



CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Shōjo Mediations

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Since the turn of the millennium the Japanese word *shōjo* has gained currency on a global scale, accompanying the transcultural consumption of manga (graphic narratives) and anime (animated TV series and movies), as well as the spread of associated fan-cultural practices. In recent use, *shōjo* refers on the one hand to commercial genres marketed to female audiences—*shōjo* manga (girls’ comics) to begin with—and on the other hand to a character type, which may appear in entertaining graphic narratives, non-narrative games, or branding campaigns: the cute adolescent girl. While Japanese writings still show an inclination to conflate this character type with real-life girls, whether as agents or objects of desire, in actuality, *shōjo* does not signify real girls as such, but “a crafted concept,” as Masafumi Monden puts it in his contribution to this volume (which does not rule out the possibility that real girls apply it, or have it applied, to themselves). It is against this backdrop that the present volume re-approaches the already well-studied *shōjo*, foregrounding the mediations which have both engendered and engaged it.

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“GIRL” AS PERFORMATIVE PRACTICE

During the first half of the twentieth century the prolonged phase between childhood and marriage for girls of the urban middle and upper classes had shaped *shōjo* as a social category. *Shōjo* marked the young woman’s “transitional state between the social roles of child and wife or mother”¹ and as such a liminality or in-betweenness. In prewar Japan, modern media addressed to an adult and predominantly patriarchal public had given rise to *shōjo* discourse.² Through entertaining media targeted at and employed by female adolescents—magazines containing illustrated girls’ novels (*shōjo shōsetsu*), among other things, and later *shōjo* manga—this discourse became part of girls’ culture: at least in part, girls twisted what was marketed to them into their own subculture. While inextricably linked to school education, the term *shōjo* designated out-of-school activities,³ first and foremost, the participation in an imagined community of girl magazine readers. By engaging in such practices real-life girls became *shōjo*, according to literary scholars Tomoko Aoyama and Barbara Hartley.⁴ The magazine-induced formation of an exclusive and safe space of kindred spirits culminated in postwar *shōjo* manga discourse, as the writings by manga critic Yukari Fujimoto evince.⁵

But from the 1990s onwards *shōjo* underwent a significant shift. Already in 1991, Sumiko Yokokawa, a scholar of children’s literature, had pointed out that the non-contradictory unity of girl and “girl” under the term *shōjo* was becoming obsolete, and that the same name started to assume a different meaning.⁶ *Shōjo* changed from being employed by girls (and women) as a reference point for affiliation, to providing a stock of aesthetic conventions and narrative tropes, a whole “*shōjo*-scape” in Monden’s words. This pool of girlhood signifiers has proved to be expedient for differently gendered users and various usages, even among girls. In early twenty-first century Japan, *shōjo* operates as a code, one which women themselves increasingly remove from use as social representation. Today, *shōjo* is not anymore confined to straightforward representation; it probably never was. As Heather Warren-Crow puts it in her ground-breaking monograph *Girlhood and the Plastic Image* (2014), “Girlhood is itself a practice, a performative process.”⁷ Indeed, girl culture has often been associated with role-playing and masquerade, escapism, and the indulgence in fantasy, preferably in relation to non-reproductive sexuality. Furthermore, indicative of performativity is the fact that the girl has been identified by modern patriarchy as

a “‘not-quite-female’ female,”⁸ embodying “less a state of being than a state of becoming,”⁹ which modern critics regarded as a lack of autonomy, accountability, and agency.

While shōjo is already spreading beyond Japan—not only in the technical sense that analog and digital networks have made it possible for Japanese “contents” to expand globally—the word itself still evokes a sense of locality, namely Japanese particularity. Dedicated fans of manga and anime, Japanese critics, and non-Japanese mediators of Japanese culture alike have conceived of shōjo as a specifically Japanese discourse, investigating its rise under the conditions of twentieth-century Japan.¹⁰ While this is of continuing importance, the fact that shōjo has entered the lexicon of non-Japanese users in recent years cannot be traced back to a successful unidirectional export from Japan. It is clearly related to a more general, transcultural “embrace of girliness”¹¹ within the contemporary digital mediascape. With regard to the attributes of the digital image—malleability, transmediation, and openness to change—Warren-Crow asserts this transculturality as follows:

While the Japanese shōjo and the Western adolescent girl are not exactly symmetrical concepts, the capacity of each to embody transformation and potential [...] is exactly what allows them to be evacuated of their more nationally and culturally specific meanings.¹²

The present volume approaches shōjo from the perspective of media rather than (Japanese) culture to complement the so far prevalent and often history-oriented focus on cultural specifics, social representation, and actual girls. Equal emphasis is put on transcultural commonalities, non-representational enjoyment, and girl characters, or more precisely character types arisen from the manga-derived shōjo-scape, such as beautiful boys (*bishōnen*), and cute girls (*bishōjo*).¹³ While acknowledging that shōjo has mediated a multitude of discourses throughout the twentieth century—discourses on Japan and its modernity, consumption and consumerism, non-hegemonic gender, and also technology¹⁴—this volume seeks to raise awareness of shōjo mediations, stretching from media for and by actual girls to shōjo—the performatively practiced and conventionalized sign or image, that evokes certain affects—as media.

Through its diverse chapters, this volume provides an overall picture of what shōjo research has accomplished so far, and on which avenues it might proceed in the future. Some of the chapters focus on girls and

young women in modern Japan and how they have been positioned as a social entity in the name of *shōjo*, a model of identity, or selfhood, shaped by patriarchal society and men's desire, but also formed by girls themselves, swaying between resistance and conformity as all subcultures do. In line with the majority of previous research, which has been informed by Japanese-studies and gender-studies concerns,¹⁵ these chapters are primarily interested in girl culture, or the “*shōjo* world,” as being mediated by representations and character types which have evolved with respect to specific target groups. In contrast to Masuko Honda, the expert of children's literature who opened up *shōjo* research in the 1980s,¹⁶ most English-language publications of the last decade do not seem to see a potential in the political, historical and social “emptiness” of *shōjo* fiction or art; many exhibit an urge to explain how the apparently “mere decorative” expressions relate to women's societal empowerment and to changes in gender policy—that is, how imagined experiences with fictive characters affect real-life girls. In a way, this is similar to attempts at legitimizing manga via reference to traditional notions of serious, sophisticated literature instead of developing new concepts in the face of new media.

The majority of chapters, however, take the existence of *shōjo*—as a genre of popular girl-oriented fiction, a mode of address, a trope—for granted, reversing the relation between means and end to the extent that aspects of the contemporary media environment can be explored: interrelationality, or connectivity, mobility, and modifiability as constitutive of both images and actors. These chapters, too, take girl culture into account, but often in the sense of fan-cultural communities which, leaning on media-specific conventions, interrelate different genres within one media as well as different media with each other: for example, *shōjo* manga with fashion and cosplay, or the women-oriented boys' love (BL)¹⁷ manga with BL audio drama, anime, and Visual *Kei* rock band performances. But before introducing all chapters individually, some remarks on wording are in order.

NAMES FOR “GIRL” IN JAPANESE

This volume proceeds on the assumption that the term *shōjo* is inextricably linked with modern, mainly entertainment media, and not only a category of social representation but also mediation, or interrelationality.

As such, this volume does not regard shōjo primarily as a “compendium of commodities”¹⁸ and neither a direct reflection of societal issues pertaining to the situation of woman in general and girls in particular. As already mentioned, shōjo has served as a tool of self-expression and a vessel of different projections, but over the years it has asserted its own agency as a performative rather than representationalist conception.

It goes without saying that shōjo, the signifier, defines itself through what it is not supposed to signify—in terms of gender, *shōnen* (boy), and within the female gender, “woman,” largely confined to the social role of “good wife and wise mother” (*ryōsai kenbo*), in particular in prewar Japan. Up to the present day, adult women, specifically mothers, feature in popular “female” media often as evil antagonists for girls—in this volume evinced by Emerald L. King’s discussion of manga sources for cosplay and Akiko Sugawa-Shimada’s survey of the magical girl genre in anime. Adult women may also remain completely absent, forced back by the predominance of homosexual beautiful boy characters for female consumers (*bishōnen*) or cute girl characters for male consumers (*bishōjo*). To repudiate this propensity as a “writing out of women” demonstrates ignorance of modern Japanese patriarchy, and also of modern girlphobia, that is, adultist arguments brought forward in favor of “the knowledgeable, focused, literate, and above all mature subject.”¹⁹

However, in modern Japanese media, not every unknowledgeable, dreamy, subliterate, and infantile girl (character) is called a shōjo, or calls herself by that name. To begin with older designations, there is the “daughter” of a good family (*musume*, *ojōsan*), and there is the *otome* (maiden). The *otome* invokes a nostalgic male conception imposed on modern young women, as Kaori Yoshida claims in her chapter on films that melodramatically feature female A-bomb victims. Craig Norris, too, points out in this volume that the *otome* is “considered an old-fashioned and out-dated term associated with antiquated ideals of femininity and virginity,” but he also exhibits an awareness of the word’s recent revival in so-called *otome* dating games. Due to their romantic content, these women-oriented video games are traced back by some critics to resurgent conservative notions of heterosexuality. Yet, no matter whether such commercial genres reflect or represent a specific ideology; for consumers, they gain identity in the first place by distinguishing themselves from similar genres in the same market. Minori Ishida mentions in her chapter, that voice porn targeted at female consumers, another new current, is

marketed in the name of both *fujoshi* and *otome*. While to her *otome* functions as a mere taste category signaling heterosexual content, the first term—*fujoshi*, lit. rotten girls—designates mainly heterosexual female fans of male–male romance, i.e., BL. Two things are noteworthy here: first, that the label *fujoshi*, which had been used disparagingly for women indulging in *shōjo*esque fantasies of non-reproductive sexuality was turned by those labeled into an affirmative self-designation²⁰; and second, that the label of *otome* came to be employed in response to the spread of *fujoshi* subculture, setting fictive heterosexuality against fictive homosexuality. A similar thing had happened in the early 1980s when so-called *otomechikku* [maiden-like] *manga* flourished within *shōjo* manga.²¹ These small-scale and cute heterosexual love comedies with straightforward narratives and everyday life settings—represented, for example, by Mutsu A-ko—appeared as the antithesis to the grand narratives by those female artists who were labeled the Year 24 Group or Magnificent 49ers (*Hana no 24nen-gumi*), artists who went down in manga history as revolutionary in part for their replacement of girl protagonists with homosexual boys, laying the ground for today’s BL.

The case of *otome* clearly facilitates the performativity claim made above, as it demonstrates that all the names for “girl” and the implied conceptions are liable to change according to era and, furthermore, media. *Otome* apparently helped to oppress the voice of female victims in melodramatic movies of the 1960s–1980s, but it is now successfully employed in marketing heterosexual porn to self-confident female consumers, as well as fannish affinity spaces to young East Asian tourists in Japanese cities such as, in the case of Norris’ chapter, Fukuoka.

One of the most common designations for actual girls today is *onna no ko* (lit. female child).²² According to Sugawa-Shimada, who has contributed to this volume a chapter on girl characters in girl-oriented anime, “girls and young girls [sic!] address themselves as an *onna-no-ko*, but almost never as a *shōjo*.”²³ Likewise, *joshi*, the prevailing legal term for woman, is used for self-designation by contemporary women. Although including the character for child (in the reading *shi*), it signifies merely a gender difference, without any connotation of infantilization, and it is purportedly given preference by women themselves over the more scientifically sounding *josei* (woman, feminine, female) or *onna* (female, woman, sometimes also mistress), words that had been set by feminists against *fujin* (lady).²⁴ Both terms are deliberately distinguished

from shōjo. While this is due to shōjo connoting the girl as an object of male desire, as Sugawa-Shimada suggests, the same distinction can be taken as a confirmation of the shōjo's fundamentally mediatic constitution: it is a media image, not a legal subject.

In this volume, further names for “girl” surface, such as *moga*, the prewar “modern girl,” and *kogyaru*, a spectacularly dressed teenage girl with heavy make-up, in Sohyun Chun's chapter, and *burikko*, the comic fake girl, in Patrick W. Galbraith's chapter. Whatever the name, the multiplicity is striking, as it exceeds designations of “boy” and attests to a societal difficulty of coming to terms with the malleable, unfixed girl.

SHŌJO AND/AS MEDIA

The media considered in this volume stretch from the initially analog, but increasingly digitalized representatives of Japanese popular culture—manga, anime, and audio drama, cosplay and fashion, the Takarazuka all-girls revue and the stage art of Visual *Kei* music—to web-based novels for mobile devices and a tourism website. The picture is rounded up by two excursions into women's literature and live-action film. While these do not necessarily exhibit a media-conscious approach, they help to illuminate what such an approach implies: primarily, the deliberate distinction between medium/mediums in the narrow sense of referring mainly to technical systems and material support, and media used in the form of both a collective singular and the plural. In order to sufficiently account for the conventionalized practices and institutional frameworks, which, once established, predetermine how individual mediums are being used, it stands to reason to follow art historian W.J.T. Mitchell and media theoretician Mark B.N. Hansen, who in their *Critical Terms for Media Studies*, aim at “something more than the form of a specific content, and thus something that exceeds the pluralization of the term *medium*” (2010, location 88 of 5202), namely a “crossroads of aesthetics, technology, and society” (location 174).²⁵ This implies a shift of perspective which allows for attention to mediation, i.e., how media operate, especially with regards to the relations and environments they engender.

Shōjo Across Media starts from shōjo manga, which has been a vital point of departure and persistent intermedial reference of shōjo-media practices since the 1970s and addressed mainly from the perspective of manga's gendered genres.²⁶ Ordinarily, a chapter on the Magnificent

49ers, or Year 24 group—who actually had never formed an association according to their year of birth, Shōwa 24, that is, 1949—would have been placed here, if only for the ongoing prominence of these artists. Their works of the 1970s found recognition beyond the initial girl culture due to innovative narratives, male critics’ attention, and a significant change in medium, namely, publication in book form (*tankōbon*) following the ephemeral (and as such shōjoesque) magazine serialization. An exceptional rather than a representative phase in the evolution of the genre, last but not least with regards to sustained creative impact, the canonization of the Magnificent 49ers in the name of gender criticism and experimental style has triggered unusual academic interest, but it has also overshadowed the normality of shōjo manga.²⁷ Within this volume, Craig Norris gives an account of the Magnificent 49ers’ central position in previous shōjo (manga) research, and Alisa Freedman approaches the history of girl culture in modern Japan through a manga series by Waki Yamato, purportedly one of them.

Refraining from factual claims about what shōjo manga *is*, Part I offers three representative examples of how contemporary academics view shōjo manga: as a means for the study of Japanese culture; as a subject of genre theory within manga studies; and as a generically established gendered mode of graphic storytelling which activates specific practices of reading and gazing.

Alisa Freedman’s chapter “Romance of the Taishō Schoolgirl in Shōjo Manga: *Here Comes Miss Modern*” provides an introduction to prewar shōjo history by taking the example of a shōjo manga series first published in the latter half of the 1970s. The manga’s protagonist, who embraces the new opportunities of modern life available from the late 1910s onwards, appears as the epitome of the initial shōjo, a “gender identity applied to female children of the urban middle class” who were sent to secondary school by their parents and who had access to girls’ magazines.²⁸ Complementing the manga’s representation with knowledge about both the girl-oriented mediascape of prewar Japan and genre-specific traits of shōjo manga (largely modeled on the Magnificent 49ers), the chapter arrives at the conclusion that shōjo manga turns schoolgirls of the past into idealized figures of resistance, highlighting the bright side of the shōjo position, that is, a certain freedom of action, mobility, and the implied defiance, at the expense of its dark side, i.e., social privileges and constraints. As a consequence, shōjo manga appears incapable of living up to historical realism.

In contradistinction, Giancarla Unser-Schutz' chapter on "Redefining Shōjo and Shōnen-Manga Through Language Patterns" maintains, with regards to characters and their speech patterns, that shōjo manga works appear more realist than those of shōnen manga. This contrast to Freedman's chapter may have to do with the fact that the manga narratives analyzed here are newer, namely from the 2000s, and further, that shōjo manga's reality is not measured against history at large, but everyday life and interpersonal relations. Similarly vital is the author's interest in "how language is used in manga and how that shapes manga as a medium," especially in relation to manga's gender-specific genres. In light of recent changes—the shrinking role of manga magazines as the initial carriers of those genres, an increased cross-genre consumption by previously segregated reader demographics as well as the cross-pollination with regards to visuals and type of narrative—Unser-Schutz proposes a new model of genre differentiation based less on publication site, target group, and stylistics, and more on the use of linguistic devices, such as handwritten background thoughts, which foreground characters and their relationships. With their focus on feelings, Unser-Schutz finds shōjo manga facilitating and even compelling empathy, as distinct from the global bestsellers of shōnen manga which consist of fantastic, densely populated, and plot-driven narratives and precisely thereby may provide an "alternate reading experience [... to] many female readers who desire something else."

The last point is noteworthy as it goes beyond the common sense of shōjo-manga discourse to treasure empathy above all. This stance is related, on the one hand, to the long-time devaluation of character-centered atmospheric narratives without much physical action, and on the other, to the cherished shōjo community and its inclination to sameness, to excluding the hegemonic social Other in an attempt at establishing a safety zone (which, as Adrienne Renee Johnson observes in her chapter, is also practiced by a specific group of music fans). How characters of manga narratives published within the institutional framework of a male genre become anchors of empathy—i.e., mobilize a generically female, if not girlish reading practice—is the central issue in Olga Antononoka's chapter "Shōjo Manga Beyond Shōjo Manga: The 'Female Mode of Address' in *Kabukumon*." While in line with the strand of shōjo manga research, which privileges the Magnificent 49ers and thereby the representation of non-hegemonic gender as a source of agency for both characters and readers, Antononoka moves one step

further, entwining gender theory with comics aesthetics. Specifically, she proceeds from the observation that comics are composed of fragmented (paneled) pages, which require reiteration to generate a seemingly continuous narrative, just like gender as inconsistent performance in Judith Butler's account, and the invocation of "woman" through body parts in Jacques Lacan's conception of *objet petit a*. Taking as her example a recent manga series that features theatrical performance and male impersonators of female roles (*onnagata*), Antononoka investigates the media-specific performativity of manga with a particular focus on how sequences of panels and pages bring "woman" into momentary existence as an onstage construct. She demonstrates further how the actors' acceptance of femininity as part of themselves connects to their artistic agency within the authoritarian institution of kabuki theater.

Girls are apparently not involved here, neither as target group nor character; and typical visual markers of shōjo manga, such as extradiegetically used flower decors, frills, and ribbons, or wavy hair, do not surface either. Fusami Ogi has identified shōjo as a code and ideological institution that can also be investigated in women-oriented texts without girl characters (for which she had the Magnificent 49ers in mind).²⁹ Yet, in Antononoka's discussion, this code appears to have changed direction, being employed by male artists in a male genre to promote a "female" mode of empathy-centered reading and thereby leaving behind its initial social bonds.

Part II shifts the emphasis to other forms of narrative than manga, namely two kinds of literature—one pre-digital, auteurist, and connected to the wider mediascape mainly through the shōjo trope, the other one produced with digital technology within communities of high school students—and two kinds of moving images. The latter include live-action feature film for theatrical release and a genre of TV anime, or more specifically, a genre which was first targeted at small girls but has also been appropriated by male viewers in recent years.

Shōjo narratives in the form of novels were the primary media of pre-war girls to interconnect and form an imagined community, and from the 1960s onwards magazine-based manga serials assumed that role, but since the 2000s, female high school students have engaged in creating and sharing web-based novel-like content adapted for mobile media. In their chapter "Practicing Shōjo in Japanese New Media and Cyberculture: Analyses of the Cell Phone Novel and Dream Novel" Kazumi Nagaike and Raymond Langley demonstrate how the texts themselves lack

specificity (of depiction, authorial voice, characters' proper nouns, etc.) to the extent that they could have been generated by an algorithm, yet it is that very lack which proves to be their strong point, as it evokes empathy and the feeling of being in synchronicity with the community.

Emptiness, or stereotypicality, facilitates connectivity, as Warren-Crow observes about the girl as digital and protodigital image.³⁰ In a similar vein, literary scholar Noriko Adachi has discerned relationality in the works by the Magnificent 49ers as follows:

Here, “emotions,” for example “expressed” in the form of words, as signs of countenance, or through background tones, do not “belong” solely to one character in the way the modern novel presumes it as a matter of course. It is the related affect which moves the narrative forward, sometimes surfacing in a way strangely detached from specific characters, thrown in between them, inducing a subtle resonance.³¹

Nagaike and Langley investigate cell phone novels, and in extension, dream novels, that is, web-based narratives in which readers may substitute their own names for that of a designated character and thus become an immediate part of a now virtual reality. Relatedly, they argue that the girls and girl characters deviate from the “I” or “me” of modern individualism in favor of a fluid multidimensional identity, which matches the new digital and global environment, while resting on the protodigital capabilities of shōjo.

In contrast, Sohyun Chun's chapter “The Shōjo in the Rōjo: Fumiko Enchi's Representation of the Rōjo Who Refused to Grow Old” introduces a stand-alone literary work, first published in 1974, and reads it as a critique of hegemonic gender. Here, the shōjo trope represents the possibility to act uninhibitedly on one's personal desires. Reinvigorating the “girl” within herself, the protagonist, an aged woman (*rōjo*), is able to overcome self-regulation and experience empowerment. As a story of resistance to social expectations of aged women, this novel helps to confirm that the conception of shōjo is not confined to chronological age or sex, but that it can apply to young as well as old women and even to men. While men are not included in the chapter's discussion (and neither are the topics of literature as media or literature's intermediality regarding shōjo), the quiet delinquency of the protagonist is being related to various other forms of deviance by young women in prewar and contemporary Japan, as in, for example, the non-compliance to cuteness.

Likewise disregarding target groups and audience communities beneath the national level, something central to media-conscious accounts of *shōjo*, Kaori Yoshida's chapter "Mediating *Otome* in the Discourse of War Memory: Complexity of Memory-Making Through Postwar Japanese War Films" illuminates one of the "dark sides" of the girl trope, namely its deployment within the patriarchal memory culture of postwar Japan. The widely familiar combination of hyperfeminization and nation-as-victim narratives, which occurred across all popular media including manga, is dissected here through the example of two live-action movies released in 1966 and 1985 respectively. At the center of both movies is a melodramatic narrative about a so-called A-bomb maiden (*genbaku otome*), portrayed by the same actress, Sayuri Yoshinaga. Leaning mainly on U.S.–American war film studies, as well as affect theory applied to individual film reception, the chapter reads the movies as a romanticization of radiation illness, which privatizes the political and deprives the real women of their voice. It ultimately arrives at the conclusion that "a melodramatic woman-centered war narrative does not necessarily give credit to the multiplicity of female victims' experiences." In a way, this is reminiscent of *shōjo* manga representations weighed against historical realism and found wanting. But what appears here as a patriarchal girlification of female victims, so to speak, may give a different picture if examined from the perspective of a multiplicity of viewers, viewings, and intermedial relations.

Scrutinizing the lack or potential of female empowerment permitted by the *shōjo* trope is also the main concern in Akiko Sugawa-Shimada's chapter "Shōjo in Anime: Beyond the Object of Men's Desire." She surveys the genre of magical girl (*mahō shōjo*) anime from its beginnings in the late 1960s to the mid-2010s, focusing on changes in representation and societal environment, spectatorship, and broadcasting time. With respect to representation, the magical girl character is shown to have grown into a self-affirmative role model for girls over the years, the initial equation of magical powers and feminine traits such as caring and mothering being attenuated; a hybridity of feminine and masculine traits developed, without radically challenging hegemonic gender. In addition to representation, the chapter foregrounds spectatorship—on the one hand, little girls as the initial target group, and on the other hand, young men to whom an increasing number of late-night anime programs has been addressed in more recent years. An outlook at the possibility that empowerment and conservatism operate on both sides is given at the

end of the chapter. In order to explore this possibility further, it may be worth considering how the genre interrelates with the medium, that is to say, how narratives of magical transformation are afforded by animation itself. After all, magical girl anime “animates shōjo” in a way which invokes Warren-Crow’s discussion of the “morphing, mobile, and girlish digital image.”³²

From a gender perspective that is not media-conscious, “the question of shojo [sic!] tends to be posed first and foremost in terms of a gap between girl and image, which can be read in terms of representation or misrepresentation, normative regulation (social codes and norms), or a filling-in and transforming of the image by girls (performance),”³³ as Thomas LaMarre notes in *The Anime Machine*. It is the latter kind of performance that opens Part III, which is dedicated to enactments and stagings within the shōjo-scape. In his chapter “A Dream Dress for Girls: Milk, Fashion and Shōjo Identity” Masafumi Monden highlights the understudied role of fashion as crucial for performing shōjo. Taking the fashion brand Milk as his point of departure and contrasting it with the Lolita style as well as the older ballerina garment developed in shōjo manga, Monden accentuates the empowering potential of girl dresses which often indicate passivity and submissiveness to feminist observers, especially outside of Japan. In addition, he elucidates the intricate relation between transcultural commonalities and intercultural differences through the tropes of Alice in Wonderland and the Victorian princess, whose symbolism changed significantly upon appropriation within the shōjo media of postwar Japan.

The performance of shōjo by means of clothing and the intermediality involved are also at the core of Emerald L. King’s chapter “*Sakura ga meijiru*—Unlocking the Shōjo Wardrobe: Cosplay, Manga, 2.5D Space,” although the main focus is not on self-expression or gender identity, but on cosplayer’s efforts to animate shōjo characters regardless of their own age and gender. Girlness is called into existence through costuming, make-up and posing, and this takes place in a shōjo-exclusive safety zone, which has been expanded to comprise fan conventions, the cosplay competition stage, and the setting for cosplay photo shoots. Remarkably, it is again the magical girl that plays the lead in the discussion. Her wardrobe represents gender, age, and capabilities not just statically, but accumulatively in accordance with the gaining of power, constantly equating the costume with identity and the changing of clothes with transformations of a higher dimension. Thus, it is persuasive when King calls

these cosplayers (and performers in anime-inspired live-action shows) “live-action magical girls.” With the initially two-dimensional characters having priority for the fans at the expense of the three-dimensional performers themselves, this new shōjoesque space has come to be perceived as 2.5-dimensional.

Shōjo has actually been enacted onstage since the 1910s, most of all by the Takarazuka Revue. This musical company provides an all-girls school environment not just with respect to its female-only performers who attend the revue’s boarding school, but also in the broader sense in regards to its predominantly female, and by now cross-generational, fan community. In her chapter “Multilayered Performers: The Takarazuka Musical Revue as Media,” Sonoko Azuma proposes a new perspective on the matter, exceeding the long-time preoccupation with issues of gender and representation and, relatedly, questioning the continuity of prewar and postwar girl culture. Her focus is on Takarazuka’s performers, with the female impersonator of male roles (*otokoyaku*) leading the way, and she considers not only the troupe’s promotional and fan-cultural media, but also the mediality of the performers themselves, discerning four layers. The first is the male, or female, typecasting, that is, the ascribed role, which is reminiscent of the cosplayers’ “characterization” (i.e., transformation into fictive characters)³⁴ brought up already in the previous chapter. Yet, the Takarasiennes, as they are called in Japanese, operate in equal measure their onstage persona (as actress), their offstage persona (as troupe member), and their real-life personality, their fans indulging in all four layers without any attempt at confuting one with the other.

Minori Ishida, too, looks at performers, but these performers are male and, as the title of her chapter “Sounds and Sighs: ‘Voice Porn’ for Women” indicates, theirs is an auditory stage. Questioning the widespread assumption that shōjo is, first and foremost, a phenomenon appertaining to visual culture, Ishida introduces two examples of male voices mediating explicit sexual content to female listeners: BLCDs with homosexual boys’ love fiction, and heterosexual Situation CDs which put the listener in the position of the directly addressed love interest. At first glance, this may appear unconnected to shōjo discourse as investigated from the perspective of cultural anthropology, but the chapter reveals two main points of contact. The first one reverses the still wide-spread notion of shōjo as an object of male desire by bringing up the fact that the purchase of these CDs is not restricted by age, and that high school girls actually consume them. “This fact shows that the concept of the

shōjo in women's popular culture is becoming a mere façade," Ishida states. The second point is the familiarity with female manga genres and anime imagery, which help to package the pornographic content in a women-friendly way. Finally, the chapter addresses the use of stereophonic sound for the recording of Situation CDs, and it is here that the issue of gender inequality is considered: in order to achieve utmost immediacy, the listener's position in the acoustic space has to be fixed, which renders her passive opposite the male voice.

With regard to sharing enjoyment of the same magazines, narratives, images, and costumes, shōjo mediations have always involved a fan-cultural element. While this element surfaces in a number of chapters, for example, the ones on cosplay, Takarazuka, and cell-phone novels, it occupies center stage in Part IV, which discusses both fans of shōjo (characters) and shōjo-like fans.

Adrienne Renee Johnson's chapter "From Shōjo to *Bangya(ru)*: Women and Visual *Kei*" highlights the power and empowerment of female fans using the example of Visual *Kei*, a music genre performed by men whose stylized onstage appearance and online self-display are highly reminiscent of beautiful BL characters. Dismissed by feminist critics for the lack of women performers, and also by (foreign) fans for a perceived musical decline in proportion to commercialization, Visual *Kei* is approached here from the perspective of its consumers, in particular band girls, or *bangya(ru)*, those most devoted fans who actively participate in live performances. Often single and in employment, these women are "embracing the liminal, non-(re)productive position of the shōjo" to act on their personal desires, as Johnson concludes from her ethnographic research, which included observations of *bangyas'* behavior in the "gendered safety zone" of live-concert venues. Ultimately, the chapter reaches beyond the female subversion of hegemonic femininity, acknowledging that Visual *Kei*, with its women-oriented non-hegemonic representations of gender, provides both women and men with an opportunity to perform ambivalence towards societal norms.

Taking a different perspective, Craig Norris' chapter "Shōjo Fantasies of Inhabiting Cool Japan: Reimagining Fukuoka Through Shōjo and Otome Ideals with Cosplay Tourism" foregrounds how fan identity is being performed in promotional travel narratives, which, in a way, may appear as the counterpart to anime "pilgrimages" initiated by fans themselves. In particular, he looks at the magazine-style news and entertainment website *asianbeat*, which promotes the city of Fukuoka

as a destination that is affective, transformative, and safe enough to be enjoyed as a “shōjo affinity place.” As its articles about famous Asian cosplayers and their visits to spots in old and new Fukuoka suggest, visitors from Asia can indulge in fannish activities without meeting public rebuff in the city. Norris pays special attention to the fact that the “fan-advocacy mode of address” is being operated by cosplayers. They stand in for the active fan, but also her/his object of desire, and their enacting of various characters approximates the malleability of shōjo, which offers “an empowering opportunity for foreign visitors rather than a wishful nostalgia,” as Norris concludes.

The final chapter, authored by Patrick W. Galbraith and titled “Seeking an Alternative: ‘Male’ Shōjo Fans Since the 1970s,” interrelates the gender-studies concern with alternatives to hegemonic forms of masculinity, the anthropological concern with the mediations practiced by consumers and fans, and the media-studies concern with both the non-representational operating of fictive characters and the embeddedness of media texts within a network of genre conventions. The chapter’s focus is on bishōjo, one type of manga-induced character that is easily dismissed as another variant of idealizing girls by hegemonic male desire, objectifying women, or evincing a disability to confront mature women, especially if created by men for men. Against this common assumption, Galbraith traces the emergence of such characters back to a “male” fascination with shōjo manga setting in in the 1970s. His analysis of testimonies by creators and critics reveals two important points. First, that those men were invested not in actual, three-dimensional girls, but virtual, two-dimensional girl characters, which due to their medium-specific affective potential were capable of moving their readers. As foregrounded in Part I of this volume, initially “female” manga have leaned on prioritizing interpersonal relations and empathy, not only among characters but also between characters and readers. Once firmly established as a distinct genre, shōjo became codified, and as such its close ties to actual girls loosened. It is to this turning point that the early “male” engagement with shōjo manga seems to attest. Second, interrelations within the contemporaneous manga-media environment become visible in the chapter. Long before heterosexual otome productions countered the increasing homosexual fujoshi creations, male artists reacted to the female predominance in the fan-cultural realm by resorting parodically to cute girl characters, which was a matter of both gender and genre: the queering of hegemonic masculinity by means of shōjoization went hand

in hand with the queering of an exclusively female media. By conjoining all the major issues raised in this Introduction, Galbraith's chapter brings *Shōjo Across Media* full circle.

NOTES

1. Deborah Shamoan, *Passionate Friendship: The Aesthetics of Girls' Culture in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012), 9.
2. For pioneering research see, Jennifer Robertson, *Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), especially 61–70.
3. Erika Imada, *Shōjo no shakaishi* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 2007), 10.
4. Tomoko Aoyama and Barbara Hartley, "Introduction," in *Girl Reading Girl in Japan*, eds. Tomoko Aoyama and Barbara Hartley (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 23–37.
5. Beginning with Yukari Fujimoto, *Watashi no ibasho wa doko ni aru no? Shōjo manga ga utsusu kokoro no katachi* (Tokyo: Gakuyō Shobō, 2008 [1998]).
6. Sumiko Yokokawa, *Shochō to iu kiributa: "Shōjo" bihyō josetsu* (Tokyo: JICC, 1991), 8–9.
7. Heather Warren-Crow, *Girlhood and the Plastic Image* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2014), 50.
8. Robertson, 65.
9. Warren-Crow, 23.
10. Representative of shōjo studies and most widely referenced are, in addition to the already cited authors, Jennifer S. Prough, *Straight from the Heart: Gender, Intimacy, and the Cultural Production of Shojo Manga* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011); Sharalyn Orbaugh, "Busty Battlin' Babes: The Evolution of the *Shōjo* in 1990s Visual Culture," in *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field*, eds. Joshua Mostow, Norman Bryson, and Maribeth Graybill (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 201–228; Fusami Ogi, "Beyond Shoujo, Blending Gender," in *A Comics Studies Reader*, eds. Jeet Heer and Kent Worcester, 244–252 (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008 [2001]); Mizuki Takahashi, "Opening the Closed World of *Shōjo Manga*," in *Japanese Visual Culture*, ed. Mark McWilliams (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2007), 114–137; Michiko Oshiyama, *Shōjo manga jendā hyōshōron: "Dansō no shōjo" no zōkei to aidentiti* (Tokyo: Sairyūsha, 2013 [2007]); Minori Ishida, *Hisoyakana kyōiku: yaoi, bōizurabu no zenshi* (Kyoto: Rakuhoku Shuppan, 2008); Hōsei Iwashita, *Shōjo manga no hyōgen kikō: Hirakareta manga hyōgenshi to Tezuka Osamu* (Tokyo: NTT Shuppan, 2013).

11. Warren-Crow, 20.
12. Ibid., 133.
13. The media-related conception of shōjo proposed here implies that bishōnen do not represent Japanese gay men just as bishōjo do not represent actual female minors.
14. See, Thomas LaMarre, *The Anime Machine: A Media Theory of Animation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), Chapter 7 “Only a Girl Can Save Us Now,” 77–85.
15. For an account of the respective Japanese-language research see, Masafumi Monden. “Manga Studies #7: Shōjo Manga Research: The Legacy of Women Critics and Their Gender-Based Approach,” *Comics Forum*, March 10, 2015, last accessed November 1, 2018, <http://comicsforum.org/2015/03/10/shojo-manga-research-the-legacy-of-women-critics-and-their-gender-based-approach-by-masafumi-monden/>.
16. For her most widely cited essay, see, Masuko Honda, “The Genealogy of Hirahira: Liminality and the Girl,” trans. Tomoko Aoyama and Barbara Hartley, in *Girl Reading Girl in Japan*, eds. Tomoko Aoyama and Barbara Hartley (New York: Routledge, 2010 [1982]), 19–37.
17. What currently circulates most widely under the name of BL (boys’ love) in the Japanese market, had its forerunner in the *shōnen’ai* subgenre of 1970s shōjo manga and is called *yaoi* outside of Japan as well as in reference to markedly fan-cultural activities within Japan. This volume employs BL as the respective umbrella term.
18. Frenchy Lunning, “Under the Ruffles: Shōjo and the Morphology of Power,” *Mechademia* 6 (2011): 4.
19. Warren-Crow, 46.
20. The release of a special issue on *fujoshi* by the monthly magazine *Eureka* in June 2007 was indicative of the turn.
21. For one of the few mentions in English, which symptomizes the presence of the name in Japanese media discourse, see the (in terms of manga, unreliable) entry by Yuika Kitamura, “The Emergence of Girls’ Manga and Girls’ Culture,” in *The Cambridge History of Japanese Literature*, eds. Haruo Shirane, Tomi Suzuki, and David Lurie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 750.
22. I would like to thank lawyer Takashi Yamaguchi for his advice in this regard.
23. Akiko Sugawa-Shimada, “Grotesque Cuteness of Shōjo Representations of Goth-Loli in Japanese Contemporary TV Anime,” in *Japanese Animation: East Asian Perspectives*, eds. Masao Yokota and Tze-yue G. Hu (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2013), 203.
24. Kazue Kawahara, “‘Joshi’ no imi sayō,” in *‘Joshi’ no jidai!*, eds. Nobuhiko Baba and Daishin Ikeda (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2012), 26–29; Nobuhiko

- Baba, “Hajime ni: Ima naze joshi no jidai na no ka?” in *“Joshi” no jidai!*, eds. Nobuhiko Baba and Daishin Ikeda (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2012), 11.
25. W.J.T. Mitchell and Mark B.N. Hansen, eds., *Critical Terms for Media Studies* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010 [Kindle]).
 26. Regarding manga’s genres see, Jaqueline Berndt, “Manga, Which Manga? Publication Formats, Genres, Users,” in *Japanese Civilization in the 21st Century*, eds. Andrew Targowski, Juri Abe, and Hisanori Katō (New York: Nova Science, 2016), 121–133.
 27. Dalma Kálovics, “The Missing Link of Shōjo Manga History: The Changes in 60s Shōjo Manga as Seen Through the Magazine *Shūkan Margaret*,” *Kyoto Seika Daigaku Kiyō* 49 (2016): 3–22; *ibid.*, “Manga Studies #8: Shōjo Manga History: The Obscured Decades,” 2015, last accessed November 1, 2018. <https://comicsforum.org/2015/06/11/manga-studies-8-shojo-manga-history-the-obscured-decades-by-dalma-kalovics/>.
 28. Imada, 8.
 29. Ogi, 245.
 30. Warren-Crow, 133.
 31. Noriko Adachi, “Kore wa katei da kedo, sonna toki ni wa boku—Shōjo manga to dōseiai,” in *Manbiken: Manga no bi/gakuteki jigen e no sekkin*, ed. Jaqueline Berndt (Kyoto: Daigo Shobō, 2002 [1999]), 261.
 32. Warren-Crow, 12.
 33. LaMarre, 209.
 34. See, Shunsuke Nozawa, “Characterization,” *Semiotic Review* 3 (Open Issue), 2013, last accessed November 1, 2018. http://www.semioticreview.com/pdf/open2013/nozawa_characterization.pdf.

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