expression actually present a mixture of these three tendencies. Nonetheless, the general tendency of comics is toward iconic abstraction. For instance, when he addresses the motion lines around Charlie Brown, he remarks, "even the most *straightforward* little cartoon character has a '*meaningless*' line or two" (McCloud 1994: 51). In other words, the dynamics of the line is taken as "meaningless", as secondary or supplementary to the art of comics, which for McCloud lies primarily in the tendency toward abstract form as meaning. Such a bias makes sense in the context

272

of McCloud's comics whose purpose is avowedly didactic. Yet as a side effect of his effort to instruct readers about understanding comics, McCloud tends to reduce the art of comics to their ability to convey meaning. And meaning for him is a matter of signification, rather than a matter of material orientations.[6]

Something analogous happens in Ōtsuka Eiji's account of how Tezuka Osamu simplified and abbreviated manga expression by introducing *kigō-e* or "symbol images" that expressed word-like meanings without words (Ōtsuka 1994: 10-11). A squiggly line over the head of a character, for instance, conveys confusion. And we might consider emotion lines (lines around characters' faces that express or enhance the affective quality of an emotion, with radiating lines to portray anger or astonishment), or expressive dialogue bubbles (wavy or spiky lines around speech to indicate or heighten their affective impact) (Fuse 2004: 8-16; 84-93), or any number of other elements that fall under the heading of manga iconography.

While manga and comics indeed use what is variously called iconic abstraction, or symbol images, or iconography, I would like to point out that, when analysis begins and ends at this formal level, two subordinations come into play. The dynamics of line is subordinated to form, and material orientations are subordinated to language. These correspond to what I previously called the second and third syntheses. In this approach, simply put, we read comics in terms of forms, and then forms in terms of meaning as content. Thus, the de facto situation in which lines generate forms is transformed into the de jure argument in which form is thought to convey meaning transparently. In McCloud's *Understanding Comics*, such an emphasis makes sense in the context of a didactic comic in which the comics artist strives to deliver a message or convey content directly to readers. Nonetheless, Derrida's critique of logocentrism proves entirely relevant here: McCloud tends to transform the art of comics into an art of language modeled on speech as the direct transparent delivery of content (signification). This is based on a simplistic model of transparent communication in which writers speak directly to readers who rather passively receive content. Accounts of manga

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6 It is a general characteristic of the French thinkers cited here that *sens*, which might be translated in English as "meaning", refers to meaning as direction or orientation rather than signification. I follow that usage here.

Thomas LaMarre

iconography head in the same direction, as does Ōtsuka's association of symbol pictures with ideographs.

If we recall that Derrida's deconstructive critique of logocentricism was gauged as a challenge to structuralism, we begin to see how the formal analysis of comics leans toward a structural analysis, in which forms are taken as structures, and structures as bearers of signification. Structure becomes the de jure position that depends on the de facto situation of form. In discussions of iconography, the icon or symbol picture assures the subordination of comics form to structures of signification. This structural inclination is also apparent in analyses of the relations between panels.

Let's continue with McCloud and look at his discussion of "transitions" and "time frames". Others have taken up similar questions, such as Will Eisner, Natsume Fusanosuke, and Thierry Groensteen. But the strength of McCloud's account lies in its broad scope and willingness to offer a general structural paradigm. In his account of transitions, he offers six categories for relations between panels: moment-to-moment, action-to-action, subject-to-subject, scene-to-scene, aspect-to-aspect, and non-sequitur (McCloud 1994:74). This approach allows a highly concrete analysis of comics based on measuring the relative proportions of different kinds of transitions within different comics. In other words, transitions in comics appear amenable to measurement, and measurement is possible on the basis of panels, that is, on the basis of structural, usually rectilinear or geometric divisions of the white page. Such an approach subordinates the line to form (that of the panel), and then the usually geometric aspect of the panel allows for a subordination of form to structure. Where the icon subordinates form to signification, the panel subordinates time to space: spatial arrangement organizes a sense of time. And it is on the basis of such subordinations that McCloud proposes to measure transitions.

McCloud knows of course that questions of time and space are more complicated, and in a subsequent chapter on time frames, he begins with the subordination of time to space only to challenge it. He starts by entertaining the notion that "each panel of a comic shows a single moment in time", and "between those frozen moments—between the panels—our minds fill in the intervening moments, creating the illusion of time and motion" (McCloud 1994: 94). And he adds, "Naah! Of course not! Time in comics

is infinitely weirder than that". In other words, McCloud here highlights the work of something *immeasurable* in comics. In fact, the subtitle of his book is "the invisible art", and it is precisely the work of the invisible within the visible that concerns him—as an art of the invisible, comics are not reducible to the measurement of lines, forms, and structures. Instead comics are matter of gaps, intervals, spacing, and the continuous surfacing of the ground, the white page. I am entirely in agreement with McCloud. If I nonetheless propose a shift in emphasis (toward an analytics of the line), it is to avoid what I see as the maintenance, however unwitting, of a subordination of line to form that turns into a de jure subordination of form to structure, which, in analyses of the panel, generally takes the form of a subordination of time to space.

It is telling that, once McCloud tells us that space-time relations in comics are more complex than decomposing temporal events into instantaneous moments of time that are then recomposed to make for motion and time, he turns to an analysis of lines, that is, motion lines. What was initially forced out of the frame (time) now appears within the frame, in the guise of motion, which is rendered by various kinds of motion lines or effects of motion blur. Yet, after this account of motion lines, McCloud quickly moves on to say, "by introducing time into the equation, comics artists are arranging the page in ways not always conducive to traditional picture-making". In other words, it is as if temporal complexity is reintroduced in comics only after being pushed outside the panel (only after its structuration by panels). Consequently, the so-called weirdness of time remains constrained to the space within or between panels. Time remains constrained by structure, by the composition of geometric structures. It is not surprising then that McCloud concludes his chapter on time frames with an evocation of the perfection of nature. In effect, because he subordinates line to form and form to structure, the ground of the white page can return only in the form of cosmos, of a duly ordered, rule-bound yet beautiful nature that owes more to Platonic notions of nature (eternal Forms) than to contemporary conceptualizations of chaos, complexity, emergence, or fractal geometries. This is why comics in *Understanding Comics* prove at once childlike and ancient, cartoonish and eternal. Its analysis tends to abstract the cartoonish in the direction of eternal Forms, universal laws, structural composition, immutable ideas, and cosmological perfection—icons and panels.

Thomas LaMarre

I have, via McCloud, looked primarily at two forms (character and panel). I have shown (a) how he sees character heading toward iconic abstraction (and signification); and (b) how his discussion of panels, even as it tries to move beyond the subordination of time to space, remains locked into it, precisely because his analysis continually subordinates line to form, and then form to structure. My point is not that McCloud is conceptually old-fashioned or scientifically outdated. In fact, the question might well be turned the other way. Rather than ask whether McCloud's account falls short due to an unwitting commitment to a cosmology of form and structure, we might well ask whether comics as a medium does not tend in this direction. Is this a genuine tendency in comics? Do comics tend to subordinate line to form and structure, or this an effect of comics analysis? Are there other ways of reading, say, icons and panels?

My sense of comics is that we can indeed detect in them a tendency toward form and structure, which formal analysis tends to highlight. But, even though comics use forms and structures, there is no reason to make these into the law or the truth of comics as a medium, to establish them as a transparent conduit for content or signification. As we have seen, this is a genuine tendency among commentators who wish to insist above all on the seriousness of comics, or on the ability of comics to address social and historical issues. Endorsements of *Barefoot Gen*, as we saw, stress how its simplicity and directness overcome or transcend its penchant for cuteness or casual violence in order to convey its message. But what would *Barefoot Gen* be without the "cute" faces of its children, or its slapstick violence and action scenes, or its anger?

There is in fact a countervailing tendency in comics, which can be approached via an analytics of the line. Attending to the dynamics of the line in comics will allow us to do two things. First, rather than begin with a divide between space and time, we can begin with the dynamics of two different kinds of line, each with an incipient space-time dynamics. Second, rather than build one synthesis upon another in such a manner as to subordinate "lower" level events (drawing, inking, layering of tone paper) to "higher" order concerns (content, structure, signification), we can leave open the play between line and form, and form and structure, for instance. In the next section, I will build on a contrast between two kinds of line: the structural line and the plastic

line or cartoon line. As is implied in my association of the plastic line with cartoons or comics themselves, I see the forces associated with the plastic line as integral to comics, equally important as forms or structures, and maybe more so. What is more, the plasticity of the cartoon line tends to keep open the play between different levels of synthesis, such that we see and feel its dynamics across levels. The plastic line invites a transversal and disjunctive synthesis, whereas the structural line encourages a subordination of lines to forms, and forms to structures (icon to signification, and time to space).

3. The Structural Line

In his account of the image, Jean-Luc Nancy remarks, "The image is separated in two ways simultaneously. It is detached from a ground and it is cut within a ground. It is pulled away and clipped or cut out" (Nancy 2005: 7). This notion of a double separation is important in considering how lines become images. For a line to become an image, it must be at once detached or pulled away from a ground and cut out or framed by edges of some sort.

What is interesting about Nancy's account is how it avoids subordinating drawing or painting to form. Instead Nancy suggests that when a stroke or strokes becomes an image, the mediator is not form but a clipping out or framing. In this way, Nancy keeps open the relation between what I previously called first and second syntheses. His account combines them in order to remain true to the force of the stroke and gesture, and thus to sensation in art, by bringing the logic of second synthesis closer to the first. In effect, he is bypassing an analysis that presumes the primacy of form, structure, or representation. He sustains attention to the "how" of art rather subordinate it to the "what" of art.

In the instance of comics, the line is becoming image as soon as it is read as a mark (detached from a ground) upon a page (framed with edges). But in the context of comics the term figure is probably a better conceptual rubric than image. Even though Nancy's account of the image is not ocularcentric but geared toward touch, contact, and tact, the term image might take on a vision-centered trajectory in the context of comics. What is more, the term image might make it seem that text is dropping out of

our comics analysis. Figure is a more fitting term because it refers to the figural force underlying both text and image. And so, to rephrase Nancy's account, let's say that the line is becoming figure as soon as it is felt as a mark upon the page. In other words, the stroke doesn't need form to have a figural force. A line is an incipient figure. It doesn't have to be subordinated to a form in order to exert an effect. The two forces of separation—detaching from the ground and clipping out edges—transform the stroke, the line, into a figure.

On this basis, we can speak of two kinds of line. In the previous section, I discussed the subordination of line to form, and form to structure. We can also think about this subordination in terms of *the structural line*. At its most basic, the structural line is one that transforms the informal edges of the page into a highly regular form, by repeating those edges with great formality. The obvious instance in comics is the panel. The rectilinear lines of the panel formalize the edges of the page, at once replicating it and channeling the force of edges into a formal unity. What was an edge becomes a rule. Indeed these lines are commonly drawn with a ruler, and a relation to law and structure is in the offing. In order for the structural line to turn into law or structure, however, it would have to pass through form. It would have to submit to form. For instance, the structural line might be subordinated to the demands of one-point perspective, to the form of the vanishing point on the horizon, which allows for scalar proportions. Such a form (one-point perspective) might then be subordinated to the law or structure of Cartesianism, in which rules of perspective begin to pose as the most objective and scientific way to represent the world.

But the logic of the structural line is not inherently directed toward Cartesianism. Its general logic is that of a line between two points. It is Euclidean, with a propensity for geometric efficiency and propriety: the line is not just between two points; it is taken as the shortest distance between two points, in which case it begins to appear highly efficient. Still, to transform this Euclidean line, drawn with a ruler, into the ground for a structure, the rectilinear shape of panels must be made into, or taken as, the formal unity of comics. Thus form prepares the way for structure.

When it comes to using the panel in comics, the structural line verges on subordination to form when the artist starts thinking of the rectilinear shapes of panels

as confining or constraining the play of other lines. You might start drawing characters with an eye to how they fit into the panel, composing them within that shape, and taking care to assure that their lines don't exceed that frame. You may start thinking of characters in terms of forms rather than in terms of the figural force of the lines composing them. Nonetheless, the panel does not thoroughly dominate the medium of comics; it cannot truly subordinate everything to the logic of form and structure. For instance, even though you might begin composing a comic by sketching in the panel distribution and then drawing characters, actions, scenes, or emotions within the panels, you still have another sense of the general layout, one that precedes drawing the specific frames of the panels. The dynamics of this other sense of layout is probably not thoroughly rectilinear and formal but loosely relational.

There is, needless to say, a trend in comics criticism toward formal analysis based on panels (McCloud, Groensteen) as well as panel distribution (*koma-wari* in Natsume). Formal analysis of comics typically lingers on the structure of panels for a number of reasons.

First, there is no doubt that the panel has played a crucial role in making comics what they are. While it is always possible to link comics to older art forms, such as picture scrolls, narrative paintings, or cave drawings, that present sequences of actions or events, there is something distinctive about the way in which the panel formalizes the edge of the page.

Second, the sequencing of panels is a prime site for the articulation of temporal relations in comics. If we think somewhat reductively in terms of a historical transformation of one-panel comics into four-panel comics (*yonkoma manga*) or strips (American comic strips or the "bandes" of BD) in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it is clear that looking at panels allows for a consideration of a variety of temporal phenomena, such as timing, rhythm, motion, and action, as well as flashback, reiteration, repetition, and remembrance. The same is true of the subsequent historical transformation of strips and four-panel comics into longer narrative forms such as *story manga*, *gekiga*, comic books, and graphic novels.

Third, there is a self-conscious modernity in the use of panels in comics. In conjunction with their serialization in newspapers that allowed for repeating characters,

279

themes, and in some instances, extended narrative arcs, comics opened a dialogue with other mass-produced media forms at the level of the panel. The dialogue of comics with cinema and animation is especially prevalent because the structure of sequential panels affords an intersection with the dynamics of the moving image in the "classical film style". David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson are frequently cited for their formal characterization of classical film style as entailing a cause-and-effect, goal-orientated subordination of time to space, through the use of various cinematic techniques that together conspire to produce a sense of continuity (see Hansen 2000). Gilles Deleuze notes a similar effect but parses it differently. Deleuze sees in prewar film a tendency toward using one type of moving image (the action image) to coordinate a variety of different types of moving image. The result is a tendency toward what he calls the movement-image (Deleuze 1986).

In any event, although comics are not moving images in the usual sense of deploying movie cameras and projectors, the use of panels in comics can be seen to present a decomposition and re-composition of movement analogous to cinema and animation; even if, like McCloud, we wish to complicate that scenario, it is an actual tendency in comics. Indeed, in the instance of Japanese story manga, commentators have typically credited Tezuka Osamu with introducing film conventions into manga in order to establish a stable and imitable form of manga expression, a classical style, if you will. Commentators commonly turn to Tezuka's 1947 story manga, *New Treasure Island* (*Shin Takarajima*), calling attention to scenes in which the movement of an automobile down the road, for instance, is decomposed into a series of images that cinematically recompose movement across panels on the page. The history of interaction of comics with cinema and animation is deeper and more complex than accounts centered on the pivotal role of Tezuka's postwar manga typically acknowledge, but there is nevertheless an important point to be made, namely, that the structure of panels in comics not only affords a site of intersection with moving image media, but also confronts the dynamics of modernity in the form of the spatialization of time.[7]

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7 Harry Harootunian addresses modernity and spatialization of time in "Ghostly Comparisons" (2003:39-52).

Thomas LaMarre

Previously, I mentioned how McCloud rightly challenges the idea that "each panel of a comic shows a single moment in time", and "between those frozen moments—between the panels—our minds fill in the intervening moments, creating the illusion of time and motion" (McCloud 1994: 94). Yet, even as he challenges the model of a cinema-like re-composition of movement, he is not able to overcome the spatialization of time implied in it, precisely because he remains caught in the formalism of panels: thus he turns to movement within panels or frames.

In sum, formal analysis of panels in comics is genuinely insightful, opening a series of important questions about temporality, spatialization, and the intersection of comics with moving image media, which can in turn pose crucial questions of modernity. Yet, in subordinating line to form, formal analysis tends also to subordinate form to structure. Thus, if we wish to complicate a structural analysis of comics, we need to return to the very line that grounds formal and structural analysis. But now we should note that structural lines have a sort of built-in resistance to form as well. While such lines imply structural stability and formal regulation, they also have a degree of fragility and brittleness. They don't bend under pressure; they break. They snap like bones. In calligraphic terms, we might well characterize the structural line as boney. As such, forms composed of structural lines tend to shatter and fragment into shards of forms. Panels, for instance, tend to break into a range of angular shapes, to tilt and list, and sometimes they explode, but rarely do they bend or warp or curl. In fact, as soon as the structural lines of panels start to bend, warp, or curl, they begin to turn into another kind of line altogether—the plastic line or cartoon line, which implies a very different set of relations to form, geometry, and structure.

4. The Plastic Line

Sergei Eisenstein's unfinished book on Walt Disney is the inspiration for my emphasis on the plastic line (Eisenstein 1988). While Eisenstein was writing about animation, his account begins with illustrations in children's books and returns incessantly to the art of the line. He thus makes the line central to understanding cartoons, and what's more, he does not establish a sharp divide between comics and animations (which we tend today to separate). In fact, as the use of the term cartoon for both comics and animation

reminds us, from the mid-1920s through the mid-1940s, comics and animations, especially those geared toward young audiences or general audiences, emerged in synchrony, almost as if they were one distinctive art with two media aspects (print and film). The term manga, for instance, which was largely synonymous with cartoon, could as easily refer to animation as to print comics, even without the rubric "film" that was sometimes added to it—"manga-film" (*manga eiga*) or animation. It is not so surprising then that, in a discussion of Disney animation, Eisenstein should dwell on the dynamics of the line.

Eisenstein calls attention to the elasticity of shapes, the mobility of contours, and the fluidity and diversity of forms, which he frequently links to primordial protoplasm-like vitality, primitive exuberance, and ecstasy. His approach to this tendency is probably best summed up in his use of the term "plasmaticness" (1988: 21). Eisenstein intermittently contrasts this plasmaticness with "heartless geometrizing" (1988: 35) and the "formal logic of standardization" (1988: 42).

In other words, he sees a tension, and potentially a dialectical contradiction, in the emergence of plasmaticity at historical moments characterized by formal standardization: LaFontaine's fables in contrast to Descartes's metaphysics and the formalities of the French court (1988: 35); and Disney's cartoons in contrast to "Ford's conveyer belts" and the oppressive regularity of work in America (1988: 3). We might well add the contrast that I presented schematically at the outset: Nakazawa's shōnen manga in contrast to foundational narratives of trauma and the institutionalization of history. Of course, *Barefoot Gen* doesn't stand outside, or in strict opposition to, the modernist aesthetics of trauma or the institutionalization of history. After all, as the first manga accepted into Japan's primary school libraries, and as the first manga translated into English, *Barefoot Gen* has taken on some canonical weight. Still, as Eisenstein's account of Disney suggests, this is precisely where its shōnen-manga-ness becomes important. And if we follow Eisenstein's lead, the quality of shōnen manga lies in the plasmaticness that derives from cartooning.

Eisenstein deftly steers his account of plasmaticness toward what he calls the stroke drawing (1988: 43), a drawing in which the line traces a continuous contour in a single stroke, in form rather like an amoeba (1988: 83-84). Drawing a cartoon line

282

is very different from drawing a line between two points, the structural line. In fact, to enhance the contrast between the cartoon line and the structural line, we can also call on Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between a "line between two points" and a "point between two lines" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 480). The continuous amoeba-like contour is an example of one kind of a point between two lines. The contour creates the sense of a center of motion within it. It makes for an animate center, as if there were a point within the contour that at once grounded and provided the impetus for mobility and elasticity of the line on either side of it (or with the amoeba, on all sides of it). With its animate center, the cartoon line doesn't tend toward the efficiency and propriety of Euclidean geometry.

While Eisenstein's account of plasmaticness is the inspiration for my attention to the cartoon line, as indicated in my preference for the term *plasticity* rather than plasmaticness, I wish to take his insights in a somewhat different direction.

Eisenstein highlights how the basic gesture of cartoons—the stroke drawing—allows for a continual transformation and deformation of form, without an actual loss of form. He refers to this at one point as "poly-formic capabilities" (1988: 41). His account tends to emphasize not only form and deformation but also transformation. Partly due to his emphasis on animism as an earlier stage of development, his account gives the impression that cartoons return us to a primitive elasticity, fluidity, and flexibility. We might thus conclude that the cartoon line is the return of a lost authenticity. Moreover, his cartoon line appears largely passive, reacting to whatever strikes it, availing itself to transformation. Yet we need also take into account the potential for movement and activity that the cartoon line imparts. I would like to call attention to the explosive quality of plasticity.[8] As the association of plastics with explosives implies, plasticity refers us not only to elasticity and flexibility (passive reaction) but also to the ability to bounce back, the capacity to adopt new form (active transformation). The plastic line is precisely a line that both gives way and bounces back, both bends and springs back. This is because it generates a point between (or within) lines, and that point, as an animate center, enters into relations with points

8 I am drawing on Catherine Malabou's distinction between flexibility and plasticity in *What Should We Do with Our Brain?* (2008).

outside the lines. If we take the example of an amoeba-like shape, there is a point outside the squiggly contour and a point inside it, which are linked directly, somehow in sync. As such, the "form" has an internal animate center (center of indetermination) that imparts "life" to it, yet this inside center or point is in sync with an outside, which makes for a receptive elasticity. While Eisenstein does not speak at length to this aspect of the plasmaticity of the cartoon line (his book is after all unfinished), he notes something analogous in his passing references to pure affect ("affect freed of any purpose"; 1988: 10) and the soul of cartoon characters (1988: 41).

In its movement of double separation (detaching from a ground and clipping out), the plastic line, as point between two lines, presents a completely different tendency in its composition of forces than the structural line does. Let me first address detaching from the ground. While the structural line does produce a vibratory oscillation between figure and ground, this oscillation tends to be quickly resolved because the structural lines enhance their strength and protect their brittleness by coalescing into solid geometric forms. The panel is the prime instance. The motion line is a sort of limit case where the structural line appears to free itself of form by associating itself with movement, and yet because movement often remains associated with panels (or more broadly with distance per unit time), the motion line only regains its vibratory force when action ruptures panel structure and explodes across the page, as in the battle scenes prevalent in shōnen manga where flying fists and feet in the heat of action begin to summon splashes and dashes of ink, and the shortest distance between two points (hero and foe) is a matter of anticipation and preemption not measurable distance.[9]

In contrast, when the plastic line separates from the ground of the white page, it sustains a certain degree of autonomy; it doesn't need to join with other lines immediately, because its force is figural, and a single plastic line is nearly a self-sufficient figure. What is more, due to having a point between lines (animate center), even when it presents itself in a dark bold contour, it implies a relation or dialogue between the point inside and the point outside, which makes the ground (the white page) palpable. The plastic line thus tends to remain closer to the vibratory oscillation

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9 Shirato Sanpei's *Kamui-den* is a brilliant example.

between figure and ground.[10] The limit case for the plastic line is the application of color, shading, or tone paper (also called screentones). These applications are equally plastic in that they do not need form or structure and sustain a certain degree of autonomy. Yet, because such applications tend to remain within the line, they to some extent forfeit their autonomy to shore up the plastic line, and at the same time, the plastic line loses some of the force of attraction between inside and outside points, becoming a contour with an inside less susceptible to the outside. While the plastic line does not in this way become a structural line or structure, it does verge on becoming a form, and as such, becomes more amenable to the form of the panel. To some extent, inking is also a limit case, for similar reasons. Inking over and erasing pencils can also transform the plastic line into something less autonomous in terms of figural force and more subordinated to the logic of form. For this reason, really good inking, in which finesse and differential force are palpable, is necessary to prolong and reinvent the plasticity of the line. Similarly, the application of ink, tones, and other kinds of shading can make or break the plasticity of manga, enhancing or hindering its figural force.[11]

As for clipping out, we have seen how, in the form of the panel, the structural line repeats and regulates the page. In effect, it re-presents the page, transforming it into a frame, and thus it tends toward structure. (The re-composition of movement via panels inclines toward representation and signification insofar as the reality of the movement presented can now be taken to have existed prior to its presentation in panels). In contrast, the plastic line has an informal and uncertain relation to the edge of the page. While it derives force from it to emerge as a figure, it does not repeat or re-present it in formal terms. Thus the edge of the page feels fuzzier, as if somehow incomplete or vague about its limits. In a practical way, comics need the figural force of the plastic line to get readers to turn the page. The impulse to turn the page comes partly from a sense of suspense, from a desire to see what happens next. Yet such suspense and such desire happen because the plastic tendencies of comics prevent the structural tendency

10 The example of certain optical illusions is instructive here, such as the well-known image that oscillates between faces in profile and candlesticks, or the classic Duck-Rabbit, or even the elephant in a boa hat of Saint-Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince*.
11 In the use of screentones, inking, and black-white contrast as forces in themselves, *Death Note* is exemplary.

from making the page into an absolute and final frame of representation. In other words, narrative has a ground; it only separates itself from the page as story by playing off the plastic and structural tendencies of comics. The tendency of the plastic line to de-structure or deform the edge of the page is striking in certain lineages of *shōjo manga* in which the panel structure dissolves into scattering flowers, streaming lace, or washes of stars; or panels appear to float on wisps of cloud or ocean foam, while characters wearing exquisitely patterned clothing seem to oscillate on the threshold between the flow and form.[12]

Yet this is not pure plasticity by any means. These two tendencies that I have established on the basis of the line are limit cases, which never appear in pure form. Even though in my broad examples I associate the dissolution of panel structure in shōjo manga with plasticity, I should add that this sort of characteristically shōjo page layout calls forth formal and structural tendencies precisely as a material limit to plasticity. Simply put, rather than a pure liberation of the figural force of the plastic line, rather than pure flows, the strategies of composition and elements in the composition often become exceedingly formalistic. The edge of the page is deformed, rendered informal and fluid, but then is limited by a sense of form and structure at the level of the composition of flows. The page is liquefied but not liquidated, to produce formal flows. Conversely, while shōnen manga geared toward action frequently rely on a formal structuration of panels, subordinating characters to goal-orientated action, this reliance on the structural line exceeds itself, and, often through motion lines, reintroduces plastic tendencies through strikes and blows that start to overwhelm the formality of the page. This is where styles that are sometimes strictly divided—shōjo and shōnen—actually turn out to overlap and intersect.[13] The overlap of motion and emotion lines is a prime instance.

Comics are always a mixture of these two tendencies. The art of comics begins with reciprocal determination of the plastic line and structural line, each of which

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12 I am thinking of Ikeda Riyoko and Hagio Moto.

13 For its disjunctive synthesis of such page layouts, I am thinking of Takemiya Keiko's *Terra e*, and a prime example of shōnen battles renewed from within is Arakawa Hiromu's *Full Metal Alchemist*.

Thomas LaMarre

has its own tendencies toward syntheses, which makes for new levels of reciprocal determination. In interest of making my argument clearer, let me summarize it in binary tabular fashion, with the caveat that I do not see structural divide or strict opposition between the plastic and structural but rather a series of interactions.

THE PLASTIC LINE	THE STRUCTURAL LINE
LEVEL 1:	
The cartoon line (and calligraphic line)	The ruled line
Point between two lines	Line between two points
Non-Euclidean	Euclidean
LEVEL 2:	
Figure	Form
Form of expression	Form of content
Character	Panel
LEVEL 3:	
Differential	Structure
Timing, rhythm	Genre
Affect	Action, emotion
Fabulation	Representation[1]
Disjunctive synthesis	Conjunctive synthesis[2]

1. In addition to deleuze's notion of fabulation, Jaques Ranciere's distinction between aesthetic regimes and represenional regimes of art is consonant with this determination as well.
2. These syntheses are roughly similar to those in Deleuze and Guattari, if one adds that the "connective synthesis" takes place at the level of pencil and page.

Rather than look at these pairs in terms of oppositional categories, we need to consider the different levels where these tendencies are both self-propelling and reciprocally determining, becoming materially entangled and entering into conjunctive and disjunctive syntheses with one other. Considering the speech bubble or *fukidashi* in this manner, we see how the simple bubble introduces plasticity into the structural line with a roundness that generates an encounter between the ruled lines of panels and the more plastic lines of characters. Its form also presents an engagement with the structure of writing: bubbles in manga tend to be long and narrow to convey vertical columns of glyphs, for instance. The protrusion that commonly points outward toward the character's head can also be turned inward to present off-panel speech (or the protrusion omitted), or its lines can take on affective or emotional qualities with curved, spiked, or tenuous stroke. Thus the form of expression conjoins with the

form of content, and affect with action and emotion. In manga, onomatopoeias are common, coursing across panels and sometime across pages. They are often written in the structurally oriented lines of *katakana* (Japanese syllabary), yet the repetitive force of their voluble flows also defies the structured lines of panels, breaking the ruled lines into rhythms and tones. In addition, I briefly mentioned motion lines and such applications as inking, shading, tone paper, and color. In motion lines, the structural line moves against the tendency toward conjunctive synthesis that subordinates line to form and structure. Conversely, the plasticity of inking, color, tones, and shades can serve to formalize the plastic line. Such mixtures are then read with and against page layouts, and at the same time, action and affect enter into reciprocal determinations, and narration alternately detaches from fabulation (pushing it into the background) and grounds it (highlighting mythic qualities). The complex mixtures at these different levels of polarization and synthesis provides an entrance into an analysis of how *Barefoot Gen* coordinates or composes such forces, as it works through the stable and imitable conventions of shōnen manga.

5. Composition in Violence

At first glance, everything about *Barefoot Gen* appears to conspire against the plastic line, especially if we look for elasticity, flexibility, or delicacy of line. Indeed, as Kawaguchi Takayuki remarks, "*Barefoot Gen* employs the thick heavy lines prevalent in shōnen manga magazines from the mid-1960s into the 1970s" (Kawaguchi 2008: 111). What is more, the structure of panels is very regular, and although its manner of sequencing action, perception, and emotion merits attention, there is nothing unusual about it. Action is usually conveyed with full body images (panels in which we see the entire body). It alternates between panels in which the character's action is situated in a location (street, house, school, etc.) and panels in which the character's body (or characters' bodies) fills the panel, often captured in somewhat dramatic poses. Establishing images clearly locate where actions take place. The form of the panel gives way to the force of the page not through active shattering or emotive dissolution but through enlargement: there are scenes that fill two full pages.

Perception provides unambiguous orientation: if we see a character looking

Thomas LaMarre

or listening in a certain direction, we subsequently have a presentation of what the character sees or hears. Emotion is rendered iconically for the most part, with a limited range of facial expressions in conjunction with emotion lines (surprise, anger, confusion, delight). Dialogue neatly stitches up any gaps between actions and emotions. If the limited range of facial expressions sometimes runs the risk of conflating different emotions or flattening emotions into a limited set of responses, dialogue at once dispels ambiguity and broadens the palette. The dark thick ink lines and careful application of shading and tones within the lines, together with the tendency to avoid the use of negative space (forms and figures tend to fill the panels and only "lean" toward or open into other panels on the basis of a continuous sequence of action), contribute to the sense of an overall coordination of various forces in which line and figure are subordinated to form and structure: character is subordinated to panel; and motion and emotion appear subordinated to a structure of action and reaction. In sum, this might be called a classical style.

This classical style is a combination of Tezuka's child-orientated story manga and the adolescent-orientated gekiga. Such a combination is not surprising: Nakazawa mentions his early appreciation of Tezuka's story manga, and by the 1970s when he began work on *Barefoot Gen*, gekiga styles had thoroughly permeated shōnen manga. Defining gekiga is difficult: there were a number of different takes on it, and the term itself is rather changeable. But then the same can be said of the style of story manga that has become so closely associated with Tezuka: not only were a number of other artists working with similar conventions at the same time, but also there were precedents for Tezuka's forms of expression. Given the complexity of both story manga and gekiga, my account of them is necessarily selective, biased toward the analysis at hand.

Gekiga is commonly said to be darker in tone, in contrast to the lighter tone of Tezuka's story manga, which is in keeping with the idea of gekiga reaching out to an audience of adolescent boys rather than children. Still, we should not forget, as Natsume Fusanosuke reminds us, that Tezuka attracted all manner of *mangaka* to children's story manga due to his ability to produce complex stories with his innovations (Natsume 1998). Moreover, even though Tezuka's manga of the 1940s

Fig. 1: Nakazawa (1993), vol. 8, p. 1.

and 1950s may be said to be lighter in comparison to subsequent developments in gekiga, his manga were in their day accused of being too violent for children. We might think in terms of two kinds of violence: a "lighter" violence in Tezuka and company, which drew inspiration from slapstick, gag strips, Hollywood films, and Disney animations, as well as mystery and science fiction adventure genres; in contrast to a "darker" violence in gekiga, inspired by European and Japanese New Wave cinema, as well as crime fiction and other fictions bringing milieu to the fore. Tezuka himself moved toward these darker modalities of gekiga expression in the 1970s and 1980s.

In *Barefoot Gen*, the lighter modalities of the Tezuka lineage are most palpable in those scenes that Spiegelman characterizes in terms of casual violence, such as the scenes where Gen's brother playfully bonks Gen on the head, and his face takes on a

Fig. 2: Nakazawa (1980), vol. 5, p. 163.

Fig. 3: Nakazawa (1975), vol. 3, p. 198.

comedic expression of agony (fig. 2); and in moments of delight where someone's leg shoots out perpendicular to his body (fig. 3). These are slapstick or gag modalities of violent action and reaction, with an evocation of plasticity in the form of a body with the capacity to spring back. Recall that this capacity to bounce back gathers discursive force through the symbolism of wheat in *Barefoot Ge*n.

The darker modalities associated with gekiga appear in the sequences in which Gen and the other children battle gangsters (postwar black market *yakuza* types), confront the biological experimentation of the American military, and denounce politicians, the emperor, and political hypocrisy in general; and in the recurrent image of the sun that punctuates the manga without reference to the story's actions or characters' emotions. The sun is a thoroughly perplexing evocation of the power of the bomb, the emperor (his mythic status of descendent of the sun goddess), the passage of time, and the fecundity and brutality of the natural world, all of which collectively perplex the manga in their figural coincidence. This is a different evocation of plasticity, not so much at the level of the line as at the level of the figure. The sun image takes on figural force.

In sum, the figural force of the manga resides in the tension between the springy stalk of wheat (plastic) and alternately oppressive and benevolent orb of the sun (geometric). In figural terms, the action stretches between ground and sky, like a plant pushing toward and against the light. Yet the wheat implies a lighter modality of violence, and the sun darker modalities of violence.

For the most part, we don't feel any radical disjuncture between these two modalities. This is because Barefoot Gen uses manga conventions to produce an overall coordination of these forces. This overall coordination tends to work through a subordination of line to form, and form to structure, at the level of action and reaction. The coordinating logic of action and reaction opens a vast range of possibilities for kinds of violence that are emotionally larger yet figurally constrained. For instance, Gen's mother does not hesitate to wallop her children when they need correction (fig. 4). If such violence seems acceptable, it is within the terms that the manga sets up: her slaps are a reaction to their (incorrect) actions; although the children's actions come in

reaction to the downright abusive actions of the relations with whom they temporarily live, the mother's "corrective violence" remains within cause-and-effect logic; it is thus comprehensible. Its forces don't exceed manga form and structure. Similarly, even though other forms of corrective violence, such as that of teachers against students, appear less acceptable in ethical terms, these are nonetheless composed within manga. In sum, shōnen manga conventions allow for an economy of action that serves to coordinate or compose various forces, which are figured in terms of kinds of violence stretched between lighter and darker modalities.

Fig. 4: Nakazawa (1975), vol. 4, p. 37.

What haunts this composition, however, is the possibility of "pure violence" that escapes the logic of cause and effect, action and reaction, which can appear at either end of the spectrum (wheat or sun). There is the violence of parents against children, which is experienced as pure because its cause is not tainted, its anger is in fact love and nurture (growing wheat). And then there is the violence of war in general, and the atomic bomb in particular, that in *Barefoot Gen* defies the logic of cause and effect, and the economy of action (harnessing the atom). The "economy" of war and destruction cannot be reckoned or measured; it is impossible to conclude or confine it by attributing responsibility to one side or the other. Rather it is an endless spiral of action and reaction in which both are effects, and there is no cause or reason. There is only a regime of destruction. While the basic actions of *Barefoot Gen* are composed between these two poles of pure violence, there is something that hovers over the composition—Gen's general affective attunement, anger.

It is here that we might begin to think in terms of trauma. After all, Gen's anger, as anger, is an attunement toward an object. Yet the object of his anger shifts incessantly: now it is the damned war, now the damned bomb, now the damned emperor, now the damned Japanese politicians, now the damned American soldiers,

now the damned black market profiteers. Of course such associations are entirely comprehensible in thematic terms; Gen's anger is consistently directed at those who exploit others, diminishing or destroying their lives and livelihood. Yet this substitution of objects of anger merits attention. On the one hand, it is anarchic, because this anger selects whatever is at hand, even as it makes broader proclamations. On the other hand, it is traumatic in that it doesn't seem liable to make an "adequate" substitution. It is locked into repetition. The other side of Gen's anger is his emotional attachments. In addition to his attachment to the surviving members of his family (mother and two brothers), Gen finds substitutes for the younger brother and older sister killed at Hiroshima. The operations here are less anarchic and traumatic in that the substitutions are based on resemblance. There is, however, an unsettling insistence on the adequacy of these substitutions, and, if the substitutes seem to agree to their new role, we get the impression that it is impossible to withstand the violent force of Gen's affective attachment. There is a pure violence to Gen, which tends toward the pole of parent-child or sibling-sibling economy, in which anger is pure because inseparable from natural affections. Such anger becomes inseparable from a love of life, of all that sustains or prolongs the forces of life.

We can read this affective attunement—pure restless anger—in terms of a traumatic response that tends to escape, trouble, or haunt the conventions of shōnen manga. Yet we should not forget that this trauma is not separable from the medium of comics itself. In other words, if we simply seize upon the "message" of trauma or its politics, we miss the tonality and the materiality of violence itself, which is related to the medium.[14]

Gen's "pure anger" is, oddly enough, associated not only with the "nurturing anger" of caregivers (father, mother, siblings, friends) but also the plastic line. Many of the scenes of frolicking and of nostalgic remembrance of past delights in *Barefoot Gen* evoke a playful slapstick-like violence between father and sons or between boys.

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14 As Ōtaki Tomonori verifies in his careful analysis of speech patterns of characters in *Barefoot Gen*, Gen's speech gradually comes to dominate the manga, deepening the impression of the manga bearing a message, especially in conjunction with the anti-war speeches that peak in volume. See "Manga o 'kotoba' de yomu: keiryō teki bunseki no kokoromi" (2006: 139-140). But as Ōtaki indicates, such an analysis would have to be supplemented by an analysis of image and panel.

Thomas LaMarre

While such moments are fleeting, they are indicative of how the plastic line operates in this manga. As I mentioned previously, the plastic line is not only a matter of elasticity, flexibility, and passive deformation or transformation. It is also a matter of springing back, of rebounding. It has an explosive quality. This explosive quality of the plastic line appears in scenes with more playful or care-giving violence. It also lingers in the conventions for character design of children and trustworthy or affectionate adults: the large low-set eyes, the prominent rounded cheekbones, the large head, and the generally rounded contours. There is also a general rigidifying of such qualities, and instead of elastic consistency, the plastic line verges on the formal and structural. In effect, there is a suppression of elasticity and flexibility. Yet this very holding back of elasticity makes the force of plasticity feel ever on the verge of exploding. This explosive force of plastic line is at once summoned and held back as if to increase and refine its capacity for pure anger against the bomb, war, destruction, and exploitation of life.

At the level of form, because the plastic line is held back, a sort of dialectical struggle takes place between the plastic line and the structural line in *Barefoot Gen*, which follows directly from shōnen manga conventions. Ōtsuka Eiji's discussion of war and peace in Tezuka's manga provides an excellent delineation of this dialectics (Ōtsuka 2008: 111-125).

6. Cartoon and Mecha
Ōtsuka calls attention to a tension or even contradiction between *mecha* (mechanical devices) and character in shōnen manga. What is interesting is how he relates this difference to drawing styles. Noting the impact of Disney cartoons on manga of the 1920s and 1930s, Ōtsuka shows how this results in characters that appear to possess a "deathless body" (*shinanai shintai*) (Ōtsuka 2008:118). In other words, he points to something analogous to the plastic line. Characters' bodies can be violently deformed in various ways, yet the characters don't die. They eternally spring back. Ōtsuka quickly expands his discussion to the level of a broad ideological stance in war and action films—cartoon lines make for invincible warriors. While Ōtsuka's generalization is somewhat fast and loose, there is something important at stake here.

Thomas LaMarre

Ōtsuka calls attention to a lineage of shōnen heroes, in which techniques of cartooning can also be said to impart a sense of the immunity and safety in the midst of war and combat, by generating plastically invulnerable characters. In this respect, Gen of *Barefoot Gen* bears comparison not only to the boy heroes in the shōnen manga of the postwar era but also to those of the wartime era cartoons, such as Bōken Dankichi or Momotarō. Even with the tendency in *Barefoot Gen* to suppress the flexible contours of the plastic line, the sense of invulnerability and invincibility associated with cartoon-line boy heroes persists at the level of form. Despite the dangers that thrill and frighten readers, such heroes can provide readers with a sense of safety and security amid war, destruction, and poverty.

Still, rather than conclude that such conventions invalidate *Barefoot Gen* or undermine its historical capacities, we might return to Itō and Omote's remarks about a fascination with war in shōnen manga but think of this fascination differently. Itō and Omote are suspicious of *Barefoot Gen* because it does not resolutely part company with the fascination with war prevalent in shōnen manga. But, if we think of fascination in the stronger sense of a mixture of attraction and revulsion, then it is hard to imagine how a complex relation to war could be articulated without evoking fascination. We shouldn't think of a fascination with war as a simple relation; even the national policy films of the wartime era do not present a simplistic relation to war. Of course, to indicate the complexity of fascination with war is not to redeem it. The point is that war is not so easy to embrace or reject.

The same is true of the use of the plastic line to create invincible boy heroes. In Japan's wartime manga films, in the celebrated *Momotarō umi no shinpei* (Momotarō: Divine Soldiers of the Sea) for instance, the sense of the invulnerability of the boy hero does not derive from slapstick or gag violence in which the hero is deformed and then rebounds. Rather the plasticity of the heroic character figures as a sort of latent force of resilience, which takes on spiritual implications in the context of the action, but which also seems to exceed the action. In this respect, postwar boy heroes like Gen are direct descendents of wartime heroes. Such plasticity becomes inseparable from a fascination with war in that it allows us to enter into war and to pull back from it. It affords a complex relation to war.

Thomas LaMarre

Ōtsuka addresses something of this complexity when he turns to the profound contrast between the deathless bodies of characters and the design of mecha, that is, mechanical devices, machines, and vehicles ranging from airplanes and tanks to factories. Where characters embody the fluidity and invincibility of the plastic line derived from cartoons, Ōtsuka remarks how drawings of mecha in manga derive from drawing styles dedicated to scientific representation, to accuracy, precision, and measurement for purposes of rationalized intervention or instrumentalization. This is analogous to what I dubbed the structural line.

There is indeed a strong contrast in manga, and especially in war-related manga, which persists today, between the densely detailed and precise drawing associated with machines and vehicles, versus the fairly simple fluid contours that delineate characters. In exploring this contrast, Ōtsuka calls attention to a formal tension: character form versus mecha form. In mecha form, as Ōtsuka notes, the structural line is organized in accordance with conventions of scientific accuracy derived from European legacies of representation. Ōtsuka doesn't go into much detail, mentioning both one-point perspective and engineering diagrams. Looking closer at the mecha designs in question, I think it fair to say that their drawing conventions derive largely from techniques of exploded projection used for mechanical assembly diagrams (LaMarre 2009: 120-122). Such techniques impart depth and detail to depictions of machines or mecha in shōnen manga but do not strive to organize the overall space within the panel in terms of one-point perspective. Consequently, within the space of the panel, there emerges a profound contrast between character and mecha. This contrast can be articulated in various ways. It can be extended into a tension or struggle between human and machine, or it can be flattened into partnership or complicity.

In his discussion of mecha, Ōtsuka also moves quickly from drawing style to ideology: because such mecha styles tended to settle on weaponry (fighter planes, tanks, guns, robots, and even military factories), he associates them with death and destruction. As such, in the contrast between cartoon form and mecha form, he sees a relation between human life and military death.

Ōtsuka suggests that, in Tezuka's war manga, rather than a tidy partnership of invincible cartoon hero and mecha, a genuine tension emerges between the deathless

body and the deadly mecha. In Tezuka's manga, a question thus arises: what happens when deadly weapons turn against the cartoon hero? Can a cartoon hero really die, and what kind of death is it? In other words, within war manga itself, questions emerge precisely because of the basic contrast between drawing styles—or we might say, due to a fundamental incommensurability between plastic line and structural line.

True to the conventions of shōnen manga, *Barefoot Gen* presents a strong contrast between character form and mecha. This contrast becomes especially evident in panels and sequences in which military weaponry appears. Exactly as Ōtsuka indicates, airplanes, battleships, trains, and other vehicles are drawn in the mecha style, in structurally precise detail, in a manner reminiscent of the exploded projection of assembly diagrams. Two prime examples occur in volume 7. On page 55, as Gen reads about the Enola Gay (which dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima), the airplane is drawn above his head in illustration (fig. 5). The structurally precise and mechanically dense lines of the plane present a sharp contrast with the more rounded

Fig. 5: Nakazawa (1990), vol. 7, p. 55.

forms of Gen and his friends. Similarly, on page 104, where a Japanese-American officer defends the American use of the atomic bomb by evoking Pearl Harbor, an

illustration of the Japanese attack on American warships at Pearl Harbor appears in the panel alongside him (fig. 6). Note how in this instance the mecha style contrasts more sharply with Gen's rounded features than with the adult's angular features, as if to underscore the military complicity of the adult's face. Such a contrast is common throughout the manga: the faces of adults, particularly those who are not sympathetic characters, convey less plasticity than those of the children. In sum, the contrast between cartoon form and mecha form in *Barefoot Gen* tends to settle on a contrast between children versus weapons of destruction as

Fig. 6: Nakazawa (1990) vol. 7, p. 104.

Thomas LaMarre

well as versus devious, complicit adults.

The mecha style is also used for apparently neutral depictions, as with the presentation of the temple Kiyomizudera. The children travel to Kyoto with their mother and visit Kiyomizudera, which the mother visited on her honeymoon with her now dead husband. Here the contrast between characters and mecha style of the temple is striking (fig. 7), and while the temple itself is not associated with military weaponry per se, the characters' conversations linger on mass death, and the mother presages her death and indeed soon dies, vomiting blood in a gruesomely spectacular manner as they leave the temple. In other words, a dialectical struggle between forces of life and death does indeed emerge around the contrast between the plastic line (children) and the structural lines of mecha (machines, vehicles, and even architectures). The association of

Fig. 7: Nakazawa (1990), vol. 7, p. 230.

death with architectures goes even deeper: we have only to recall the recurrent images of the faces of Gen's father, elder sister, and younger brother pinned between the beams of their fallen house. It is precisely because, under conditions of war, houses can transform into mecha-like weaponry of destruction that the contrast between plastic line and structural line takes on new urgency. And a series of quasi-dialectical questions arise through this formal contrast. Is a synthesis of these polarized tendencies possible? Or will one force triumph over the other? Can life and peace triumph over death and war? Or will there be only an eternal oscillation without hope of reconciliation, let alone hope of actual movement beyond cycles of destruction?

Posing questions in this manner might encourage us to pull a definitive message out of the manga, to decide what *Barefoot Gen* tells us about the atomic bomb. But to read manga is not to extract a content or message. We should keep in mind that, even if Nakazawa set out to use comics to present a message, he had to work through comics, through the conventions of shōnen manga. There are of course a whole series of statements in *Barefoot Gen*—about the evils of war; about the complicity of

Fig. 8: Nakazawa (1990), vol. 7, pp. 62-63.

armies, politicians, and profiteers; about the will to survive; about self-reliance; about friendship and family; about the struggle for peace, to name a few. Such statements do not attain or even strive for discursive regularity, however. Nor do comics need to strive for discursive regularity, or to impart a coherent and consistent message. But comics do compose forces, and so, if we want to explore *Barefoot Gen*'s take on the atomic bomb, we must turn to how the manga composes forces in its images of Hiroshima on August 8, 1945, with attention to the problematic of lines, forms, and structures. Let me turn to another image in volume 7 that expands the panel form across two pages to provide panoramic view of the horrors of August 8 (fig. 8).

Striking about this image is its insistence on the structural line and structures. It is not a scene of wild disorder. Although the image spreads across two pages, the form of the panel is retained, with neat lines around the image. The image is also organized with a sense of one-point perspective, an almost iconic one-point perspective view down the railroad tracks, with horizon and vanishing point. Structural lines abound: not only the railroad tracks but also their stone bed remain precisely rectilinear, and although the strongly ordered perspective serves to highlight the strangeness of the listing telephone poles, the poles retain a sense of structure. The emphasis on structure also serves to highlight the disappearance of houses along the tracks. Oddly, however, the collapsed houses remain orderly. This overall insistence on structure and structural

lines ultimately serves to foreground what is horribly out of place: the humans walking toward us down the track, flesh melting from their limbs like wax from a candle.

The image is horrifying because it depicts an actual event. Still, the force of the image does not (and cannot) derive wholly from its ability to represent actual suffering. The horror of this image derives from its meticulous use of structural lines. While the precision of lines may be read as a quasi-documentary effect, it also implies, in the context of shōnen manga, a spreading of the mecha style across the world. The echoes of one-point perspective, in conjunction with the mecha style, transform the world into an exploded projection, showing how the atomic bomb does not only destroy the physical dwellings of humans but also digs deeper in the nature of things, threatening to explode existence itself. In addition, the mecha style serves to foreground human figures, and what makes these forms especially terrifying in the context of manga is the absence of plasticity. These forms are melting, liquefying, and the result is elasticity without any springiness, as if the very possibility of rebounding or springing back had been driven from existence.[15] The image is expunged of the force of the plastic line. The effect of the atomic bomb in shōnen manga is to drive plasticity from its world, to expel the plastic line even from comics, which is its abode. The question of *Barefoot Gen* might thus be simply phrased, "Can there be plasticity after the atomic bomb?" which is to say, "Can there be comics after Hiroshima?"

The resoundingly affirmative "yes" of *Barefoot Gen*, its belief in comics, is what impresses me most about this manga. And this belief in comics takes the concrete form of a belief in the plastic line. Clearly it would not be enough for Nakazawa to embrace plasticity by covering the entire surface of the manga with plastic figures, expelling the structural line altogether. Such a gesture would not be true to comics, nor would it address the challenge of the atomic bomb to comics, which challenge lies in the ascendency of a mecha complex of lines in organizing existence. This is why *Barefoot Gen* sticks so tenaciously to plasticity, wherever it appears. It is a gesture that gathers strength in the context of shōnen manga conventions, because these at once depend on and suppress the cartoon legacy, ceaselessly transforming it.

15 Note that, in *Barefoot Gen*, injuries and scars due to the atomic bomb appear as structural lines robbing the face of its plastic appeal.

Thomas LaMarre

This commitment to plasticity unfolds into a series of compositional tensions, formal contrasts, and quasi-dialectical struggles, which do not strive for discursive regularity. Granted we can extract a discursive regularity from *Barefoot Gen* by aligning various contrasts and struggles, and the result would probably be a rather beautiful but somewhat anodyne statement with spiritual overtones, such as "life springs back when most oppressed", or "the human spirit can triumph over any adversity", or some vaguely Buddhist parable to the effect that "it is when you reach rock bottom that you can be saved". But this is not true to the manga *Barefoot Gen*. Before (and beyond) any expression of a belief in life, in humanity, in cosmological harmony, or in peace, *Barefoot Gen* enacts a belief in comics.

The image of Gen and friends striking happy and triumphant poses in front of the mushroom cloud now makes sense in a different way. These manga characters present a counter-explosion to the atomic explosion, one that harnesses the force of the plastic line within the constraints of shōnen manga. As a counter-explosion, it comes with and after the bomb. Just as Gen's "pure anger" exists to counter the multitudinous forces of military-industrial empire, so the explosive plastics of the manga bomb do not reside safely beyond the atomic bomb. This manga bomb explodes with and against the atomic bomb. And if we wish to affirm capacity of Nakazawa's manga bomb to bear historical witness, we would have first to accept its proposition: believe in comics.

Still, even though it is not possible or desirable to impose discursive regularity upon *Barefoot Gen*, its proposition—believe in comics—does make for a specific set of orientations toward the atomic bomb, which come from believing in the plastic line despite the reciprocal determinations that come with it. Manga becomes a way of orientating oneself historically and politically. By way of conclusion I would like to address this prolongation of the plastic line into a set of political orientations toward the atomic bomb and the politics of trauma.

7. Biopolitics and Trauma

Pheng Cheah argues persuasively that the concept of trauma derived from Freud implies a politics of sovereignty, of bounded subjectivity and bounded nationality (Cheah 2008: 189-219). This is because Freud's theory relies on the sovereign integrity

of the ego or psyche prior to the traumatic event. There is, in other words, a constitutive closure or bounded sovereign space that is irreparably breached by the traumatic event, shattering the autonomy and integrity of the subject. In effect, Cheah signals the tendency of trauma theory to posit national sovereignty prior to its invention, thus naturalizing nationality or national identity. To counter this tendency, he argues that we need to think in terms of the constitutive exposure of the subject, to address the artificiality of national sovereignty and identity, which is a first step in getting beyond the current tendency toward celebrating or pathologizing national sovereignty, rather than confronting its politics more pragmatically, particularly in the contemporary context of biopolitics.

Cheah's remarks are of interest in the context of the atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki for two reasons. First, they help us make sense of the ways in which the atomic bombs have entered into the formation of foundational narratives of Japanese sovereignty in the postwar era (Igarashi 2000). A number of commentators have stressed the dynamics of nationalism in discourses and practices associated with the atomic bombs. There are accounts of how an emphasis on the atomic bomb has spurred the formation of Japanese victim mentality vis-à-vis War World II, which has encouraged indifference and even intolerance vis-à-vis the victims of Japanese aggression during its Fifteen-Year Asia-Pacific War.1 There are discussions of the elimination of Korean victims of the atomic bomb from the Hiroshima Memorial Park (Yoneyama 1999: 151-186). There are analyses of contemporary right-wing discourses in Japan that argue that the emphasis on Japan's defeat at the end of war (rather than Japan's prewar and wartime legacy of military heroism and even imperial altruism in Asia) has resulted in deviant identity (Ivy 2005: 137-149). Simply put, the trauma of the actual victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has frequently been treated as national trauma, which posits the constitutive closure of the nation prior to, and above and beyond, the traumatic event.

Second, Cheah's discussion is of interest because it encourages us to think about the dynamics of power beyond the Freudian framework of trauma and thus beyond the foundational closure of national sovereignty. This strikes me as especially important in the context of *Barefoot Gen*, because its author is keenly aware of the national

appropriation of the trauma of atomic bomb victims,[16] and the manga not only includes numerous references to Japan's war of aggression and discrimination against Koreans forced into labor, but also adopts a resolutely anti-nationalist and anti-imperialist stance. One might argue against the political efficacy of such gestures or question the terms for them: while in the first volume the manga speaks against Japanese militarism, for instance, it does so by emphasizing the anti-war heroism of Gen's father. Moreover, as mentioned previously, Gen's pure anger suffuses the manga to the point that political resistance risks becoming overly generalized or entirely personalized. Nonetheless, the manga invites us to look at the effects of the atomic bomb in a framework other than that of trauma and national sovereignty. Interesting enough, if we consider *Barefoot Gen* discursively, the framework for power is neither that of nation or of class but closer to the biopolitical paradigm evoked in Cheah's discussion.

Throughout the manga, Gen speaks boldly against those who started and sustained Japan's Fifteen-Year Asia-Pacific War, specifically to denounce those who profit from war. At this level, the identification of those responsible within Japan to some extent follows class lines: the rich are frequently depicted as exploiters and profiteers, while those who profit in any manner at the expense of others are denounced as perpetuating the war. In this respect, *Hadashi no Gen* recalls the political dynamics of proletarian literature, especially stories for children that dwelled on economic disparity and resistance to special police. War is to some extent class war.

Ultimately, however, *Hadashi no Gen* does not offer a proletarian vision, in the sense of focusing on the industrial proletariat. Already in the depiction of Gen's father's pacifism in the wartime era, the manga dwells on biopolitical consequences. The father is arrested and tortured, and the family is denied food by the military authorities. There is indeed industrial production, but within an economy based on military-related production (what Chalmers Johnson calls "military Keynesianism"), and the effects of power are not registered in terms of class exploitation or extraction of labor surplus. Similarly, in the postwar era, the basic conflict is not between the bourgeoisie and the industrialized masses of proletarian workers. True to postwar

16 Fukuma Yoshiaki reminds us that Nakazawa initially had no interest in writing atomic bomb manga, due to his opposition to the media appropriation of the atomic bombs, and it was only after the death of his mother in 1966 that he began to reconsider. See Fukuma (2006: 12-13).

Japan, the black market and "unofficial economies" are as important as industrial production, and in the manga, these other economies take precedence over industrial production, which remains almost peripheral to the ongoing conflicts.[17] It is a struggle to survive that is highlighted, a struggle for life, for food and shelter, in which money has immediate physical consequences. In addition, the general emphasis on torture and medical experimentation confirms the general gravitation toward scenes of *biopolitical* struggle. *Barefoot Gen* presents an overall political and historical orientation toward a sort of military-biopolitical complex rather the military-industrial complex.

Following Cheah, we might here turn briefly to Foucault's account of biopolitics. The hallmark of Foucault's critical analytics of modern power is a refusal to think modernity in terms of a single unified power formation (Modernization or Rationalization). Throughout his studies, he continued to address different kinds of power formations, different techniques or procedures for managing a multiplicity. Thus in his later work he spoke of three distinct apparatuses of power, which nonetheless can enter into mixtures: (1) sovereignty or sovereign power, which acts on the imaginary or psyche, forming subjectivity; (2) disciplinary power, which entails dividing and segregating practices that make humans into individual bodies; and (3) security and biopolitical power, which strives to act on the real as such by following its flows and assessing them in statistical or probabilistic terms, thus constructing populations.[18]

In *Barefoot Gen* we see traces of these different power formations. In the ostracism of atomic bomb survivors, we may detect a form of disciplinary power. In the politicians' speeches and remembrances of Hiroshima, we see the operations of sovereign power, constructing a national subjectivity. In the directly physical consequences of the circulation of money, and in the tendency to treat bomb victims experimentally in terms of probabilistic population tendencies, we see the biopolitical. The manga thus offers a different understanding of trauma, if we wish to retain that term. Trauma here is not a breach in the boundaries of a pre-constituted subject (nation

17 There is of course Gen's older brother who goes to Kyushu to work in the mines, but this narrative line does not show the suffering of proletariat and soon dies out.

18 This topic is one of the major problematics in Michel Foucault's "Security, Population, Territory: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-78" (2007) and "The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France 1978-79" (2008). Note that this is very different from Giorgio Agamben (1998) who sees biopolitics as the underlying quasi-metaphysical truth of sovereignty.

or individual) but the radical exposure of a multiplicity (the real), which lends itself to different techniques of power simultaneously.

In any event, in *Barefoot Gen*, it is the biopolitical that dominates, potentially folding other techniques of power in it. But the manga is not merely a representation of the biopolitical or a discourse on it. It is the proposition—believe in comics—that spurs a commitment to following the plastic line in shōnen manga, which is prolonged not merely into a politics of affirming or protecting life but into a politics in which life itself emerges as radical exposure, in which explosion of the plastic line enacts resistance at the very site where life enters politics. This is the manga bomb that explodes over the Hiroshima world.

Thomas LaMarre

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Yoshimura Kazuma

Afterword:
intentions and methods behind my proposal for Barefoot Gen remakes abroad

YOSHIMURA Kazuma

(trans. Cathy Sell)

We had finally reached the closing chapter of the 1st International Conference, held over three days in December 2009, when during the question and answer session of the concluding workshop "Public memory, private consumption: On *Barefoot Gen*", I put forward the proposal of *Barefoot Gen* remake editions to be published throughout several countries and regions, as well as related examinations of demands and readers' responses. But we were running out of time, and as it was a comment which did not ask for concrete answers from the panellists, and was rather a sudden idea, I was not able to explain myself in detail.

Nevertheless, as a manga researcher and one of the conference's organizers, I wanted to suggest something out of my observations which seemed to tackle the tasks and prospects of all the sessions.

Instead of an afterword I aim here to clarify the concrete intentions and methods of my proposal, while looking back on the conference. As the title suggests, I will emphasize reference to its fourth part, the concluding workshop, whilst bringing to mind various themes covered across the three days, especially endeavouring to present those issues which were relevant to the conference as a whole.

1. Why Barefoot Gen?

First, a word about why I chose Nakazawa Keiji's *Barefoot Gen*. For the same reason that was the intent and main point of discussion in the conference workshop; that is, because Barefoot Gen is relevant to the global experience and memory of World War II. It is the most famous manga among Japanese which deals with the atomic bomb

and the gruesome ravages of war, and as such, it was promptly translated for overseas publication.

However, reasons behind the overseas reception of this work are slightly more complicated. For more information regarding Japanese perceptions of Barefoot Gen, in particular the transition of its publishing sites and the particularities of its reading space, you may refer to *Hadashi no gen ga ita fūkei—manga, sensō, kioku* [The scenery that *Barefoot Gen* inhabited: manga, war, memory] (Yoshimura and Fukuyama 2006). Below, I will present some additional information relating to the reception of *Barefoot Gen* abroad.

Frederik L. Schodt, well known as a pioneering advocate for Japanese manga abroad, informs us that "by 1980, the only real 'story manga' available in English and distributed in the United States was *Barefoot Gen*", followed by the explanation that "*Gen* had such a powerful message that the translation and production of the English edition were done by volunteers—Japanese and American members of a non-profit organization formed in 1976 called Project Gen" (Schodt 1996: 309). This devoted undertaking was based on the intention to convey *Barefoot Gen*'s compelling message around the world, and as is now common knowledge, it was then translated into multiple languages including Esperanto.[1]

Then "in 1983 a shorter, similar story by Nakazawa, *I Saw It*, became the first Japanese comic published in the U.S. in true American format, complete with color printing"; however this was a risky experiment which almost resulted in bankruptcy of the publishing company and not until later when "the English Gen books were picked up by New Society Publishers and by Penguin Books nearly fifteen years later, Gen could hardly be called a successful commercial venture." (Schodt 1996: 309)[2]

There are three points in Schodt's description that I would like to confirm for now. The first is that the commercial pretext behind *Barefoot Gen* appearing as the first case of translated Japanese manga published in America was not due to the needs of the local readers or its popularity within Japan, but rather, was based on political motives concerning the atomic bomb and personal war experiences. The second point relates

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1 Sabine Fiedler (2006).

2 See also Roger Sabin (2006).

to the fact that the commercial success of *Barefoot Gen* occurred later on in the 1990s, at a time when a number of other Japanese manga were also being translated and published abroad. And thirdly, we may confirm a fact which is reflected in the above two points, that even translated manga published in the American comics format were not especially popular in the mid-1980s.

From this, it can be derived that *Barefoot Gen* was not widely received in America solely due to its subject matter, that is, the message conveyed and the strength of its visual expressions, or the devices specific to the medium. And yet on the other hand, *Barefoot Gen* won popularity in the 1990s and onward, from among numerous Japanese manga translations, meaning that the initial lack of sales was not because the content was uninteresting. Rather, it can be inferred that in the mid-1980s the degree of recognition afforded to Japanese manga in America was still low, as was the level of manga literacy.

Put simply, you can translate any manga and praise it for having a "powerful message", "unusual design" or being in an "easy to read format"—but without a group who have a certain level of manga literacy, no work will gain popularity with the addressees.

Such recognition may only be proper, but this is a point we should make ourselves conscious of time and again, as we strive towards global Comics Studies. Because as far as reading or interpretive communities of specific countries and regions are concerned, knowledge and curiosity about the political, social, cultural, and historical contexts in which such communities have grown to the present level and scale (or have not), are equally important as knowledge and curiosity about a works' contents.

In a word, whilst again extremely natural, when we advocate "International Comics Studies" and find this advocacy meaningful, then we need to become better acquainted not only with "manga/comics" but also their "international" aspects.

Conversely, the more *Barefoot Gen* is praised as a canonic work of "Atomic Bomb Manga", the more difficult it is to discuss it purely as manga in comparison with other manga works. Beginning with the personal history of the author as an atomic bomb survivor, political messages about the atomic bomb and war were brought into

the foreground. Yet since this is not merely a problem which concerns Hiroshima and Japan, as the Asia Pacific War and World War II are now literally "international" matters of concern, *Barefoot Gen* definitely forms a useful subject of research for global Comics Studies. This was notably demonstrated by the enthusiastic discussions that developed in the concluding workshop.

2. Why remake editions?

Next, let us turn to the question of why remakes? I don't have in mind a revised edition by Nakazawa Keiji himself, or a *dōjinshi* [fan-made manga] using his characters and visuals, but rather, completely remade editions by new authors.[3]

Figuratively, it would be the attempt at the possibility of a transformation from a "unique Gen" to "multiple Gens". That is, as opposed to the merely translated editions which have existed up until now, remakes, created by authors of a different generation, gender, and residency to Nakazawa would make it easier to relativize the foregrounding of the original work as well as its characteristics as manga whilst bringing its unique strengths into prominence.

Those unique strengths held by *Barefoot Gen*, are the strengths that reside in a work drawn from the unique perspective of an atomic bomb survivor, and that of a work which whilst an example of the mass print-media of manga, at the same time possesses a particular aura.

Similar to a great many other manga, the message Nakazawa conveys in *Barefoot Gen* and the manga-specific devices used are his own. But the fact remains that his work is unparalleled because of the standpoint Nakazawa has as an atomic bomb survivor. Above all the originality of his work is supported by Nakazawa's outrage towards the war and the atomic bomb.

If the earnest wish of atomic bomb survivors such as Nakazawa is to appeal for the acceptance of the experience of the atomic bombing—something extremely rare in

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3 There have however been a great many occurrences of parodies and derivative works of *Barefoot Gen* by fans in the form of dōjinshi and internet manga. An excellent example website is *1995 GenProductions* (http://kamatatokyo.com/home.html), which hosts *Hadashi no gen nikki* [The Diary of *Barefoot Gen*] (http://kamatatokyo.com/hoge/hns-lite/). For an evaluation of the trends of these works, refer to Kawaguchi Takayuki (2008).

human history—as a universal issue, then the privileging of the authors' standpoint is not necessarily a blessing. Needless to say, if we maintained that *Barefoot Gen* could only be read as the canonic work of Atomic Bomb Manga, a great many readers would be unhappy. In this regard, the recent spread of manga that deal with the atomic bomb is noteworthy. For example, works such as Kōno Fumiyo's *Yūnagi no machi sakura no kuni* [Town of evening calm, country of cherry blossoms] (2004) and *Kono sekai no katasumi ni* [In the corners of this world] (2008-9), as well as Nishioka Yuka's *Natsu no zansō: Nagasaki no hachigatsu kokonoka* [Summer's afterimage: Nagasaki's ninth of August] (2008) and *Hachigatsu kokonoka no santakurōsu: Nagasaki genbaku to hibakusha* [August the ninth's Santa Claus: The Nagasaki atomic bomb and bomb survivors] (2010).

That being the case, the creation of multiple texts (i.e. remake editions) which relativize the original would be useful in order to confront the possibilities and challenges of *Barefoot Gen* as both a medium for conveying a message, including Nakazawa's privileged authorship, and as entertaining reading matter.

As may already be evident, my proposal for Barefoot Gen remakes was inspired by Kees Ribbens' discussion of Anne Frank comics and Nele Noppe's paper on dōjinshi and derivative art. Of course *Barefoot Gen* and *The Diary of Anne Frank* differ in that they depict the atomic bomb and the holocaust using fictional characters and real-life figures respectively. But they both appeal to the world through the visual expression of manga/comics regarding the experiences of people at the mercy of World War II. What is more important, however, is the crucial difference of one "unique Gen" as opposed to "multiple Annes".

As Ribbens points out, the image of Anne changes in accordance with publication site and contents, resulting in the unavoidable likelihood that the readers will have differing amounts of enthusiasm for the information and moral lessons from each work. Nevertheless, bearing in mind the issues of representation that Kawaguchi Takayuki touched upon, the image of Anne was molded right from the start in the environment of postwar media such as comics, movies and novels, and has essentially been an ex-post phenomenon. Accordingly, at the risk of not having understood correctly, it can be restated that there has never been a "unique" or "correct" depiction of Anne to begin

with. Yet at the same time precisely because of this, Anne is still alive within the hearts of readers from many countries and regions.

Frankly speaking, I would like to see this situation of *The Diary of Anne Frank* adapted to Barefoot Gen. I would like to see a "surviving Gen" or a "reborn Gen" in response to the culture, ideology, society and history of readers from various countries and regions around the world.

3. How to publish in several countries?

Nevertheless, there are obstacles that would get in the way of the immediate realization of such remakes. Certainly there would be copyright issues.

In 2009, Nakazawa Keiji announced his retirement as a manga artist due to the effects of declining eyesight. By considering Nakazawa's feelings of anger as an atomic-bomb survivor and the overlap between his personal life and Gen, we can imagine that it would be extremely difficult for him to entrust Gen to somebody else. Naturally it would not only be a matter of commercial significance or honor as a manga artist, but something that would affect Nakazawa's very identity.

Accordingly, even by "normal" standards as one manga among many, the feasibility of a *Barefoot Gen* remake is unlikely.

However in this case "normal" refers to publishing activities as they have existed up until now. But if the publication were undertaken by a university, such as in the case of this volume, other possibilities would open up. Whilst neither better nor worse, the division of labour in capitalist society is supposed to allow universities different things from what are essentially profit-seeking corporate organizations. So perhaps that would prove a worthwhile avenue through which to publish the remakes.

Of course universities are also a type of enterprise and they cannot consider making an "unsellable book" just because they are a university. But universities recognize the significance of knowledge, thought, experimentation and establishment of discourse over consideration of sales as the most important factor (naturally, it is nice if a book sells, but that is not the be-all and end-all). In actuality, the publishing assistance schemes available to universities may well share this philosophy.

However it is by no means a rule that corporate organizations lack flexibility.

Yoshimura Kazuma

For example, roughly two weeks after the end of our international conference, on page eight of their fourth of January 2010 evening edition, the newspaper *Asahi Shinbun* (Engl. edition titled Asahi News) published an article with the headline *Tezuka manga: maboroshi no kyōsaku jitsugen e—burajiru no kyoshō, seizen yakusoku* [Tezuka manga: a vision of collaboration to be realized—his living promise to a Brazilian master] (Hirayama 2010).[4]

During their friendship while Tezuka Osamu was alive, seventy-four year old Brazilian comic artist Mauricio de Sousa and Tezuka had planned to collaborate on an animated film about world peace that would feature both their characters. However it was still an unrealized dream by the time of Tezuka's death. Then in 2009 de Sousa met with Tezuka Productions staff, and received permission to use Tezuka's characters. He is now aiming towards a comics publication in Portuguese. The article also explained that it was the first time Tezuka Productions had authorized a foreign comic artist to use Tezuka's characters.

This is a heart-warming story. But if anything, the rarity of this case is what makes it so heart-warming. Should this kind of trend expand, leading to the clearing of copyright issues that we found were often and again referred to in our conference, or even allowing academic consideration of dōjinshi, it would be substantially good news for future global Comics Studies as well as the readers of various countries and regions.

How long the characters and messages of their work will endure is a compelling topic for manga artists. In that respect, Tezuka was taken with the idea that his works could cross borders and might continue to be read for a long time; so we may regard the actions of Tezuka Productions as mentioned in the article as a decisive move to observe his intentions.[5]

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4 An English translation of this article was published online by Asahi.com headlined *Brazilian animator finally teams up with Tezuka* (http://www.asahi.com/english/TKY201001290437.html). (last access 30/08/2010)

5 Take for example, the following quote from Tezuka:

> You can't understand the value of a manga until at least ten years have passed. But I do not just mean living on in memories, or thoughts of 'back in the day it was like this'. The most important thing is to inspire the same feeling in children ten years from now, and it is even more important to do so in twenty or thirty years. To transcend times and worlds has to be our daily bread in a manner of

Then surely in the eyes of Nakazawa, the copyright protection period notwithstanding, it would be his wish for *Barefoot Gen* to reach as many countries and regions as possible and to last as eternally as possible. However the realization of these aspirations requires more than the effort and desires of the author. The local publishing and distribution circumstances, social and cultural status of manga, and the level and historical development of readers' manga literacy need to be taken into consideration as well. If we assume that political position and attitudes, interpretation and memory in regards to World War II and the atomic bombing differ according to region, then a careful yet insatiable intellectual approach becomes essential. I mentioned this point above in my first section, while in the second section I discussed how the production of remakes, or "multiple Gens" would possibly amplify the voices of the atomic bomb survivors, including Nakazawa.

Now I shall discuss how publication could be realized in multiple countries. Although still in early stages of development I would like my proposal to proceed in the following manner.

First, there should be an investigation about manga/comics related to personal experiences and memories of World War II, such as the translated editions of *Barefoot Gen* and *Maus* as well as *The Diary of Anne Frank* comics, especially in regard to how they sell and how they are used and published. Of course this applies to presentations of our conference too. Then, based on the survey results we could establish indicators of the breadth of the manga readership demographic in each region and their individual manga literacy levels.

Those indicators could then be used for analysis to derive readers' preferred manga style and layout, in order to refine the fundamental strategy of the remake editions. Collectively, this would put university resources to practical use in their role as an assisting institution for the work process, with the aim to strengthen collaboration between universities and researchers. In the meantime, at some stage we should arrange

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speaking. (Tezuka Osamu and Ishiko Jun 1992: 264)

Additionally, in regards to the precedent of foreign usage mentioned in the article; there are several examples of remake editions featuring Tezuka's characters within Japan, for example Urasawa Naoki and Tezuka Osamu's *PLUTO*, as well as remakes of *Black Jack* and *Princess Knight* (*Ribon no kishi*).

Yoshimura Kazuma

an interview with Nakazawa, to discuss these ideas with him, and request permission to create a remake.

I realize that "saying is one thing and doing is another", but the greatest aim of this idea is the construction of a network for international collaboration among researchers and universities, which would be an essential point to the entire project. And needless to say, the first important step towards that has been our international conference.

To continue, we must ask who will be the agent in the overseas publication of Barefoot Gen remakes? It will be us. But then who are "we"? We are the participants in this international conference, or more specifically the people holding this anthology of papers and those who currently have or will develop an interest in global Comics Studies among their future research activities.

The Kyoto Seika University International Manga Research Center will do its part, as best it can, as a cornerstone of research to facilitate the mutual exchange of interests and the extension of such a network. In order to fill that role, "we" all intend there to be future international manga/comics conferences hereafter.

Conclusion

I have written this afterword to the present anthology based on my personal proposal in regard to *Barefoot Gen*. This proposal is supposed to be a case study of global Comics Studies, although that is not its entire purpose. In actuality, I believe that the issues this proposal raises have the possibility to relate back to each session of our conference.

This is because, to borrow a phrase from Thierry Groensteen, a sincere study of the "system of comics" inevitably requires investigation into the reading and interpretative communities which make that same system what it is, in other words, the various issues surrounding manga literacy.

Again, as pointed out by Pascal Lefèvre, the selection of appropriate works for international comparison is an important task in order to comprehensively examine the system, form and contents of manga/comics. Consequently it goes without saying that this task overlaps issues related to transnationality and identity.

Barefoot Gen provides the requirements to advance this sort of global Comics

Studies, so my intention here has been to suggest a first step forward. In that sense, this proposal has been my Manifesto for Starting Global Comics Studies.

It may be presumptuous of me, but I would like to end on this point, however in closing, I should perhaps touch on how we would put the earnings from a *Barefoot Gen* remake to use if it sold well. In Japan we have the saying "*oni ga warau*" [demons will laugh], equivalent to the English "don't count your chickens before they hatch", and since we do not want to be laughed at, let us discuss that another time.

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