MITTELDEUTSCHE STUDIEN ZU OSTASIEN

Jaqueline Berndt, Steffi Richter (eds.) 11

READING MANGA: LOCAL AND GLOBAL PERCEPTIONS OF JAPANESE COMICS

Leipziger Universitätsverlag

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Jaqueline Berndt

Foreword

Since the late 1990s, Japanese comics, or manga, have become established as a globally successful print medium. Increasingly available to readers without a command of the Japanese language, they have also been made subject to critical discourse. In Europe, for example, this applies first and foremost, to the realm of a fan culture specialized in East-Asian products; second, to cultural criticism initially focused on Europe and America, yet occasionally discussing phenomena like so-called J-pop; and third, to universities courses, especially the field of Japanese Studies. An exchange between these different perspectives is rare, not to mention the dialogue with Manga Studies conducted in Japanese. However, in order to explicate manga's astonishing global appeal, comparisons prove to be pertinent — on the one hand, between the highly selective supply of manga abroad and its diversity in Japan and, on the other hand, between Japanese and non-Japanese comics cultures. Disregarding such comparisons is an inclination among both manga fans and students of Japanese Studies; this eventually leads to overplaying cultural particularities with regard to Japan while underplaying aesthetic peculiarities with regard to comics. One way of avoiding a culturalist essentialization of 'the manga' or, as its opposite, a constriction on economic causes for the global popularity of (certain) manga, is to focus on 'reading manga'. This perspective draws attention, not only to a diversity of consuming comics under various conditions for various reasons (partly accessible through sociological audience research), but also to the respective discourses involved, among other things, assumptions of what comics in general and manga in particular are supposed to be.

In view of the above-sketched situation, an opportunity to bring the different perspectives of Japanese manga researchers, European comics experts, and japanologists together seems timely. This precise opportunity came in the summer semester of 2005, when I was invited as a guest professor to the Department of Japanese Studies at Leipzig University. The supporting program by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) included the option of organizing an international workshop. Consequently, together with Steffi Richter, I prepared the conference "Reading Manga from Multiple Perspectives: Japanese Comics and Globalization" which took place at Leipzig University on July 23–24, 2005. The essays in the present anthology derived from the talks given then, and, of course, the resulting discussions. Striving for a continuation of the transcultural and transdisciplinary exchange between insiders and outsiders of Japanese Studies as well as Comics Studies, this publication addresses itself to readers who take an interest in critical, historical, and eventually theoretical reflections on

reading manga. It hopes to introduce not only the specific subjects under scrutiny, but also by means of that — although not always explicit at first glance — the basic achievements of Manga Studies stretching from analytical questions and evaluative criteria to shared bibliographical references. In accordance with the fact that Comics Studies can be conceptualized only as a multidisciplinary field of research, the contributors to this anthology deploy a variety of angles: from Media History and Cultural Studies, to Linguistics and Social Sciences, to Gender Studies and Aesthetics. However, the range of manga works under discussion here is much more limited, but not without reason.

There are two basic (although not necessarily exclusive) ways of investigating issues like the globality and locality of reading manga: one is the pursuit of 'completeness', that is, of compiling and processing as much data as possible; the other, the discussion of a few significant samples. We decided to try the latter and selected Nakazawa Keiji's *Barefoot Gen* (*Hadashi no Gen*, 1973–1987) as the main point of reference.[1] This story about survival in Hiroshima appeared to be especially appropriate with respect to the time of our conference, held concurrently during the 60th anniversary of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as the end of World War II. Remarkably, in August 2005, several major German newspapers published articles on *Barefoot Gen*, leaning heavily on interviews with Nakazawa himself who had visited Germany on the occasion of an exhibition in Hiroshima's sister town Hannover earlier that year. Not only for historical reasons, but also for its availability to a non-Japanese audience, Nakazawa's manga recommended itself for our discussion. As Roger Sabin demonstrates in his essay on the reception of *Barefoot Gen* in Britain and America, this manga has generated an unrivalled amount of discourse which is one additional factor that makes it suitable for intercultural investigation.

Furthermore, Nakazawa's tale was one of the first Japanese comics ever to be translated into Western languages; for German readers, it appeared in 1982 in the form of a 284-page book titled *Barfuß durch Hiroshima. Eine Bildergeschichte gegen den Krieg* (*Barefoot across Hiroshima: An Anti-War Picture Story*). As can be inferred from the lettering in the illustrations accompanying Sabine Fiedler's essay in this book, it was not treated as a comic and also, similar to the UK and the US, not promoted as one, but rather as a 'book for peace' (admittedly, Rowohlt exhibited an exceptional interest in comics for a general publisher and made Art Spiegelman's *MAUS* and David Mazzucchelli's *City of Glass* too available [vol. 1: 1989, vol. 2: 1992; 1997]). As the foreword suggests, the German edition of 1982 was motivated mainly by two things: first, "the atomic bomb could also have fallen onto Germany" (Kirchmann 1982), a remark closely tied to the peace movement and its resistance

1 A note on transliteration: throughout this book, Japanese and Korean names are given in the Japanese and Korean order, family names preceding given names (except in citations to authors' works published in Western languages, where they appear in the English order). Japanese words, place names, etc. are rendered in italics and with macrons put on long vowels, except in citations where they appear in standard English.

against the arms race, especially the stationing of US missiles in Germany, and second, an appraisal of 'civic disobedience', related to alternative civic movements in general, but also to contemporary Japan where, according to media reports, nonconformists like Gen and his father were suppressed by the educational system and society in the main; thus, Nakazawa was welcomed as an exceptionally critical voice. In addition to the 6-page foreword, the 1982 edition provided the reader with the translation of a *Guide to the Museum of Hiroshima* in place of an epilogue. More than two decades later, Carlsen, one of the major German publishers of comics, commissioned a new and longer translation directly from Japanese. Resting upon the success of recent bestselling manga, often from the same magazine *Barefoot Gen* was initially serialized in *Shōnen Jump*, with the now four-volume and thoroughly translated edition of *Barefoot Gen* they laudably indulged in publishing a manga not for business-, but for content-related reasons.

Compared to recent global best-sellers, *Barefoot Gen* might look atypical. However, it shares a sufficient number of familiar characteristics with other manga: it was originally designed not as an art work, but as a genre product devoted to entertaining boys (*shōnen manga*), and it appeared first not as a book, but as a magazine series. Such features account, among other things, for the depictions of 'burlesque' violence (Platthaus 2005: 31) which were — because the spectacle contradicted the expected seriousness of a testimony and the foregrounded messages — "hard to swallow" (Spiegelman 2004: vii). Yet, such inconsistencies prove to be typical of the mainstream of Japanese comics, making *Barefoot Gen* a telling sample; after all, it vacillates between entertainment and education; a child's uncorrupted view and an adult's revised memories; an affirmation of patriarchal structures and an attempted reconstruction of the mother's voice, to mention just some aspects suggested by the essays in this book.

The present anthology is divided into three parts. The first focuses on the case study of *Barefoot Gen,* paying special attention to its reception in different cultures, that is, in Japan as well as in Britain and America, but also within the Esperanto community. Because of its subject matter *Barefoot Gen* provokes explorations of comics' potential to narrate history realistically. This, then, is the object of attention in the second part, which reveals that there is more on the agenda than cultural differences between Euroamerica and Japan when it comes to historical comics; differentiations according to commercial mainstream and subcultural underground, to generation and gender are equally important. Finally, the third part highlights a variety of topics related to the impact of manga on foreign comics cultures, or, on perceiving the familiar in a new light. Illuminating what characterizations as 'typically Japanese' signify and in what contexts they are utilized or found to be irrelevant, the essays suggest that questions about the 'Japaneseness' of manga cannot easily be swept aside although answers to

them are to be no longer expected in essentialized national images, but rather in contextually-specific, actual, and transient interrelations of different kinds of interests. The following brief look at all the essays in order of their appearance shall suffice to outline the present book's content; it will be supplemented by an introduction of the two conference papers whose authors were unfortunately not able to contribute to this publication.

To launch the volume, I asked Japanese manga historians after the above-mentioned conference for an introductory essay on the reception of *Barefoot Gen* in Japan hoping for some accounts from reliable sources with regard to both whether Nakazawa broke a political taboo in 1973 and whether he has been exposed to censorship for his critical activities since, as, for example, German comics critic Martin Jurgeit claimed.[2] One of the co-authors, Omote Tomoyuki, had attended the Leipzig conference together with Yoshimura Kazuma and Jessica Bauwens who both now teach at the newly-established Faculty of Manga Studies at Seika University in Kyōto. In their essay, Omote and Itō Yū trace the peculiarities of *Barefoot Gen* back to its serialization in various magazines, in other words, the specific sites of its original appearance. They also consider locations where children have been coming across this manga and speculate upon the extent to which, for example, school libraries predetermine its reading. While providing media-historical data, they are mainly concerned with *Barefoot Gen*'s fundamental ambiguity, that is, with the question of how much Nakazawa's intended messages have actually been taken in by juvenile readers.

At first, the authors and I wanted the essay to comprise one more section on *Barefoot Gen*'s position in Japanese manga history, compared, on the one hand, to the spectacular war comics popular in the 1960s, and on the other hand, to the dark tales of future wars emerging from the late 1970s onwards. That this was not accomplished in time is partly due to the status quo of Japanese Manga Studies: with an essay like this, Omote and Itō have entered new territory, since Japanese manga critics have been refraining from discussions of this work so far,[3] apparently less because of its subject matter, but rather because of their general abstinence from politically-charged issues (this is, last but not least, indicated by the necessity to rely mostly on Nakazawa's own words). Whereas Roger Sabin sets an example for a broad discourse analysis by combining media history with macro-political contexts, Itō's and Omote's descriptions seem to confirm what the author of the foreword to the German 1982 edition implied: that political activists play a less-important role in Japan, or, to be precise, in contemporary manga historians' field of vision, than is the case with a British comics expert like Sabin. Although comics are culturally more than well established in Japan, the inclination to

2 In his article for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (August 6, 2005); see also Frenz & Jurgeit.

3 Being well aware of that (probably also because of the Leipzig conference), Omote, Itō and the other members of their *Barefoot Gen* Study Group have published a Japanese anthology (see Yoshimura/Fukuma 2006).

explore and legitimate the kind of reading oneself is fond of obviously still prevails in Japanese manga research, while the partiality for critically distancing oneself from initially remarkable experiences in order to gain a broader social view is considered to be less rewarding than securing historical data.

Pursuing the process of *Barefoot Gen*'s reception — from an activist tool to a graphic novel and, finally, a (retro-)manga — Roger Sabin clarifies this manga's ambiguous place in American and British comics history. His essay is followed by Sabine Fiedler's who draws attention to two topics often overlooked in contemporary Comics Studies: the linguistic dimension of pictorial narratives, and the Esperanto community as an international comics readership significantly distinct from the 'global village' of today's manga fans. The analytical focus on translations for a culturally heterogeneous readership — in this case, the Esperanto edition which is compared to its counterparts in English and German — allows for shedding light on preconditions of reading *Barefoot Gen*, while at the same time raising an awareness for the workings of language in comics. Remarkably, linguist Sabine Fiedler does not oppose the recently popular "un-flipped translations" of manga, which to comics critic Bill Randall are "at the very least readable"; his list of the "most rewarding manga in English" starts with *Barefoot Gen*, "one of the first manga translated, perhaps the most important, and certainly one of the best handled. Its early edition should have been a model for later translators." (Randall 2005: 3) Leaving this issue to further exploration, I think it to be noteworthy that biased (and therefore challenging) statements seem to be more common among critics than scholars, and more required in America than Japan.

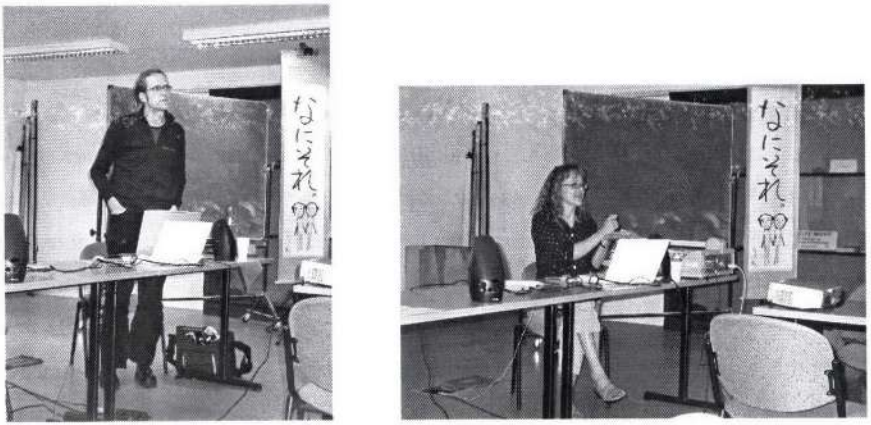
Like Itō and Omote, Ōgi Fusami too exhibits an interest in ambiguity, which she explores from the perspective of gender. To her, *Barefoot Gen* is a hybrid autobiography, telling as much about the author as about his mother. Although *Barefoot Gen* was published initially within the generic framework of boys' comics and revolves around a male protagonist who looks up to his father, it is not an androcentric narrative, as she tries to validate. From her comparison of Gen to 'Art' in *MAUS* she concludes, that both comics, despite their differences, have one thing in common: the authors, as sons, attempt at reconstructing their mothers' voices. In *Barefoot Gen* this has the impact of counterbalancing the father's strong presence, while preventing the protagonist from become heroically idealized.

At the conference, Ōgi's assertations were questioned from two sides although indirectly (last but not least due to language problems). One critique came from Ole Frahm who delivered a paper on "The autobiographical contract in Art Spiegelman's *MAUS* and Nakazawa Keiji's *Barefoot Gen*". Known for his many articles on the former, Frahm addressed mainly two issues: whether these works can be considered to be autobiographical in a strict sense, and what causes authenticity effects. With regard to the former, he stated that the 'autobiographical pact' between author and reader is

set up in *MAUS* only to be destroyed by the dead who, as haunting ghosts, ultimately escape any narrativization, but that such a contract is not aimed at in *Barefoot Gen* in the first place. Concerning realism, he demonstrated how *MAUS* comments on well-known pictures, and highlighted that it is precisely the repetition of memorable pictures which generates reality effects in comics. In addition, Frahm pointed out Nakazawa's inclination to leave almost nothing invisible, presenting even the dead as if they were physically present, while hiding any blind spots of Gen's — and his own — memory. These observations triggered intercultural questions which remained unanswered — on the one hand, concerning the actuality of ghosts in Japanese tradition and its relation to modern visual realism; on the other hand, concerning the roots of autobiography in European literature.

Less concerned with autobiography than with the 'Bildungsroman' as another developmental genre, Alwyn Spies' paper "Reading *Barefoot Gen* as a coming-of-age narrative" started from the astonishing fact that this apparently critical anti-war manga has never been subject to political intervention by conservative forces. Informed by a strong interest in educational as well as gender-related issues, she emphasized the patriarchal elements embedded in this story's narrative structure as well as within its characters. According to her, *Barefoot Gen,* by its very form, affirms a belief in rational, linear progress and modern individualism which eventually serves to erase World War II as an 'aberration'. Itō and Omote, who know Spies as a former member of their *Barefoot Gen* Study Group, might have been provoked by her to stress in their essay that this manga is not to be understood as a 'Bildungsroman'. But Spies' reading also appears to stand in sharp contrast to Ōgi's interpretation, since she claimed at the conference that the manga denied Gen's mother the ability to become 'adult' or to access a modern subjectivity. In order to strengthen her argument, she linked the subject matter of nuclear war to the similarly patriarchal postwar nuclear family whose values she found to be projected in retrospect onto Gen: as part of an independent family unit instead of a conformist community, Gen becomes a symbol of the new and sane postwar Japan. A characterization like hers of *Barefoot Gen* as "authoritarian in its anti-authoritarianism" has not yet been attempted in Japanese, and could have contributed significantly to this anthology (although her argument rested initially more upon the animated version than the manga).

Noteworthy with regard to the essays published here is not only the attempt at politicizing manga discourse as such, but also its relation to 'ambiguity', one of the apparent leitmotifs of this book. To put it differently, argumentations like Spies' confront us with the problem of whether comics in general and *Barefoot Gen* in particular provide their readers with historical complexities or instead with simplifications, and consequently, whether the latter necessarily leads to an ideological unequivocalness, especially that one which is favored by neo-nationalist and neo-conservative circles.



Ole Frahm and Alwyn Spies speaking at the conference, next to a poster designed by Shiriagari Kotobuki © by author

As the first of the second part of this book, Bettina Gildenhard's essay analyzes a manga similar to *Barefoot Gen*, Tezuka Osamu's *Adolf* (*Adorufu ni tsugu*, 1983–1985), a tale about ideological indoctrination and war stretching from Nazi Germany in 1936 to Palestine in 1986. Intrigued by its oscillation between education and entertainment, serious themes and funny side-gags, fact and fiction, she compares Tezuka's manga to *MAUS*, Mizuki Shigeru's *Hitler* (1971) and a German comic of the same name from 1989, but also to a recent Japanese educational manga, reaching the conclusion that it is Tezuka's skillful emphasis on fictionality that allows for a historically convincing narrative. In view of *Adolf*, she affirms manga's simplification, that is, the favoring of one particular view of history instead of considering a whole range of perspectives, as a challenge to the reader to actively negotiate what the pictorial narrative offers.

Similarly, Stephan Köhn assumes comics to be a simplifying medium when he sets out to examine *Lone Wolf and Cub* (*Kozure ōkami*, 1970–1976, by Koike Kazuo and Kojima Gōseki) in regard to what the student of Japanese history may take at face value in the case of this classic work, often praised for its historical authenticity; in other words, he weighs this supposedly realist comic (*gekiga*) against a realist view of the historic era in which it is set. From the view point of reading manga globally, *Lone Wolf and Cub* is a very important comic, since it was one of the first from Japan which attracted the attention of Europeans and Americans after *Barefoot Gen*. However, as a japanologist, Köhn is less interested in its reception by a non-Japanese comics readership (including respective differences between then and now), but rather in the way its central theme, the 'way of the warrior' (*bushidō*), enjoys increasing popularity in the present age of globalization.

Although Köhn does not explicate it — as distinct from Gildenhard — I am tempted to read his essay as a confirmation that manga has never been a realistic medium acceptable to historians;

not even classic *gekiga* which look completely different from what is popular today on a global scale. Manga is rather a highly subjective medium of dreams and desires (even and precisely as a commodity), and as such, ideology-prone. Accordingly, the problem lies less in measuring the correctness of representational content than in illuminating how respective desires are projected in and onto comics. My own contribution to this anthology discusses a manga creator Nakazawa would oppose as much as Tsuge Yoshiharu and other avant-garde artists with characterizations like "self-indulgent" and making "no effort to convey their point of view — if they had one — to the reader" (Nakazawa 2003: 45). It was not only with regard to the historical issues under discussion in the previous essays that I chose Maruo Suehiro as my subject; I also felt the need to feature one more deviation from manga mainstream in this anthology besides Pascal Lefèvre's discussion of Nananan Kiriko.

Part III begins and closes with national considerations; inserted between them are two essays by European comics experts on more specific aspects of the intercultural exchange initiated by manga. First, Jean-Marie Bouissou, who attended the conference and kindly agreed afterwards to submit his research for publication here, sketches the present proliferation of manga in France. Drawing upon a survey he is currently conducting as well as on theoretical reflections upon 'pleasure products' and also comparing the functioning of manga to American comics and *bande dessinée*, he demonstrates how globalization is accompanied by intentional and productive misunderstandings, a process in which cultural essentialism is intertwined with its very deconstruction — just like reading and watching, the serious and the funny, the adult and the infantile in manga.

Likewise sensitive to manga's ambiguities, only this time narrowed down to the issue of gender-bending, German comics critic Jens Balzer provides an astonishingly fresh perspective on the impact of Japanese girls' comics when he gives a detailed account of how these *shōjo manga* made him approach his own tradition anew. Using the early American comic *Krazy Kat* and Ikeda Riyoko's girls' manga *The Roses of Versailles* (*Berusaiyu no bara*, 1972–1973) as his main examples, he illuminates in what way the title flowers of the latter — pointing, among other things, to the girl Oscar in male-attire — turn up in the utopian land of Coconino where Krazy the cat whose gender remains indefinite indulges in her/his eternal masochistic passion for Ignatz the mouse. Balzer's analysis raises an awareness for resemblances between Japanese and American comics which cannot be attached to visible graphic renderings, but seem to be rooted in cross-cultural characteristics of comics as a modern medium.

Although also related to the Japanese genre of *shōjo manga*, artist Nananan Kiriko interests Pascal Lefèvre less in regard to gender issues but more as an example for the kind of manga that

has been escaping the attention of established European and American comics experts. Calling for self-critical reflections upon one's own cultural location as a reader and a critic, his close reading of one of Nananan's short stories suggests how stimulating the acceptance of the fact, that one's point of view is naturally limited, can be for intercultural explorations of manga. Interestingly, Lefèvre notices differences between the comics cultures of Euroamerica and Japan not only in regard to the aesthetic range of manga available, but also the diversity of researchers; while publications on European and American comics are mostly written by male authors, those on manga often come from women. Admittedly, this observation also applies to both the speakers at the Leipzig conference and the contributors to this anthology, but it probably needs to be traced back, among other things, to communicative abilities as they reveal themselves in the command of foreign languages; Manga Studies in Japan is as equally male-dominated as its Euroamerican counterpart.

Nevertheless it is female sociologist Yamanaka Chie with whose essay this book comes full circle. By making the Republic of Korea her subject, she removes our view from the book's tendency to fixate on the exchange between Japan and Euroamerica. The main issue she addresses is that of nationalist discourses in comics culture which in Korea took the form of Othering Japan, including manga imports, be they as pirate editions or legal translations. According to Yamanaka, nationalism can only be pursued at the expense of the historical, cultural, and aesthetic hybridity typical particularly for *manhwa* (Korean comics). However, she also shows, that Korean editors — insofar as they want to sell their product globally — have to master the balancing act between being identifiable as both: part of the successful 'manga-style', that is, part of the previously refused Japanese pop-culture, and something specifically Korean. In view of Bouissou's remarks about the relative irrelevance paid to 'Japaneseness' or 'Frenchness' by French manga fans, Yamanaka's descriptions raise questions in regard to the preconditions in different cultures which allow for shrugging off national categorizations or, on the contrary, for clinging to them.

The issue of 'Japaneseness' is, in lieu of an epilogue, competently discussed by Steffi Richter who understands manga as a challenge and a chance to intertwine internal and external perspectives on several levels. In search for discourses which resist the conscious or unconscious essentialization of 'Japan' and, accordingly, manga — in other words, the re-localizing of the globalized by a pursuit of alleged authenticity — she links the recent worldwide proliferation of Japanese comics to its local reception in Japan and recapitulates modern Japanese nationalism which rested on aesthetic and cultural particularities. Referring to *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints, she also touches briefly upon traditional pictorial calenders (*e-goyomi*), that is, a pre-comics form of spatializing time.

What could be more appropriate for an anthology focusing on a modern medium intertwining temporality and spatiality, and on historical explorations not only of, but also by this medium?

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who made the intercultural exchange intended here possible. The conference could not have been held without the kind support of the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst, DAAD) and this book could not have been published without the generous contribution of the Society for the Promotion of Japanese-German Cultural Relations Cologne (Förderverein japanisch-deutscher Kulturbeziehungen e.V. Köln, JaDe). I would also like to thank all my colleagues and students at Leipzig University's Department of Japanese Studies, who, with their hospitality and dedication, contributed to the exceptionally good atmosphere of the conference. I am very grateful to all participants, regardless whether they presented something or not, but especially to those who not only went to the trouble of attending two days of intense discussion — often at their own expense — but also spared no effort in revising their papers for publication, although our present culture seems to agree less and less with the time-consuming process of making books like this. Since English is not the editors' mother tongue, the cooperation of a native speaker was essential; Steffi Richter and I are deeply indebted to Melodie Cook (Siebold University, Nagasaki) for providing us with a safety net. All remaining mistakes are our fault, due to time limitations. Likewise, we would like to express our gratitude to Michael Schultz (Department of Japanese Studies, Leipzig University) for his translation help at the last minute, and to Katrin Gengenbach (Department of Japanese Studies, Leipzig University) who took very good care of all the formal aspects ranging from transcriptions to the final standardized layout.

Personally convinced that this anthology was worth the joint efforts, I hope that it will find many open-minded readers and not only provide them with useful information but also stimulate further intercultural exchange for the sake of elevating Manga Studies.

Jaqueline Berndt

Yokohama, May 2006

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I. Readings of *Barefoot Gen*

Itō Yū and Omote Tomoyuki

Barefoot Gen in Japan: An Attempt at Media History

Introduction

Barefoot Gen (*Hadashi no Gen*)[1] is an autobiographical manga. Its author, Nakazawa Keiji, born on March 14th, 1939 in Hiroshima, experienced the dropping of the atomic bomb on August, 8th, 1945, at the age of six. At that time, his family consisted of his father, mother, three brothers (two elder, one younger) and one older sister, but three of them (his father, older sister and the younger brother) died then. *Barefoot Gen* is the story of Nakaoka Gen, main character and alter ego of the author; it depicts the desperate will of Gen and his remaining family to survive after having lost three family members.

The manga ran, at intervals, for almost 14 years, from June 1973 until February 1987 in various (not only manga) magazines, its total number of pages finally amounting to approximately 2,600, and filling 10 *tankōbon* volumes in its compiled version. The story can be summarized as follows: Gen and his family live in Hiroshima. Since Gen's father Daikichi is opposed to the war, they are persecuted by the police and their neighbors, but stand together as a family and try to live their lives. When America drops the atomic bomb, Gen's home is destroyed by the blast, which buries and kills his father, his sister Eiko, and his younger brother Shinji. After the explosion, Hiroshima appears as a gruesome place to behold; the manga depicts how people whose bodies are completely burnt seem to be turned into bundles of old rags and are wandering around. In addition, the manga illustrates how the city gives off a stench of rotting dead bodies, which are lying about everywhere. In these hard circumstances, with no home and nothing to eat, Gen's mother Kimie gives birth to his little sister Tomoko. To protect her life, Gen wanders about the scorched fields in search of food and witnesses again and again the mercilessness of the atomic bomb. Eventually his two older brothers, Akira and Kōji, who were either evacuated to the countryside or drafted to the navy, return and the family starts a new life. At one time before that, Gen meets the street-urchin Ryūta, who looks exactly like his deceased brother Shinji. Gen and Kimie think of him as being a reincarnation and take him into their new family believing that they all have to stick together since everyone has lost relatives and tries desperately to hang on to life. In the course of events, Gen meets many other bomb victims

1 In English, the 'g' of 'Gen' is often pronounced in a voiced manner (as in 'gentle'), which would be transcribed from Japanese into English as *jen* ; in Japanese however it is pronounced as in 'get'.

whom he tries to help, but beginning with the death of his newborn sister Tomoko, he experiences numerous sad partings. When he turns 15, he leaves for Tōkyō.

Barefoot Gen is not just an interesting comic in itself, but a comic of deep historical significance, at least in regard to the following three points. First, in this work, denouncing the indiscriminate killing of average citizens, a survivor himself tells in detail of the bomb and its devastation based on his own experience. Of course, in 1973, the year the manga began to be serialized, full reports on the explosion and its aftermath had already been published, but the survivors still faced deep-rooted prejudice and discrimination. Thus, the attempt to come out in the open as an A-bomb survivor was accompanied by great sacrifices. Second, highly praised by peace movements and anti-nuclear groups, *Barefoot Gen* was introduced in schools as material for peace education. Despite the conventional view in society of manga being vulgar and therefore harmful to children, *Barefoot Gen* was the first manga to be used as teaching material in schools. Third, it was one of the very first Japanese manga to be translated into English and published outside Japan. Since the first English version came out in August 1978, the series has been translated into more than 10 languages and is read worldwide.

With regard to the historical status of comics at the time *Barefoot Gen* first appeared in magazines, as well as to the relation of this specific manga to anti-war and anti-nuclear movements, in this paper we will pursue the process of its reception in Japan from the perspective of media history.[2] The magazines which published *Barefoot Gen* had an important impact on how this manga was received both by its readers and by society in general. We will therefore focus on *Barefoot Gen*'s magazine serializations, introducing them in chronological order and considering the different character and position of the respective magazines (for an overview see Table 1), before finally touching upon this manga's treatment as an educational tool in schools.

(1) Shūkan Shōnen Jump (Shūeisha)	No. 25/1973 (June) — No. 34/1974 (September), since May 1975 released in book form (4 volumes) by Chōbunsha
(2) Shimin (Keisō shobō)	Sept. 1975 — Aug. 1976, released in book form by Shiminsha in July, 1976, and by Suiyōsha in May, 1977 (each publisher 1 volume resp.); re-released in February 1980 by Chōbunsha

2 This paper is largely based on the findings of the Study Group for *Barefoot Gen* (*Hadashi no Gen kenkyūkai*), which consists of 10 scholars specialized respectively in Sociology, Pedagogics, Intellectual History and Manga Studies (Fukuma Yoshiaki, Higuchi Kōichi, Itō Yū, Omote Tomoyuki, Otaki Tomoori, Shikata Toshiaki, Alwyn Spies, Tanimoto Naho, Yamanaka Chie, Yoshida Kōji, Yoshimura Kazuma), see Yoshimura/ Fukuma 2006.

(3) Bunka hyōron (Shinnihon shuppansha)	July 1977 — Aug. 1979, Oct. 1979 — March 1980; released in book form by Suiyōsha in July 1978 (1 volume); re-released by Chōbunsha in Feb. 1980 and Feb. 1983
(4) Kyōiku hyōron (Nihon kyōshokuin kumiai bunkabu)	April 1982 — Jan. 1985, April 1986 — Feb. 1987; released in book form by Chōbunsha in Feb. 1983, Dec. 1984 and March 1987 (3 volumes total)

Table 1: Magazine serializations and subsequent book editions of *Barefoot Gen.*

Barefoot Gen was widely read, introduced into schools, and even known abroad because of its pacifist, anti-nuclear messages. However, from the perspective of media history it cannot be overlooked that it was first published in the weekly manga magazine *Shūkan Shōnen Jump*, at that time disdained as an extremely vulgar medium. 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 which aimed less at enlightening than at merely entertaining boys.

1. *Barefoot Gen* in the manga magazine *Shōnen Jump*

The serialization of *Barefoot Gen* in Shūeisha's boys' manga magazine *Shōnen Jump* started in June 1973 with issue No. 25, and ended abruptly in September 1974 with issue No. 39. In this section, we will introduce the kind of magazine this was and what kind of context it provided to *Barefoot Gen*, especially in view of other manga series published at the same time.

Shōnen Jump was founded in June 1968 as a bi-weekly magazine, becoming a weekly from the October issue No. 20 in 1969 onwards. Japan's earliest manga weeklies were *Shōnen Magazine* by Kōdansha, and *Shōnen Sunday* published by Shōgakukan (both established in 1959). Launched almost a decade later, *Shōnen Jump* faced hard competition. Its greatest disadvantage was that it could not recruit veteran artists such as Tezuka Osamu, Fujiko Fujio or Ishimori Shōtarō (later: Ishinomori Shōtarō). These popular artists were already publishing in different weekly manga magazines and thus unable to work for yet another. Also, the payment for their labor proved to be too expensive. For these reasons *Shōnen Jump* decided to actively feature young artists. Although in the beginning this was nothing more but a last resort effort, by concentrating on fresh new artists, the magazine was able to exclusively publish many unconventional manga, some of which still exhibited technical shortcomings, but nevertheless captured the readers' attention due to the passion of these young authors. This made *Shōnen Jump* exceptionally attractive and enabled it to cross the threshold of 1 million copies per week in 1970, at a time when the leading *Shōnen Magazine* sold about 1.5 million

copies. In a public opinion poll conducted in 1971 by the *Mainichi Shinbunsha*, *Shōnen Jump* proved to be the most read magazine by primary school students (age 10 to 12); it experienced a rapid growth within that target group, in contrast to *Shōnen Magazine* which had most of its readership among young adults such as university students (Nakano: 106).

Nakazawa Keiji's first appearance in *Shōnen Jump* dates back to September 1969, that is, four years before he was given the opportunity to begin *Barefoot Gen* there. After finishing junior high school in March 1954, Nakazawa became an apprentice with a local sign-painter. During his training he also drew comics. In February 1961, he went to Tōkyō and made his debut as a manga artist in June 1963, while working as an assistant for Kazumine Daiji.[3] He published two mini-series and several short stories in various boys' manga magazines, but from 1968 on, his works started to appear in manga magazines for young adults (*seinen*) on a regular basis, one of which was *Manga Punch* by Hōbunsha. This magazine's May 1968 issue contained Nakazawa's comic *Kuroi ame ni utarete* [Black rain], which featured a survivor of the atomic bomb as the main character; other comics on the same theme followed. When Nakazawa's first manga appeared in *Shōnen Jump* about one year later, he had already a six-year-long career and was not exactly a popular, well-selling artist, but a unique one known for drawing manga which were focused on the atomic bomb. What made his appearance in *Shōnen Jump* possible in the first place was that this latecomer among the manga magazines allowed for deviations from the mainstream of boys' comics. Insofar as it made room for passionate comics by still inexperienced artists, it was quite exceptional.

Remarkably, Nakazawa's first work in *Shōnen Jump* which appeared in issues No. 17 and 18 of 1969 was not about the atomic bomb. Called *Moero! Guzuroku* [Burn up! Block head Roku] this manga told the story of a clumsy but honest boy who meets a clumsy racing horse, and how they mature by cooperating with each other. In the end, the boy succeeds as a sign-painter; this link to Nakazawa's own experiences during his apprenticeship was the only autobiographical element. But there was also a manga which voiced anger about the dropping of the atomic bomb by the U.S. forces through the main character, a second-generation Japanese immigrant living in New York: *Otoko nara shōri no uta o!* [Guys, sing a song of victory!], serialized from December 1969 (No. 26) until January 1970 (combined issues No. 4 and 5). It is in these elements, e.g. the autobiographical traits as well as the stance towards the A-bomb and America, that Nakazawa's early works in *Shōnen Jump* correspond with the later *Barefoot Gen*.

It must, however, be noticed that Nakazawa did not depict the atomic bomb as part of his own personal experience at first. The protagonists of his works published in *Manga Punch* as well as the

3 Kazumine Daiji (*1935) has turned many TV-action hero series into manga since 1955, for instance *Ultraman* or *Ultraseven*. Although it is said that Nakazawa's thick lines were inspired by Kazumine, his style differs significantly from Kazumine's in regard to his pathos and his commitment to messages.

main character of his first A-bomb manga published in *Shōnen Jump*, *Aru hi totsuzen ni* [Suddenly one day] (No. 17, April 1970) remained fictitious. According to Nakazawa's own so-called autobiography, as the main character he chose a child who had survived the bomb because he had just become a father himself and was concerned about his oldest daughter, born in January 1967; he was especially worried that she might have inherited side-effects from the bomb. Drawing upon his feelings and experiences in order to write manga about the bomb was one thing, but creating an autobiographical manga was something very different, he felt (Nakazawa 1994: 200). Thus, he was extremely hesitant when asked by *Bessatsu Shōnen Jump*[4] in 1972 to draw an autobiographical manga. Although he temporarily turned the request down, the zealous efforts of his editor to persuade him proved effective: in October 1972, *Ore wa mita* [I SAW IT] was published. One reader wrote that at first he thought very badly of Nakazawa, as a person who tried to make money with the tragedy of the bomb. But through reading *Ore wa mita* he came to know that Nakazawa himself was an A-bomb victim, and in reviewing his first thoughts he wrote a letter of apology to Nakazawa, which threw the author into "complicated, dark feelings" (Nakazawa 1994: 208). Of course, only Nakazawa himself knows about the nature of these feelings, but he probably felt uneasy about being labeled an A-bomb survivor. He was also worried about the possibility that making the tragedy of the atomic bomb known to the public would be seen as a kind of unscrupulous business. At that time, the public already knew about the bomb and the existence of its survivors, but these people were seen less as victims of war, than as loathsome creatures. There were of course survivors who came forward and became active in the anti-war, anti-nuclear movements, despite being looked coldly upon by society; Nakazawa, too, joined them eventually. However, the "complicated, dark feelings" he mentioned, clearly showed the difficulties of raising one's voice as a victim in the Japan of those days.

Nakazawa's *Ore wa mita* was published as the first issue of a series of autobiographical manga (*Mangaka jiden shirīzu*) appearing in *Bessatsu Shōnen Jump* for about two years until the August 1974 issue. Besides Nakazawa, there were *Ganbaranakucha* [I must hustle!] by Chiba Akio (February 1973 issue) and *Otoko ippiki manga taishō* [Lone-wolf manga general] by Motomiya Hiroshi (August 1973 issue), as well as *Aoi mangakyō* [Blue kaleidoscope of manga] (Ishimori Shōtarō, June 1973), *Kore ga gyagu da!* [That's a gag!] (Akatsuka Fujio, July 1973) and *Sutajio boro monogatari* [Tale of the ragged studio] (Fujiko Fujio, September 1973). From these highly-motivated autobiographical stories by representative manga artists one can, among other things, infer the editors' enthusiasm for this series which did not deliberately revolve around the war, although many of the contributing artists had experienced it. War-time and colonialization-period experiences were crucial elements of

4 *Shōnen Jump*'s supplement *Bessatsu Shōnen Jump* was later published monthly as *Gekkan Shōnen Jump* apart from the famous weekly magazine.

stories like Tezuka Osamu's *Goddofāzā no musuko* [The godfather's son] (January 1973) and Chiba Tetsuya's *Noro Tetsu fun sensu* [Blockhead Tetsu is fighting desperately] (October 1973). It was by no means *Shōnen Jump*'s central policy to spread pacifism as can be deduced for example from the advertisements of bombers appearing in its first pages (Fig. 1).

However, the fundamental ambiguity of manga which 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 — should be acknowledged also in regard to *Shōnen Jump* which uncritically met boys' fascination for war-related items while introducing the cruelties of war through one of its manga series.

Fig. 1: Advertisements for toy-bombers ("Taking only 60 min. to assemble!") right next to the very first page of *Barefoot Gen* on the left of the spread.
Source: *Shūkan Shōnen Jump,* No. 25, cover inlet/ p. 1 © Shūeisha 1973

In addition, the magazine's staff, beginning with its first chief editor Nagano Tadasu, had obviously a passionate interest in war themes (Fig. 2). *Aru hi totsuzen ni*, Nakazawa's first short story about the atomic bomb for *Shōnen Jump*, took up 80 pages out of 300; likewise, the later *Barefoot Gen* received an exceptionally good treatment with 15 to 20 pages weekly. According to Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen* became possible precisely because it was powered by the editors' unusual ardor; having paid close attention to their readers' reactions to *Ore wa mita*, they allowed Nakazawa not only to continue his *Barefoot Gen* series for as long as he pleased, but also to use as many pages per issue as he liked (Nakazawa 1994: 209).[5]

5 However, this does not mean that *Gen* was one of the most popular series in *Shūkan Shōnen Jump*; e.g. in issue No. 48 (November 1973) it appeared as the 12th out of 16 manga series (pp. 213 — 234); this was *Gen*'s average ranking due to the readers' preferences as measured through the magazine's weekly surveys.

Fig. 2: The editors' catchphrase at the top of this page reads "Let's hand down across all generations this anti-war testimony!" pointing to anti-war messages and characterizing the story as non-fictitious. Source: *Shūkan Shōnen Jump*, No. 31 (July) p. 171; left of spread © Shūeisha 1973

However, whether the editors' passion and Nakazawa's messages communicated straightforwardly to the readers cannot be assessed without considering *Shōnen Jump* as a medium. Thus, we need to take into account which series accompanied *Barefoot Gen* in this magazine in 1973 and 1974. There were baseball manga like *Samurai giants* [Samurai of Yomiuri Giants] by Kajiwara Ikki (scenario) & Inoue Kō (artwork) and *Asutoro kyūdan* [The super baseball team Astro] by Tōzaki Shirō (scenario) & Nakajima Norihiro (artwork), but more than on the game itself, they focused on the interplay of forces, occasionally indulging in rather harsh depictions of violence.

Other manga featured violent clashes too: Nagai Gō's *Mazinger Z* which presented battles of giant robots, the Western *Kōya no shōnen Isamu* [Prairie boy Isamu] by Yamakawa Sōji (scenario) & Kawasaki Noboru (artwork) (Fig. 3); even a cooking manga such as *Hōchōnin Ajihei* [Chef Ajihei] by Gyū Jirō (scenario) & Big Joe (artwork) concentrated on fierce rivalry, in this case pertaining the speedy preparation of meals. In tune with such manga, *Barefoot Gen* was read as a part of *Shōnen Jump*; thus, the reading experience of this magazine's consumers must have differed significantly from people who read the comic for its political messages or from students who later found the book edition in their school library.

Fig. 3: Cover of *Shūkan Shōnen Jump*, No. 47 (Nov.), 1973, promoting the Western *Kōya no shōnen Isamu* [Prairie boy Isamu] by Yamakawa Sōji and Kawasaki Noboru; there is no reference at all to *Barefoot Gen*.
© Shūeisha 1973

Unfortunately, there is hardly any material from which we can learn about readers' responses to this manga. For now we would just like to point out two possibilities, derived from the resemblances between *Barefoot Gen* and the works mentioned above: first, the striking prevalence of depictions of violence, and second, the main characters' resolute fighting for their beliefs. With regard to the former, *Barefoot Gen* could have been read as a form of spectacular visual entertainment irrespective of the messages embedded in its representational content. But even if the reader would have concentrated on the latter, the messages actually taken in may not have been necessarily political or social, pro-peace and anti-war. *Barefoot Gen* seems to convey rather the importance of living true to one's beliefs, referring less to society in the main than to the individual. This applies, for example, to characters like Gen's father, who stands up against the war and never strays from his principles no matter how severely he is persecuted by governmental authorities or the local community. Such father figures who taught 'the way true men ought to live' were common in boys' manga at that time. Of course, the anger about war and the wish for peace was probably not lost on readers. But limiting the potential responses of *Shōnen Jump* consumers to this would lead to a one-sided interpretation leaning too heavily on both the author's original intention and the manga's later appraisal (Fig. 4). Therefore, the political messages of *Barefoot Gen* such as the anti-nuclear/anti-war theme and the tilt at the war responsibility of politicians as well as the Emperor (*tennō*) should be treated as one of several dimensions, but not be biased.

Fig. 4: Last page of the *Gen* episode in *Shōnen Jump*, No. 43 (Oct.), with the editors' catchphrase placed on the right: "Prepare yourself not to be beaten by your pain. The struggle with the atomic bomb will continue as long as you live. Gen, from now on you'll have to prove how brave you really are!" Thus, the manga is positioned less as Nakazawa's tragedy but as a story of courageous struggle in order to overcome all ordeals. Source: *Shūkan Shōnen Jump*, No. 43 (Oct.), 1973, p. 286; right of spread © Shūeisha 1973

From the perspective of manga and media history, *Barefoot Gen* was first a boys' manga which fell in line with others of its kind in the 1970s; considering the story line — overcoming difficult circumstances with new friends — it is safe to say that it was not unusual. Survival stories were but one of many genres. However, unlike most boys' manga, *Barefoot Gen* is not a 'Bildungsroman', that is, a developmental story about the main character's spiritual growth and maturation by triumphing over numerous ordeals. Admittedly, Gen matures to become a sturdy supporter of his family, and he strengthens the bonds to his friends, but every time he overcomes a trial, he expresses his anger about the atomic bomb and the war, about the American troops, the emperor and the politicians; he returns to his origin, so to speak. Since *Barefoot Gen* is both a manga for boys and the author's autobiography, Gen's anger is Nakazawa's anger, and in order to keep war from happening again, Nakazawa has to keep this anger alive as long as he lives. Naturally, his story cannot be concluded.

2. *Barefoot Gen* in non-manga magazines

In September 1974, *Barefoot Gen* ceased to be published in *Shūkan Shōnen Jump*. The story had advanced from the kidnapping of Tomoko, Gen's younger sister born after the bomb, to her discovery, and it ended with her death, but since Gen's struggles were just about to begin, the serialization was practically suspended. Nakazawa explained the reasons for the discontinuation as follows:

> I continued to draw my criticism against the dropping of the bomb by the Americans and against the *tennō*-system and I thought there would be a lot of contradiction at *Gen*. But since no argument, none of the expected harassment occurred, I actually felt disappointed. Then, there was the 'first oil shock of 1974'. The economy fell into disarray, paper became scarce and the number of pages in the weekly magazines decreased rapidly. In manga too it was continually reduced and when I was told to draw *Gen* in just 13 pages or even to stop altogether, I felt very unhappy 'since the story finally was running high'. Fatigue also added tremendously to it and so my spirit to draw *Gen* waned. In that situation, when editor-in-chief N, who 'had been boostering the serialization of *Gen*', was promoted and transferred away, I took the liberty of halting the still unfinished *Barefoot Gen* after one and a half years in *Jump*. (Nakazawa 1994: 214)

Yokota Takashi, a journalist from *Asahi Shinbun* in charge of themes related to the atomic bomb and peace issues, introduced Nakazawa to the magazine *Shimin*, which was to become the medium for *Gen's* continuation; Yokota was also actively engaged in releasing the still unfinished *Barefoot Gen* in book form (Fig. 5, 6).

Fig. 5: *Shimin* cover (1975) announcing the '*gekiga* series' *Barefoot Gen*.
Source: *Shimin*, No. 9 (Sept.) © Keisō shobō 1975

Shūeisha, the publisher of *Shōnen Jump*, had been refraining from a *tankōbon* edition because they thought it acceptable "for such a political story, a story investigating the reality of war and the atomic bomb, to be published in a weekly magazine, because after a week, it would disappear. But once printed in book form it would remain as a product of our company and would give us a bad image." (Nakazawa 1994: 216). Eventually four volumes were published in May 1975 by Chōbunsha, a company specializing in leftist writings and educational books. For a small publisher like Chōbunsha this was an adventurous undertaking since 'nuke manga' were previously unheard of. But *Gen* turned out to be a best-seller; the number of copies sold rose to 640,000 in 1976 and reached 1 million in 1980.

Fig. 6: The first appearance of *Barefoot Gen* in *Shimin* (Sept. 1975), remarkably without catchphrases; on the left page, an introduction by *Asahi* journalist Yokota Takashi. Source: *Shimin*, No. 9, pp. 68/69 © Keisō shobō 1975

Shimin [Citizen], first released in 1971, was a general-interest magazine with articles by people like the political and social theorist Hidaka Rokurō, the poet Oda Makoto and Asukada Ichio, then mayor of Yokohama city. Since Asukada later became chairman of the Socialist Party of Japan, one can assume the magazine to have been close to its leftist influence. It was basically a platform for discussion aimed at introducing and activating the then upcoming civil activists and neighbourhood movements. One reason for the emergence of these movements since the late 1960s lay in the distrust in government and local authorities, who were rather protective of industry and remained passive about problems such as pollution. The anti-Vietnam war movements also provided a stimulus to these civic movements. An element they had in common was the feeling of alienation toward the existing

political parties. The political strife between members of the Communist Party of Japan, the Socialist Party of Japan and the General Council of Trade Unions of Japan (*Sōhyō*) within the movements against atomic and hydrogen bombs can be raised as a perfect example in the sense that they were completely detached from the demands of the local population. In the end, the arguments about the nuclear tests of China and the Soviet Union led to the establishment of two different organizations: the Japan Congress Against A- and H-bombs (*Gensuikin*), which was affiliated with the Socialist Party, and the Japan Council against A- and H-bombs (*Gensuikyō*) of the Communist Party. In this situation, the magazine *Shimin* reflected the trends of the civic movements, which turned their backs on the established political parties. However, since the editing and printing was done by volunteer groups, the release was frequently obstructed by a lack of funds. *Barefoot Gen* was published in the second *Shimin*, reissued after a temporary suspension; it was the only ongoing manga series there at the time. One factor of *Gen* being published in such a magazine seems to be that these movements, as extensions of pollution problems, began to be concerned with atomic power plants.

With the discontinuation of the magazine, however, the serialization again came to an end. *Gen* moved to *Bunka Hyōron* [Cultural Review], a political magazine close to the Communist Party which back then was harshly criticized for example by Oda Makoto, one of the regular authors of *Shimin* (Fig. 7, 8).

Fig. 7: *Bunka Hyōron* cover, No. 185 (July), 1977. Although this issue contained the first episode of *Barefoot Gen* the manga is not announced on the cover, and it is not accompanied by a synopsis or verbal introduction either, obviously due to its already established fame. © Shinnihon shuppansha 1977

Yet, the change of publisher did not represent a shift in Nakazawa's own political beliefs, although the political views of *Shimin* and *Bunka Hyōron* differed significantly. *Barefoot Gen* was at first glance overflowing with political speech, but deep down characterized by a more concrete anger which led to the politically rather neutral standpoint Nakazawa has been holding until now. His stance 'against all forms of nuclear power' was welcomed by the Communist Party, because it provided an opportunity to unite the anti-nuclear movements (then split into the *Gensuikin* and the *Gensuikyō*). *Bunka Hyōron* published *Barefoot Gen* until the sections which depicted the protagonist as a young adult. These met with a favorable reception as the magazine section with messages from the readers suggests. Nakazawa responded in a column called *Ganbare! Hadashi no Gen* [Do your best! Barefoot Gen]. During its serialization in *Bunka Hyōron*, *Gen* was also made into a live-action movie[6] and saw its first translation into English.

Fig. 8: Last page of *Barefoot Gen* episode in *Bunka Hyōron* (July 1978). In the course of this serialization, manga-typical catchphrases began to be used, but as distinct from *Shōnen Jump* they contained clearly political messages; relating to the Korean victims this one reads: "Not only Japanese were suffering from the atomic bomb. One more occasion for Gen to broaden his horizon."
Source: *Bunka Hyōron,* July 1978, p. 250; right of spread

6 Director: Yamada Tengo; actors: Satō Kenta, Mikuni Rentarō et al., 107 min. color, by *Hadashi no Gen* production, 1976.

After that, *Gen* was moved to the magazine *Kyōiku Hyōron* [Educational Review]. Although the bulletin of the Japan Teachers' Union (*Nikkyōso*) and close to the leftist wing of trade unions, it did not share the views of the Communist Party. *Barefoot Gen* was published in this magazine because of its anticipated effects as an 'educational comic'. At that time, the story revolved around the 'red purge' policy of the GHQ and Gen's anger toward the national flag of the Rising Sun as well as the national anthem. On the one hand, this concurred with the ideological conflicts between teachers' union and the Ministry of Education together with the members of the prefectural boards of education, who tried to enforce the display of the flag and the recitation of the anthem in schools. On the other hand, it reflected more general concerns about thought control and government intrusion into educational institutions. In this context, *Barefoot Gen* began to attract the attention of adults who usually had no ties to manga; in other words, its shift from a boys' manga magazine to a general review journal, as well as its political statements, removed this comic from its original subcultural, and thus limited, realm.

3. *Barefoot Gen* at school

Through its acceptance by elementary and junior high-school teachers *Barefoot Gen* found its way into the schools, which previously were almost manga-free. At first, teachers who had a personal interest introduced it to their classes. But now a rather large number of school libraries have formally added it to their collections. According to a recent survey at all municipal elementary and junior high-schools in Hiroshima City and Toyohashi City (Aichi prefecture), 88.3% of the schools, whose libraries contained manga, were in possession of *Barefoot Gen*.[7] As the survey revealed, teachers are mainly hoping for *Barefoot Gen* to function as a suitable teaching tool for peace education, and ambitious teachers appreciate its venturing on themes such as the war responsibility of the Emperor and Japan's role as a perpetrator in World War II. Yet, they are obviously not fully at ease with the manga medium. This can be shown with regard to the following three aspects.

First, there was widespread opposition on the teachers' side toward manga intruding into the schools, which today has weakened but can still be found in a few educational institutions. The 1970s, when *Barefoot Gen* started to be serialized, saw an overt educational pressure on all

7 Conducted by electronic and standard mail from Sept. 5, to Nov. 10, 2005. Contact persons were the respective school librarians. Response rate for Hiroshima City, elementary schools: 76 out of 140, junior high-schools: 31 out of 63, 1 unspecified school. Response rate for Toyohashi City, elementary schools: 31 out of 52, junior high-schools: 16 out of 22. To obtain a comparative view for Hiroshima, which formed the stage for *Gen*, the elementary schools of one more city (Toyohashi) were included in the survey. A marked difference to the answers of the Hiroshima schools could not be detected. The survey was conceived and conducted by Itō Yū.

'children's media', especially comics. At the time it was released in book form, one elementary school teacher mentioned, "the view of manga and *gekiga*[8] as being generally something vulgar is very strong". Comments like this point to the difficulties of manga being placed in libraries (see Tajima 1977). Even Nakazawa himself admitted that "there surely is this idea of looking at manga as being vulgar" (Nakazawa 1976). Second, *Barefoot Gen* contained many elements that actually did not fit very well with the preferred moderate manner of peace education at elementary and junior high-schools. Gen's anger towards war and the atomic bomb was not communicated in an abstract way, and Emperor Hirohito's war responsibility was not only pointed to, but harshly criticized. Third, manga — by nature a highly individualistic medium — appeared to be unfit for group lessons. Most of the school personnel interviewed by the Study Group for *Barefoot Gen* told of the difficulties of equipping the libraries with enough copies, as would have to be the case with a regular text book.[9] More frequently used at school are the two animated versions of *Barefoot Gen*, to which Nakazawa himself contributed.[10] In the 1970s, in an attempt to keep the memory of the atomic bomb experience alive, the 6th of August, although in the midst of the summer holidays, was made a regular school day (*hachi-roku tōkō*) in Hiroshima prefecture. Since the 1980s against the background of the upcoming audio-visual education, it has become customary to screen so-called 'nuke *anime*' such as the animated version of *Barefoot Gen* at all schools on that day. This appreciation of *anime* was not limited to the 6th of August, but it became a nation-wide approach to peace education. Even today, many schools and boards of education have quite a few 'peace *anime*' in stock, one of the standard items being the animated *Barefoot Gen*.

However, for many students the first encounter with *Barefoot Gen* was neither the live-action movie nor the animated version but the manga. This is apparent from a survey we conducted at 7 universities in western Japan.[11] Many students recalled that they read the manga when they were elementary or junior high-school students, but not in class. This hints at the possibility that the children independently chose to read it. Even now, *Barefoot Gen* is still a popular book in school libraries.

8 Graphic novels for youth in a more realistic style distinguished occasionally from 'manga' as a more humorous and infantile sort of comics.

9 The following persons were interviewed: Mr. T. N. (Hiroshima Teachers Union, Secretary of the Hiroshima Educational Institute, former teacher); Ms. K. S. (regular teacher at a Hiroshima municipal elementary school); Ms.Y. M. (regular teacher at a Hiroshima municipal elementary school); Ms. Y. J. (school librarian at a Hiroshima municipal elementary school); Mr. M. K. (Toyohashi Board of Education, assistant to the chief of the school education section, employee of the Toyohashi Education Center); Mr. I. T. (regular teacher at a Toyohashi municipal junior high-school). Interviews conducted by Itō Yū.

10 *Barefoot Gen* (director: Mori Masaki, 90 min. color, by Gen Production, 1983); *Barefoot Gen 2* (director: Hirata Toshio, 70 min. color, by Gen Production, 1986).

11 The survey was designed by Otaki Tomoori and Shikata Toshiaki and conducted in July 2005 by members of the Study Group for *Barefoot Gen*. The targeted students from the Kansai (e.g. western Japan) Region were elected by method of judgement sampling (retrieved answers: 827; 819 of them valid; average age: 20.0 years).

According to our survey of elementary and junior high-schools in Hiroshima City and Toyohashi City, only 3 out of 122 schools obtained the manga before 1989; the majority of 69 schools bought the manga between 2000 and 2005, among them 11 schools which purchased it in 2005. This does not mean that *Barefoot Gen* became popular only recently, but that the books need to be frequently restocked and replaced. As a teacher of a Hiroshima municipal elementary school said: "Since they are read so often, they fall apart and we have to constantly replace them" or "[We bought them] every year during the last decade".

Yet, there is another fact which allows for the possibility that the way the children read *Barefoot Gen* has been different from the way it was intended by the teachers: comics are read individually and independently. Part of our survey at the universities was to have the students write an episode they remember about *Barefoot Gen*. Almost none of these episodes contained peace-related statements; instead there were many records of 'traumatic' memories: "The pictures were frightening; when I read it in elementary school it felt just like a horror manga" or "The first time I read *Barefoot Gen* was in elementary school before lunch. Unfortunately, it wasn't exactly a manga to be read before having lunch. But then, I think kids really are curious to see scary things and I really got hooked on it. Today, when I think about that I read it a lot before lunch, I am a little bit afraid of myself." There were many other remarks describing this manga as 'grotesque' and 'unpleasant', which probably all referred to the scenes directly after the dropping of the bomb. Remarkably, the evaluation of *Gen* is not based on a variety of scenes, the story as a whole, or a consideration of its historical background. This trend also showed in an interview with former *Barefoot Gen* readers from Hiroshima prefecture.[12] Nakazawa himself as a man of conviction said:

> If throughout Japan the number of children looking at the horrible scenes of the atomic bomb, crying and saying 'I'm scared!', 'That's disgusting!' or 'I never want to see that again!' increases, I would think of it as truly a good thing. (Nakazawa 1994: 211)

The school teachers however felt wary about such a reading. In fact, this exact wariness was one of the reasons why *Barefoot Gen* was not used as a teaching tool in peace education for lower grades at elementary school. Accordingly, the development of 'peace *anime*' after *Barefoot Gen* saw efforts to soften irritating impacts. But since most of the readers encountered *Gen* in a regulated environment such as a school or a library, their reception was probably predetermined anyway, for example by stereotypes ('this is a good manga about the importance of peace'), which usually accompanied the availability of *Gen* at such places. Recently, school libraries have started to collect common

12 The following persons were interviewed: Ms. T. H. (born 1973 in Hiroshima City), Mr. T. S. (born 1977 in Kurose Town), and Mr. H. N. (born 1976 in Hatsukaichi City).

story manga too, for instance works from Urasawa Naoki (*1960) or Kawaguchi Kaiji (*1948).[13] Yet, these works differ from *Barefoot Gen*, insofar as they are not almost exclusively read at school. Unlike other manga, *Barefoot Gen* is located right on the border between pedagogical attempts at peace education and the world of subculture and entertainment.

Conclusion

Barefoot Gen is neither the first nor the only manga about the atomic bomb. In 1959, Shirato Sanpei's *Kieyuku shōjo* [Vanishing girl'] (Nihon mangasha) depicted the tragedy of a little girl struck by radiation sickness. In 1969, Asaoka Kōji drew the manga *Aru wakusei no higeki* [The tragedy of a certain planet], which was based on the memoirs of the bomb survivor Kusakawa Tatsuo and published in *Shūkan Shōnen Magazine* (Kōdansha). Due to the influence of the rising anti-Vietnam war movements, the early 1970s were a time which saw a great number of anti-war manga. Yamagami Tatsuhiko's *Hikaru kaze* [Shining wind] (1970), telling the story of Japan's re-armament and a conspiracy of the American occupation forces, can also serve as a representative example. Thus, *Barefoot Gen* is not special because it denounced the atomic bomb and the war; many other manga did that too. But this raises the question of why out of all other manga *Barefoot Gen* is being remembered and read for over 40 years now. The first reason for this probably is that it was part of the school education. Second, and perhaps contradicting the first, *Gen* was by no means an 'educational manga' (*gakushū manga*), but a boys' comics to the last; it was not supposed to convey information, but to be enjoyed as a manga. Functioning as a medium for messages and being enjoyed in its own right as a comic, *Gen* is a classic example of the ambiguity of manga.

(Translation from Japanese: Michael Schultz)

13 This trend probably started with the manga of Tezuka Osamu. According to the Toyohashi/Hiroshima-survey, 65.6% of the elementary and junior high-schools owned works by him. After Tezuka's death in 1989, his works came to be seen as 'high-culture' and were thus easier to obtain for school libraries. Furthermore, with their impressive cover illustrations they often do not look like manga books on first sight; also their increasingly being published in hard-cover helped their entry in school libraries.

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Roger Sabin

Barefoot Gen in the US and UK: Activist Comic, Graphic Novel, Manga

Barefoot Gen occupies a revered yet ambivalent place in the history of comics in the USA and Europe. One reason has been that it is symbolic of a tragedy that is still being dealt with, namely the dropping of the atomic bomb, and thus is automatically in a category on its own. At the same time, any appreciation of the comic comes freighted with the idea that it is already a 'classic' — a notoriously difficult cultural positioning to debate or challenge. Moreover, because it is Japanese, *Gen* has been classed as 'other', and inevitably discussed on a level different from other comics output (and, because of its subject matter, different from other manga as well). Perhaps it is not surprising, therefore, that reviews in the media and in the academic press have veered toward respectful description rather than critical examination, and that *Gen*'s elevation to the 'canon' has been an awkward one.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the phases of republication of *Gen* in the US and UK. It is hoped to show that each time the comic was republished — in 1978–81, 1987–93 and 2004 onwards[1] — it became symbolic of other themes. What, for example, were its links with anti-nuclear protest, the 'graphic novel' revolution in publishing, and the need to memorialise Hiroshima? The paper derives from a talk delivered at the conference "Reading Manga From Multiple Perspectives: Japanese Comics and Globalisation", held at Leipzig University, 2005 — the '*Gen* panel' for which was, itself, timed to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the bomb. *Gen* is essentially a pacifist

1 These are rough dates. The following is a detailed time-line, based on Rifas (2004) but with additions by the author:
1978–1982: Project Gen publish the first two volumes.
1980–81: EduComics publish two issues of *Gen of Hiroshima* (with *I SAW IT* published in 1982).
1983: Horupu Shuppan publish the first two volumes in English in Tōkyō for use in English classes in Japan.
1983: Part of volume 1 excerpted in Frederik Schodt's book *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics* (Kōdansha International).
1987–1993: New Society publish the first four volumes.
1989–90: Penguin UK publish the first two volumes.
1990: Last Gasp publish the first two volumes. Plus, in 1999, volume 3; and in 1994, volume 4.
2004–onwards: Last Gasp publish all ten volumes.
In Europe, the pattern has been roughly similar. In the case of France, the country where interest in *Gen* has arguably been most intense, the chronology looks like this:
1981: Part of volume one appears, translated from English, in the Swiss magazine *Le Cri qui Tue* (a small circulation fan magazine).
1983: The first volume is translated, from English, by Les Humanoïdes Associés under the title *Gen d'Hiroshima*. LHA was, at this time, a medium-sized publisher with underground links.
1990: The first volume is published by a respectable mainstream publisher, Albin Michel, under the title *Mourir pour le Japon: La véritable histoire d'une famille anéantie par Hiroshima.*
2003: Vertige Graphic starts the complete publication. Six volumes published up to 2005. VG is publishing other 'serious manga' like the works of Tatsumi Yoshihiro.
Thanks for this information to conference attendee Jean-Marie Bouissou. See also his essay in this volume, plus *Manga Goes Global* at: http://www.ceri-sciencespo.com/archive/avril00/artjmb.pdf

history of Hiroshima, as seen through the eyes of a little boy survivor — 'Gen' (a word meaning 'source' or 'beginning'). It is also the semi-autobiography of creator Nakazawa Keiji, who was seven years old when the bomb fell. The first four volumes (of ten) feature scenes of Gen's family life in the town before the bomb, including commentary about the roles of the Japanese and American militaries in starting the war, the manufacture and dropping of the bomb itself, and the ghastly aftermath. The comic spares no horrors as Gen embarks on an odyssey through the rubble to find his surviving family members, and witnesses people with burned and peeling skin, suffering the effects of radiation sickness, and other appalling injuries ("Hurry, please! Get this glass out of my body. The pieces are scraping together inside me! It hurts so much!"). The final six volumes, not yet published in the USA or Europe, follow Gen's life up until the present day, and his constant struggle with the psychological and physical after-effects.

Thus, the story brilliantly recalibrates the scale of the devastation to human dimensions. This is perhaps Nakazawa's key creative triumph; and the only other writer to have come close to this kind of intensity is perhaps W. G. Sebald with his descriptions of the bombing of Hamburg. As a study of suffering, the comic is peerless, but there is also a critical, evaluative, dimension that is often overlooked. As we shall see, it is as much a political commentary as a piece of straight reportage.

This dual creative purpose is complicated by the fact that, as mentioned, the story functions simultaneously as a semi-autobiography (at the finale, in volume 10, Gen makes his way to Tōkyō to become a mangaka). How much of the comic is true to actual events is debateable. We know, for example, that Nakazawa saw terrible things, but he has also said in interviews that he wasn't actually present when his family members were killed, as depicted in the story, so there is obviously a degree of poetic license.[2] Nakazawa is still alive, and revisited Hiroshima in 2005 in order to re-state his pacifist views. While there, he said that *Gen* was written 'to bear witness' — a politically loaded idea that we'll come back to ("as a survivor of that horror, I am on a mission. It is my duty to tell future generations: Never, ever resort to nuclear weapons. Fighting wars is wrong." [quoted in Takeda 2005]).

In Japan, the story was first published in serialised form in a boys' comic, *Shōnen Jump*, from 1973.[3] In other words, it was one of a number of adventure stories collected together in a cheap

2 Gen's mother is a key figure in the story. In reality, Nakazawa's mother died in 1966. At her cremation, no shards of bone were found in the ashes, as would be usual. This led Nakazawa to conclude that the radiation had penetrated as far as her skeleton. He has explained in the years since that this was a spur for him to use his manga skills to bring the story of Hiroshima to light.

3 According to manga expert Jonathan Clements, the story's original appearance was as much down to serendipity as anything else: "It was originally smuggled into publication as a bio piece about a manga author, along with a series of other less sensational ones. Before then, Nakazawa was getting turned down from editors who were afraid they would end up on a mythical CIA blacklist after the renewal of the US-Japan defence treaties at the end of the 1960s." Interview with the author, Oct. 12, 2005. For a full discussion of Nakazawa's career, see Clements' excellent essay (2005).

newsprint weekly anthology title. Moreover, though it may seem strange to readers in the US and Europe today, *Gen* appears to have been promoted as a war comic, a 'ripping yarn', and appeared accompanied by advertisements for war toys — including, incredibly, American bombers (it's almost as if the gleeful kid pictured in the ad is being invited to 'interact' with the comic). Evidently, war was perceived to be 'cool' amongst youngsters in Japan in the early 1970s, as it was in Britain and the US, and this was one way of marketing the comic (a view substantiated by various Japanese manga scholars present at Leipzig).[4]

Measured against the other *Shōnen Jump* stories, *Gen*'s quality soon became apparent, and it was filleted out to be sold in book form. Thus re-formatted, it found an audience among Japanese of all ages, and sold in staggering numbers — over seven million copies by 2005 (figures from Takeda 2005). With this kind of commercial impact, it wasn't long before *Gen* became an exalted part of Japanese culture. It was placed on school reading lists, and was promoted at various times by the government. In this way, as historian Sharon Kinsella has argued, it led the charge for the institutionalisation of certain kinds of 'politically acceptable' manga in Japan.[5]

Phase 1: *Gen* the activist tool

The first phase of republication of *Gen* in the US, between 1978 and 1981, was thanks to the efforts of peace activists and believers in the power of comics. They could see *Gen*'s value as an instrument in the struggle against nuclear weapons, and in the politically charged atmosphere of a country coming to terms with defeat in Vietnam and a new phase in the Cold War with the Soviets, any method of reaching the population — however bizarre it may seem to that population at first — was reckoned to be worth trying. Nakazawa's original aspiration for the comic was thus deemed ready to go international.

Project Gen was a not-for-profit-organisation set up with the express intention of translating *Gen* for this purpose, comprised of a group of Japanese and Americans living in Tōkyō (the most notable among them being Frederik Schodt, later author of the classic book *Manga! Manga!*).

4 Many thanks to fellow conference speaker Ōgi Fusami for bringing to Leipzig this now very rare comic for attendees to see for ourselves.

5 This institutionalisation of such comics was partly the subject of a talk by scholar Sharon Kinsella entitled "The Nationalisation of Manga" given to the Japan Society, London, Oct. 11, 2005. An abridged version can be found at: http://www.japansociety.org.uk/lectures/05kinsella.html

It was an all-volunteer operation, and by all accounts was fairly ad hoc.[6] According to the current co-ordinator of the Project:

> [It] began in 1976, when Japanese peace activists Masahiro Oshima and Yukio Aki[7] walked across the United States as part of that year's Transcontinental Walk for Peace and Social Justice. Their fellow walkers frequently asked them about the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, and one of them happened to have a copy of *Hadashi no Gen* [*Barefoot Gen*] in his backpack. The Americans on the walk, astonished that an atomic bomb survivor had written about it in cartoon form, urged their Japanese friends to translate it onto English. Upon returning to Japan, Oshima and Aki founded Project Gen. (see Asazuma 2004)

The group felt it was logical to publish *Gen* as a series of books: after all, this was the format in which it was acquiring fame in Japan at the time. The result was two black-and-white volumes, published in 1978 and 1979. Although print runs for the books were very small (5,000 apiece), we have to remember that these were groundbreaking efforts: in retrospect, there seems no justification for their relative invisibility in comics history textbooks (or, by the same token, for the equally disproportionate level of attention lavished on allegedly groundbreaking book-form comics published in a similar time-frame — e.g. Will Eisner's *Contract with God*, which is sometimes credited with inventing the idea of serious literature in this format). The reality of the situation was that 'starting small' was the only option for Project Gen: their resources didn't stretch any further. The aim was for the books to be published in Wisconsin: the main distributor would be The War Resisters League, an organisation with roots going back to 1923, and which had been the first peace group to call for withdrawal from Vietnam. Once in the US, they would hopefully be sold from a variety of outlets and sources including radical political bookstores (the ads pages of contemporary alternative newspapers were typically brimming with notices for socialist, anarchist, and feminist stores, among others), peace organisations (such as SANE) and religious bodies (notably the Quakers).

But the Project Gen group weren't the only players in the game in the late 1970s. While this process of translating and publishing was happening, another activist got involved, and this time from the world of comics — or more specifically, underground comics. His name was Leonard Rifas, and his company, EduComics (Educational Comics), was a one-man operation dedicated to highlighting various ills of the world via the comics form.[8] His view was that a *Gen* book wasn't the only way to go. Another solution would be to serialise it as a comic. The reason was, very simply — according to Rifas — that comics had their own qualities as an extremely effective democratic tool, representing

6 For more on the process of translation, plus an interview with one of those involved (Alan Gleason), see Adams 2003.

7 Azasuma uses the family name last, as in English tradition, and without macrons: Ōshima Masahiro, Aki Yukio [the editors].

8 I am extremely grateful to Leonard for looking over a draft of this essay, though, of course, the mistakes are my own, and, as you can see from footnotes 15 and 16, we did not agree on everything (who ever does?). Historians are incredibly lucky in that he has written a detailed autobiographical account of his struggle to publish *Gen*. See Rifas 2004.

"access for the voiceless" (see Rifas 1982). Portable and cheap, they could be disseminated in a different way to books, though both had a role to play in what he would later call "globalisation from below" (see Rifas 2004). After negotiations with Project Gen, Rifas was allowed to use their translation, and the result was two EduComics under the name *Gen of Hiroshima*, one in 1980, and the other in 1981 (Rifas would also publish a full colour comic of another Nakazawa story, *I SAW IT*, a straight re-telling of his life story, in 1982).

A word on underground comics: these were essentially counter-cultural publications that had their heyday between 1968 and 1975: hippie comics, simplistically speaking, consisting mostly of humorous tales about sex, drugs, politics and rock and roll — but anchored within a left-libertarian worldview. Typified by the work of Robert Crumb and Gilbert Shelton, they appeared in pamphlet form and were sold from 'headshops' — hippie shops that sold posters, drug paraphernalia, and so on — rather than from mainstream newsagents or bookstores. The 'underground revolution' meant that comic books in the USA could once more be thought of as vehicles for adult subject matter.

With this in mind, Rifas wanted *Gen* to be educational in quite a specific way, within the compass of underground concerns. It wasn't to be just another anti-war statement, but also an anti-nuclear statement more generally — a subtly different approach to Project Gen. The publisher had previously had hits with titles such as *All Atomic Comics* (1976), which riffed on the dangers of nuclear reactors on American soil. Thus, *Gen* was intended to be co-opted into a larger anti-nuclear power agenda (as well as helping to expand the possibilities of comics), and ideally would have a long life, as it would in theory be serialised in pamphlet form over a period of years. Rifas expected that the majority of sales would come from the headshops, and from the burgeoning specialist comics store network, though he wouldn't ignore the same radical bookshops being targeted by Project Gen.[9] Whatever the strategy, the entry of EduComics into the fray meant that *Gen* was being retailed as a book and as a comic, in a two-pronged advance.

Why was *Gen* so appealing to the activist frame of mind? In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Cold War was getting very warm indeed, and 'Mutually Assured Destruction' (acronym: MAD) between the Americans and the Soviets seemed like a real possibility. There was a sense among the activist left in America that not enough was known about the effects of nuclear bombs, and that if this was made explicit then people would be more inclined to protest against them. For example, Rifas later explained that, "I felt it was vitally important for Americans, as citizens of the leading nuclear superpower, to be able to imagine in greater detail what nuclear weapons actually do" (Rifas 2004: 138).

9 Rifas even managed to secure some decent distribution in Europe — especially to Germany, where the anti-nuclear movement was particularly strong.

That *Gen* happened to be about Hiroshima was more than pertinent. The very word 'Hiroshima' had come to be a by-word for morally unjust mass annihilation in left-liberal circles. There was also a sense of unease that virtually no visual evidence survived from Hiroshima and Nagasaki (even today, when we think of those events, the tendency is to imagine mushroom clouds rather than images of human suffering). It was recognised that the destruction had been so complete that it would be asking too much to expect eyewitness documentary records; but there was anger that film footage taken by US military personnel and journalists immediately after the surrender had been suppressed by the authorities.[10] The rationale for this censorship had been threefold: first, the authorities did not want to provoke unnecessary fear among the US population. Second, it was felt that if such footage was released in Japan it may stir the Japanese population into insurrection. And third, there was no desire to open the possibility that the bombs could be characterised as war crimes. This latter point is particularly germane to our discussion, because it is something that *Gen* addresses directly.

We should note here that the issue of how much the US-American and European public knew about Hiroshima and Nagasaki at this time (late 1970s/early 1980s) continues to be controversial. Despite the perception of the left, some historians argue that there was plenty on information available. For example, they point to writer John Hersey's account of six Hiroshima survivors, published in *The New Yorker* in 1946, and expanded as a monograph (*Hiroshima*) later that year (see Hersey 1946). The book became a best-seller, was translated into Japanese, and was the model for many future media discussions of the bomb. Similarly, in Britain, awareness seems to have been more widespread than in the US. In 1965, controversy had raged over the alleged 'banning' by the BBC of a programme called *The War Game*, which imagined in some detail the effects of a bomb on southern England. However, recent studies have shown that far from being a conspiracy to shield the public from unpalatable truths, this decision not to show the programme was taken on an ad hoc basis (see Chapman 2006). By contrast, in 1973, the epic documentary TV series *The World at War* spared no details when it came to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These are isolated examples, of course: a full discussion of what people did and didn't know in the US and UK is beyond the scope of this essay.[11]

Nevertheless, it is fair to say that for American pacifists such as the Project Gen volunteers and Rifas, *Gen* seemed like the perfect educational tool. It was 'bearing witness' (Nakazawa's aim)

10 The best source on this is Michael Hogan's book *Hiroshima* (1996), which talks in detail about the censorship of information in the postwar years.

11 Rifas later made a study of this with regard to comic books (see Rifas 1988). In an interview with me, he summed up his argument thus: "In one sense, there had been a tremendous amount about nuclear weapons in American popular culture, but when you look at what it amounted to, it breaks the heart… You had two large categories of response: (1) trivialization of nuclear weapons. Soldiers attain recognition for acts of individual heroism during atomic combat; superheroes hug exploding nuclear bombs without suffering even an earache. (2) apocalyptic exaggeration of the power of nuclear weapons. The great round earth bursts into fragments; humanity is reduced to two survivors." (Aug. 10, 2005)

to a horror that had not had enough exposure — albeit in an unusual and, to some of its audience, an oblique way. The politics of the time seemingly demanded its urgent publication. There were other ways, too, in which it fitted comfortably into a broadly leftist worldview. Nakazawa himself identified as a socialist, and was happy to say so repeatedly in interviews. *Gen* was clearly anti-militarist. The early part of the story, in the run-up to the bomb, is unambiguous about the responsibility of the Japanese military machine for starting the war. There is also negative commentary about the US military. But more than this, the cliques who stood to benefit from military aggression are spotlighted. In the first few pages, Gen's father — who readers are clearly invited to admire — twice blames the monied Japanese elite, "A handful of rich men started this war! They didn't consult us!" (any Marxist would be proud). Finally, the story expresses sympathy for the victims of Japanese imperialism — namely the Koreans and Chinese, who were used as slave labour.

But there were also tensions: aspects of the story that did not sit so well (especially with the more anti-American elements of the peace movement). Most importantly, as previously mentioned, *Gen* did not make an explicit case for Hiroshima as a war crime. An atrocity, yes, but a war crime, no. For the American radical left, a common viewpoint was that the bomb was unnecessary: that Japan was exhausted, that the war would have ended anyway, and that the only rationale for dropping such a fearsome weapon on defenceless civilians was to make a point — specifically to warn off the Soviets. In coming to this conclusion, the radicals were paralleling and being influenced by a concurrent debate in academia, typified by the writings of Gar Alperovitz (see especially Alperovitz 1965). But Nakazawa, Project Gen, and EduComics were not in tune with this view. For all Nakazawa's passionate denunciation of Japanese and American militarism in *Gen*, he was not interested in making this kind of judgement. For him, war itself was the atrocity, and the people to blame were the 'rich men' who acted undemocratically in starting it. More than this, there's little in *Gen* to suggest that Japan was on the point of surrender pre-1945. True, there are some scenes indicating how bad things had gotten for the Japanese military, but there are others showing 'home guard' militias preparing to fight a guerrilla war should the Americans invade. This aspect of the story could be interpreted as giving credence to the idea, contra Alperovitz et al., that an invasion would have been extremely costly and would arguably have led to more deaths (soldiers and civilians) than Hiroshima and Nagasaki.[12]

There were other niggling tensions. For example, the picture of Japanese home life that *Gen* presents could be problematic. The female characters are generally subordinate (especially the mother) and there are scenes of domestic violence, especially of kids being knocked about by adults (the father and a teacher). One defence of this could be that it is merely attempting to show Japan 'as it was'.

12 The most commonly quoted estimate is c. 2 million, versus the c. 200,000 dead in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. (Though can we ever judge morality via numbers?)

But for some sections of the American left in the 1970s–80s who were gender-politically focused, it presented a contradiction. In the words of another speaker at the Leipzig conference, "You cannot use *Gen* to promote pacifism if you don't question the politics of the everyday" (Spies 2005).[13]

Perhaps partly because of these problems, sales of *Gen* were poor — both in its book form and as a comic. True, it was often reviewed (in the radical press and in comics fanzines) in a positive manner. But the buyers were staying away. The Project Gen volumes had no advertising behind them, and remained rooted to the shelves. Indeed, the War Resisters League tried to warn off Rifas from attempting a comic version because sales of the volumes had been so slow (Rifas 2004: 143). Meanwhile, the comics were not doing much better. They were not making as much of an impact as had been hoped on the headshop, Crumb-fan, community — or indeed as much as previous EduComics — and despite some success with distribution into Europe, Rifas later admits that they were "a commercial failure" (ibid: 139). They never made it past two issues.

But when we look closely at the reasons for this failure — both as book and comic — it is clear that there was more to it than simply the story's stance on war crimes or its depiction of domestic violence. For example, there was the simple fact that it didn't fit with public perceptions of what a comic should be. Firstly, it was Japanese, and this led to all kinds of problems when it came to a readership acclimatised to the storytelling in American (and British) comics. There was certainly no sense of a manga industry at this time — *Gen* was one of the first ever translated, and so the idea of Japanese panel transitions and other narrative techniques seemed alien indeed.[14] For example, *Gen* includes what we now think of as aspect-to-aspect panel progressions; symbolism including wheat sheaves to indicate new life; and body-language such as profuse sweating to demonstrate agitation, and a bubble issuing from the nose to indicate sleeping.[15] This 'graphic language' was especially difficult when overlaid onto the semi-documentary content of the comic, with its emphasis on Japanese customs and mores. Secondly, *Gen*, in its comic book from, didn't fit with the underground.[16]

It was political, yes; it was violent, yes; but it markedly was not a 'funnybook'. Most of the other undergrounds were essentially satirical, their politics being implicit rather than explicit. Only a

13 Spies went on to argue that possibly this point accounts for why *Gen* was promoted by successive conservative governments in Japan — there was nothing at stake at this (gender political) level.

14 The earliest known republication of manga in America was "The Loyal Bandits", a translation of *The Tales of Suiko* with art by Yokoyama Mitsuteru, which ran in the *World Tribune* newspaper in 1972. Other than this, the most notable predecessor was a 1965 comic of *Astro Boy* (Gold Key), but this derived from a TV show rather than the original (Tezuka Osamu) manga. The EduComics' *Gen* is recognised as the first comic book version of manga material.

15 For a basic introduction to manga techniques, see Scott McCloud 1994, pp. x–y. On the narrative style of *Gen* specifically, see Jeff Adams' PhD thesis 2003.

16 Rifas disagrees. "*Gen* fit perfectly well with the post-classical period of comix [sic] of the late 1970s as the cartoonists moved on to post-psychedelic, serious themes. My article [Rifas 2004] tells in the footnotes what the underground comix artists thought of Nakazawa's work." Interview, April 19, 2006.

tiny percentage was straightforward 'message comics' in the EduComics mould. As comics historian David Huxley has noted:

> Given the nature of the underground [in general], its disapproval of establishment politics, opposition to the Vietnam War, desire to change laws, etc., it would seem logical that these concerns would be directly reflected in its own comics. Although this is the case in underground magazines and newspapers, where much political debate takes place, there is comparatively little direct or obvious comment in the comics themselves. (Huxley 2001: 133)

As for *Gen*'s 'educational' tag, which could theoretically have been a problem, there is no evidence that the counter-cultural readership found it patronising. Additionally, on the level of autobiography, it did not gel with underground trends. Creators such as Crumb and Justin Green had pioneered the idea of autobiography in comics, and by 1980 this had become a staple of the underground. Later, in the 1990s and 2000s, Joe Sacco would take this further and use autobiography as a way to comment on the political situations in Palestine and Bosnia. *Gen* has been retrospectively fitted into this tradition by some critics, and it is easy to see why (indeed, in later editions, Crumb is quoted on the cover singing its praises). But at the time, the story seemed distanced from the hippie vibe, and commentators were not making this link — not even in the comics press.

Above all, selling the comic was difficult when the underground was dying. By 1980, the headshops were closing down or being turned into regular boutiques, and frequent busts of comics and of shops due to the tightening of state obscenity laws meant that distribution for *Gen* and other undergrounds was becoming severely restricted. True, the number of specialist comics stores was growing at the same time: but this (superhero-driven) market was never going to be as welcoming. It was the end of one era, and the beginning of another.

Thus, *Gen* in its first English incarnations was sunk. For both Project Gen and EduComics, the aim had been to open people's eyes to what a bomb could do. But by selling into the peace activist community and to underground comics fans, they were preaching to the converted (which is not in any way to denigrate the efforts of these pioneering publishers).[17] This bigger aim could never have been achieved in this way. For any chance of this to happen, the whole idea of 'a comic' would have to be rebranded. Old prejudices about what a comic should or should not be would need to be challenged on the level of the general public. And that is the subject of our next section.

17 Rifas remembers reaching these communities of 'the converted', and not an undifferentiated mass audience, as his immediate goal. He now says "I think if we had just broken even and eliminated nuclear weapons, we would have been satisfied". Interview, April 20, 2006.

Phase 2: *Gen* the 'graphic novel'

The opportunity to reach a wider readership came with the publication of *Gen* in book form by Penguin Books between 1989 and 1990. Packaged as such, it could be promoted as 'a graphic novel' — a term being used at this time to denote a new kind of comic, one that was in the forefront of an adult comics revolution, bringing serious subject matter to the public for the first time. All hype, of course. Book-form comics had been around for nearly as long as comics themselves, and serious subject matter was far from new — the Project Gen edition had shown this much back in 1978. Nevertheless, hype sometimes has its value, and for a while it seemed as if *Gen* could make the leap from cult to mainstream. Indeed, it was only now, with the imprimatur of a major publisher behind it, that *Gen* was accepted into the canon of 'classic' comics, both within fandom and outside, and that Nakazawa became a much more widely-known name.[18]

The story has its beginnings back in 1987, when yet another small radical publisher decided to bring out versions of the Project Gen editions. This was New Society Publishing, a company with ecological and anti-nuclear leanings, who put out the first two volumes between 1987 and 1988, and a further two, again based on Project Gen translations, in 1988 and 1993. In this regard, they were very much in the tradition of Project Gen, and were basically continuing their work. As before, they could only count on very limited distribution, and were selling into more or less the same politically aware, liberal market as Project Gen and EduComics. Radical bookstores were the key market, and although enough of these still existed in the late 1980s–early 1990s in the US to constitute a network, and although sales of the new editions were better than before, it was never going to be enough to make the leap onto the radar of the mainstream media and of the general public. What the New Society books did do, however, was put *Gen* onto the radar of other publishers.

Penguin Books picked up the torch, and published the first two volumes under more 'designery' covers — covers being a point of pride for this particular house — between 1989 and 1990. Specifically, this was the initiative of Penguin UK: due to distribution wrangles in the US, the British version would be imported, while another US reprint of the same books would be undertaken by Last Gasp Publishing (see below, p. 52). With Penguin, *Gen* had serious marketing clout behind it for the first time. And although, certainly, this was a publisher with a liberal reputation (though not a leftist one in the same sense as Project Gen, EduComics, or New Society), their intention from the start was to reach as wide an adult readership as possible. Once again, the comic's origins as a kids'

18 Arguably, this elevation to the canon began with Frederik Schodt's 1983 book *Manga! Manga!*, which excerpted a section of the *Gen* story.

story would be elided, as the 'quality newspaper-reading' classes were targeted: in other words, the Penguin demographic that frequented the high street bookstores.

As previously mentioned, part of the plan involved exploiting the nature of the book's very format. Ergo: *Gen* was promoted as part of new wave in literature — "graphic novels for the post-literate generation".[19] This was an agenda cooked up in tandem by the media and the publishers of book-form comics (primarily Titan Books but later Penguin as well). The idea was that by putting out comics in this guise, as opposed to in pamphlet form, and (even better) by publishing sober subject matter thus, comics would be taken seriously as an artform. In this way, it was hoped that respectability for this previously un-respectable form would be automatic. Britain and the US could then enjoy the kind of 'comics album' culture that had long existed in Europe. And, if this happened, then Penguin et al. could be expected to make a financial killing. Soon every newspaper supplement and TV arts show was rallying to the cry: "Comics Grow Up!"[20] It is perhaps too strong to say that Penguin were 'cashing in' with *Gen*; but it is also clear that by placing it within a long-term publishing plan, their motivations were not the same as any of its previous publishers.

There was a back-story. Penguin UK had already had a hit in 1987 with *Maus*, by Art Spiegelman (published in the US by Pantheon) — a graphic novel about the Nazi Holocaust. *Maus* had set the scene for the acceptance of semi-documentary comics, and *Gen* was hyped as the follow-up. It even came with a foreword by Spiegelman, in which he claimed he owed a creative debt (to the Project Gen editions). Both comics were autobiographical, and this time the link was made by critics with similar work coming out of the 1960s/70s underground, of which Spiegelman had been a part. Nevertheless, for Penguin, the aim was for *Gen* to be the next step in fortifying their list for the future — and in the early 1990s they would indeed go ahead and commission a substantial roster of graphic novels, many in translation from Europe.

But the plan had flaws. Penguin were already behind the times, and *Gen* was looking very old-fashioned by the time it appeared in its new clothes in 1989. For one thing, comparing it with *Maus* did it no favours at all because *Maus* obviously had a much more familiar style. With its layered allusions and knowing style, it was sophisticated in a way that a kids' comic from 1973 could never be. Other advantages of not being Japanese have already been discussed in relation to the Project Gen and EduComics editions.[21]

19 This is a soundbite invented by comics writer Alan Moore, *Signals*, Channel 4 TV, Jan. 18, 1989.

20 The graphic novel hype was the subject of several chapters in Sabin 1993.

21 A detailed comparison of the two publications was the subject of Ole Frahm's talk "Haunted Comics: The Autobiographical Contract in Art Spiegelman's *Maus* and Keiji Nakazawa's *Barefoot Gen*", Leipzig conference, July 23, 2005.

Moreover, there had been numerous documentary and semi-documentary comics and graphic novels published since *Maus*, and these, too, often made *Gen* look clunky. I had the pleasure of being one of the first journalists to review *Gen* for the national press in the UK, and one of my criticisms was that a comic called *Brought to Light*, about the Iran-Contra affair, with its fully painted artwork and whizzy layouts, looked and felt much more progressive (Sabin 1989). Being a fledgling reporter, I had no idea of *Gen*'s juvenile origins a decade-and-a-half before: this information had not been forthcoming in the Penguin publicity material. Several other critics made the same assumptions.

But *Gen* was out of step in other ways. By 1989 there was a new element — the rise of manga. The comic that kick-started the trend had appeared in translation a year before: *Akira*. This fast-paced dystopian fantasy, all speed-lines and dynamic violence, was published in a number of volumes, and went into cult overdrive with the release of its companion anime in 1988. Suddenly, the US-American and European media went manga-crazy, nearly always discussing them as science fiction spectaculars in the *Akira* mould. This narrow view had the benefit of co-opting manga into the tradition of SF comics in the USA and Europe, including the superhero titles that were the basis of the fan market, and thus making them seem less alien. It also had the effect of opening the floodgates for similarly themed manga, typically packaged in book form, ranging from cyberpunk to 'mecha' adventures. It goes without saying that *Gen* did not fit this newly fashionable template at all.[22]

For Penguin, this was the final straw. *Gen* could not compete in a marketplace where the media's attention was being drawn elsewhere. Overall, sales were poor, and although the volumes did garner reviews in the 'quality press', both in the US and UK, as intended, they ended up in dump-bins very quickly. More than this, the whole 'graphic novel revolution' failed to materialise. *Maus* had been one of three graphic novels in the late 1980s to achieve significant sales (the others being *Watchmen* and *The Dark Knight Returns*).[23] But over time it became clear that these had sold into a non-fan market primarily on the basis of their novelty value. The three were in a position to capitalise on the 'comics grow up' hype, but the graphic novels published thereafter, including *Gen*, would have a hard time catching up.

A wider public were evidently still not interested in comics, and the fabled European paradigm was nowhere to be seen. Indeed, by the time *Gen* appeared, a backlash in the media was already

22 There had been an anime based on *Gen* released in 1983, but it had been significantly different to the comic, and played down the politics (there was also a follow-up anime, plus three live action movies).

23 Full details for the three are as follows: *Maus*, by Art Spiegelman, originally serialised in *RAW Magazine* (1980–86), then published in book form by Pantheon in the USA in 1986 and Penguin UK in 1987; *Watchmen*, by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, originally serialised by DC Comics in 1986–87, then published in book form in 1987 by DC Comics in the US and Titan Books in the UK; *The Dark Knight Returns* by Frank Miller (with Klaus Janson and Lynn Varley) originally serialised by DC Comics in 1986, published in book form in 1986 by DC Comics in the US and Titan Books in the UK, 1986.

setting in: by 1991, London magazine *Time Out* was famously including graphic novels in its *Hated 100*: "Biff! Bang! Krapp!" ran the listing. "If adult comics are the wave of the future, how come nobody's reading them?" (*Time Out London*, Nov. 12, 1991). Suddenly, *Gen* was looking like the symbol for one of the most spectacular failures in recent publishing history. Recognising the depressing truth, Penguin withdrew from graphic novel publishing within five years.

Nothing has been said so far about the political context for '*Gen* the graphic novel'. This is because the intersection with current politics was not so important for Penguin as it had been for Project Gen or EduComics in the years before, for the reasons already outlined (as for Last Gasp, see Phase 3). This is not to say that the nuclear threat was any less pertinent. In fact, the opposite might be said to be true. Mrs. Thatcher had ascended to power in the UK in 1979, and Ronald Reagan in the US in 1984, and between them they had taken the Cold War into a new and extremely dangerous phase. The result was a newly energised peace movement, partly boosted by the subculture of the moment, punk (some historians have seen the revival of CND — the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament — in the UK as being intricately linked with the rise of anarcho-punk).

The comics world did respond to the newly-heightened situation (as we might expect, and as happened in other aspects of the arts). But mostly, the books that addressed it did so in the abstract. To take two examples already mentioned: *Watchmen* was a revisionist superhero tale in which a certain 'Dr. Manhattan' realises the radiation he is emitting is giving his friends cancer (this was also, in part, a satire on 1960s superhero comics, in which the heroes often derived their powers from radioactivity). There were plenty of other references to nuclear catastrophe in the story, including allusions to 'Hiroshima shadows', and indeed *Watchmen* ends in an (alien-induced) apocalypse that is clearly meant to be interpreted as a metaphor for the same. Similarly, *Akira* takes place in a post-apocalyptic Tōkyō, and begins with a mushroom cloud. Its themes of mutation and suffering are clearly reality-based.

But there was one comic that dealt head-on with the new zeitgeist: *When the Wind Blows* (1982) by Briton Raymond Briggs. This remarkable story, about two pensioners caught up in a nuclear holocaust, was the creator's personal statement about the UK government's lamentable attitude to public protection. Like Nakazawa, Briggs wanted to 'show what a bomb could do', and so ensured that the story involved harrowing scenes of radiation sickness and had no happy ending. It was published by Penguin, slightly ironically, and sold in album form into the bookstores long before the graphic novel hype. It was a surprise best-seller, and in 1986 was made into a hit animated movie, voiced by John Mills and Peggy Ashcroft. By the time *Gen* came along in 1989, it was just one more precedent to live up to.

Phase 3: *Gen* the manga

Another decade, another *Gen*. The third and most recent incarnation of the comic is the one just published (in late 2004) by Last Gasp. It is in a new translation, again by Project Gen, and is once more in book form, though in a slightly smaller format than the Penguin edition (the so-called '*tankōbon*' size that is the staple of the Japanese market). All ten volumes are promised on this occasion, though at the time of writing only four have appeared. Unsurprisingly, the main promotional thrust from Last Gasp has involved the fact that 2005 is the 60th anniversary of Hiroshima.[24]

Last Gasp are a venerable comics publisher, with roots in the underground. Founded in 1970, they have been responsible for putting out some of the more politically aware comics within the compass of the underground, such as the 'Eco-funnies' series, with its emphasis on Green politics. (Many of their comics have dealt satirically with nuclear power and weapons.) In the 1980s and 90s they diversified, and became home to (and distributors of) comics and books of a more varied kind, though typically veering towards transgressive subject matter — tattooing, outsider art, etc.

Interestingly, what Last Gasp have never been known as is a manga publisher, though head honcho Ron Turner was an early supporter of *Gen* in its EduComics days, and the company did republish the New Society/Penguin volumes in the 1990s, albeit in low-key fashion. Thus, in some ways the decision to publish *Gen* in its full ten volumes hearkens back to its activist-inspired origins. The same educational imperative is there, and, similarly, the main market is intended to be the specialist comics stores rather than the mainstream bookstores (though no publisher in the 2000s can ignore this market). A lot has happened in the world of comics since the Penguin edition of *Gen*, and Last Gasp do not want to make the same mistake of launching it into the book trade in the hope that a readership will emerge. In the words of Alan Gleason, former co-ordinator of Project Gen, "Now, it's the fans of comics, a different market — the sort of market that Last Gasp aims for" (quoted in Cha 2005).

There are limitations with this strategy. In the 2000s, the specialist comics store market has been thoroughly 'sewn up' by the dominant publishers — namely DC Comics and Marvel — who deal primarily in superhero comics, and who account for over 95 per cent of sales. This leaves little room for manoeuvre for the smaller publishers, such as Last Gasp (of whom there are many). Thus, print runs of *Gen* have been realistically small: for example, an initial print run of 3,000 for the first volume, which is fewer than the Project Gen 1978 edition.[25]

24 The press release for the first volume is headed: "A Reissue of This Classic Manga to Coincide With the 60th Anniversary of Hiroshima". Thus far, media coverage has indeed picked up on the connection with the memorial services that are happening all over the world.

25 For more on this, see Matthew McAllister 2001.

But the background to Last Gasp taking this direction is clear. Following the collapse of the adult comics dream in the late 1980s/early 1990s, the industry had to readjust. Slowly, over the next decade and a half, graphic novels made a comeback. Even though the best-seller status of *Maus*, *Dark Knight* and *Watchmen* was never repeated (and perhaps could never be repeated), graphic novels became an established part of the literary landscape. In the high street, they were not yet accepted in the same way as album comics in Europe, but nevertheless occupied a space on the shelves analogous with cult fiction, or even poetry. In the specialist stores, although pamphlet comics still thrived, more and more publishers could see the benefit of the chunkier format. The majority of sales in the industry remained via this market.

Within this general picture, manga came a long way, too. The post-*Akira* wave of science fiction titles gradually gave way to more varied subject matter, and quite unexpectedly in the 1990s the industry discovered a new market — young women. The 2005 London Book Fair declared manga to be the fastest growing sector of publishing, with *shōjo manga* (aimed at women) leading the way. Such pronouncements need to be treated with care, coming as they do from vested interests. But nevertheless, it seems clear that in the 2000s a sea change is happening in the way comics are perceived. Predictions in the trade press strongly suggest that the old American and British stereotypes of what a comic can be are fast being superseded by something more Oriental-looking (see Boyd 2001).

The new Last Gasp *Gen* is certainly taking account of these changes. On the one hand, it is in a position to be more readily assimilated than earlier editions: the cultural conditioning that enables superhero comics to be read seamlessly did not previously apply to *Gen*, but since the 1990s manga explosion this is no longer quite so true. The *tankōbon* format is signalling that the new publisher is aware of this shift, but is also a nod in the direction of 'retro manga' — a term currently being used in the comics press to describe 'vintage' manga from the 1960s and 70s that are being repackaged for a younger readership.

The best example of this retro-manga concept so far is the republication of the work of Tatsumi Yoshihiro as a *tankōbon, The Push Man and Other Stories* (Drawn & Quarterly, 2005), complete with a designer cover by hip cartoonist/designer Adrian Tomine.[26] A member of staff at a London comics store sums up why this is important:

> These books are definitely old-school, and the artwork does look its age next to the wham-bam dynamic style of some of the shojo and adventure manga on the racks. But by going for modern packaging, they're appealing to the connoisseur in the manga collector, and opening up a new way of approaching them. (Salmond 2005)

26 The trend for using fashionable cartoonists and graphic designers to make-over, and produce covers for, reprints of classic comics is also one that is growing. Chris Ware has been commissioned for *Krazy Kat* and *Walt and Skeezix*; Seth for *Peanuts*; and Chip Kidd for various projects including an illustrated biography of Jack (*Plastic Man*) Cole.

Finally, it is also important to note that the political context in which the new *Gen* finds itself is very different. One view might be that the Cold War is over, and 'the war on terror' has begun. That the public in the West are no longer so preoccupied with nuclear weapons, and instead — to be slightly sensationalist for a moment — live in fear of the young person with the rucksack in the seat next to them on the metro. It's a new kind of war, and from this vantage Last Gasp's strategy (or rather, the strategy of its distributors) in promoting the comic as a memorial, rather than pushing its value as an active tool in political protest, can be seen as reflecting this changed perception.

As if to underline this, the footage of Hiroshima taken by military personnel after the war — the censorship of which became such a bone of contention in the 1960s and 70s (see above) — has just been de-classified.[27] Such a process of the US establishment willingly becoming transparent only occurs when an issue is no longer 'live'; when the information is no longer considered dangerous. Perhaps this is the ultimate symbol that a new phase of history has begun.

But memorialising Hiroshima has its own issues. Commentators have expressed concern that it transforms Japan from aggressor to victim. That the West's guilt over Hiroshima tends to shift the focus away from Japan's war crimes and allows the Japanese to portray themselves as victims alongside those of the Holocaust (again, the equivalence of *Gen* with *Maus* comes into focus). That, ultimately, at a time when Japan's internal politics are taking a sharp lurch to the right, the emphasis on memorials will have a counter-productive effect.[28] Such arguments are perhaps inevitable, and indicate once more how easily *Gen* can become a cipher for other political concerns.

More than this, we need to ask just how far the world really has moved on from the threat of nuclear annihilation. Estimates vary, but in 2005 there are nine nuclear nations, and the world's nuclear arsenal stands at approximately 27,000 bombs — most of them far more powerful than the one dropped on Hiroshima. An added irony is that Japan itself feels under threat from nuclear-armed China and North Korea, for reasons that hearken back to the 1930s and 40s and which are chronicled in *Gen*. Even if we accept that the 'war on terror' is a new kind of war, it has the potential to destabilise this world situation. Plus there is always the possibility of terrorists acquiring nuclear capability and bombing America or Europe. Perhaps, after all, *Gen*'s value to the ongoing anti-nuclear struggle is as relevant as ever. Uncomfortable truths that perhaps indicate that *Gen* is not yet a period piece.

27 Some of the footage was declassified earlier (see Tucker 2005) while 701 photographs were discovered, amazingly, in a trash heap in Massachusetts in 2000.

28 The evidence for Japan's rightward shift is plentiful, but its nature is disputed (a harmless form of defensive nationalism, or the beginnings of neo-fascism?). In the world of manga, it is reflected by the success of books such as *On the Yasukuni Question* by Kobayashi Yoshinori, which defends Japan's 1930s–40s military expansion into Asia.

Concluding remarks

Barefoot Gen has travelled a long distance from being a serialised 'fast food' strip in a kids' comic in Japan, surrounded by all the clutter of advertising aimed at that demographic, to a smartly packaged graphic novel for Western adults, with all the 'middlebrow culture' and 'memorial' associations that implies. The act of republication has happened on three distinct occasions (though see footnote 1 for the full, convoluted publishing history), and each time the comic's intersection with politics and wider culture has been different — as we would expect. For this has been a continuing process of translation, not in the sense that 'translation' means a simple transfer of words and images from one language to another, like a bilingual dictionary. But rather, a translingual act of transcoding cultural material — a complex act of communication. There will be further editions of *Gen*, and there will be further modifications in meaning. But its message will continue to ring out, louder than the Hiroshima Peace Bell, for anybody who is prepared to listen.

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Sabine Fiedler

Nudpieda Gen — Hadashi no Gen in an International Speech Community

1. The planned language Esperanto and its speakers

Planned languages (also called 'universal languages', or '[artificial] world auxiliary languages') are language systems which have been consciously created according to definite criteria by an individual or a group of individuals for the purpose of making international communication easier (see Wüster 1931). Their number has probably reached almost 1,000 already. Among these, Esperanto, initiated by L. L. Zamenhof in 1887, is the only system that has managed the successful transition from a project to a fully-fledged language. This is due to linguo-structural properties (see Janton 1993; Wells 1989; Nuessel 2000), but above all to extra-linguistic factors (see Blanke 1995: 75–76; 2000). Esperanto has found a sufficiently large and differentiated speech community which has adopted and developed it. The number of speakers is estimated at between 500,000 (Pool/ Grofman 1989: 146) and 3.5 million (Piron 1989: 157). These speakers are connected by an active network of communication possibilities on local, national and international levels, which includes, for example, an independent press as well as publishing houses, organizations, correspondence, collective travelling, meetings and conferences in which only Esperanto is spoken, and radio programmes (see Fiedler 2002). There are more than 100 periodicals; the 2001 catalogue of Esperanto publications included more than 4,000 titles; among these are original works, as well as translated literary world classics.

From its beginnings, Esperanto has been connected with an ideal often called 'esperantism' or the 'internal idea of Esperanto' (*interna ideo*).[1] It has its origin in Zamenhof's humanistic-pacifist aims to create and disseminate a common language in order to ban war from human societies (*Forigi la militon el la homa socio*) as well as to establish fraternity and justice among all peoples (*frateco kaj justeco inter ĉiuj popoloj*) (see Kökény/Bleier 1933/1986: 150). Today there seem to be only a few speakers who remain loyal to the *interna ideo* in its original utopian meaning. Esperanto, however, is connected to a number of ideals, especially concerning linguistic communication. These include the necessity of communication to become acquainted with other people, the endeavour to remove language privileges and barriers, and the effort to achieve universal linguistic equality. Another outstanding property is the Esperanto speakers' feeling of identity, which finds its expression, for example, in linguistic loyalty. For the majority of its speakers the planned language does not only

1 This is also expressed in its name: *Esper-ant-o*, which was originally Zamenhof's pseudonym which has become the name of the language meaning *'one who hopes'*.

imply a means of communication but also a vehicle of culture which must be preserved and spread. The fact that Esperanto is taught as a mother tongue to children is indicative of this loyalty. Against this background it is not surprising that *Hadashi no Gen*, a book opposing war, a cartoon story that is "humanistic and humane, demonstrating and stressing the necessity for empathy among humans if we're to survive into another century" (as Art Spiegelman put it in his introduction to the new English translation [2004]) was translated into Esperanto.

Translation has always played an important role for Esperanto. The very first textbook (*Unua Libro*), published by L. L. Zamenhof in 1887, included translations, such as passages of the Bible and a text by Heinrich Heine. In the first period[2] of Esperanto literature, Zamenhof and other Esperanto pioneers translated important works of world literature, such as Dickens' *The Battle of Life* (1891), Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1894), Gogol's *Revizor* (1907), Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (1908), Schiller's *Die Räuber* (1908), Molière's *George Dandin* (1908), Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz* (World War I), and Orzeszkowa's *Marta* (1910). The last decade has also seen a variety of Esperanto translations come to light, such as Gabriel García Márquez's *Cien años de soledad* (1992), Giovanni Boccaccio's *Il decamerone* (1995), Cao Xueqin's *Hong Lou Meng* (*Ruĝdoma Sonĝo* [Dream of the Red Chamber]) (1995–1997), Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1996/2001), J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the* Rings (1996/97), Goethe's *Faust* (1999), Franz Kafka's *Die Verwandlung* (three versions 1996–2000). Literary work and translation has always been seen as both a means of developing Esperanto as a language and as proof that the language was capable of presenting there the work of other cultures (see Cool 1993: 73). Many translations into Esperanto, especially those of prose fiction and lyric poetry, can be compared favourably to their counterparts in ethnic languages (see Richmond 1993: 35).

In comparison to ethnic languages, Esperanto translations are characterized by three peculiarities. The first one refers to the direction of translation. There are only few examples of translations from the planned language; the major direction is the translation from ethnic languages into Esperanto. This means that, in the majority of cases, the source language of the literary work is the translator's mother tongue. This constellation is often advantageous for it provides the opportunity to notice all subtleties of the original work, which is an important precondition for good translations, as comparative studies reveal (see Fiedler 1999: 306–332).

The second peculiarity concerns the variety of source languages. Translation plays an important role within the speech community. According to a sociological survey by Rašić (1994: 160), about one-fourth of all Esperanto speakers are currently translating. They wish to make

2 M. Hagler (1978), in her doctoral thesis on Esperanto as a literary medium, divides Esperanto literature into a first period from 1887–1919 and a modern period from 1920 onwards.

other speakers familiar with the culture of their home countries. In this way, literary works of even small nations, translated into Esperanto, have the chance of reaching an international readership. However, developments in the international book market are different. Statistics show that translations from English dominate. According to a survey by Koller (2001: 30–33, based on the Statistical Yearbook 1999, published by UNESCO) in 1987 in 77 countries altogether 65,297 translations were published; the so-called big languages English, French, Russian and German amounted to 77.5% of all original texts. The source languages (with more than 1,000 titles) were as follows:

English	49.3%
French	10.3%
Russian	10.1%
German	7.8%
Italian	2.6%
Swedish	1.8%

Table 1: Source languages of translations.

The distribution looks different in Esperanto, as the following Table illustrates (see Fiedler 1999):

French	13.3%	Serbocroatian	1.7%
English	12.5%	Portuguese	1.7%
German	7.5%	Croatian	1.7%
Macedonian	7.7%	Slovak	1.7%
Russian	6.7%	Lithuanian	1.7%
Swedish	5.8%	Danish	0.8%
Japanese	5.8%	Persian	0.8%
Czech	5.0%	Polish	0.8%
Chinese	5.0%	Albanian	0.8%
Dutch	5.0%	Estonian	0.8%
Hungarian	3.3%	Bulgarian	0.8%
Spanish	3.3%	Finnish	0.8%
Italian	2.5%	Greek	0.8%
Serbian	1.7%		

Table 2: Distribution of translations into Esperanto.

The languages English, French, Russian, and German come to 40.0% of all source languages. The aim of Esperanto to contribute to linguistic and cultural equality and to remove language barriers seems to find its expression in the field of translation as well. Of course, we should not forget that the absolute number of Esperanto translations and their readers is very low compared with ethnic languages.

The third peculiarity is the character of the readership. True, in general, Esperanto speakers are very interested in intercultural communication; they know more foreign languages and have a higher educational level than the average population, as studies reveal (see Fiedler 2002), but the community is very heterogeneous. The reader is not only a member of the Esperanto community but he or she is

also influenced by the culture of other speech communities. Therefore, translators have to be aware that their text will be read by, say, both Korean and Polish speakers with their distinct relative cultural backgrounds and presuppositions. This is the reason why Esperanto translations usually contain a large number of additional texts, such as notes or supplements providing socio-cultural background knowledge. The analysis of *Hadashi no Gen* has to takes these aspects into consideration.

2. Esperanto and comics

The types of comics that have been published in Esperanto, so far, can be subdivided into various categories. The first group comprises translations of famous semi-funnies, such as *Astérix*. Translated by an international group in 1973, the first volume of this series, *Asteriks la Gaŭlo*, was the first comic to appear in Esperanto. Several other volumes were published by Croatian editors in the 90s.[3] Only recently, in 1987 and 2005, did the first two volumes of Hergé's *Tintin* (*La Nigra Insulo*; *Tinĉjo en Tibeto*) appear. Another type of Esperanto comics includes adapted versions of famous literary works, such as Bolesław Prus's *La Faraono* and Mark Twain's *Aventuroj of Tom Sawyer*. Both of them were published by the Hungarian Esperanto Association at the beginning of the 1980s. As a third category, educational comics should be mentioned. Examples include a biography of L. L. Zamenhof, the creator of Esperanto, and a story on Confucius and his ideas. Furthermore, an Esperanto version of the popular educational comic *The Cartoon Guide to Genetics*, by Larry Gonick and Mark Wheelis, published in Korea in 1996, should be mentioned. Original Esperanto comics by Japanese authors appear in literary journals occasionally.[4] The genre is also applied to teach the planned language, such as in *Kiu estas Jozefo?* (Zagreb 1984), a language learning comic written in easy Esperanto due to a special didactic approach (the so-called Zagreb method). Finally, I would like to mention the volumes by Arnau Torras i Tutusaus (e.g. *La D-ro Senesperanto serĉas la bonan etoson*; Zagreb 1998) which might be considered a kind of original Esperanto comic. The author calls his works "subgrundaj komikso" ('underground comics'), and, in fact, both the author's drawing style and the protagonist's sexual obsessions seem to remind us of Robert Crumb.

When *Nudpieda Gen* appeared in 1982,[5] Esperanto speakers considered it to be an important book because of its subject matter. As a story about the horrors of the atomic bomb, it was welcomed at a time when peace-loving people took to the streets to fight for nuclear disarmament. Only three

3 For example, *Asteriks kaj Kleopatra* (1995), *Asteriks ĉe la olimpiaj ludoj* (1996), *Asteriks kaj la normanoj* (1996).

4 An example is a series of comics (based on legends from Okinawa) by Uehara Manami in the journal *Riveroj* in 1996/97.

5 Only volume 1 of the Japanese manga series was translated into Esperanto.

years before, a Japanese photographic documentation on the consequences of the atomic bombing in Hiroshima and Nagasaki had been published in Esperanto. *Nudpieda Gen* received widespread attention on the pages of the Esperanto press. I found reviews in eight national and international journals.[6] Reviewers stressed the topicality of the book, as headlines such as *Memoru la militon* ('Remember the war') (*El Popola Ĉinio* 10/1983: 15) or *Japanio admonas* ('Japan admonishes') (*der esperantist* 2/1983: 44) illustrate, and its universal significance as an anti-war book, as the following passages show:

> *Mem perdinte familianojn en la Hiroshima hekatombo, Nakazawa verkas unuavice por japanoj, por ilin eduki kontraŭ ĉia ajn militfervojo, kaj sekve kritikas eksklusive (almenaŭ ĉi-volume) la japanan socion. La mesaĝo tamen estas universala.* (Charles R.L. Power, *esperanto* 6/1982: 113)
> ['Having lost relatives in the Hiroshima disaster himself, N. works, first of all, for the Japanese, in order to educate them against any kind of military enthusiasm and, therefore, focuses his criticism on Japanese society exclusively (at least in this volume). The message is universal nevertheless.']

> *La libro havas tre riĉan enhavon, kiun oni ne supozus antaŭjuĝante pri komikso. Ĝi ree konfirmas la senskrupulan stultecon de militistoj. Post la legado kaj spektado mi eksentis japaneske.* (Destina Tyblewska, *Heroldo* 7 September 1983) [' The book is rich in meaning, which one would not suppose being prejudiced against comics. It reconfirms the war mongers' unscrupulous stupidity. Having read and watched it, I started feeling Japanese.']

> *Min emocie kaptis ne nur la terura morto de la bomboviktimoj. Insiste estas pentrata la vivo sub la kondiĉoj de militarismo, la sensenca morto de fanatike fiagititaj gejunuloj, la suferado de la plej mizeraj tavoloj pro ekspluatado kaj mensogo.*
> *Tio estas nek pasinta nek japantipa. Okazaĵoj de la lastaj monatoj pruvis, ke la malnovaj kaj konataj manieroj de militinstigado ankoraŭ bone funkcias.* (Michael Lennartz, *der esperantist* 2/1983: 44)
> ['It was not only the bomb victims' terrible dying that touched me emotionally. It is (also) the insistent description of life under militarism, the senseless deaths of fanatically misdirected youths, the suffering of the poorest strata through exploitation and lies.
> This is neither a thing of the past nor typical of Japan. Events during the last few months have proved that old and well-known kinds of instigating war are still working well.']

The way of presentation, i.e. the aesthetic particularities of comics as a genre, is not the focus of these reviews. We can only find occasional remarks on the Japanese character of the drawings, and one author criticizes the introduction of new soundwords:

> *La ĉ. 2000 desegnaĵoj surhavas la karakterizajn trajtojn de la japana grafikarto, tamen ili ne estas aparte "japaneskaj".* (Vilmos Benczik, *Hungara Vivo* 5/1982: 193) ['The approximately 2,000 pictures have characteristic features of Japanese graphic art; however, they are not especially "Japanesque".']

> *La desegnado impresas ofte tro karikatura, laŭ okcidentaj normoj, por rakonto tiel serioza, sed kelka alkutimiĝo sufiĉas por forigi tiun senton.* (Charles R.L. Power, *esperanto* 6/1982: 113) ['The drawing often gives the quality of a caricature to such a serious story, according to Western norms, but once you got accustomed to it, this feeling is gone.']

6 These are, among others, *Hungara Vivo* (Hungary) 5/1982; der *esperantist* (German Democratic Republic) 2/1983; *El Popola Ĉinio* (China) 10/1983; *Esperanto* (organ of the Universal Esperanto Association) 6/1982; *Heroldo* (7 September 1983); *Paco* (organ of the *Mondpaca Esperantista Movado* 'World Peace Esperanto Movement') 6/1984.

> *Mi dubas, ĉu estas necese enkonduki multajn novajn interjekciojn kaj onomatopoeojn kiel ekzemple BANZAI, GJAK, HHOJSH, FEK, BONK, DZAK, BURR, BAMM, JHUP, RAT, TAT, ZOOM, TRINCH, TRAC.* (V.K., *El Popola Ĉinio* 10/1983: 15) ['I doubt whether it is necessary to introduce many new interjections and onomatopoeia, such as…']

Nudpieda Gen was elected Book of the Year in the category children's book (*Infanlibro de la Jaro*) by an international commission appointed by the Universal Esperanto Association in 1983.

3. Comparative analysis of *Nudpieda Gen*

The following analysis is both intralingual and interlingual. It aims at evaluating the Esperanto version of *Hadashi no Gen* by comparing it with two translations into German, *Barfuß durch Hiroshima* (1982; 2004), and the English translation *Barefoot Gen* of 2004.[7] The criteria of comparison are, first, the quality of the language presented in the narrator's text and in the speech balloons; second, the reading direction and the visual appearance on the printed page; third, the translation of culture-specific elements; and fourth, soundwords.

3.1 The verbal texts

As in the majority of comics, there are various types of verbal elements interacting with one another in *Hadashi no Gen*: the narrator's text; the characters' dialogues in the speech balloons; inscriptions of buildings, places, books etc. as insert texts; and soundwords. When we compare the texts in the two German editions, we notice that the language of the earlier translation is sometimes somewhat unnatural, as example (1) shows. The translation of 2004, as well as the Esperanto text, are much better here, reflecting the style of a factual report.[8]

(ex. 1)
DIE HEERESLEITUNG VERBREITETE FALSCHE INFORMATIONEN ÜBER DIE PRESSE UND ÜBER DAS RADIO.- DOCH HEIMLICH MACHTEN SIE PLÄNE, DIE DAS VOLK NOCH MEHR QUÄLTEN. (1982: 111; ... secretly they made plans that tortured the people even more)

DIE HEERESLEITUNG VERBREITETE GÄNZLICH ERFUNDENE INFORMATIONEN ÜBER DAS RADIO UND DIE PRESSE. SIE ERGINGEN SICH IN ENDLOSEN SCHREIBTISCHDISKUSSIONEN, WIE MAN DAS JAPANISCHE VOLK NOCH MEHR FÜR DEN KRIEG MOBILISIEREN KÖNNTE. (2004: 121)

7 Unfortunately, I am not able to use the original as a basis of comparison because I do not speak Japanese.

8 English translations of the German and Esperanto texts are only given if these do not correspond to the published version in English.

Spreading false information through newspapers and the radio, the war leaders devised strategies for manipulating the public from the comfort of their offices. (2004: 111)

LA MILITGVIDULOJ ENTUZIASMIS NUR POR SURTABLA DISKUTADO KAJ DISVASTIGIS FALSAJN INFORMOJN PER LA RADIO KAJ GAZETARO, ELKOVANTE NOVAJN PLANOJN POR URĜI LA POPOLON. (1982: 111)

Translation problems are also caused by the rhymes and songs presented in the book. In (ex. 2) the German version of 1982 does not show any rhyme and omits a part of the content, whereas the new German translation does justice to the character of a teasing phrase by providing two imperfect rhymes (*da — klar*; *ich — Pech*). The Esperanto translator managed to find a perfect rhyme (*puojn — ŝuojn*). In (ex. 3), again only the Esperanto version provides a rhyme.

(ex. 2)
BÄH; KOREANER! SIE TRAGEN ALLE KOMISCHE SCHUHE! (1982: 60) ['Ugh, Koreans! They all wear strange shoes!']

Es stinkt gar sehr, was seh ich da? 'Nen Koreaner, ist doch klar! Ihr esst und scheißt so dünn wie ich, doch die Schuh sind spitz, was für ein Pech! (2004: 70) ['It stinks very much, what do I see? A Korean, that's obvious! You eat and shit as loose as me, but their shoes are pointed, that's bad luck!']

Jaa, jaa, la koreoj same furzas puojn, sed surmetas strangajn ŝuojn. (1982: 60) ['Yes, yes, the Koreans fart in the same way, but put on strange shoes.']

(ex. 3)
KANINCHEN AUF DEN BERGEN JAGEN; UND DEN FISCH IM FLUSSE ANGELN ... (1982: 51)

Die Berge, wo ich einst auf Hasenjagd gegangen, der Fluss, wo ich einst Karpfen angeln ging! (2004: 61)

Chasing rabbits on the mountain, catching fish in the river ... (2004: p. 51)

Tra la mont' leporon ni ĉasis
En river' fiŝetoj amasis ... (1982: 51) ['Across the mountain we chased a rabbit, in the river there were lots of fish...']

The texts presented in the speech balloons represent spoken discourse. This is one of the most important advantages of comics — they can be 'heard'. As a rule, the German translation of 2004 seems to pay more attention to this characteristic than the 1982 edition. The dialogues are livelier and genuinely spoken, as the following examples illustrate:

(ex. 4)
STIRB NICHT, KOJI. (1982: 114)
Und stirb ja nicht, hörst du. (2004: 124)
Don't die, Koji! (2004: 114)
Ne mortu, Kôzi. (1982: 114)

(ex. 5)
ICH HAB AUCH DEN LEHRERN GESAGT; DAß MAN MIT EUCH ANDERS UMSPRINGT. (1982: 63)

Jetzt, wo ich die Lehrer über euch informiert habe, wird man dort anders mit euch umspringen! (2004: 73)

I even got the teachers into the act ... told 'em to give you a hard time. (2004: 63)

Ankaŭ la instruistoj estu al vi rigoraj, he he. (1982: 63)

In English the spoken character is often expressed by contracted and abbreviated forms (e.g. *Akira can't have any, 'cause he's going away* — p. 3) or non-standard spelling (e.g. *I wanna eat too!* — p. 168). Furthermore, the English as well as the new German texts are rich in phraseological units (see [ex. 5] for English; e.g. *Du fragst mir noch ein Loch in den Bauch* — p. 31), which are attributed to oral communication. As for Esperanto, above all interjections (e.g. *ho ne*) are used to mark spoken discourse.

3.2 Reading direction and print

The reading direction in translated manga today is like that of the Japanese original — back to front — to be accepted by a young readership who insists on authenticity. *Nudpieda Gen*, however, is printed in front-to-back direction. This seems to be suitable for a heterogeneous international speech community and corresponds with the English and German translations. Furthermore, as we have seen in the reviews, the focus for Esperanto speakers was more on the content than on the features of the genre. The different reading direction poses additional problems for translators[9], for the pictures have to be reversed.

It does not disturb the reading process too much if the narrator's text is situated in the top right-hand corner instead of, as expected, the left-hand one (see 2004: 111). In the same way, a wrong order of turns can be tolerated in scenes where these consist of a single word only, so that we are able to read them almost simultaneously and where a reversal causes the problem of left-handedness, as in (ex. 6). However, there are several situations in the Esperanto version, as well as in the first German translation, where the arrangement of the turns contradicts the logical sequence of the speech events, as the following examples illustrate:

9 I am saying 'additional', as comics translation, in general, is a challenge, as Schmitt (1997) describes. Meanings often result from the effective interplay between pictures and words. In a translation, the visual elements cannot be altered; there is limited space for the texts in the speech balloons; onomatopoeia are integrated in the pictures.

(ex. 6)

Fig. 1: *Nudpieda Gen*, p. 52
© Rondo Gen 1982

Fig. 2: *Barefoot Gen*, p. 52
© Last Gasp 2004

(ex. 7)

Fig. 3: *Nudpieda Gen*, p. 47
© Rondo Gen 1982

Fig. 4: *Barfuß durch Hiroshima*, p. 47
© Rowohlt 1982

Fig. 5: *Barfuß durch Hiroshima*, p. 57
© Carlsen 2004

Fig. 6: *Barefoot Gen*, p. 47
© Last Gasp 2004

In Fig. 3 and 4, the boy's question *Kial vi batas nin?* ['Why do you hit us?'] must precede the mother's answer, as it was accomplished in the new German and English translations by reversing the panel (Fig. 5 and 6).

(ex. 8)

Fig. 7: *Nudpieda Gen*, p. 55 © Rondo Gen 1982

Although Eiko's rather general comment 'Miskompreno, misjuĝo!' ['Misunderstanding, false conclusion'] (in Fig. 7) makes the dialogue smoother — compared to the first German text — the wrong order is obvious. As a rule, the new German translation and the English version have removed these mistakes (Fig. 8).

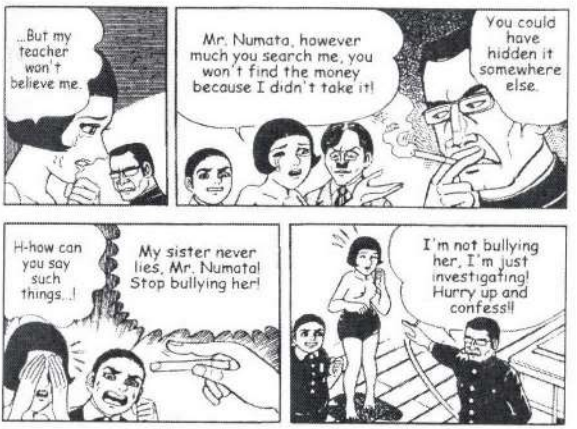

Fig. 8: *Barefoot Gen*, p. 55 © Last Gasp 2004

Concerning the visual appearance, *Hadashi no Gen* illustrates the comic principle that phonological features are presented by graphic means. Loud noises are expressed by huge and bold letters, whereas soft or faint ones are marked by smaller ones and ordinary print. All in all, the Esperanto version can be given good marks with regard to this criterion. This is due to two reasons. First, machine lettering, which was used in the new German, the English, and the Esperanto versions, seems to be

more appropriate than the amateurish hand lettering of the German 1982 edition (see [ex. 7]). In the new German translation, admittedly, some texts look a bit lost in the large balloons of the Japanese original. In general, however, this version illustrates that machine lettering, e.g. by applying italics for thought balloons, and bold letter types for loud voices or commands, can provide a variety of means for differentiation and accentuation (see [ex. 9]).

(ex. 9)

Fig. 9: *Barfuß durch Hiroshima*, p. 20 © Carlsen 2004

In the Esperanto version, important words are marked by capital letters. Second, as for the presentation of onomatopoeia, the effective hand lettering in the Esperanto version is advantageous, as a comparison with the new German translation and the English version clearly demonstrates (see [ex. 10]).

(ex. 10)

Fig. 10: *Nudpieda Gen*, p. 2 © Rondo Gen 1982

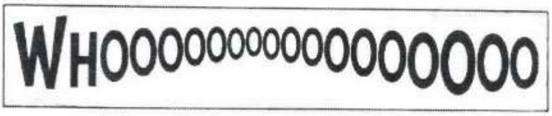

Fig. 11: *Barfuß durch Hiroshima*, p. 12 © Carlsen 2004

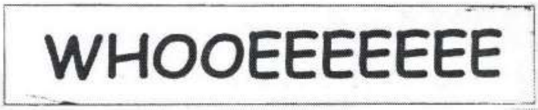

Fig. 12: *Barefoot Gen*, p. 2 © Last Gasp 2004

(ex. 11)

Fig. 13: *Nudpieda Gen*, p. 266
© Rondo Gen 1982

Fig. 14: *Barfuß durch Hiroshima*,
p. 276 © Carlsen 2004

Fig. 15: *Barefoot Gen*, p. 266
© Last Gasp 2004

(ex. 12)

Fig. 16: *Nudpieda Gen*, p. 269
© Rondo Gen 1982

Fig. 17: *Barfuß durch Hiroshima*, p.279
© Carlsen 2004

Especially at the end of the book (see [ex. 11] and [ex. 12]), when the horror of the bombing is shown, it is the Esperanto version, with its individual presentation of onomatopoeia, that expresses people's feelings best.

3.3 Culture-specific elements

Hadashi no Gen can also be regarded as an introduction to Japanese culture. 'Japaneseness' is expressed by the physiognomy of the characters, such as the large eyes and open mouths in manga style, the symbolic means applied in narrative function, such as the sun and the clock, or the Japanese insert texts on shops, notice boards, and banners. One of the most striking (and for me really shocking) features is the omnipresent violence. Although being a pacifist, a supporter of friendship between peoples (see p. 74), who loves all his children (see p. 137), Gen's father uses corporal punishment. Indeed, violence marks almost all kinds of interpersonal relations, those between parents and their children, between siblings, neighbours, and between teachers and pupils. From an outside perspective, a reader who is not familiar with the generic conventions of boys' manga feels tempted to take scenes of casual violence like those in the book for a realistic description of Japanese everyday life.
The narrator's comments include important information about the historical situation. A comparison between the four translations concerning these passages shows some differences, as the very first text already reveals:

(ex. 13)
APRIL 1945 .... KURZ VOR DEM ENDE DES PAZIFISCHEN KRIEGES, DEN JAPAN GEGEN AMERIKA UND ENGLAND ANGEFANGEN HAT. DIE STADT HIROSHIMA ...(1982: 2)

DAS 20. REGIERUNGSJAHR DES TENNO SHOWA (1945). DIE STADT HIROSHIMA. DER PAZIFIKKRIEG, DEN JAPAN GEGEN AMERIKA UND ENGLAND FÜHRT, NÄHERT SICH DEM ENDE. (2004: 12)

Hiroshima. April 1945... in the last months of the War in the Pacific that Japan began with the USA and England... (2004: 2)

APRILO 1945 — PRESKAŬ ĈE LA FINO DE LA DUA MONDMILITO, KIUN JAPANIO KOMENCIS KONTRAŬ USONO KAJ BRITIO — URBO HIROSIMA — (1982: 2) [April 1945 — almost at the end of the Second World War, which Japan began against the USA and Britain — City of Hiroshima —]

The new German translation distinguishes itself by giving additional information about the Japanese emperor and, in doing so, right from the first pages on, adds some cultural flavour to the text. The Esperanto version, speaking of 'the Second World War' instead of 'the War in the Pacific' might irritate some of the readership.

In the translations analyzed, supplementary texts are used as the major strategy of explaining Japanese words and giving background information on culture-specific elements. As a rule, footnotes are a general characteristic of translated manga (see Jüngst 2004: 96). There are, however, differences in the compared texts with regard to authenticity and detail.

When Gen's mother Kimie tries to borrow some rice from Mrs. Sumida, the inscription on the shop is translated into English as *Sumida's sake* (2004: 49) and in a similar way into Esperanto as *sakejo* (with the suffix *-ej* meaning 'place'). The footnote in the first German translation (*SCHRIFTZEICHEN: SUMIDA'S*) does not add much information, whereas the new German translation includes the most informative explanation: *Lebensmittelgeschäft mit Lizenz zum Alkoholverkauf* (2004: 59) ['grocer's with a licence to sell alcohol']. The food that Kimie wants to borrow in this scene, by the way, is *rice and miso* (in German *Reis und Miso-Paste* — p. 59) in the new translations — obviously, readers are supposed to know something about Japanese cooking — whereas the 1982 edition in German uses *Reis und Bohnenpaste* ['rice and beans paste']. The Esperanto translation of 1982 describes it as *rizo kaj farbopasto* ['rice and colour paste']. The latest Esperanto dictionary, published in 2002, however, includes the word *misoo* for 'miso'.

When Gen is punished by his father for having broken the neighbours' windows (see [14]), his brother is teasing him in the German translation of 1982 in a rather western style *Haha, siehst aus wie ein Verbrecher* (p. 237) ['... you look like a criminal'], in a similar way as in the English version *Hee hee! You look like an outlaw, Gen!* The Esperanto text runs *Vi estas kvazaŭ papera pendpupo!* ['... like a hanging paper puppet'].

(ex. 14)

Fig. 18: *Nudpieda Gen*, p. 236
© Rondo Gen 1982

Fig. 19: *Nudpieda Gen*, p. 237
© Rondo Gen 1982

This is certainly an adequate translation, but it makes the reader only guess that a special Japanese tradition is alluded to, without giving any details. Here again, the new German translation seizes the opportunity of enlightening the readership about a Japanese tradition by means of a footnote: *Na, Gen, wollen wir Regenmännchen spielen?* *Stoff- oder Papierpuppen in Form von buddhistischen*

Mönchen. Man hängt sie ans Fenster wenn es regnet, um für die Sonne zu bitten. (p. 247) ['Well, Gen, do you want us to play little rain-men?* *Puppets made from fabric or paper in the form of Buddhist monks. People hang them on the window when it is raining to beg for the sun']. Due to explanations like these, having read *Hadashi no Gen*, readers have the impression that they know Japan a little better.

3.4 Onomatopoeia

Hadashi no Gen abounds with soundwords. According to a qualitative analysis on the basis of the Esperanto version their total number amounts to 710. This means that we find on average 2.5 soundwords per page.[10] A first and rather rough functional classification into the three groups of 'positive' sounds (including e.g. *HIHI* to express the joy of receiving a meal — p. 71), 'neutral' sounds (including e.g. *MO-OO* to represent the sound of a train — p. 116), and 'negative' sounds (including e.g. *BAMM* to express punishment — p. 80) makes obvious that soundwords can be used to indicate the character of a comic. The majority of onomatopoeic words in *Nudpieda Gen* (53.2%) function as 'negative' sounds, i.e. to express pain, horror, fear, violence etc. The most frequent soundwords are *ŬAAAA* (and variations) for crying, *ŬUUUUU* (and variations) for pain, *SNUF* for sobbing/sighing, *BONK* for punches, and *GRRRR* (and variations) for anger.

A more detailed analysis shows that onomatopoeic words are often poly-functional. For instance, in the Esperanto version *Hm* (and variations) stands for 'thought' (p. 165) as well as for 'malice' (p. 31), or 'disappointment' (p. 38). *GRRR* is applied for the expression of both 'anger' (p. 52) and a 'propeller drive' (p. 154). Sometimes we even have to differentiate within the same act. *CHOMP* stands for a bite, but the same soundword accompanies the joyful bite into a sweet potato (p. 16) as a bite into the enemy's finger (p. 24). *HAHAHAH* and *HIHI* represent very different types of laughter — up to Kimie's insane laughing at the end of vol. 1, when she sees her family dying in the rubble. A subgroup of soundwords is not truly onomatopoeic in the sense that they represent sounds which are similar to the noises they describe. They paraphrase sounds with reference to linguistic means. They often symbolize sounds without really imitating them, which is why Keller (1995: 172) calls them 'pseudo-onomatopoeia'. Their percentage is higher in the Esperanto version (21.7%) than in the new German one (15.4%), which can be explained by the difficulty to find truly international sounds. Therefore, verbal roots indicating processes are used as a basis, such as *TREM* (*tremi* —

10 Although statistics on the use of soundwords are rare and their frequency can vary considerably among individual comics, this number is to regarded as high. The analysis of a German comic, *MOSAIK* (1955–2003), for example, revealed an average frequency of one soundword every six pages (see Fiedler 2003: 60).

'tremble'), *FRAP* (*frapi* — 'flap'), *RONK* (*ronki* — 'snore'), or *GLIT* (*gliti* — 'glide'). The translators demonstrate considerable creativity, multiplying vowels, consonants, and syllables for intensification (*KKKKNAR* — p. 35, *KNA-NAR* — p. 197, based on *knari* 'creak'; *ŜŜŜIR* — p. 182, based on *ŝiri* 'tear'), shortening words (*MUR* — p. 196, based on *murmuri* 'mumble'; *FLUS* — p.188, based on *flustri* 'whisper'). Reduplicatives often show alternating sounds, such as in *TIK-TOK* — p. 241, *KLAN KLON* — p. 54, *GANG GONG* — p. 114, *KIP KOP* — p.177, *TIP TOP* — p. 233).

4. Final remarks

Fig. 17: *Nudpieda Gen*, cover © Rondo Gen 1982

Hadashi no Gen, the eye-witness report of the Hiroshima bombing, is an important book. Because of its humanistic content, it has found a legitimate place in Esperanto literature. As has been shown, the Esperanto version, compared to translations in German and English, has both strong and weak points. The characteristics of comics mean new challenges for the planned language. In meeting them, for example, by the creation of expressive soundwords, translators contribute to the development of Esperanto. Limitations of space in this paper made it necessary to restrict the discussion to a limited number of criteria; however, further studies might include an examination of swear words, and the stylistic differentiation between the spoken discourse in speech balloons and narrative texts. Despite its horrible topic and violent nature, *Hadashi no Gen* is an optimistic book, with a baby being born at the end of the story, i.e. vol. 1. This optimistic character is emphasized on the cover of the Esperanto version by a smiling Gen wearing a green star (the symbol of Esperanto and image of hope; Fig. 17) and giving his readers a sign of peace.

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Ōgi Fusami

Barefoot Gen and *MAUS*: Performing the Masculine, Reconstructing the Mother

Introduction

"Auto/biographical memoirs are necessarily a hybrid form." (Nancy K. Miller)

Nakazawa Keiji's *Barefoot Gen* (*Hadashi no Gen*) and Art Spiegelman's *Maus* are monumental works in the field of graphic novels. *Barefoot Gen* was serialized in *Shōnen Jump*,[1] a weekly boys' manga magazine from 1973 to 1974, for one and a half years. *Maus* appeared in Spiegelman's alternative self-published comics magazine *RAW* from 1980 to 1991. Targeting different readers and thus different forms of comics, these works might seem to fulfill totally different purposes and offer dissimilar contents. However, both have been widely appreciated beyond their initially targeted readers. Awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1992, *Maus*, an innovative graphic novel, gained broad public recognition and played an important role in Holocaust literature. Deborah R. Geis suggests that *Maus* "is not exactly a comic book, nor is it exactly a novel, a biography (or autobiography), or a work of oral history — and yet it is all of these things" (Geis 2003: 1). *Barefoot Gen* in addition, is what Geis calls "all of these things". As one of the important works of *genbaku* (nuclear bombing) literature, *Barefoot Gen* has been welcomed by schools and libraries and attracted adult readers as well as children, at a time when few manga could be seen in academic institutions.

Both works are based on real and historically tragic events: the Holocaust and the bombing of Hiroshima in World War II. Taking an autobiographical form, both works focus on one male protagonist, that is, the author himself. However, autobiography does not speak just of the author alone. As Nancy K. Miller says, "autobiographical memoirs are necessarily a hybrid form" (Miller 1996: 2); an autobiography combines memoirs of more than one person. From such an interesting perspective, we find these two works share the following two points: first, the author consciously portrays himself as a son who had been substantially influenced by his father regarding life decisions, and second, in both cases, although already having passed away, their mothers play a significant role in motivating the authors to write. Focusing on these two points, I would like to analyze both *Maus* and *Barefoot Gen* as memoirs as well as records of historic events. Depicting crucial moments of World War II and recording what actually happened there, what the authors write as sons are attempts to reconstruct their mothers' voices; voices lost through the violence of war.

1 Shūeisha launched *Shōnen Jump* in 1968. In 2003, an English version debuted under the title of *Shōnen Jump*.

1. Lost voices

"There is no one who could tell a story of the hypocenter." (Maruki 1982: 21)[2]

First of all, in both works, what reveals the narrators as sons is their connection to their fathers. Both works start with a scene illustrating this relationship. *Maus* begins with an episode which occurred when Artie was young (Fig. 1).

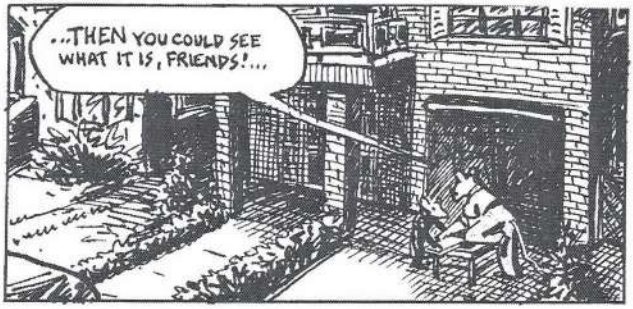

Fig. 1: Art Spiegelman: *Maus* I, p. 6 © Pantheon 1986

To little Artie, who could not catch up with his friends, his father Vladek explains what the meaning of friends is, hinting at his severe experiences during the Holocaust. This short prologue indicates the main theme of the story.

Fig. 2: The first page of *Hadashi no Gen*. Source: *Shōnen Jump* No. 25, p. 3 © Shūeisha 1973

Similarly, *Barefoot Gen* begins with a father and son relationship (Fig. 2). The father tells his sons to live as stalwartly as wheat grows. Gen often remembers these words when he encounters upheavals in his life. Thus, the father is represented as a dominant figure by both authors right from the beginning. However, this dominance of father over son is not directly connected to the concept of masculine power.

2 This quote is from *Pikadon*, an illustrated book about the Hiroshima bomb which was censored during the occupation. It was published on August 6, 1950 by Potsdam shoten, which disappeared soon after the book was censored.

The fathers' messages are rooted in their experiences during the war, when they were victimized, and they remind readers of the fact that they had been deprived of their voices.

The bombing of Hiroshima and the Holocaust are known all over the world. According to recent reports, the younger generation is quite ignorant about World War II,[3] but still these two events have been recognized as two of the worst events of the twentieth century. However, we know about these tragedies not because those who suffered them have offered their experiences. On the contrary, most people involved in these tragic events are still deprived of their voices. According to Hannah Arendt, the total-dominion apparatus in totalitarian countries constructed what she calls "holes of oblivion" in order to make their victims disappear (Arendt 1976: 434). Theodor W. Adorno says about a survivor who could escape from Auschwitz, "he will be plagued by dreams such as he is no longer living at all, that he was sent to the ovens in 1944 and his whole existence since has been imaginary" (Adorno 2000: 87). Memoirs of some survivors are accompanied by even greater silences of large numbers of others.

What silenced people was not only death; in Japan, severe discrimination against survivors of the bombing also kept them quiet. Under the occupation by the US government (1945–1952), the Civil Censorship Detachment censored Japanese media until October 1949, including bomb-related materials, especially reports that would reveal the bomb's terrible effects. This caused a tendency in Japanese people to regard anything associated with the atomic bomb as dangerous or even fatal (Horiba 1995: 54). As a result, atomic bomb survivors would not reveal themselves as victims. Instead, they tried to keep their misery and their experiences hidden. Nakazawa, the author of *Barefoot Gen*, also concealed his status as a survivor. Until his mother's death, he had silenced himself because of discrimination; particularly a belief that illness caused by the atomic bomb was infectious (Nakazawa 1999: 52; 1982: 46). In *Maus*, Vladek also appears reluctant to divulge his experiences, saying, "No one wants anyway to hear such stories" (*Maus* I: 12). In this sense, having a 'son' tell a story not only provides a voice for the author himself, but also gives a voice to a generation of survivors who lost their own.

3 According to a survey by *Die Welt* (German National Newspaper) and ZDF (one of Germany's National Broadcastings) in March 2005, only 51% of informants who were younger than 24 years old could answer correctly the question "What is the 'Holocaust.'" (Asahi.com 2005, Internet). In a 2005 survey by NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) concerning people's awareness of the atomic bombing only 38 % of Japanese informants could answer correctly the date of the Hiroshima bombing. Even among Hiroshima residents, a quarter of them could not answer the question (NHK 2005, internet).

2. Looking back at the past: reconstructing the mother's voices

"We don't choose our families, but we get to revise their myths." (Miller 1996: x)

2.1 *Barefoot Gen*: from personal memory to survivors' memories

The fathers appear before the eyes of the authors, their sons, but what about their mothers? In *Maus,* we rarely see Artie's mother directly from his point of view. In *Barefoot Gen*, we sometimes find a rather typical mother and son relationship: Gen is very active, while his mom is rather passive, as if their relationship were rearranged to fit the genre convention of *shōnen manga*, comics for boys which portrayed a male as more active than a female at the time.

First editorial chief, Nagano Tadashi formulated the policy of manga magazine *Shōnen Jump* to be that of *yūjō* (friendship), *doryoku* (effort) and *shōri* (victory) based on data concerning readers' reactions and the popularity of each work (Natsume 2003). These attributes can be found in *Barefoot Gen*, which deals with such grim themes as the dropping of the atomic bomb and its aftermath. However, the story of Gen's courage in the face of difficulties gives the work a positive focus. It is Gen who heartens those about to lose the energy to survive. According to Taguchi Randy, a popular freelance writer, "What is actually expressed in *Barefoot Gen* is a boy's soul. This manga is about the power of a child" (Taguchi 2002). This comment suggests how strongly the concept of 'boy' and 'child' were connected in the representations of *shōnen manga.*

What supports Gen are his father's words which appear at the beginning of the story and conclude the part serialized in *Shōnen Jump*, the first volume of *Barefoot Gen*. Gen survives the bomb along with his mother and baby sister, who — like other female characters as well — mostly appear in order to be protected by Gen, who takes over his father's position. Messages written by the editors on almost every page in the magazine format, which are usually deleted in the book format, sometimes reinforce such gender ideology by referring to Gen's mission to be a strong boy. For example, the last page of the episode on the day of the bomb is accompanied by the following words in the margin: "Your sister, who gave the first cry in this hell, and your mother, and you. The way of thorns is growing even more difficult. Gen, do not shrink" (*Shōnen Jump* 1973.38: 287). To confirm such a message, Gen's every action appears determined and impressive, displaying his strength, courage, and love. Right after the bombing, Gen finds his mother and witnesses half of their family being burnt to death, listening to his father who asks him to be strong and protect his mother and his yet-to-be-born little sister (Fig. 3). After he escapes the fire, he helps his mother to give birth. Remarkably, it is Gen who brings the baby into the world with his own hands (Fig. 4). After that, against his mother's wishes, Gen returns to the place where his family was burned to death to dig up their bones.

Nakazawa Keiji, author of *Barefoot Gen*, is a survivor of the Hiroshima bombing and portrayed the historic event in a series of manga works called the Black series.[4] What motivated him to write about his own experience was, according to himself, his mother's lost bones. In Japan, cremation is the most common mortuary practice, and usually some bones are not burned completely in order to be ritually put into the urn by the bereaved immediately after cremation. At his mother's funeral in 1966 however, Nakazawa found none of her bones left; the radioactivity had thoroughly decimated her body. When he finally saw what the bomb had deprived him of, he began to write, and he called his manga series about the bomb a "funeral fight for my mom" (Nakazawa 1996: 377).

Fig. 3: Nakazawa Keiji: *Hadashi no Gen*. Source: *Shōnen Jump* No. 38, p. 279
© Shūeisha 1973

Fig. 4: Nakazawa Keiji: *Hadashi no Gen*. Source: *Shōnen Jump* No. 38, p. 287
© Shūeisha 1973

4 Nakazawa wrote a series of manga works which would protest the atomic bombing and unveil its aftermath for the men's comics magazine *Manga Punch* before he wrote *Gen*. They were called the 'Black' series because their titles began with the word black (*kuroi*): *Kuroi ame ni utarete* [Struck by black rain] in May 1968, *Kuroi kawa no nagare ni* [Black river] in July 1968, *Kuroi chinmoku no hate ni* [Black silence] in August 1968, and *Kuroi hato no mure ni* [Black pigeons] in September 1969; *Kuroi hae no sakebi ni* [Black flies] appeared in *Pocket Manga Punch* in May 1970.

In his essay *"Barefoot Gen" Autobiography*, Nakazawa says quite directly, "Gen and I share the same history. I am the model of Gen and Gen's life comes from what actually happened" (Nakazawa 1994: 4). In another essay, he remarks that "Gen is an alter ego" (Nakazawa 1996: 368). However, reading his essays which delineate his family's experience, we note a slight difference from what Gen experiences, especially about his mother. Some of Gen's experiences are taken from what Nakazawa's mother went through alone without her son. Right after the bomb, according to Nakazawa, he and his mother were separated. His mother saw her husband, her daughter and her other son all burned alive in the house. When Nakazawa met his mother again, his baby sister had already been born. His mother could not speak of how his family was burned to death until his oldest brother came back and she unburdened herself. She used to say that she could hear their calls for help and terrible nightmares reproached her every night.

Here, rather than questioning what actually happened, I would like to examine how effective *Barefoot Gen* is at, for example, letting Gen go through the mother's actual experiences. As mentioned before, adopting for the plot to reflect his mother's actual experiences makes the story seem more real. Nakazawa could have presented Gen as a more masculine protagonist for boys' comics, who protects his mother and takes over his father's position, but he did not do that and he did not idealize him either by letting him share his mother's actual experiences, as commonly occurs with heroes of this genre. Although Gen is with his mother at the crucial moment, that does not mean the tragedy of the family's death did not happen or the tragedy became less significant. Gen and his mother could not do anything about their family burning to death under the collapsed house, just as Nakazawa's mother could not do anything. Despite Gen's presence, nothing heroic happens. What the manga presents is neither a faithful reconstruction of what actually happened, nor an idealization of Gen's act as a courageous and commanding protagonist of *shōnen manga*.

So, what is gained by this rewriting of actual events? The scene focuses on Gen as a witness with his mother, as a son and as a child. The author rewrites his mother's memoir into one in which she has her son with her when she experiences her family being burned to death. It is a rearrangement by a son of his mother's memoir. Based on what his mother said to him, he imagines a scene in which he is with her when she experienced what caused her nightmares until her death. In other words, *Barefoot Gen* is not only an autobiographical graphic novel based on Nakazawa's actual experience, but also a reconstruction of a mother's experience from the view point of Nakazawa as her son.

It is a possible version of events his mother could have experienced, if her son had been with her. As a main character under the rubric of *shōnen manga*, Gen is placed in the center of the survival experience. Boys would presumably identify with Gen and imagine what Gen went through. Gen's existence does not change the facts, but in taking care of his brother and listening to his father who

is dying, Gen shares what his mother would have experienced. *Barefoot Gen* is not only a record of Gen as another self of the author, but also a memoir of survivors, including his mother. Precisely by sharing her tragic experience Gen appears a courageous and innocent hero of *shōnen manga*, which leads readers to imagine a more hopeful future.

After being serialized in a *shōnen manga* magazine for one and a half years, *Barefoot Gen* finally went beyond the genre.[5] All the magazines that serialized it afterwards were for adult readers. This fact suggests that *Barefoot Gen*, which was quite serious in its presentation, did not fit the genre conventions of *shōnen manga*, although, according to Yokota Tadashi, a reporter for the newspaper *Asahi Shinbun* at that time, it was one of the most popular manga in *Shōnen Jump* (Yokota 1975: 250). However, even after leaving behind *shōnen manga* conventions, the genre for boys seems to have led this work to a more sincere message of atomic bomb survivors. As Art Spiegelman says in the introduction of the new English version of *Barefoot Gen*, "the underlying fact is that the artist is reporting on his own survival — not simply on the events that he lived through, but on the philosophical/psychological basis for that survival." (2004, not paginated). It is significant that this work was serialized as *shōnen manga*. As he becomes older, Gen goes through more serious experiences which might not be seen as promoting the power of a boy and child. Because he witnesses people's suffering from illness caused by effects of the atomic bomb, he cannot be optimistic, childlike and determined anymore. At times, he can find no answers and suffers psychologically and philosophically. As he grows up and takes on a more significant existence, elements are added which perhaps *shōnen manga* could not handle. Gen's power to live necessarily has to move from that of a boy and child to that of a man and adult.

2.2 *MAUS*: a father's fairy tale

Just as Nakazawa's work is motivated by his mother's death, we also find *Maus* to be a work written by a son who hopes to find his mother's voice. *Maus* has two chronological levels: one is from 1978–1991, the era in which the story is narrated and drawn, and the other is during wartime. In the first level, Art (Artie) Spiegelman, a comics artist whose mother has already died, interviews his father Vladek and composes *Maus*. In the second level, told by Vladek, Anja, his wife, is one of the main characters represented from the very first episode, since Artie asks Vladek to "Start with Mom" (*Maus* I: 12). Evident here is Artie's trick to force his father to focus the story on his mother. Although

5 After *Shōnen Jump*, *Barefoot Gen* was never serialized again in a manga magazine. Instead it appeared in *Shimin* over a year and a half beginning in September 1975; subsequently in *Bunka Hyōron* (July 1977 to March 1980); and after that, in *Kyōiku Hyōron*, from April 1982 for three years and a half. See also chapter 1 by Itō Yū and Omote Tomoyuki.

Vladek actually starts to talk about his girlfriend Lucia and, as James E. Young points out, "Art's needs are frustrated by his father's actual memory" (Young 1996: 679), Art manages to manipulate Vladek to talk about Anja, reminding Vladek of her. Whereas Anja is present in the story, the first level, told by Artie, rarely depicts her. Instead, we often see him asking Vladek to talk about her. Thus, the first level, from Artie's point of view, seems only to show the readers Anja's absence. For her son, Artie, Anja is something being reconstructed in the talk between the father as narrator and the son as listener.

As Marianne Hirsch points out, Anja only speaks in sentences imagined by her son and recollected by her husband. As part of their memory, she is "mystified, objectified", and visualized, because Artie and Vladek wish to remember her (Hirsch 1992: 19–20). However, does the son's reconstruction merely show the absence of Anja's voice?

Art Spiegelman, founder of *RAW*, the experimental magazine of alternative comics, had challenged the dominant concept of the term 'comics', assumed to be "well suited to children and naturally funny and popular" (Gopnik 1987: 29). A clue to the answer can be found in the special way *Maus* visually represents its story. The attempt itself was a remarkable turning point that "redefined the limits of comic art" (Kurp 1990). Moreover, it also raised the question of how different media can interact to produce a multi-layered text in presenting the Holocaust (Hirsch 2002: 25). *Maus* effectively goes beyond a conventional point of view concerning comics, employing animal figures to show characters' race and ethnicity. Jewish people appear as mice, Nazis as cats, Poles as pigs, Americans as dogs, and so on. Those animal images work to add allegorical effects to the presentation of *Maus*. However, there is another type of comic within the comic showing characters as human beings. It is embedded in *Maus*, a four-pager entitled *Prisoner on the Hell Planet* written by Artie right after his mother's suicide (Fig. 5).

Fig. 5: The first page of *Prisoner on the Hell Planet*. Source: Art Spiegelman: *Maus* I, p. 100 © Pantheon 1986

This comic is merely a citation within an episode in which Vladek, who rarely looks at comics, finds the work and feels bad. Yet the comic itself, despite its short length, seems to play a significant role in the context of the mother/son relationship. Beginning with an actual photo of Anja as a young mother and Art Spiegelman as her little boy, the story shows how depressed Vladek and Artie became right after Anja's suicide, and concludes by suggesting serious miscommunication between Anja and Artie before her death.

This interweaving of the short comic as well as the photo emphasize Artie's strong wish to have his mother's diary. He sometimes asks Vladek if there is any remaining writing by Anja. His hopes are shattered when Vladek recalls that he burnt Anja's diary after her death. What is worse, is at the end of volume I, Vladek repeats Anja's hope to Artie, "I wish my son, when he grows up, he will be interested by this" (*Maus* I: 159). This hurts Artie, because Vladek never let him read his mother's writing and thus never fulfilled her wish. Artie calls Vladek a 'murderer', but soon shows his understanding when Vladek tries to explain his depression at that time. However, when he is alone, Artie still murmurs the word 'murderer', before the first volume ends (Fig. 6).

Fig 6: Art Spiegelman: *Maus* I, p. 159 © Pantheon 1986

Reconstructing his father's experience in *Maus*, Artie seems to recollect bits of memory of Anja as well, which helps him to understand her as her son. The four-paged comic embedded in *Maus* is drawn in a different style, and the difference of the two emphasizes their differences in portraying the same people. Such a discontinuity suggests that there may exist another story of Anja from another person's point of view, a story that would contain an Anja whom neither father nor son could perceive, or even an Anja who could exist outside the story of *Maus*. Anja's writing, which Vladek burnt, could have been a link to this other Anja whom neither Artie nor Vladek had ever seen. In this sense, Artie is right to call Vladek a 'murderer'.

The four-page comic is not just a citation. It is a medium through which readers can experience Anja's being, offered by Art himself in the first-person point of view from his own history. In it, Art shows his mental conflict with his mother. At the same time, it shows that the mother shares the

conflict and suffers deeply. She asks the son, "You still love me, don't you?" Her direct address to the son lying against her conveys her complicated and painful feeling to the reader as well. This Anja has been deleted from the father's story. *Maus* as told from Artie's point of view thus suggests his mother's existence outside the story, which could only be recorded as her absence. Emphasizing *Maus* as a presentation from a particular point of view suggests the possible existence of what the particular point of view fails to reveal.

Fig. 7: Art Spiegelman: *Maus* II, p. 114 © Pantheon 1991

At the very end of *Maus*, Vladek shows Artie Anja's family photos, instead of her diary (Fig. 7). Hirsch points out that these photos create a moment which links the two different levels, the father's and the son's. Vladek explains each photo which shows what has been lost; in addition, they create

a link to the existence of Anja. Remarkably, all the photos of Anja's family explained by Vladek are redrawn by Spiegelman using the heads of mice. Here again, human figures are transformed into animal figures as a device for suggesting that what you see is told from the specific perspective of Vladek and redrawn by his son. In a sense, the special style of *Maus* visualizes the constraint under which Vladek's story lacks a figure of the mother from the son's point of view. In Vladek's story, only Vladek could directly see Anja. At first in *Maus*, Artie tells Vladek, "I want to tell YOUR story, the way it really happened" (*Maus* I: 23). However, the stylistic reshaping of human beings as animals leads readers to imagine unreal elements. The animal images indicate Artie's point of view (he can see Anja only through Vladek's eyes), and at the same time, they bring about an allegorical effect to express what happened in terms of ethnicity and race.

Maus contains three photos of Jewish people that are not redrawn as mice. The first one is of Anja and Artie on the first page of the inserted four-paged comic, the second one is of Richieu, Artie's elder brother who did not survive the war, on the front page of the second volume (*Maus* II: 5), and the third one is of Vladek at the end of the story (Fig. 8). Each photo works to emphasize a familial tie in relation to Art Spiegelman himself.

Fig. 8: Art Spiegelman: *Maus* II, p. 134 © Pantheon 1991

The first one, showing the young Art with a big smile and his mother Anja, conveys their warm relationship and love. The second one, as Victoria Elmwood points out (2004), with the captions above and below the photo, makes a striking grouping which would connect two generations (both of which link to Art Spiegelman): Richieu, his dead brother, and Nadja, his living daughter. Only the third one has something to do with the plot of *Maus*.

After the war is over and he is released, Vladek sends Anja a letter with a photo to let her know he has survived. Anja reads the letter and sees the photo. This photo is not redrawn into that of a mouse, unlike the family photos referred to right before. Instead, the story shows us the same photo that Anja sees to confirm her husband's survival. It is significant that we are not just seeing Vladek in the photo. We also encounter Anja, by seeing what she actually saw. This is Artie's trick to enable readers to experience who his mother was.

According to Artie, neither Vladek nor Anja told Artie about Richieu (*Maus* II: 15). For Artie's memory, Richieu should have been absent, but by calling Richieu his 'ghost' brother, Artie tells readers that he always has competed with him. From a psychoanalytical point of view, Elmwood analyzes this imaginary Richieu as foregrounding "Spiegelman's own feelings of inadequacy next to an idealized sibling" (2004). Yet on the other hand, it is Artie himself who lets readers imagine his 'ghost' brother's existence again and again, as if the brothers had grown up together and strengthened their ties. In the same way, Artie does not correct Vladek for ending his actual history by making it a fairy tale in which Anja and Richieu continue to exist. For Artie, Vladek's fairy tale offers a never-ending dialogue with his father, his mother, and his elder brother. From Artie's point of view, in this memoir by a son, the unveiled absences of his mother and brother, never to be seen again but always imagined by his father who ended his story by acknowledging the lost mother and son, will endlessly be reconstructed.

Eventually, Vladek completes his story by making it a fairy tale with a happy ending, which does not lose any family members. It is meaningful that *Maus* ends as if it were a fairy tale, although it is based on the actual facts of what Vladek said and Artie witnessed. Vladek concludes his story, telling Artie, "More I don't need to tell you. We were both very happy, and lived happy, happy ever after" (Fig. 9). Here we note that Anja, who ended her life by committing suicide, has been omitted. In addition, at the very end, before sleeping, Vladek mistakenly calls Artie "Richieu". But Artie does not correct Vladek. Instead, he accepts his father's mistake in introducing both Anja and Richieu into his fairy tale and he helps him to end his story by arranging for gravestones for both of his parents.

Fig. 9: Art Spiegelman: *Maus* II, p. 136 © Pantheon 1991

Conclusion

> "Spiegelman said that 'getting the story *was* the relationship'. [...] When we write about the dead we write them into our lives, put them in a place from which we can move on." (Miller 1996: 19)

Reading *Maus* and *Barefoot Gen* as attempts to reconstruct mothers' lost voices is not only to recall what happened in the past. Gen, an alter ego of the author himself, sharing his mother's experience, reconstructs her memoir and insures his bond with her, even though her corporeal being was no longer present. In *Maus*, eventually, Art allows his father to conclude his history in the form of a fairy tale. This is not just to comfort his father who lost a wife and son; it suggests that Art will continue to imagine Anja, his mother who committed suicide, and Richieu, his dead brother, listening to their voices unveiled by his father, and wondering how their lives could fit into a fairy tale. Art cannot find his mother's thoughts written in the form of a diary; however, he carefully interjects what his mother left into his father's narration and his own drawings so that the text *Maus* could continue reminding readers of Anja and lead them to imagine what she would feel and see. This imagined instantiation can never find a true resolution because of the disjunction between Vladek's words as historical record and his yearning for a fairy tale ending.

Composed for different genres and targeting different readers, as autobiographical graphic novels of memoirs these two works go beyond the narrow categories and limitations they were first put in. Continually inviting readers to imagine what has been lost and suggesting links to them, these books provide every reader with a chance to share the characters' experiences. The latter's existences are effectively hidden yet woven into these texts. Memoirs, as a hybrid form, encourage us to reconsider what we are taking over from the past, and each time we imagine voices which must have been a part of lived experiences, but remain hidden somewhere seeking a chance to be unveiled.

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II. Depictions of History in Japanese Comics

Bettina Gildenhard

History as Faction: Historiography within Japanese Comics as seen through Tezuka Osamu's Manga *Adolf*[1]

Introduction

In 2005, the publishing house Carlsen commissioned a German translation of the Japanese comic *Adorufu ni tsugu* by Tezuka Osamu (1928–1989). This manga was first serialized in the weekly magazine *Shūkan bunshun* between 1983 and 1985.[2] Its paperback edition consists of five volumes.[3] *Adolf*, as the title of the German translation reads, is an invented story typical of a manga set within the wider historical context of the 1930s and 1940s, in particular Nazi Germany. The twenty-year gap between the appearance of the Japanese original and the German translation — an English translation of the work had already appeared in 1986 — can be explained by the topic, which for a German readership is highly sensitive and its treatment in the medium of manga which, as much as comics in general has been underestimated in Germany. The fact that the work has now been translated is indicative of the ever-increasing interest in Japanese manga. In the 1990s, the most successful versions of manga in Germany were the gender- and age-specific genres of *shōjo* and *shōnen manga*, girls' and boys' manga, both designed to appeal mostly to teenagers. As such, they filled a gap in the German comics market. In the wake of these trailblazers, other manga are now reaching a German audience. One of them is *Adolf*.[4]

The treatment of the historical period of Nazi Germany in the medium of comics, though, is not completely new for the German audience. In 1989, the work *Hitler,* by Friedemann Bedürftig and Dieter Kalenbach, was published by Carlsen (a second, revised edition, appeared in 1993). In a review that appeared in the *Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt* and is cited on the back cover of the book, *Hitler* is called a 'comic'. But the only features that the work shares with a comic are the bubbles that contain thoughts and utterances. The 1993 edition features hardly any panels that would structure the narrative sequence. Instead, drawings and collages prevail, which cover the entire page and are

1 Many thanks to Ingo Gildenhard and Jaqueline Berndt for their support.

2 *Shūkan bunshun* is a general magazine not specialized on series of so-called *story manga* for boys or girls.

3 After the conclusion of the series, *Adolf* was published in book form in four different editions: 1985, 1988 and 1992 by *Bungei shunjū* (the publishing house which also owns the magazine *Shūkan Bunshun*) and 1996 by *Kōdansha*. Interestingly, the first edition of 1985 was published not in the B 6 or paperback size (the usual size for manga), but in duodecimo. The publishing as folio emphasized that *Adolf* was a serious and valuable work that should be kept like a "real book" after reading (and not thrown away like most manga).

4 See e.g. the December 2005 issue of the Swiss comics journal *Strapazin* (No. 81), which introduced to a German public various alternative Japanese manga artists, who are well-known in Japan but not yet in Germany.

framed by a narrative commentary. Apart from the already mentioned bubbles which are integrated into the drawing, texts and images are strictly separated (Fig. 1). The arrangement makes it doubtful whether the label 'comic' is really justified. Indeed, the authors do not mention the term 'comic' at all in their introduction: the images are called 'pictures' (Bilder) or 'drawings' (Gemälde) and are linked to art. The work *Hitler* thus demonstrates the mistrust of the authors regarding the medium of comics as well as revealing their lack of awareness about the medium and its functions. As Ole Frahm points out in his review of the work, the way the bubbles are used to show the inner thoughts of "historical persons is especially problematic, and partly reaffirms anti-Semitic perspectives" (see Frahm/ Hein 1993).

Fig. 1: Bedürftig/Kahlenbach's Hitler, p. 155 © Carlsen 1993

Another work that was discussed heatedly in the German public is *Maus* by Art Spiegelman.[5] In this graphic novel, Spiegelman gives an account of how his parents, who were Polish Jews, survived the Holocaust. In contrast to *Hitler*, *Maus* fulfills all formal conditions for being called a comic. However, the way Spiegelman uses the medium differs from conventional ideas. In an article about Holocaust films, Sander L. Gilman points out that etiquette usually requires that they do not contain funny elements, and mentions *Maus* in this context to illustrate his point: in the case of comics dealing with the Holocaust, like *Maus*, the medium should not be confused or identified with the meaning of the adjective 'comic', i.e. funny or humorous.

> Even the appropriation of forms such as the commix (the illustrated novel) by artist/authors such as Art Spiegelman has self-consciously stripped these forms of any comic, humorous, or witty content or intent. Indeed, Spiegelman's text works against the popular American assumption that 'serious' themes cannot be dealt with in the form of the illustrated text. [...] In Japan, on the other hand, one of the most powerful series of Tezuka Osamu's *manga* (commix) *Also Tell Adolph* (*Adolph ni Tsugu*) (sic) [...] chronicles the Shoah as seen from the point of view of the Japanese. Neither Spiegelman's nor Tezuka's commix is comic. (Gilman 2000: 279)

It is interesting that Gilman includes Tezuka's *Adolf* in his discussion. For while it is surely true that *Adolf* is not 'comic' in the strict sense of 'consistently aiming at hilarity', it is also important to realize that the work features a very peculiar mixture of art and entertainment, as well as of facts and fiction, which makes one wonder whether it should be placed in the same category as *Maus*. Gilman's article can be seen as one example of the overall increase of interest in manga since the 1990s, and its attendant re-evaluation. This re-evaluation, however, always risks becoming over-evaluation by treating manga without considering its history as an entertainment medium. The facile equalization of manga and commix in the above quotation demonstrates this tendency.

Tezuka's *Adolf* on the one hand claims — like *Hitler* and *Maus* — to be a serious approach to history, but on the other hand it is 'faction', a mixture of fact and fiction. It tries to entertain its readers with a thrilling story in a way that cannot be found in *Hitler* or *Maus*. In Germany, where entertaining works are routinely mistrusted and undervalued in the fields of literature and art, this mixture might be very opaque, if not disturbing for the readership. This paper will attempt to avoid preliminary judgement and aims to illuminate the special approach of Tezuka's *Adolf* to history by analyzing the work's complex and problematic interplay between fact and fiction, art and entertainment. By casting a comparing (and contrasting) glance at two other Japanese manga dealing with the same period, the paper tries further to discuss the possibilities of this manga and of comics in general as a medium of historiography.

5 First German editions vol. 1: 1989, vol. 2: 1992 (Reinbek: Rowohlt).

Tezuka Osamu's *Adolf*
1. The characters

Tezuka presents *Adolf* as the autobiographical account of the fictional character Tōge Sōhei, who serves as narrator. But, as suggested by the title, the main focus of the work is someone else. Already in the opening panel we learn that "This is the story of three men named Adolf": Adolf Hitler as well as two fictional characters, Adolf Kamil, a Jew born in Kōbe, and Adolf Kaufmann, who is the Kōbe-born son of a German Consulate official and his Japanese wife. That Kamil and Kaufmann share their first name with the *Führer* is not coincidental: as the story progresses, it soon becomes clear that Tezuka operates on the assumption that names imply a destiny. Thus Adolf Kaufmann develops from a cute child into a brutal Nazi, and the last volume presents Adolf Kamil as undertaking ruthless actions against the Palestinians in the newly founded state of Israel. Already at the outset, Tezuka stresses that, despite the diversity of their lives, the three Adolfs have something in common, which he does not hesitate to call an element of fate:

> This is the story of three men named Adolf. /
> Each Adolf lived a life that was very different from that of the other two... /
> Yet the three of them were bound together by a single twist of fate. /
> Now that the last Adolf has died, I will recount the story for those to follow. (*Adolf* 1: 12–14)

Tezuka uses the onomastic identity to point to deeper similarities between Hitler and the other two Adolfs, thereby intimating that the evil of Hitler may be found in other human beings as well. This destiny manifests itself primarily on a first-name basis. One may wonder to what extent his notion of 'destiny' exculpates its perpetrators insofar as it seems to circumscribe free will and the possibility of independent moral judgement. In other words, could those whom Tezuka names Adolf have turned aside from their paths of evil? This is of course a hypothetical questions to which *Adolf* provides no answers. But we may note that the title and the use of names illustrate Tezuka's tendency to use an element of history (in this case Adolf Hitler) together with fictional devices to endow his text with patterns of deeper meaning that has to be read between the lines. The question, whether the onomastic identity means that all human beings bear a Hitler-like part, has to be answered by the readers themselves.

2. The plot

The plot revolves around a document that supposedly proves Hitler had Jewish ancestors. This document, which is entirely fictitious, serves Tezuka as a sort of node to interweave the experiences of his narrator/protagonist with the biographies of the three Adolfs. Whereas the document and the name of Adolf provide important narrative unity, the story itself delights in elements of chance and contingency. To mention just two examples: Adolf Kaufmann's mother and Tōge Sōhei happen to meet each other by chance, and an affair ensues, which is one of the various love stories featured in the work (amongst triangular relationships, first love, late love, unfulfilled love etc.). And the father of Adolf Kamil, on a trip to Europe during which he tries to get Jews out of Lithuania, is captured and executed by a group of Hitler Youths to which Adolf Kaufmann belongs. None of these chance encounters and seemingly arbitrary fates would qualify as 'probable'. Actually much of Tezuka's narrative is out of line with principles of unity and coherence. This should, however, not automatically be taken as a reason for underestimating the work.

In his famous essay on the so-called pure novel *Junsui shōsetsu-ron* (1935) the Japanese author Yokomitsu Riichi (1898–1947) identified 'coincidence' as one of the main characteristics of the popular novel (*tsūzoku shōsetsu*). The term *tsūzoku shōsetsu*, coined in the 1920s, refers to literary texts which are written for a broad readership and do not follow the principles of the highly valued so-called 'I-novel' (*shishōsetsu*), which claims to be reality-based and truthful and became a dominant value standard in the literary world. According to Yokomitsu, though, the I-novel (*shishōsetsu*) and its overemphasis on the principles 'necessity' and 'plausibility' were responsible for the impoverishment of prose literature, and so he called for a reappraisal of contingency and other literary techniques of the *tsūzoku shōsetsu*. Yokomitsu would have appreciated Tezuka's way of story-telling; in Adolf, the Holocaust and the Second World War serve as an historical backdrop for a plot familiar from (Japanese and foreign) crime and love novels, full of tension and surprises.

3. The narrative frame

Tezuka's framing of the story is fairly sophisticated. In the opening panels it soon becomes clear that the verbal commentary does not belong to an authorial but an internal narrator. Early on, the narrator introduces himself as Tōge Sōhei and refers to himself as a *kyōgen mawashi*. The term comes from the *kabuki* theatre, referring to not the main character, but one who nevertheless plays an important role in the development of the story. After the narrator is properly introduced, a jump in time follows:

we are in the Berlin of 1936, to witness the opening festival of the Olympic Games. After several panels on the Games, we encounter a significantly younger Tōge Sōhei, who is attending the Games as a journalist. Here the story begins for real and continues for 35 chapters in chronological order from 1935 to ca. 1949, until a new jump in time occurs in chapter 36, which returns us to the initial scene. The last panels of the manga again show the aged Tōge Sōhei and reiterate almost verbatim the formulation of the beginning:

> This is the story of three men named Adolf. /
> Each Adolf lived a life that was very different from that of the other two...yet the three of them were bound together by a single twist of fate. /
> Now that the last Adolf has died, I will recount the story for those to follow. (*Adolf* 5: 253)

The last panel shows the graveyard already featured in the opening panel with the caption "Das Ende" (the end), which even in the Japanese original appears in German. This arrangement has the effect of turning history into a story within a story. In fact, the Japanese term that the internal narrator employs to introduce and characterize his story is *monogatari*, which means 'narrative'. It is a programmatic choice on the part of Tezuka, a signal to the reader that the following story will contain fictional elements and should therefore not be expected to conform to the standards of empirical veracity as appropriate for historiography.

4. The historical insets

At the same time, Tezuka is at pains to underscore that the larger context in which his story unfolds *is* historical. Chronological tables, which list the most important events for each year for both Japan and the world at large appear at various points in the text. These tables contain only words and no comics-specific pictograms. Their vertical presentation requires a reading from top to bottom and thus interrupts the reading of the story, which the reader of the Japanese original follows from right to left (in the German translation from left to right). In short, on the level of art work, the manga construes a complex interface between fiction and fact, which is fraught with tension and can be negotiated in a variety of ways. The same is the case with the 'serious' historical commentary, which places fictional events within a larger historical context. Thus, when the above-mentioned document falls into the hands of a Japanese school teacher, Tezuka uses the occasion to comment on the persecution of the Left in pre-war Japan. The second volume begins with a blunt description of Japan's invasion of China as well as the mobilization and oppression of the population of Japan.

> The Japanese military continued its relentless expansion into Nanking, Wuhan, Hsüchou and Canton... /
> Descending into mud and madness. /
> Tens of millions of civilians were slaughtered. They were ruthlessly cut down, shot and bayoneted by Japanese soldiers. /
> Even women and children, suspected of spying or guerrilla tactics, were routinely massacred. (*Adolf* 2: 14–15)

This sort of rhetoric gives Tezuka's sober historical facts a sensationalist packaging, aiming at thrill and entertainment as well as information.

5. Drawing style and intermediality

Iconograms such as little clouds that indicate anger or drops that signify fear as well as broadly drawn exclamations that blur the boundary between word and picture characterize manga as a medium which does not claim a high degree of realism and referentiality. Such elements indicate that comics should not primarily be measured by means of modern realism. Yet again, Tezuka opts for effects that complicate the matter. His mode of narration generates the impression as if the viewer is watching a film. Instead of maintaining the verbal I-perspective of the frame narrative throughout, Tezuka, according to the requirements of a visual medium, turns his narrator into a figure who is being observed as if through a camera. In the first volume, an interesting intertextual dimension heightens the effect further. Tezuka here uses images from the (supposedly documentary, yet highly stylized) films *Olympia* and *Triumph of the Will* by Leni Riefenstahl. What we have, then, is the layered phenomenon of 'art imitating art representing life'. As regards *Olympia* (1938), Tezuka's engagement with Riefenstahl seems mainly formalistic: he imitates the alternating sequence of portrayals of individuals and groups or masses. But with respect to *Triumph of the Will* (1935), a documentary movie about the so-called *Reichsparteitag* (the annual meeting of the National Socialist Party at Nuremberg), Tezuka extends his dialogue to the ideological level. He cites the historical images of Riefenstahl, but uses the strategies and techniques peculiar to comics, particularly their proximity to caricature, to embed them in an ironic matrix and undercut their original propagandistic message: during his climactic speech at the *Reichsparteitag*, Hitler slowly transforms into a screaming and gesticulating ape. Such images, together with the sober commentary of Tōge, reveal the supposedly documentary character of Riefenstahl's images as an ideological spectacle (Fig. 2).

At the same time, Tezuka does not resist the temptation to enrich *Adolf* with a form of intertextuality for which he is notorious: a couple of fixed figures serve as 'cast' and appear in different works. In *Adolf* the knowledgeable reader already knows two of the bad guys, Ham-Egg and Azetylen

Lampe, from Tezuka's previous publications.[6] The result of these touches, which of course tickle the devoted fan with the delightful experience of recognition and *déjà vu*, further undercuts the historical basis of the work. Thus, *Adolf* becomes just one more piece in the manga world of Tezuka.

Fig. 2: Tezuka's *Adolf. A tale of the twentieth Century*, pp. 78/79 © Cadence Books 1995

6. Authorial self-promotion

Finally, there is Tezuka's rather ambiguous self-promotion, which features the same oscillation between fiction and fact as *Adolf*. In a commentary on his manga entitled *The dignity of life is my theme* (see Tezuka 1997, chapter 4) Tezuka notes that the occasion to create Adolf was a request of a publisher to produce a 'war diary' (*sensō nikki*). Tezuka first considered basing such a work on his own war-time experiences with portrayals of the cities of Kōbe and Ōsaka, but soon jettisoned the idea since the resulting story would have lacked 'drama'. For this reason, he added the figures of the two Germans. Tezuka further notes that he wanted to present the story of Adolf from the point of view of a person who himself experienced the brutality of the times and thereby to countervail the tendency to approach the period of Nazi Germany and imperial Japan as a distant past. To characterize this

6 For a detailed description of Tezuka Osamu's 'cast' see Susanne Phillipps (2000).

point of view, Tezuka uses the terms *kyoshin tankai* (unbiased) and *kiroku* (report) and stresses that the narrator Tōge is none other than himself. However, his emphasis on authenticity and commitment to historical truth does not fully convince. These are at variance with many of the artistic techniques discussed above and at times generate outright contradictions. For instance, Tezuka's claim that Tōge is a stand-in for himself chafes with the introducing of Tōge as an internal narrator, who tells a *monogatari*, a fictional story. Their respective age creates further difficulties. Tezuka was born in 1928, i.e. he was eight years old at the time of the Berlin Games. Such contradictions make it appear as if Tezuka, in his commentary, wished to counteract the internal dynamic towards ever greater liberties with historical truth that *Adolf* developed over the course of the three years in which it was published.

To understand the dynamic development of the story, it may be useful to recall the specific mode of production and reception of manga and the limits it imposes on the author, especially the requirements of magazine serialization, such as (presumably) time pressures and, in particular, the need to animate the reader to buy the next issue. In fact, the further the story progresses, the less interested Tezuka seems to be in exploring innovative possibilities of historical representation, and the story consists more and more of fictional components without reference to existing historical material.

Comparison and Conclusion

To appreciate better the merging of historical themes with fictional elements in manga, it is useful to compare Tezuka's work with two other approaches to the history of Nazi Germany: Mizuki Shigeru's *Hitler* (*Hittorā*) which appeared first in 1971 (May–August) as a serial in the weekly manga magazine *Shūkan Manga Sunday* and *The Manga Introduction to World History* (*Gakushū manga sekai no rekishi*, Shūeisha 2002), a 20-volume series of world history.

The Manga Introduction to World History is a so-called 'learner's manga' (*gakushū manga*). The promotional blurb on the book cover promises that the reader will "Find out what happened and why!!" (*dōshite? nani wo? ga yoku wakaru!!*), while the pictures on the cover appeal to the image of manga as being interesting, entertaining, and easy to understand. Volume 18 deals with the Second World War, the same historical period as Tezuka's *Adolf*. On the first page Hitler, Churchill and Roosevelt are depicted with Hiroshima burning in the background. The next few pages show the 'cast' of characters and the table of contents. The 'cast' is made up of 9 historical figures and a fictional family of three portrayed as the 'average American family'. Some additional background

information is given in text form before the actual manga 'story' begins. The introduction of the average American family suggests that the following historical process is shown from their view, so that the average reader can identify with them and 'feel' history through them. But this expectation is betrayed. The narration focuses on the historical characters, while the fictional American family and other fictional characters are simply used to illustrate aspects of the historical process. Like the German 'comic' *Hitler* by Bedürftig and Kalenbach the learner's manga seems to distrust its chosen medium. There are a lot of explanations both inside and outside the panels, and the manga elements do not amount to a genuine narrative, but are primarily there to provide illustration. The learner's manga is clearly addressed to schoolchildren, designed to facilitate the assimilation of knowledge about history through the use of an entertaining medium. Its conception of history is therefore fairly simple. History is mainly presented as history made by famous people, and it is not clear who gives the explanation and from what point of view the historical process is seen. The learner's manga therefore perpetuates the illusion that a neutral and objective view on the past exists, a feature more familiar from history school books than the narrative medium of the manga.

Mizuki Shigeru's *Hitler* portrays the career of Hitler from his early days as an unsuccessful and at times homeless painter to dictator and warlord. In the last sentence of the work, the authorial narrator identifies the aim of this manga as providing a historical lesson: "Germany was a wasteland: that was the empire supposed to last for a thousand years which Hitler gave to the German people" (Mizuki 2005: 274–275). As well as the learner's manga, the 'story' chronologically follows historical events without additional narratives. The main characters are historical persons; fictional characters only serve to illustrate the historical background. But in contrast to the learner's manga, *Hitler* is a work 'trusting' the medium of manga and demonstrating its possibilities. Like Tezuka did in the above-mentioned scene of the *Reichsparteitag*, Mizuki exploits the potential of his visual medium by including an additional layer of commentary. Hitler, for instance, is characterized not only by what he does and says, but also by how he is drawn — as a criminal monomaniac and charlatan. This simultaneousness of reference and irony distinguishes manga from literature. In literature, additional layers of commentary can, according to the linear character of (written) language, only be added subsequently. The German author Christa Wolf, for instance, tried in her work *Kassandra* to give the 'hero' Achilles a new negative image by referring to him as "Achill, das Vieh" (Achilles the brute) (see Wolf 1983). In this linguistic structure, however, the characterization of Achill as brute remains additional, while in Mizuki's *Hitler*, reference and irony are merged together in the way Hitler is drawn. The manga as a pictorial *and* narrative medium has thus two ways of producing additional layers of meaning; simultaneously *and* subsequently. In this sense the medium is suitable for a way of historiography, which does not try to be neutral or objective, but emphasizes one particular view of

history and presents this view by the means of a narrative story. The learner's manga (and the 'comic' of Bedürftig and Kalenbach) disappoint as historiographies, because of the very reason that they do not effectively exhaust the means of comics. Tezuka's *Adolf* and Mizuki's *Hitler* on the other hand provide a view of the historical period, which in other mediums like film or literature, would not have been possible.

So how can Tezuka's *Adolf* be judged? In comparison to the learner's manga, *Adolf* is far more complex, demanding and in this way educational. But Tezuka delivers his historical lessons with a degree of fictional license far beyond that found in other visual histories of the period, such as *Hitler* by Mizuki Shigeru. Moreover, in *Adolf* education and entertainment hang in precarious balance and more often than not, the scale tips towards the latter. By making full use of his narrative medium and the artistic devices at his disposal, Tezuka offers an opaque and complicated version of 'faction' that raises more questions than it answers. The results are ambiguous, as pointed out by Ng Suat Tongs in his review of the English translation: "*Adolf* is undoubtedly Tezuka at his darkest. The content necessitated a change in approach to his drawing but the lightness which remains in his style still rebels against the content" (Ng Suat Tong 1996: 42). Ultimately, it is up to each reader to negotiate this tension (as well as several others) for himself or herself.

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Jaqueline Berndt

'Adult' Manga: Maruo Suehiro's Historically Ambiguous Comics[1]

1. Introduction: A plurality of manga

Among japanologists it is customary to transcribe Japanese words without the '-s' indicating the plural since there is no equivalent in Japanese. This can, however, be misleading, especially when the missing ending helps discursive inclinations towards essentialism — as is occasionally the case with manga, although Japanese comics escape being understood in the singular. In Europe and America, there are at least three different kinds in circulation: first, magazine series and *tankōbon* editions for a young audience favoring cute characters, fantastic fiction, and manga style as a shared language. Frontrunners like Oda Eiichirō's *One Piece*, Kishimoto Masashi's *Naruto* or works by the female team CLAMP set the dominating image of manga, sometimes to such an extent that different-looking Japanese comics cannot be categorized under the same heading. One type of manga the typical manga fan would not easily obtain, is the second sort: comics reminiscent of avant-garde or underground traditions, which often draw upon horror, pornography, and scatology, popular for their shock value. Together with so-called *gekiga* of the 1960s and early 1970s,[2] creators of these manga, such as Maruo Suehiro (*1956), Hino Hideshi (*1946) or Hanawa Kazuichi (*1947) have been paid considerable attention abroad, by alternative comics publishers as well as, for example, *The Comics Journal*. Finally, there is something which could be called the 'third manga', works that neither unconditionally serve nor drastically provoke their readers. Dedicated to this type — incidentally the latest to be introduced to a non-Japanese audience — is the label *Sakka* [author], with which French publisher Casterman promotes manga by Taniguchi Jirō (*1947), Takano Fumiko (*1957), Kuroda Iō (*1971), and Nananan Kiriko (*1977), to mention just a few. Yet, whereas the word *sakka* may suggest *auteurism* at first glance and by that the traditional counterpart to products of the culture industry, comics by Taniguchi, Takano and others are located rather beyond the modernist dichotomy; they

1 This essay is the partly revised version of Berndt 2005, which derived from a talk given at the international conference "Szenarien des Comic. Kulturwissenschaftliche Untersuchungen im Medium der Schriftbildlichkeit" (2nd International Comics Festival Berlin, August 27–28, 2003).

2 The term *gekiga* (literally pictorial drama) was coined in 1957 by the comics artist Tatsumi Yoshihiro (*1937) in order to distinguish the then newly emerging realist comics from previous manga mainly aimed at children, especially those created by Tezuka. From my point of view, the universal use of this historically specific term is problematic in three respects: first, it is deeply rooted in the Japanese manga discourse of the 1960s; second, it was closely tied to the so-called rental libraries (*kashihon'ya*) and the peculiar communicative interrelations engendered by these sites which have disappeared in the 1970s; and third, *gekiga*'s stylistic accomplishments have become components of *story manga* in general, as can be inferred for example from Tezuka's later works; see Randall (2002a, 2002b), Köhn (2005a, 2005b).

can be enjoyed as comics although they do not comply with commercialism. They offer pleasurable reading and trigger reflections upon one's reading at the same time.

Remarkably, Casterman's complete catchphrase reads *sakka, l'autre manga*, and is accompanied by the Japanese sentence *manga wa otona ni naru*, literally 'manga become adult' or 'manga grow up'. This is precisely the object of my attention here: the relation of comics to 'being adult'. In accordance with the theme of the present anthology — reading manga from multiple perspectives — I would like to stimulate further intercultural exchange upon what different people expect from various kinds of manga and what standard of value is underlying their assessment. Indebted to their respective comics cultures, European and American comics critics have had a tendency to regard manga as being infantile, that is, less sophisticated, or even 'retrivializing' the comics medium (Platthaus 1998: 230; Munier 2000: 32). Highly symptomatic is an American review of Aida Makoto's *Mutant Hanako*, a manga parody which I cannot discuss in detail here, but would at least like to mention since it attempts to come to terms with similar issues like the examples discussed below. The reviewer voices his unease as follows:

> [..I]t is impossible to say whether Aida is ridiculing Japanese nationalism or providing us with a warped vision of the same. [...]'Mutant Hanako' is, in a word, infantile. It matters not a bit to me if Aida is a 'fine artist' and capable of wondrous feats of draughtsmanship for what is produced here amounts to sheer tedium. (Tong 2001: 35)

Statements like this indicate cultural differences with regard to accepting ambiguities. But things have changed since the beginning of the new century. Obviously influenced by comics like Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*, many critics now distinguish between childish and childlike, and admit not only that the narrative perspective of a child makes it possible to render invisible things visible — like in *Barefoot Gen* — but also that comics for children allow for 'adult' readings. Mentioned in passing, it is intriguing to trace such discursive changes back to the impact of manga, and further, to the congruence of comics as an allegedly infantile medium, and Japan as an allegedly infantile culture.

However, I do not intend to analyze discourses of infantilization here nor do I aim for an examination of in what way notions of an adult reader stem from European modernism. Instead, I will discuss two works by Maruo Suehiro, a manga artist whose style is occasionally described as 'pseudo-naïve' in European and American comics discourse. Using conventional notions of 'adult comics' — related to sex, politics and art — as my springboard into the topic, I will first highlight the issue of ambiguity and pursue it in view of both fundamental aesthetic characteristics of comics and cultural peculiarities of manga. Here, my main argument is that the term 'adult' applies not only to subject matter, but above all to the way politically-charged issues are approached, by both the text itself as well as by the individual reader. After that, I will shift the focus of attention to one particular

aspect of comics' basic ambiguity, that is, the intertwining of time and space which can be understood as a variation of the interlocked relation between words and pictures, or reading and watching, often regarded as the very essence of comics. Linking the definition of comics as spatial narratives to Maruo's multi-layering of historical time, I hope to demonstrate how this artist is 'naturalizing' history in order to erode ideological 'naturalizations'. That said, it is probably apparent that I do not aim at a general introduction of Maruo by touching upon all his works in chronological order while elucidating his artistic development and illuminating spheres of influence. With an occasional reference to *Barefoot Gen*, I will analyze only two of his works as exemplary for the plurality of Japanese comics in general and the diversity of their historical explorations in particular.

2. Ambiguously 'adult'

Since the 1960s, manga has grown up, as can be stated in regard to the age of its readership, to the range of its stories, genres and styles, and to its scale as a market, not to mention its embrace by formerly rather hostile institutions. In comics discourse however, the attributive term 'adult' refers less to economic or cultural maturation than to issues like the following three: first, to sexual or pornographic content; second, to a specific kind of reader — e.g. politically conscious members of society — and third, to comics as a valuable art form. Yet, even if considering all three meanings, critical assertions of 'adult' comics risk underplaying fundamental characteristics of comics in general and of manga in particular whenever they are too deeply indebted to a culture of self-confidently drawing clear lines — between the adult and the infantile, and consequently, between the political and the a-political, the erotic and the pornographic, serious art and spectacular entertainment. The Euro-American adult comics dream might have collapsed, as Roger Sabin points out,[3] and modern notions like 'adult' — as well as 'nation' and 'history' — have evidently been losing reliability for comics readers, but this does not mean that reflections upon 'adult comics' have become obsolete altogether. The very concept of 'adult' needs to be revised, though. In this section I will argue that 'adult' should be understood less as a matter of thematic content or readers' age-groups than as a mode of expression and a way of reading. If being adult today meant affirming the basic ambiguities of (post)modern life, then adult comics would be a platform for practicing multiple perspectives, including a focus not only on representational content and its respective recipients, but also on the media-specific forms of its materialization as well.

3 See his contribution to this anthology.

Comics in general are an aesthetically ambiguous medium; Japanese comics, however, are characterized by a further range of cultural ambiguities which often go unheeded abroad. I shall list them briefly before discussing Maruo's short story *Planet of the Jap*. To begin, manga's ambiguities are indicated by the fact that 'adult comics' in the sense of comics with sexual and pornographic content are not labeled *otona* or *seijin* using native words for 'being of age' or 'grown-up', but *adaruto* by means of a loanword from English. Loanwords connote unordinariness, and what appears to be unordinary in this particular case is the foregrounding or even isolating of sexuality, usually something much more integral to Japanese than to American or European mainstream comics. Whereas readers, male and female alike, rather enjoy erotic depictions conflated with humour and daily-life situations, foreign critics as well as Japanese courts focus on the 'objectionable' image in isolation.

Apart from erotic or pornographic 'adult comics' which are shrink-wrapped and in principle inaccessible to children, it is not easy to ascertain whether specific manga works are for adults or minors. The often-cited conspicuous amount of sexuality and violence in manga can be traced back to its taking minors seriously, while apparent puerility does not necessarily mean that the respective comics are read solely by children. Often manga also allow adults to nurture the child inside themselves and recall what they have been repressing as grown-ups, among other things, a child's lack of understanding towards strict binaries. Furthermore, the kind of manga which has successfully penetrated the European and American markets and set the tone for the perception of Japanese comics by the general public there is aimed at neither children nor adults, but at teenagers. In view of that, I feel compelled to touch upon Sharon Kinsella's *Adult Manga: Culture and Power in Contemporary Japanese Society* (2000); after all, it is the most widely-known publication on the subject under scrutiny here. Being well aware of this book's usefulness for comics experts without a command of the Japanese language, I do not mean to diminish its significance as a contribution to both the study of manga and the search for 'adult' comics in general. However, in order to raise the level of the debate over 'adult manga', I would like to point out aesthetic and cultural ambiguities which escape its consideration.

Adult manga are, according to Kinsella, "high-circulation, mainstream, non-specialist, non-pornographic" Japanese comics produced by neoconservative editors for neoconservative readers, in other words, pictorial narratives for serious, responsible non-teenagers who prefer stories with adult protagonists like themselves staged in major companies or government agencies. Pointing to manga series of the early 1990s, such as Kawaguchi Kaiji's *Silent Service* (*Chinmoku no kantai*, 1989–), she asserts: "For men, having 'adult' taste often implies a personal decision to reject the infantilism and frivolity of youth culture, and to become a serious, disciplined, and 'realistic' person instead" (Kinsella 2000a: 49). Kinsella also uses the term 'youth' (*seinen*), first of all when summarizing

her book in Japanese (Kinsella 2000b, internet),[4] but she interprets the term *seinen manga* as acting merely as camouflage in order to resist "pressure from government institutions opposed to a culture of adults reading manga" (Kinsella 2000a: 46). Mainly published in so-called youth-manga magazines (*seinen-shi*), Maruo Suehiro's manga contradict this interpretation, but before sketching his indecision between conventional notions of the infantile and the adult through an example, we need to consider one more crucial aspect: the inclination to equate the adult with a certain notion of the political. Assuming that manga became socially respectable due to its conversion from the anti-establishment stories of the 1960s — 'politically radical' *gekiga*[5] — to neoconservative themes in the 1990s, Kinsella claims that the major publishing houses were responsible for the transformation of manga into a "middle-class medium which expresses the consciousness of both editors and bureaucrats employed in government agencies" (Kinsella 2000a: 10). Such a perspective, however, risks underplaying manga's contemporary potential for cultural criticism. This derives from other sources than traditional political opposition, and addresses society not directly and at large, but through manga's functioning as an intermediary of communication more than as an autonomous text, through parodic references to other manga, the aesthetic refusal to easily exploitable narrative super-structures as carriers of long-term magazine serializations, and manga's openness to queer readings.

Maruo Suehiro's comics are 'adult' not just because they offer blatant sex scenes or depictions of "a connection between authoritarian militarism and distorted sexuality" (Stephanides 2005: 31), but rather because they confront us with inextricable, highly mediated ambiguities. Here, the infantile as irresponsible and excessive is part of the adult, and the adult is part of the child-like perspective insofar as these stories do not settle for unequivocal messages. While *Barefoot Gen* takes for granted what is good and desirable, Maruo's comics question the very premises of morality, denying the reader happy-endings and thus a comforting closure. This is the case with his short comic *Planet of the Jap* (*Nihonjin no wakusei*, 1985). Unfolding something like the backstory to Philip K. Dick's novel *The Man in the High Castle* (1962), it toys with the idea of Japan having won World War II. In a complete reversal of the historical facts, the story begins with the dropping of a Japanese atomic bomb upon Los Angeles on August 6, 1945, proceeds to the Japanese occupation of New York, and culminates in the execution of General MacArthur on September 3, 1946. The first 10 of the altogether 27 pages (not counting the title illustration) depict chronologically the time span between the dropping of the bomb and the capitulation of the US.

4 She translates the title of her book as *Seinen manga. Gendai Nihon shakai no bunka to kenryoku* [Youth manga: culture and power in contemporary Japanese society].

5 See also the equation of 'adult' and 'politically engaged' in the characterization of Tezuka's manga as a "clean and healthy form of children's entertainment" (Kinsella 2000a: 29) and as "a-political" (ibid: 99).

Fig. 1: Title illustration of *Planet of the Jap*, p. 183 (2003) © Maruo Suehiro 1985

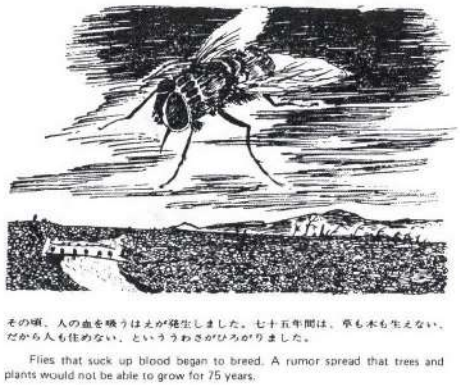

Fig. 2: *The Laughing Vampire*, German edition 2003, p. 111 © Maruo Suehiro 2000

This part is without dialogue and rendered in a primarily photorealist style which favors a bird's-eye view, the resulting impact of distance lowered only by close-ups of a cicada implying summer heat, and — as the Japanese original reads — 'beautifully dying' Japanese soldiers. Contrarily, the events of the second part — after an intermission of four pages presenting victory festivities — are shown predominantly at close range: in light pictures now emphasizing planarity and monochrome line-work, the reader witnesses how Japanese soldiers rape a blond woman and hurl her crying son's head at the wall. What follows are four pages dedicated to the execution of General MacArthur which is

celebrated in the form of almost calligraphic sword strokes, completed by one finale page repeating page 8 — the bird's-eye view of a bay, a mushroom cloud, and a foregrounded cicada — only this time wordless (Fig. 1, 2).Unlike the most successful manga globally, Maruo's works refrain from inviting the reader to emphasize with their protagonists, although they often feature highly attractive young men of a somehow decadent beauty. As if providing a frame to the whole story, one of these figures appears on the cover of *Planet of the Jap* and another one on the next-to-last page. The latter epitomizes the young emperor in western uniform on horseback who seems to look back pensively at the decapitation of General MacArthur on the previous pages. The youth on the title page (Fig. 3) wears the pre-war student's uniform of the military academy at Etajima (Hiroshima). Like a giant, he rides on a tank, the barrel between his thighs heightening the phallic power of his sword. His headband proclaims that he is prepared to sacrifice his life for his country. Branches of a cherry tree and mount Fuji in the background remind us further that until 1945, Japanese soldiers were supposed to identify with the short-lived cherry blossom. The superb beauty of Maruo's picture planes suggest an affirmation of such ideological clichés.

Fig. 3: Last page of *Planet of the Jap*, p. 210 (2003) © Maruo Suehiro 1985

Apparently leaning on what can be called a hypertrophied 'samurai aesthetics', this manga might be suspected of promoting militarist nationalism; however, putting it to the test, contemporary neo-nationalists will probably not welcome it.

On the one hand, *Planet of the Jap* professes a desire for masculine and imperial strength; it reveals anti-American resentment, and aestheticizes heroic death. Yet, on the other hand, there are flies crawling over the beautiful corpses, the boy's smashed face comes zooming like a mask towards his murderer, and MacArthur's executioner reaches for his lap in an aroused manner after he has carried out his lethal duty. Maruo's comics, although historically rarely as definite as this one, seem to express a longing for Japan's pre-war years, an era of chauvinism and imperialism; their pictorial beauty and graphic perfectionism might give the impression of affirming the then-dominant values. But on second glance their exaggerated artificiality, the suspiciously even surfaces, and elements like the indecently dribbling barrel on the title page of *Planet of the Jap* hinder realistic readings. These manga are less concerned with historical facts as such than with ways of relating to them. *Planet of the Jap* coerces the reader into affirming a certain desire for masculine strength while deconstructing it at the same time; it refuses to be faithful to historic events while calling for historical faithfulness in regard to the underlying collective dreams. Thus, it rather defies its readers to build their own view instead of instructing them. If readers lack historical knowledge though, they may consume Maruo's stories as weird fantasies which confirm how unreal Japan's militarist past is for them.

Comics like these prove to be for adults insofar as they intertwine the sexual and the political in an ambiguous manner. According to film and manga critic Yomota Inuhiko, Maruo's manga are "attempts to resurrect censored history", discarding "stereotypes of Japanese national mythology, sometimes by reference to various kinds of sexual perversion" (Yomota 1993: 204). Unfortunately, Yomota does not explicate what he means by 'censored history'; in Maruo's case this is likely to be tied to 'politically incorrect' sentiments and thus similar to Kobayashi Yoshinori's focus, although the latter strives for eradicating any unequivocalness. But I do not intend to make this nor the considerable change in the political criticality of sexual references since Yomota's above-mentioned statement in 1993 my issue here. Rather, I would like to highlight that Yomota concludes Maruo to be "the true successor to the grotesque tendency in *ukiyo-e*" (ibid). Such a link to premodern woodblock prints raises doubts with regard to suggesting a historical continuity as well as implicitly assigning Maruo's manga the status of art. The latter deserves attention here as the final meaning of 'adult' in comics discourse.

An appreciation as "adult comic art"[6] is rare for manga creators outside of Japan, due to the proliferation of commercial manga for teenagers, and within Japan, due to a distrust of manga artists and critics in the authority of 'art'. Contemporary manga critics do not refer to 'art' in order to single out certain works. For them, as for the general reader, quality is not a matter of beautiful

6 For example, the English translation of Maruo's *Shōjo Tsubaki* (English: *Mr. Arashi's Amazing Freak Show*, also know in European languages as *Midori*; first published in: *Manga Piranya*, No. 8, 1981) was announced by the New York Press as "exquisite [...] adult comic art of high visual sophistication" (Blast Books, internet).

or aesthetically-demanding expressions, but of functional renderings; it is assessed mainly in regard to how well a specific style serves the reader, be it by supporting the story or by providing cute characters. If 'art' is given importance, then it is done primarily by state officials and educators who refer to it — and through it to manga — as a part of a national tradition. Thus, in Japan, calling manga 'art' inevitably evokes issues of national identity, whereas in European and American comics discourse it relates rather to an international (though initially Eurocentrist) modern art with an avant-garde twist: experimental, original, and subversive. Such 'comics art' appears to be critical because it benefits from being interpreted by critics. Remarkably, there are fewer discussions of Maruo's works in Japanese than, for example, in English — a fact which points to cultural differences concerning comics criticism and art in general. Maruo obviously dislikes both modern art in a global sense and the local institution of art which was imported from Europe by Japanese elites in the late 19th century as part of the national project of modernization. The avant-gardist rebellion against institutionalized art (which, in the end, remains bound to its counterpart precisely by rejecting it) has remained foreign to him, although his works are partly shocking and often marked as art in the sense of 'avant-garde'. Regarding certain manga artists as avant-garde leads back to Tsuge Yoshiharu (*1937) whose successor Maruo is often presumed to be. Since 1968, when the legendary alternative manga magazine *Garo* dedicated a special issue to Tsuge, his short comics have attracted the attention of Japanese art and film critics as a form of surrealism, due to the real look of their unrationalizable sequences.[7] Maruo's comics too are occasionally labeled 'surrealist', but what sets them apart from Tsuge's is the surprisingly small number of critical writings about them which probably derives, among other things, from their escaping psychological readings. On top of that, Maruo's manga do not suggest a pursuit of authenticity. Eclectic layerings of given motifs take precedence over originality; sticking to decorative surfaces is favored over aspirations for an emotional or historical depth; and parody prevails as the ground color, making any effort to seriously categorize them — as political statements, as porn or as art — difficult.

7 Critics like Satō Tadao and Ishiko Junzō (as to be distinguished from Ishiko Jun who was mentioned in the preface to the first German translation of *Barefoot Gen*) paid special attention to Tsuge's short story *Nejishiki* (first published in: *Gekkan Manga Garo*, additional issue, No. 47, June 1968, pp. 3–8). The English translation was *The Stopcock* in 1971; in 2003 *Screw-Style* (see Tsuge 1971; 2003). For general introductions see Asakawa (2004) and Maréchal (2005).

3. Escaping history

Most of Maruo's stories are set in Japan in the 1930s. Yet, as mentioned above, this problematic past is neither condemned and repudiated in a modernist way, nor idealized in a traditionalist manner. Maruo's manga take an aesthetic rather than an explicitly political stance towards the pre-war era, an attitude which necessarily remains ambiguous; it repeats the startling aesthetic nationalism of modern Japan, while dislocating its ideological effects anchored within the collective subconscious. Thus, icons like the flag of the rising sun — from a historical perspective an imperialist symbol, while a mere auspicious, innocuous ornament from an ahistorical point of view — appear as indicators of a desire which cannot clearly be remembered or seriously rationalized. It remains uncertain whether Maruo's approach is, strictly speaking, historical, since the past is not envisaged as a temporal sequence of Before and After; it is rather subject to a media-specific nostalgia oscillating between layered images and their respective connotations of historical time. In tune with the general intertwining of the adult and the infantile, in Maruo's comics, the historical time of rational grown-ups — a time of purposeful action and development — is inseparably bound up with the eternal present experienced by children, the modern moratorium called youth, or, a utopian standstill.

Maruo's multilayering of time corresponds with the peculiarities of comics as spatial narratives or translations of time into space as they are defined. These peculiarities allow for questioning historical time — for example when graphic perfection brings the speedy progression typical for manga to a halt, or when pictorial spaces become laden with signs of 'nature' to such an extent that they render the attempt at historical understanding futile. A telling example is *The Laughing Vampire* (*Warau kyūketsuki*, 1998/99). This 233-page manga, originally serialized in a youth-manga magazine, begins with images of a destroyed modern Japanese city. Architecture and clothes suggest the 1920s or 1930s as the time of action, but as the story unfolds, it seems to take place in the late 20th century, an era characterized by technological progress and consumerism; the characters live in houses with modern bathrooms and TV sets, and sometimes they watch people going to brightly-lit department stores which appear as the last relics of enlightenment the vampires shy away from. But this landscape is intruded into by butterflies — the symbols of restless souls — the beautiful surfaces coated with decorative though overripe flower tendrils, cobwebs, and vermin (Fig. 4). In accordance with men turning into animal-like creatures instead of pursuing humanism, these references to nature clearly dehistoricize the scene. Maruo's 'naturalization' is historically twofold though. On the one hand, it links his manga to the grotesque, 'atrocious' *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints of the

19th century, supposedly comparable to contemporary comics as a subcultural mode of expression, and obviously exhibiting a similar distrust in historical realism during an era of drastic historic change.[8]

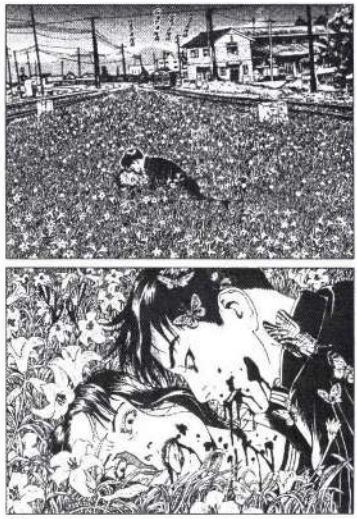

Fig. 4: Maruki Iri and Toshi: *Pikadon*. Tōkyō: Roba-no-mimi 1979 (without pagination). The painter-couple Maruki Iri (1901–1995) and Toshi (1912–2000), renowned in the context of the anti-A bomb and peace movement for their 15-part series of monumental paintings titled *The Hiroshima Panels* (*Genbaku no zu*, 1950–1982), published a picture book in 1950 of which this is the 52th illustrated page. © Roba-no-mimi 1979

On the other hand, it alludes to ideological naturalizations in modern imperial Japan. An eminently illuminating example is modern practice to count the years according to the reign of each emperor (*nengō*), concurrently used with the Gregorian calendar, and still in use today; thus, the year 1945 is the 20th year of the *Shōwa* era, the reign of emperor Hirohito, which lasted until his death in 1989; consequently, the respective historic break becomes embedded in a comforting national continuity. In other words, the imperial calendar 'naturalizes' history insofar as it allows for both a spatial detachment of the insular empire from the rest of the modern world, and a temporal one, that is, the illusion of historical resets, or of escaping history.

The most prominent fictional figure epitomizing the desire (as well as the curse) to escape history is the vampire who features in the title of Maruo's manga. The temporally multi-layered stage of *The Laughing Vampire* is haunted by a middle-aged female bloodsucker. She initiates the high-school student Mōri into her world who in turn transfers his immortality to Luna, after she has

8 In 1988, Maruo and his colleague Hanawa Kazuichi published their adaptation of a famous portfolio of 28 'atrocity pictures', created by Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839–1892) and Ochiai Yoshiiku (1833–1904) in 1867; see: Maruo/ Hanawa (1988).

been strangled with a belt by their class-mate Henmi. Henmi is later revealed to be the 'laughing vampire'; under that name, he keeps a diary in which he records his killings. But he does not commit his murders in a vampire-like way, and there is nothing to 'laugh' at. Contemplating on his being punished with loneliness, Mōri and Luna finally drown him in a pond with lotus flowers, the Buddhist symbols of death and rebirth. More than by bloodsucking, Maruo's young vampires are defined by loneliness. They are left alone because they are impure, that is, positioned between life and death, impulse and reason, child and adult, past and present. Unlike the protagonist of *Barefoot Gen* they can only try to swallow the authentic but never embody it because they are parasitic by nature, last but not least in regard to history which never really affects these witnesses, not even in the form of physical development.

While Maruo apparently refers to historical ambiguity by means of the vampire, Kotani Mari discusses this motif as a metaphor for the Other, in terms of culture as represented by Europe and America, but also in terms of gender. From her readings of popular Japanese literature she deduces that the vampire has served less as a vehicle for self-critical defamiliarization (or denaturalization) but rather as a projection screen for the strangeness of foreign cultures which were to be familiarized (or japanized). Against the backdrop of Japan's modernization in which the break with the past proceeded under the conditions of an unequal intercultural exchange, Japanese authors adapted the European bloodsucker for the first time in the 1930s, Maruo's preferred era. Drawing upon an indigenous tradition of ogres (*oni*),[9] they utilized the vampire as a signifier of xenophobia, applied to Europeans as well as 'westernized' (and as such estranged) Japanese. While in literature this was resumed in the early 1970s — albeit now in order to express conflicting emotions towards the US — the girls' manga artist Hagio Moto (*1949) transformed the vampire from a monster into an affirmative figure (Fig. 5). Edgar, the protagonist of her famous series *The Pō Family* (*Pō no ichizoku*, 1972–1976), is an adolescent vampire removed from time and growth: "What is at stake here is not only the binary opposition between physical childhood and internal adulthood, but also that between physical manhood and internal womanhood" (Kotani 1997: 191–192).

Immortal, and therefore lonely, Edgar roams through England and Germany in a manga aimed specifically at Japanese girls;[10] here, the intercultural or ethnic aspect was for the first time given less importance than the ambiguity of gender. Being trapped in a temporal space beyond historical time, vampires like Edor Mōri (who also could have originated from a girls' comic) embody a modern nostalgia: They allow glimpses into a past which cannot be accessed directly, suggesting its desired

9 The Japanese word for vampire *kyūketsuki* consists of the Sino-japanese characters for sucking (*kyū*), blood (*ketsu*) and ogre (*ki*, also read *oni*).

10 First serialized in the girls' manga magazine *Bessatsu Shōjo Comic*.

'authenticity' while at the same time, revealing it to be untenable. To put it differently, they present one way of escaping history, closely connected to spatial narrowness.

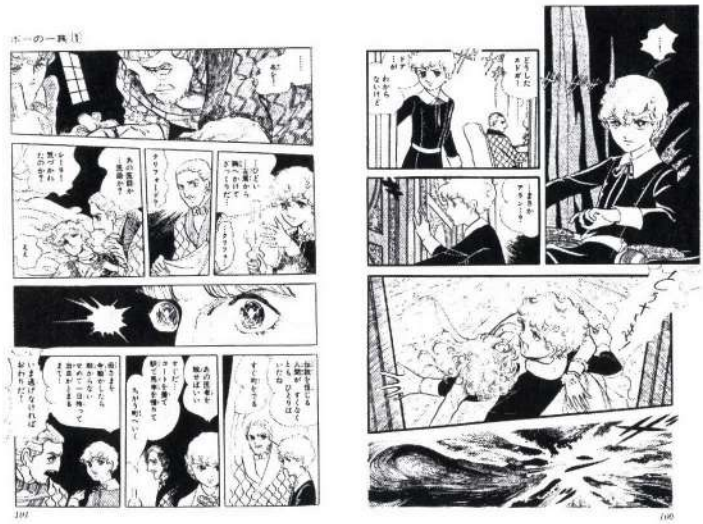

Fig. 5: Hagio Moto: Pō no ichizoku. In: *Flower Comics,* vol.1, 1984, pp. 110/111 © Hagio Moto 1974

In his groundbreaking book on the history of art criticism in postwar Japan, Sawaragi Noi introduced the metaphor of 'Japan as a closed circle', a place shielded by the US after World War II and therefore 'beyond' or in the slip-stream of world-history. As Sawaragi claimed for the art world, under these conditions the era of Japan's modernization (1868–1945) had fallen into convenient oblivion, resulting in a vicious circle of repetition instead of development, and the quotidian feeling that nothing ever really happened. This feeling recurs in many manga which tell personal, small-scale stories set in daily life. In Hanawa Kazuichi's *Keimusho no naka*, for example, daily life appears — according literally to the title — as life *In prison*. At first sight, Hanawa seems to document his own imprisonment for illegal possession of firearms from 1995 to 1998; but the sepia colors the manga is rendered in make it look as if the story happened in a far more distant past, and the pseudo-naïve tone it adopts — about how comfortable it feels to be in prison where you are finally free of any 'adult' responsibilities — opens it to ironic readings. Contrarily, in Maruo's manga, the characters do not make us laugh about the narrow world they cannot escape from and therefore are unable to observe from a distance. The orphan Midori is trapped at the end of *Shōjo Tsubaki*, and so are the young people in *The Laughing Vampire*. They can only dream of breaking out of their constricting world; Maruo does not even allow them to overstep the panel boundaries — he rather keeps them anchored in pictorial spaces which

are unusual for mainstream manga regarding their degree of depth, plasticity, and accuracy in detail. Graphic sophistication leads to reducing visual mobility.

Using children as characters for 'adult' stories is a common practice in Japanese popular culture, and especially the young girl (*shōjo*) — allegedly pure and innocent — has served male artists as a utopian screen for a unified identity located in the past. Maruo parodies this modern tradition, among other things, by foregrounding boys. These boys have two sides: the vampire who is caught up in spatial narrowness, and the 'beautiful boy' (*bishōnen*) as his counterpart (and alter ego) who opens up prospects of a vaster and lighter world. Today, the latter is primarily known as the principal character type of 'boys'-love' comics (*shōnen ai*), which derived from *shōjo manga* and have recently been extended to the female erotic genre of *yaoi*. This tradition of ambiguous gender depictions has of course not escaped Maruo's attention; actually, he made his debut in 1980 with a parody on Tezuka Osamu's (1928–1989) girls' manga *Princess Knight* (*Ribon no kishi*, 1953–1956). But by furnishing Mōri, the protagonist of *The Laughing Vampire*, with both sides — that of the vampire as well as the beautiful boy — Maruo refers also to Japan's pre-war culture reminding us of the fact, that the 'beautiful' boy can be traced back to early boys' magazines. Not yet specialized as comics but richly illustrated, pre-war magazines for boys (and, respectively, for girls) occupy a historical location between contemporary manga and pictorial traditions like that of *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints; they have mediated the latter to artists like Maruo. This becomes apparent through the resemblance of Maruo's boys with those of the illustrator Takabatake Kashō (1888–1966) who between 1924 and 1935 worked mostly for the boys' magazine *Nippon shōnen*. His 'beautiful boys' adorning many cover pages of the magazine, are remarkable in three aspects, which I would like to mention briefly in order to illuminate how Maruo actualizes the past in the form of a media-historical dream.

First, in contrast to girls who remained passive and lost in thought, Takabatake pictured boys in action: swimming, baseball-playing, and fencing. Such boys visualized the desire for a world with wide horizons and large spaces, a vastness otherwise vaguely suggested by the flag of the rising sun. Onto them, the upper-class youth who consumed these magazines could project their dreams. Insofar as these dreams addressed the issue of cultural mobility, they had a spatial as well as a temporal dimension, referring to the departure from both insular narrowness and antiquity to the large, wide, modern world. Boys' magazines like *Nippon shōnen* (literally: Japanese boys) suggested not only that such mobility was possible, but also that it was possible within (modernizing) Japan. Second, the dream of cultural mobility revealed itself in the visual intertwining of different ethnic elements, above all the slightly Caucasian faces of these clearly Japanese boys, their pithy noses, chins and cheek bones. The eyes, by the way, regained an 'almond shape' in the late 1920s, that is, returned to 'Japaneseness' then. In part, this can be traced back to Takabatake's personal intentions. Initially

educated in traditional Japanese painting, he felt soon unsatisfied with the predominance of the two genres of landscape on the one hand, and pictures of flowers and birds (*kachōga*) on the other. Rather interested in beautiful people, he began to autodidactically study European classicism. In the sculptures of ancient Greece, he found a model not only for depicting young men (which suited his homosexuality well), but also, in a more general way, for rendering beauty realistically as a matter of almost tangible bodies. Third, Takabatake's boys were not only westernized, but also feminized, resembling the modern vampires introduced by Kotani Mari. As androgynous beauties, they evoked erotic fantasies, although they never became (homo)sexually explicit (Fig. 6).

Fig. 6: Takabatake Kashō: cover illustration for *Nihon shōnen*, July 1930

Japan's culture has a long tradition of depicting erotic boys, be it young priests in the monasteries of the middle ages, or nonchalant young samurai in the urban pleasure districts of the peaceful 18th century.[11] After a break in the late 19th century due to modernization, this tradition was revived by the pre-war predecessors of today's manga magazines. There, beauty was less a matter of an actually invisible morality, but rather of a pleasant outward appearance. The latter's (obviously tolerable) sexual overtones can be partly explained by the strict separation of boys and girls who once they were seven years old were not even allowed to sit next to each other. However, the 'beautiful boys' of the 1920s and 1930s added a new dimension to the tradition; they allowed for indulging in a desire directed not only at gender or social position, but also at modernity and the foreign 'West'. It goes

11 See Nakamura for a survey, and Komatsu for a hand scroll which was created in the 1350s as a pictorial biography of the 3rd abbot of the Honganji temple; the scene where the protagonist is ordained also shows elder monks' affection for young men. I am grateful to Melanie Trede for pointing this scroll out to me.

without saying that the peculiar intertwining of nationalism and sexual attraction foreclosed their rise as symbols of modern Japanese culture. This is precisely where Maruo's vampiristic nostalgia sets in, suggesting that the beautiful boy's dream of mobility is just the reverse of the vampire's deadlock, and thus only another attempt at escaping history, this time into a fictitious vastness.

Concluding remarks

Adult manga are addressed to grown-up readers who indulge in deviating from social norms. In Maruo's case this includes a deviation from mainstream manga. His comics revolve around historically- and politically-charged issues but do not come up with clear messages; by drawing attention to their formal aspects, they rather invite reflections upon the very premises of taking a moral stand. These stories lack characters the reader could easily emphasize with, and they do not lead to happy endings. Pictorially oscillating between a stylized two-dimensionality recalling *ukiyo-e* traditions, and a realist three-dimensionality alluding to a corporeal presence, their beautifully-crafted panels and pages resist rapid consumption. But no matter how unusual Maruo's comics appear when compared to global best-selling manga series, they share fundamental ambiguities with them which raise doubts about conventional binaries — between watching and reading, the representational and the sensual, the contextual and the textual, and the adult and the infantile. By simultaneously affirming and refusing dominant images of manga, they also shed light on the issue of what could possibly pass as a typical manga.

Unlike the majority of Japanese comics, Maruo's works exhibit an interest in modern history; his manga are, among other things, a medium of memorizing and actualizing the past, sometimes for suspicious, that is, politically-incorrect purposes. As demonstrated in the previous sections, they do this by deploying a nostalgic approach which is filtered by media history. Many manga artists who are not at the centre of mainstream production show an inclination to nostalgia as a mode of self-critical inquiry — Tsuge Yoshiharu, Hanawa Kazuichi, Taniguchi Jirō, Takano Fumiko, or Kuroda Iō, all belonging to the second or third sort I mentioned in the first section of this essay. Today, in view of teenagers preferring mobile phones and computer games to printed pictorial narratives, one might be tempted to put this down to a general characterization of comics as a nostalgic medium. Yet, in Japan, this is not a recent phenomenon, probably because of the deep-rooted uncertainties of subjectivity-formation which arose from a modernization hovering between eurocentrism and traditionalism. Part of this modernization has been a discourse of cultural self-definition which has replaced temporal, or historical with spatial categories, foregrounding 'Japaneseness' and 'Westernness' instead of

traditionalism and modernism. Maruo's manga suggest an intriguing congruence between this discourse and comics as spatial narratives. They allow for an application of comics' basic unsettled temporality and spatiality while reflecting upon Japan's problematic past. However, unlike *Barefoot Gen* they do not make authentic experiences their issue; instead, they draw attention to the longing for authenticity and its ultimate unattainability. The desire for a comforting identity — whether located in a time passed or in a unique cultural space — turns out to be like a child's dream.

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Stephan Köhn

Glimpses of the Past: The Allegedly Authentic Samurai Spirit as seen through *Kozure ōkami* (*Lone Wolf and Cub*)

> Only three years ago, anyone predicting that bookshops would very soon place bookshelves with comics in the most attractive places in their shops, would have been called a lunatic. But nobody even dared to make such a prediction, as the manga boom was considered a temporary phenomenon. Although the series *Dragon Ball* was extremely popular, it was generally believed that the manga boom was only an imported, short-living fashion. Therefore, the publishers thought it time to make money as long as possible. Today, to the publishers' great relief, making money is still possible. And it has never worked better than today. (Platthaus 2003: 29; translated into English by S. K.)

Manga's great popularity was not only a stimulating factor for the sudden flourishing of the German comic market, as Andreas Platthaus wrote for the magazine *Börsenblatt des deutschen Buchhandels* in 2003, but also responsible for a revaluation of a medium that had been socially disregarded for a very long time. While only specialized comic shops were dealing with Japanese manga until recently, nowadays almost every well-stocked bookshop in Germany is selling them. Various works have been translated, and the different manga genres are now available to German readers.

Looking at the German translations, one title seems especially noteworthy, at least to me: *Lone Wolf and Cub* (*Kozure ōkami*).[1] Unlike all the other titles, which are, generally speaking, works published in Japan within the last 10 or 15 years, *Kozure ōkami* was published almost 35 years ago. Koike Kazuo (*1936; scenario) and Kojima Gōseki (1928–2000; artwork) created this voluminous samurai drama, which was first serialized in the magazine *Manga action* (*Manga akushon*; Futabasha) between 1970 and 1976, and which has been translated into German by *Panini Publishing* since 2001.[2] But *Kozure ōkami* is not only different from most other titles translated into German by its own 'age' but also by its readers' 'age'.[3] *Kozure ōkami* is not considered a manga for boys or girls (*shōnen manga, shōjo manga*) and neither for young men (*seinen manga*), which are usually translated into German, but a *gekiga*, a 'dramatic picture'. The term *gekiga* was created in Japan in the mid-1950s by a group of young artists around Tatsumi Yoshihiro (*1935), who tried to develop a more realistic and dynamic way of graphic storytelling that could attract an adult readership.[4]

1 There exist, actually, two German translations of *Kozure ōkami*, but the first one, *Ōkami* published by Carlsen Comics in the years 1996–97, was never completed. The publishing house Panini started a new translation of *Kozure ōkami* in 2003 under the title *Lone Wolf & Cub* and has published, so far (November 2005), 15 volumes (out of a planned 28).

2 The German translation by Panini uses the same cover illustration as the English translations (by the comic artist Frank Miller). For no clear reason, the chronological order of some episodes from the first two volumes of the Japanese original has been changed.

3 A very good overview of manga translated into German can be found in Keller (2006).

4 For details see Köhn (2005).

Today, *Kozure ōkami* counts — together with several historical works by Shirato Sanpei (*1932)[5] — as undoubtedly among one of the masterpieces of *gekiga*. In translation, this work had already attracted its first American and European (adult) readers in the late 1980s with a hitherto unseen visual aesthetic, and with mythical and, in most of the cases, tragically ending heroes: the samurai of the Edo period (1603–1868).

Especially in Germany, there can be observed a general fascination for the samurai. The samurai is considered a symbol of old-fashioned moral values and ideals, as can also be seen by the large amount of books published within the last years that all have one crucial thing in common: propagating the way of the samurai (*bushidō*) as a mental source in times of globalisation, economic recession, and spiritual disorientation. Titles such as *Hagakure für Führungskräfte: Der Weg des Samurai [Hagakure* for Managers: The Way of the Samurai](Drosdek 2002), *Samurai-Prinzipien für den Manager des 21. Jahrhunderts. Was wir von der alten japanischen Führungselite lernen können* [The Code of the Executive — Forty-seven Ancient Samurai Principles Essential for Twenty-first Century Leadership Success](Schmincke 1997) or *Der Samurai-Faktor: Durch Chaosmanagement aus der Krise* [The Samurai-factor. Getting over Crisis by Chaos-Management](Drosdek 1995), invite the reader to discover his 'innermost' samurai to be successful in life.[6] Especially works that had been ideologically misused in Japan during times of nationalism in the 1930s and 1940s, such as the well-cited *Hagakure* [Hidden Leaves] from 1716 or *Gorin no sho* [The Book of Five Rings] from 1643, are enjoying great popularity.[7] Formerly read only by martial arts fans, these two books have now gained the status of 'handbooks' for those seeking success in business or simply spiritual truth, as the following titles show: *Samurai-Spirit. The Way of the Warrior in Japanese Martial Arts* (Preston 1999) or *Die innere Form: Zen im Management* [The Innermost Form. Zen in Management] (Linder-Hofmann & Zink 2002).

Thus, the German translation of *Kozure ōkami* meets a demand and longing for the traditional (and as such, of course, allegedly authentic) Japan and its very specific culture that has existed in Germany for several years. This demand is undoubtedly on the minds of many Japanese film producers who seem to produce their movies especially for a market in America or Europe, for example Kitano Takeshi's film *Zatōichi* (2003). This movie, using all kinds of clichés of 'Japaneseness' (*nihon-rashisa*), was more popular in foreign countries (Kitano won 2003 the 'silver lion' for a special directors award at the 60th International Film Festival in Venice) than in Japan and was shown in

5 Shirato's most famous *gekiga* are *Ninja bugeichō* (Book of ninja's martial arts; San'yōsha 1959–62) and *Kamui den* (Legend of Kamui; in *Garo* 1964–71).

6 Even private training institutes provide a wide range of different kinds of programs to discover the 'innermost' samurai. See for example http://budo-paedagogik.de/samuintro.html (2006/2/8)

7 The newest translations have — although the *Hagakure* and the *Gorin no sho* were translated in the last years a dozens of times — been published in 2005. See Höhn/Sakai (2005), Keller (2005), Bode (2005) and Yamada (2005).

Germany under the misleading title *The blind samurai* — perhaps because the blind hero, an outcast, could fight with a sword.

A large number of personal interpretations and comments on *Kozure ōkami*, such as can be found on many German manga fan-sites or club homepages, point out the historical authenticity and the unique samurai spirit of this story.[8] But what has this samurai-spirit been made of? And what ethical and moral ideals are presented to the reader? The starting point of the following reflections on the 'samurai spirit' and the question of allegedly historical authenticity in modern manga will be *Kozure ōkami*. After a short summary of the plot, I will first try to point out the special qualities of a samurai as can be observed by the two protagonists of this work. In the next step, I will provide a closer look at the historical context of the samurai culture and its theoretical framework as it was written down in the *Hagakure* by Yamamoto Tsunetomo and Tashiro Tsuramoto. Some general remarks on the possible function of the 'samurai-spirit' in Japan and in Germany in times of growing neo-nationalism and the creation of cultural identities will conclude my paper.

1. A short summary of *Kozure ōkami*

After Oda Nobunaga (1534–82) and Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–98) had made the first attempts at unifying the country under one strong ruler, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616) completed their lifework at the beginning of the 17th century and erected a new shogunate government, run by the Tokugawa clan that should last for almost 250 years. To gain complete control over all defeated *daimyō*, the feudal lords of this time, the government founded three independent organizations, each of them run by a single clan: first, the so-called *o-niwaban*, responsible for tracing down descendents of a former rival *daimyō* who was beaten or killed at the final battle at Sekigahara (Gifu prefecture) in 1600; next, the so-called *shikakunin*, responsible for assassinating unpleasant officials; and finally, the so-called *kaishakunin*, responsible for beheading a person in the act of committing *hara-kiri* (self-disembowelment) by order. Although *o-niwaban*, *shikakunin* and *kaishakunin* were, actually, historical government positions in the Edo period, the dramatic framework and the protagonists of *Kozure ōkami* are absolutely fictional.

In the mid-17th century, Ogami Ittō, head of the Ogami clan and chief of the *kaishakunin*, lost not only his position and honour through intrigue of the Yagyū clan, the *shikakunin* of the government, but almost his entire family by assassins sent by the Yagyū. Only his newborn son, Daigorō, survived the nightly massacre and became the only companion of his father on his long way of vengeance

8 See for example http://www.top100comics.de/single_book_international.php?rank=36 (2006/2/8)

and justice. On their wanderings through different fiefs all over Japan, Ogami Ittō earned a living by working as a cold-hearted assassin himself. After countless battles with retainers of the Yagyū clan and the Kuroguwa clan, the former *o-niwaban* that were now allies of the Yagyū clan, Ogami Ittō finally triumphed over his enemies and got revenge for the injustice he and his family had had to suffer all that time.

2. Stylized characters for reader's projection: A closer look at the protagonists

One of the main reasons for the overwhelming success of the samurai-drama *Kozure ōkami* is, undoubtedly, the special father-son-relationship, which maybe demonstrates the propagated 'samurai-spirit' best: the father, Ogami Ittō, represents a life maxim that is characterized by Spartan humbleness that was generally considered one of the most striking virtues of a real samurai. Ittō expresses his obvious rejection of wealth and luxury to other samurai with the following words: "Half a tatami mat for sitting, and a whole tatami mat for sleeping, and even as a ruler 450 grams of rice are [more than] enough" (*okite hanjō, nete ichijō, tenka tottemo nigōhan*) (Fig. 1). For Ittō, who always introduces himself and his son to strangers with the words "we are already living in the world of the dead and demons, we are standing at the threshold between accepting and rejecting the four stages of life in the six Buddhist worlds" (*meifu madō ni iki rikudō shishō jungyaku no sakai ni tatsu*) (Fig. 2), nothing in this world is of any deeper interest anymore.

Fig.1: Ittō's life maxim. Source: *Kozure ōkami,* vol. 1, p. 152 © Shōgakukan 1976

Fig. 2: Living only for revenge. *Kozure ōkami,* vol. 6, p. 16 © Shōgakukan 1976

Due to the sudden assassination of his clan and his wife by the ambitious Yagyū clan, the only thing that counts for Ittō now is to avenge the murdered.

Ogami Ittō is a samurai with a traditional education. Although he is officially employed by the Tokugawa-government as a *kaishakunin* and allowed to wear the shogun's crest (*mitsuba aoi*) on his ceremonial dress (*Kozure ōkami* 1: 8–9), he is presented to the reader in this *gekiga* wearing his head unshaven like a masterless samurai (*rōnin*). Ittō shows, as most 'heroes' in historical *gekiga*,[9] skills in sword fighting that most other samurai can only dream of. While his enemies rely primarily on the weapons they hold in their hands, Ittō relies only on his instinct and his technique, which allow him to cut even a grain of rice precisely into two halves (Fig. 3) or to slay — visualized by long sequences of 'silent' panels — an entire army that was recruited against him (*Kozure ōkami* 6: 51). The obligatory mental basis and therefore guarantee for Ittōs invincibility is, of course, Japanese Zen-Buddhism: Gaining spiritual power through religious meditation (*zazen*) (Fig. 4) and physical strength through specific ascetic practices (*shūgyō*).

Ittō does not only have the ability of 'mental fighting' as propagated in Miyamoto Musashi's (1584?–1645) *Book of Five Rings* (*Gorin no sho*), which means anticipating how a fight will probably end before it has even started, and then choosing a strategy that will have the best chances of success (Fig. 5), but he also possesses an iron will that even allows him to overcome tetanus he is suffering from in order to fulfill his obligations as a professional assassin (*Kozure ōkami* 4: 146; 171).

Fig. 3: Extraordinary technical skills.
Source: *Kozure ōkami*, vol. 5, p. 169
© Shōgakukan 1976

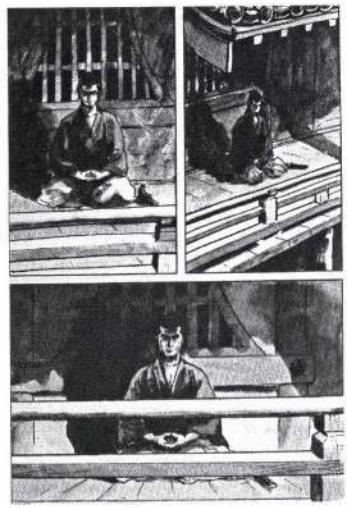

Fig. 4: Ittō practising zazen.
Source: *Kozure ōkami*, vol. 5, p. 193
© Shōgakukan 1976

9 See for example all the ninja fighters in Shirato Sanpei's *gekiga*, who — as Kagemaru in *Ninja bugeichō* shows maybe best — have to be killed more than a dozen times (due to their supernatural skills) before they 'finally' die.

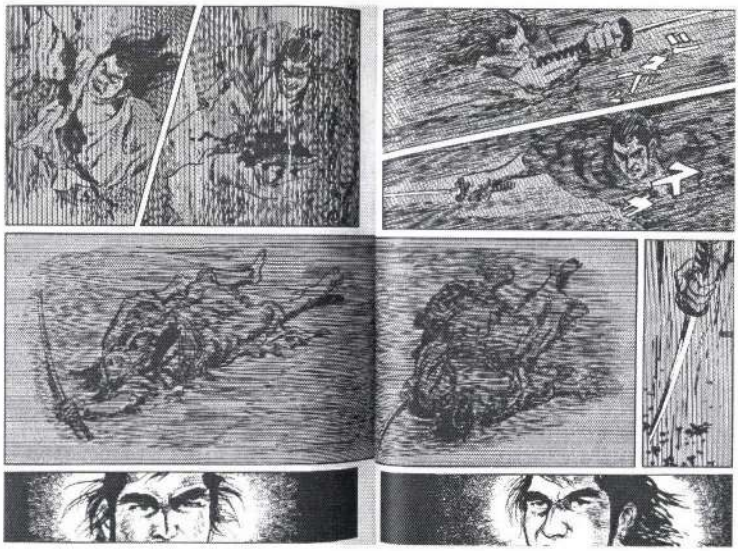

Fig. 5: Ability of 'mental fighting'. Source: *Kozure ōkami*, vol. 1, pp. 172/173 © Shōgakukan 1976

Total control over emotions — or should it be called lack of emotion — is another characteristic of a samurai like Ogami Ittō. Crucial to his former position as *kaishakunin* was a certain emotional distance from other human beings, which even allowed him to ritually execute women and young children — an emotional distance that can also be found in the relationship to his only son, Daigorō. Ittō forces his son to decide between the easy way (represented by the *mari*, a small ball), which means following his mother to the 'other side' by a merciful act of his father, and the hard way (represented by the *dōtanuki*, a short sword), which means following his father on his uncertain journey for justice and revenge (Fig. 6). And Daigorō as a real little samurai chooses, of course, the hard way. Already at the early age of three, Daigorō learns the crucial lessons of samurai life: not to faint when you are hungry, not to give up when you quiver with cold, and to keep your self-possession when it is time to die. Therefore, every time his life is in real danger, Ittō's greatest concern is whether his son will be able to die with the dignity of a samurai. Ittō's resoluteness to sacrifice his only son in order to carry out an obligation or a job he is requested to do is particularly criticized by other samurai. Daigorō for example, is thrown into a river as a bait for Ittō's enemies — and when they try to rescue the child, Ittō assassinates them under water (*Kozure ōkami* 1: 98) — or Daigorō is tied to Ittō's back to blind his enemies in battle with a mirror that is fixed to his forehead (*Kozure ōkami* 1: 94). His enemies' offers to spare at least the life of his son are strictly rejected. Ittō justifies his obvious cold-heartedness towards Daigorō with a simple explanation: "Only a father can understand the feelings of his son, and only a son can understand the feelings of his father" (*Chichi nareba koso ko no kokoro, ko nareba koso chichi no kokoro*). The climax of a samurai's lack of emotion, as propagated so far in this *gekiga*,

is reached when Ittō has to fight against his former disciple. Here, for the first and last times, Ittō sheds tears of grief and sorrow, emotions he does not even show when his wife is murdered.

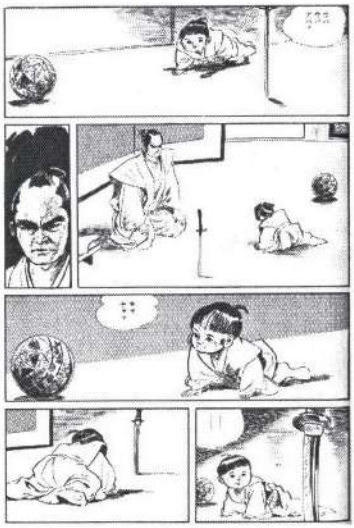

Fig. 6: Daigorō's choice.
Source: *Kozure ōkami*, vol. 1, p. 75
© Shōgakukan 1976

Fig. 7: Daigorō's extraordinary behavior.
Source: *Kozure ōkami*, vol. 1, p. 109
© Shōgakukan 1976

Ittō's son Daigorō, although still very young, represents the ideals of a real samurai child. He is introverted (almost as if autistic), taciturn (*mukuchi*),[10] and emotionless (*namida mo shiranai ko*), and his behavior is obviously different from all the other children. When he has stolen food offerings from a grave, he leaves some of his few belongings behind in recompense (Fig. 7), and when he is offered food after days of starving, he waits calmly until he is told to eat (*Kozure ōkami* 3: 111).

Daigorō has special abilities any other child of his age does not have, and courage most adults can only dream of (Fig. 8). Especially his eyes showing — as can be seen in several close-ups in this *gekiga* — the same lack of emotion as his father's eyes seem to fascinate the other samurai he meets on his long journey. They admire the expressionless look of his eyes, which is generally called *shishōgan* (i.e. eyes that can see life and death at once) and is considered proof of self-control and fearlessness. It is widely believed that only people who have seen scenes of carnage (*shurajō*) hundreds of times will get this special look. Therefore, it is only natural that most would-be samurai of this gekiga are fascinated by Daigorō because this child already possesses the gift they have always longed for. Like his father, Daigorō has full control over his emotions. The only time he sheds tears of sorrow is when a masterless samurai and his son, who have saved Daigorō's life, are killed by assassins sent by the

10 One of the very few 'words' Daigorō is able to articulate in this *gekiga* is '*chan*', a meaningless abbreviation of '*tōchan*' (= father).

Yagyū clan to kill Ittō and his son (Fig. 9). Daigorō's obedience completes the picture of a well-raised samurai child in the Confucian sense of *oya kōkō* (filial piety). He follows his father's instructions without any hesitation and endures every humiliation to save his father's life.

Fig. 8: Courage like an adult.
Source: *Kozure ōkami*, vol. 1, p. 233
© Shōgakukan 1976

Fig. 9: First tears of sorrow.
Source: *Kozure ōkami*, vol. 3, p. 237
© Shōgakukan 1976

Fig. 10: Zenpē's ritual suicide after 'rescuing' his family.
Source: *Kozure ōkami*, vol. 5, pp. 27; 71 © Shōgakukan 1976

Besides Ittō and his son, who represent 'samurai spirit' at its best, there are only few characters in *Kozure ōkami* who actually deserve to be called 'real samurai'. One of these very few exceptions is Harata Zenpē. Zenpē, whose family is saved from arrest by a group of farmers, demonstrates the principles of *ongaeshi*, the repayment of a favour: First he rescues his wife and his son from a life of shame by killing them, then he assassinates — in a typical *gekiga*-style fighting scene using different camera angles and speed lines — the feudal lord who had cruelly oppressed the farmers over a very long time, and finally he delivers himself to justice and commits ritual suicide to save the lives of innocent farmers (Fig. 10).

3. Samurai spirit in the Edo period: facts and fiction

The life of a samurai as depicted in *Kozure ōkami* follows a strict moral and ethical code. Zen-Buddhist meditation and ascetic exercises give him, as seen above, the necessary mental and physical strength to defeat his enemies in countless fights for life and death. Crucial for his success is the rejection of any emotional feelings and personal relationships. Even his own flesh and blood will be sacrificed if it helps to fulfill his duty or to achieve his aims. Every single moment of his life, a samurai must be mentally prepared to fight against other samurai or to sacrifice his life immediately when being told by his lord, without hesitating or asking for reasons (Fig. 11). But how realistic was this samurai image in the Edo period in fact?

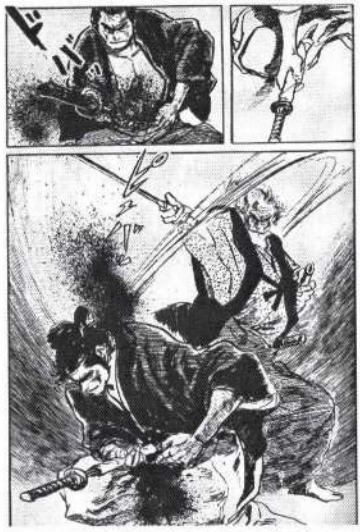

Fig. 11: Gorōza sacrifices his life for the Yagyū clan's honour.
Source: *Kozure ōkami*, vol. 4, p. 27 © Shōgakukan 1976

Historically speaking, ethics and etiquette of the samurai, as propagated in movies, literature or manga and *gekiga* respectively, had already lost their validity in the middle of the 15th century. In the following one hundred years, the so-called age of civil strife (*sengoku jidai*), intrigues, conspiracies, and treachery were quite common ways for ambitious samurai and feudal lords to gain more power. At the time when Oda Nobunaga started to hold sway over most parts of the country, fighting strategies on battlegrounds changed radically. The introduction of firearms made traditional fighting more and more useless. Battles were no longer won by the sword, but by the gun.

After Toyotomi Hideyoshi had continued Oda's life work, it was finally Tokugawa Ieyasu who gained control over the whole country and erected a new shogunate government that lasted for almost 250 years. At that time, the samurai ideals of loyalty and devotion were already an antiquated virtue, as history tells: Nobunaga was murdered by one of his closest retainers, and Ieyasu, who had sworn loyalty to Hideyoshi's son, betrayed his former lord and became ruler over Japan himself. Under the new government, a peaceful era began where warriors like the samurai became more and more useless. Most of the former soldiers therefore began to work as officials in civil and military administration offices of the new Tokugawa government. Many governmental decrees now prohibited the practice of the samurai's traditional ethical and moral codes: it was prohibited to follow one's lord in death by ritual suicide by a decree from 1661, and a few years later another decree prohibited avenging a death (*katakiuchi*) that was not officially permitted by the magistrate on duty (*Kokushi daijiten henshū iinkai* 7: 416; and 3: 348–353).

Losing their own tradition, most samurai of the Edo period, who were forced to live in idleness, began to adopt the glamorous lifestyle of the merchants (*chōnin*) and to forget — in contrast to the stylized representation in *Kozure ōkami* — the real ideals of a samurai according to the *bushidō*.[11] It is obviously no coincidence that the *Hagakure*, the unofficial bible for all real and would-be samurai, was published at exactly the time when *chōnin* culture was in its heyday and the decadence and mental decline of the former elite class, the samurai, reached its first climax: the Genroku period (1688–1704).

The *Hagakure*[12] was compiled by the two former samurai: Yamamoto Tsunetomo (1659–1717) and Tashiro Tsuramoto (1678–1748) over a period of more than 7 years and contains several reflections on the essence of *bushidō*. It idealizes the way of the samurai of former times, and harshly criticizes the new type of degenerated samurai of the Edo period.

11 In Neo-Confucian thought, the unofficial ideology of the Tokugawa government, merchants (*chōnin*) were considered the lowest class in pre-modern society, according to the traditional Confucian class hierarchy *shi-nō-kō-shō* (Samurai-Farmers-Craftsmen-Merchants).

12 In actual fact the original text of the *Hagakure* has been lost. The oldest copies of this text are known under the titles *Hagakure shū* (*Collection of Hidden Leaves*), *Hagakure kikigaki* (*Notes on the Hidden Leaves*) and *Hagakure rongo* (*Disputes from the Hidden Leaves*). See *Nihon koten bungaku daijiten henshū iinkai* (1984: 44–45).

> Furthermore, during the last thirty years customs have changed; now when young samurai get together, if there is not just talk about money matters, loss and gain, secrets, clothing styles or matters of sex, there is no reason to gather at all. Customs are going to pieces. (*Hagakure*, in: *Nihon no meicho* 17: 85)

A real samurai should resist all temptations of the floating world (*ukiyo*), the world of joy and pleasure, and be aware of his real duties in life. The idealized samurai of the *Hagakure*, whose life maxim is 'to be of good use to the master', and 'to be filial to the parents', should focus his whole mental energy on the central theme of every samurai's life: death.

> Every day one should think over and make an effort to implant in one's mind the saying, "The time to die is right now." It is said that it is strange indeed that anyone is able to pass though life by one means or another in negligence. Thus, the way of the samurai is, morning after morning, the practice of death, considering whether it will be here or be there, imagining the most sightly way of dying, and putting one's mind firmly in death. (*Hagakure*, in: *Nihon no meicho* 17: 139)

Against the general belief — as can be seen in chapter 2 — that Buddhist thought and practice were crucial for the mental and physical strength of a samurai, the two authors of the *Hagakure* reject these esoteric views and explicitly warn young samurai not to get in closer contact with Buddhism:

> It is a great mistake for a young samurai to learn about Buddhism. The reason is that he will see things in two ways. A person who does not set himself in one direction will be of no value at all. (*Hagakure*, in: *Nihon no meicho* 17: 246).

For a samurai, it is crucial to obey the moral and ethical codes of the *bushidō*. It is the nature of a samurai to die or to kill for his master's sake. Moral doubts about one's master's orders, or a lack of interest in sword fighting, as seen in most young samurai of that time, are harshly criticized by the authors.

> Last year I went to the execution grounds in Kase [i.e. city of Saga] to try my hand at beheading, and I found it to be an extremely good feeling [*nantomo sawayaka na kimochi*]. To think that it is unnerving is a symptom of cowardice. (*Hagakure*, in: *Nihon no meicho* 17: 297).

The *Hagakure* had declared war against the degeneration of the new type of samurai in the Edo period. But the moral and ethical codes propagated by the authors — and, as seen above, by Koike Kazuo und Kojima Gōseki in their romantic renderings in *Kozure ōkami* — were already anachronisms from a good old past that actually had nothing in common with the reality of a samurai's life in the 17th/18th century. The literature of that time, the *kanazōshi* and *ukiyozōshi*,[13] shows a type of samurai that contradicts the widely-believed image of fearless warrior. Except for the privilege of wearing two swords, a samurai's life was very similar to a merchant's one. Effeminate, weak-looking samurai enjoyed the different pleasures that were available in Kyōto, Ōsaka, and Edo.

13 After liberalization of the publishing industry in the first decades of the 17th century, the *kanazōshi* (books written in Japanese syllabary; 1620–82) and the *ukiyozōshi* (books about the fashionable world; 1682–mid 18th century) were very popular literary genres revealing a deep insight into pre-modern daily life.

The modern samurai did not live for the battlefield but for the theatre and gay quarter, and he no longer trained his mind and body but cultivated elegant behavior and a fashionable outlook (Fig. 12).

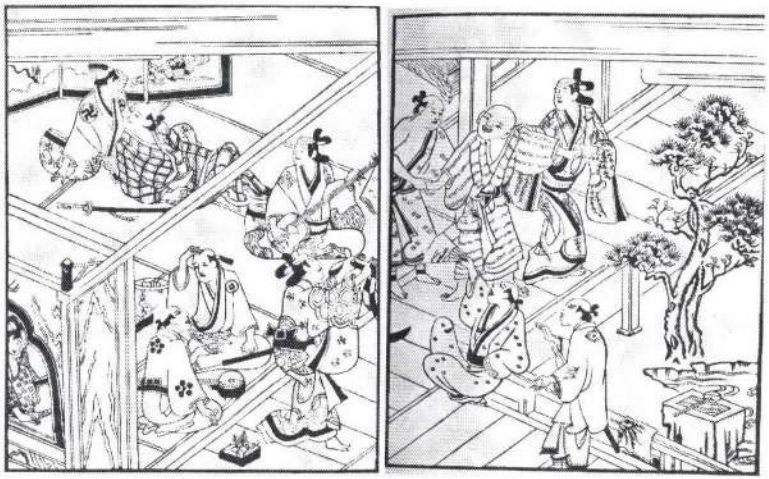

Fig. 12: The new type of effeminate samurai in Ihara Saikaku's *Nanshoku ō-kagami* [Big mirror of homosexuality].
Source: *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 39, pp. 536–537 © Iwanami shoten 1984

Fig. 13: Kinpira, sitting on the right, as a new model of pre-modern masculinity.
Source: *Kinpira saitan no hokku*: 1 [verso]–2 [left]. © Izumi-tayū/Torii Kiyonobu 1698

The samurai of the Edo period had almost nothing in common with the ideals of the traditional *bushidō*. So new fictional characters emerged that would represent the classical moral and ethical samurai codes of former times. The new type of protagonist that began to appear in literature and theatre was fearless, chivalrous, very masculine, possessing high moral standards and standing for

law and order. In most cases, the stories of the novels or plays were relocated into former times. One reason was the official prohibition against writing about persons from the present time, but another reason was also a lack of appropriate models for creating a hero. It is not surprising that the authors of the kabuki theatre had chosen the figure of Kinpira, a famous hero from the 10th century, as model for a new type of character (and acting, the so-called *aragoto*, i.e. rough-style of the Kabuki theatre in Edo) that combined all samurai virtues in one person and that was very popular especially among the samurai audience (Fig. 13).While in the Edo period the way of the samurai (*bushidō*) was reduced to a stylized ideal from the past, it gained new popularity during the Meiji period (1868–1912) — a time when the government's new modernized army had to defeat a rebellion of the last traditional samurai in 1877 in the Seinan War (*Seinan sensō*) in south-east Japan![14]This new form of *bushidō*, also called modern or national *bushidō*, was not only a revival of almost-forgotten moral and ethical codes, but was also filled with new ideological contents. Within the new framework of the *kokutai*-ideology,[15] Japan promoted its modernization and westernization while restoring traditional values and virtues. The new generations of soldiers were no longer samurai — the feudal class system of the Edo period was abolished in the Meiji period — , but with their vow to the Emperor (*tennō*), the new spiritual, military and political leader of Japan, they were obliged to pledge absolute loyalty and devotion, just as the samurai of the good old days.

In the Meiji period, as Rinaldo Massi writes in his introduction to Nitobe Inazō's well-cited book *Bushido* (1985: 63–73),[16] 'samurai spirit' according to the traditional *bushidō*, was more and more popularized and reached its climax in the times of Japanese ultra-nationalism in the 1930s and 40s, where the *Hagakure* was even part of the curriculum in many schools. Ideals of the traditional *bushidō* were now combined with constructs of national homogeneity and uniqueness. And this new 'samurai spirit' as a base for national identification was very popular not only in Japan; even Nazi Germany was attracted to the 'samurai spirit' made in Japan, as Janine Hansen (1997) revealed in her study about the Nazi film production *The Samurai's Daughter* by Arnold Fanck.[17]

14 A romanticized version of the *Seinan sensō* can be found in the movie "The Last Samurai/Bushidō" (2003) with Tom Cruise and Watanabe Ken.

15 The term *kokutai*, first mentioned in the second half of the Edo period (see Kang 2002: 39), symbolized in the Meiji period Japan's new national identity: the unification of all classes to one nation (i.e. body) with the Emperor as the new political and religious leader (i.e. head). See also Antoni 1998.

16 Nitobe wrote his *Bushido* first in English for a foreign readership that was, undoubtedly, more receptive for a special kind of self-made cultural exoticism, a phenomenon that can also be seen in Okakura Tenshin (i.e. Kakuzō), especially his famous *Book of Tea*.

17 Released in German on DVD in 2005, this German-Japanese co-production — the Japanese title was *Atarashiki tsuchi* (New Land) — tells the story of a young Japanese who falls in love with a German woman in 1910, but finally follows his personal obligations and decides to marry his former Japanese fiancé. Hansen (2002: 82) points out that the German film critics praised the self-sacrificing samurai spirit of this film, a samurai spirit that was very popular among German soldiers. See also Maltarich (2005).

4. 'Samurai spirit' in postwar Japan

As the traditional ideals of *bushidō* were widely misused during World War II, stories about samurai were prohibited by General Douglas MacArthur in the first years after the war. One of the first samurai manga of postwar Japan was Takeuchi Tsunayoshi's (1926–87) *Akadō Suzunosuke* [Suzunosuke with the red breastplate] (1954–60 in *Shōnen gahō*) (Fig. 14). The 1960s with the Olympic Games (1964) and the Izanagi-boom (1965–70) — a period of greatest economic growth that was euphemistically named after the god Izanagi, the mythological creator of the Japanese islands — was a time of fundamental change in Japan (for a detailed description see Nakamura 1993: 525–579).

Fig. 14: *Akadō Suzunosuke,* vol. 1, p. 105 © Āsu shuppankyoku 1991

For Abe Kiyoshi (2001: 56), who investigated the development of nationalistic movements in postwar Japan, the 1960s are a turning point in history seeing the transformation from blind rejection to a first acceptance of Japan's traditional culture.[18] The figure of the samurai became more and more popular in the mass media. In 1965, the first historical dramas (*jidaigeki*) were produced for television (the first movies were already produced in 1912), and from 1968 on, over 20 different *jidaigeki*-series (for example *Mito kōon* [The retired shogun Tokugawa Kunimitsu]) were televised every year (Kondō

18 Abe (2001: 54–58) divides four phases of nationalistic development in Japan: 1) the awareness of the negative character of Japanese culture (1945–54), i.e. Japanese culture is considered negative because it is antiquated and different from the West; 2) the awareness of historical relativity (1955–63), i.e. Japanese culture is considered neither negative nor positive because it is part of global cultural history, 3) the awareness of the positive character of Japanese culture (1964–83), i.e. Japanese culture is considered positive because it is the secret source for Japan's economic growth and power; and 4) the cultural shift from peculiarity to universality (since 1984), i.e. Japanese culture is now proudly exported to other countries.

1997: 211–222). In real life, too, the 'samurai spirit' of former days found a tragic reawakening. The author Mishima Yukio (1925–70), who, by the way, was fascinated by the teachings of the *Hagakure*,[19] did not only use the samurai as a model for some protagonists in his novels and plays, he himself followed the *bushidō* — in his own peculiar interpretation — in initiating a new Shōwa-restoration that should lead to a new political order in Japan (with the Emperor as the ultimate political leader), and in committing traditional suicide (*hara-kiri*) in 1970 — i.e. the same year the serialization of *Kozure ōkami* started! — when his coup d'état failed. In this regard, the great success of *Kozure ōkami* is not really surprising, as samurai spirit was *en vogue* again.

Two decades later, after the Japanese 'bubble economy' had burst, interest in Edo culture grew even stronger. The number of comics set in the Edo period increased, as Murakami Tomohiko (1998: 136) pointed out, countless academic and non-academic books on the lifestyle and culture of the Edo period were published, and new types of entertaining 'tele-education' such as *O-Edo de gozaru* (NHK; 1995–2004) were televised. This new age of neo-conservatism und neo-nationalism, as pointed out by Kayama Rika (2002) or Kang Sang-jung (2002), brought about a rethinking of Japanese culture and identity. And the Edo period, as doubtlessly the best-known period of Japanese history in all foreign countries (due to its geisha and samurai), was generally used for constructing this cultural identity.

Therefore, it is not surprising that a story from the good old Edo period recently became a best-seller, although it was already told in manga, movies, and television dramas more than a dozen times: the story of the swordsman Miyamoto Musashi. Inoue Takehiko (*1967), who had adopted the historical novel Miyamoto Musashi (1935–39 in *Asahi shinbun*) from Yoshikawa Eiji (1892–1962), began to publish his manga *Bagabondo* (*Vagabond*) in the magazine *Morning* in 1999. The central figure of this work, which is also translated into German, is the young samurai Miyamoto Takezō (i.e. Musashi), who has to master countless fights and duels on his wanderings to finally become Japan's strongest and most famous swordsman.

Yoshikawa Eiji's idealized and — as Jutta Holoubek (1991) could show in her study — mostly fictionalized portrait of the historical person Miyamoto Musashi presents to the reader a man who lives solely for becoming a real master of the sword. Although the story told by Inoue's *Bagabondo* is neither new nor historically correct, Japan saw a Musashi-boom only a few years ago. Several books have been published in the meantime,[20] and in 2003, NHK produced another very successful *jidaigeki* series for television, although other productions had already been televised in 1967, 1970, 1975 and

19 In 1967, Mishima wrote a modern commentary on the *Hagakure* titled *Hagakure nyūmon* [*Introduction to the Hidden Leaves*].

20 Besides titles like *Miyamoto Musashi's* Gorin no sho *for Business* by Tanizawa (2003) or *How Miyamoto Musashi Should be Read* by Sakurai Yoshiki (2003), there is also a *Big Musashi Encyclopedia* published by Karai (2003).

1984 (see Kondō 1997). But why are old-fashioned heroes like Miyamoto Musashi so popular in 21st-century Japan, and why are European readers so attracted to the 'samurai spirit' made in Japan?

5. 'Samurai spirit' and the construct of 'Japaneseness'

Samurai and samurai spirit as depicted in modern mass media like manga, movies, or television have almost nothing in common with the historical past.[21] National mobilization of the new Meiji government led to a reinterpretation of the traditional *bushidō*, which became part of a new national ideology. Symbols that had been crucial for samurai of the Kamakura period (1185–1333) but had lost their meaning for the followers of the degenerated *bushidō* of the Edo period were now re-arranged in the Meiji period. Zen Buddhism as a basis for mental and physical power, cherry blossoms as a metaphor for a samurai's pure heart, and moral and ethical codes as a guideline for loyal behavior were unified in new ideal for identification, a new expression of 'Japaneseness' (*nihon-rashisa*).

The Edo period, which is widely reduced to images of samurai and geisha, has become more and more of a spiritual (and cultural) home for many Japanese, especially in the last few years. That this popularized picture of the Edo period is more or less a modern construct does not really matter. Japan's modern society, as Kayama Rika (2002: 143–153) also shows with the *o-matsuri*-boom,[22] is now, after years of rejecting its traditional culture, looking for a new cultural identity. Responsible for this 'cultural turn' of modern Japan, as Abe Kiyoshi (2001: 133–166) points out, was the Asia boom that arose in Japan in the mid 1990s. Japan has developed a kind of 'techno-orientalism'. As one of the world's leading high-tech nations, Japan with its self-perception of not being an Asian country (!) began to 'discover' Asia from a distant perspective. Through confrontation with 'exotic' Asian culture[23] the Japanese became aware of their own, almost forgotten traditional culture, a culture that is considered 'beloved' (*natsukashii*) and 'typically Japanese' (*nihon-rashii*). One main purpose of this trend, according to Abe (2001: 177–206), is to show traditional Japanese culture as 'chic and groovy'

21 Even *Kozure ōkami*, which is widely praised in the Europe and America for its historical authenticity, is, as an interview with Koike Kazuo and Kojima Gōseki from 1987 shows, absolutely fictional. See the interview text of *Comics Interviews* 52 at http://mightyblowhole.com/lwc/lwc_artFM.htm (2006/2/8)

22 During the *Yosakoi sōran*-festival in Hokkaidō — named after the *Yosakoi*- (from Kōchi in Shikoku) and *sōran*-melody (from Hokkaidō) of traditional Japanese folk songs — groups of (young) Japanese present street performances that they have trained together for months, wearing self-designed traditional-looking costumes and singing self-composed songs in traditional rhythms. Essential for this invention of traditional culture is, as far as Kayama (2002) points out, the affirmation of being 'Japanese' for every single performer.

23 The Japanese interest in this 'Asian culture' is, according to Abe (2001: 133–166), mainly reduced to aspects of lifestyle (furniture, dishes, textiles, fashion etc.).

(*kakkō ii*) as possible, and in a second step to export this image to foreign countries (see for example the *geta*-tap-dancing would-be geisha in the film *Zatōichi* 2003).

Manga/*gekiga* like *Kozure ōkami* (or *Bagabondo*), as could be shown so far, depict an allegedly authentic picture of 'samurai spirit'. Instead of historical accuracy, romanticism and idealization of Japanese samurai culture are dominating the narrative framework. The way manga are dealing with history is less a question of capability of the medium than of its intention (see also Munier 2000). Manga is a highly 'subjective' medium dealing primarily with its reader's dreams, projections, and longings, and is therefore also a highly ideological medium reproducing certain images of, for example, 'Japaneseness'. By that means, images of samurai as depicted in manga/*gekiga* meet certain expectations of readers in America and Europe, which were doubtlessly influenced by idealizations of Japanese *bushidō* such as in Eugen Herrigel's famous book *Zen in the Art of Japanese Archery* (1948), or fictional renderings such as James Clavell's novel *Shogun* (1975).

In times of search for new spiritual orientation, the samurai with his 'supernatural' physical and mental strength, his 'samurai spirit', becomes a very popular character for identification. The images of a 'groovy' and 'typically-Japanese'-looking traditional Japan that were exported by different kinds of media meet a form of 'longing' in America and Europe, so that finally the fictionalized 'Japaneseness' can — at least in foreign countries — become reality.

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III. Reading Manga beyond Japan

Jean-Marie Bouissou

Japan's Growing Cultural Power: Manga in France

This paper is an attempt to analyze the success of manga on the international market of cultural goods in the same way as the success of any other commercial product, with special attention to the case of France, not only because France is this author's country, but also because it is — with the possible exception of Korea — the most developed export market for manga, still well ahead of the United States. Starting with the translation of Ōtomo Katsuhiro's *Akira* in 1990–1991, manga has gained a 38 % share of the French comics market. According to my calculations,[1] as of December 31, 2005, 628 titles from 231 manga artists (*mangaka*) have been translated into French, and several dozens of new volumes keep pouring in every month.[2] Last but not least, manga has replaced martial arts as the main reason why young people choose to study things Japanese at university.

My starting point is a statement of fact. Manga appeared in a very specific cultural and historical context, i.e. the unique experience of the atomic cataclysm and the traumas inflicted on Japanese society by fast-track modernization under the pressure of threatening external forces. Manga comes from a country whose international cultural influence has for a long time been very limited, and it is radically different from everything that Japan exported in the past in this field. While Japanese cultural commodities that have been successful in Europe since the end of the 19th century, such as *ukiyo-e* woodcut prints or Zen gardens, were finally — if not immediately, depending on the countries and audiences — treated as part of high culture, and exhibited an aesthetics based on the values of equilibrium, refinement and spirituality, manga is a form of popular culture founded chiefly — at least as far as the products most successful in France are concerned — on various forms of excess, confrontation and sensual pleasure. And yet, paradoxically, manga is becoming a global cultural product that appeals to a very wide spectrum of audiences. This raises the question of how this product found a mass market outside its original sphere. At a time when cultural globalization is on the increase in tandem with economic globalization, the significance of this question goes far beyond the framework of Japanese Studies and could be of interest for specialists of international phenomena linked to the problematics of either identities or 'soft power'.[3]

1 Author's calculation based on Dunis and Krecinba (2004) for 1989–2004 and *Animeland Hors-Série* (12–2005).

2 During 2005, an average of seven new *mangaka* per month have been introduced to the French manga fans. In the sole month of December, no less than 91 new volumes were published by 16 publishers — including 9 new titles and 82 volumes of already running series. Source: *Animeland* 117 (2005), p. 99.

3 This is why my research centre (Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales, belonging to the Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques) is presently funding my work on manga — quite a big first in the French academic world of both political science and international relations.

I chose an 'economics-based' approach, starting with an analysis of the particular niche that manga occupies in the international cultural market — what I call 'pure pleasure products' (I shall return to this concept later), then define the conditions a product must fulfil in order to succeed in this niche, and then determine whether manga does so.

This approach seems to have two major drawbacks. The first one is that I focused only upon those manga that succeeded most in the French market — especially series for teenagers called *shōnen manga* (for boys) and *shōjo manga* (for girls), which have been the key for opening the country of *la bande dessinée* to Japanese exports and still constitute the bulk of sales, even though new genres — manga for young adults (*seinen manga*), historical fiction, manga dealing with social problems or politics, and the old *gekiga* (quite realistically rendered comics for youth emerging around 1960) — are attracting a growing readership. But since my question is why manga has succeeded, it is only natural to limit my analysis to successful genres, even if this does not do justice to the fascinating diversity of the universe of manga.

The second drawback is that the way I ask the question might well dictate the reply. Having defined the criteria of commercial success for a 'pure pleasure product' and established that manga is successful, it is too tempting for the researcher to conclude *ipso facto* that manga does fulfil these criteria — and to 'prove' it by grossly oversimplifying the universe of manga to retain only those elements that bear out his conclusion. But here again, the question is not that of manga *per se*, but of its consumption. Now all consumption is by nature a process of selection and processing; one could even say 'digesting'. French readers, like any others, take only what they need from the manga universe and appropriate it as they please. Their approach is essentially reductive, and it is this reduction that interests us. Duplicating this reduction is the only means of answering the question, which is not what manga is, but how manga has become a global cultural product.

In order to answer this question, initially, I have treated manga like any other manufactured product by analyzing its advantages compared with its two international competitors — American comics, and French and Belgian *bandes dessinées*. Secondly, I have taken into account the specificities of cultural products. They are commodities used by consumers to fulfil an extremely varied need for pleasure, and invested with numerous significances which determine their value beyond any economic considerations.[4] It is as if the manufacturer has produced only an 'empty form' that can be used in many different ways, which makes its value range from 'almost nothing' to billions of dollars. This leads us to ask why manga, above other products, has this capacity to be imbued with meaning by today's French consumers of comics strips. Lastly, I turn my attention to the soft power that Japan

4 For example, in 1998, it was the audience that turned *I will survive*, the pop song by Gloria Gaynor, into the unofficial anthem of the Football World Cup, by investing it with the fighting spirit embodied by the French team, and making it a multi-million earning hit.

can derive from the global spread of manga. I sought to investigate what resources manga can provide Japan with in terms of potential influence on French public opinion. As a researcher in an institute devoted chiefly to international relations and political science, I could not ignore this question.

Parts 2 and 3 of this paper are based on the analysis, as yet incomplete, of a survey I am conducting among French manga readers through the Internet. As of December 2005, it has generated 123 answers — 64 from male readers and 59 from female fans, ranging from ages 14 to 31. 61.7% of the respondents are university students, 27.6% are working people and 10.5% are high school students or lower. Due to the exclusive use of the Internet, the survey has a very strong bias towards the more intellectually and materially well-equipped fraction of manga's readers, but it nevertheless encompasses a large variety of social conditions. This is still a work in progress, but it is already apparent that the new answers that continue to come in do not substantially modify the results.

The survey produced a clear view of the most successful series among French manga fans (students and working people) in 2005.[5] The most interesting result is probably the fact that the fans mix up all the genres. The three superstars — equally popular among young men and women — are *Nana* (a *shōjo manga* by Yazawa Ai), *20th Century Boys* (a *seinen manga* by Urasawa Naoki) and *GTO/Great Teacher Onizuka* (a *shōnen manga* by Fujisawa Tōru) in that order, followed by a mixed bunch of *shōnen manga* for teenagers (*One Piece* by Oda Eiichirō, *Dragon Ball* by Toriyama Akira, and *Naruto* by Kishimoto Masashi) and for the more adult audience (*City Hunter* by Hōjō Tsukasa), *shōjo manga* (*Fruits Basket* by Takaya Natsuki), and *seinen manga* (*Monster* by Urasawa Naoki), plus a lonely piece of cyberpunk science fiction (*Gunnm* by Kishiro Yukito).[6] Thus it seems that the genre — and even age — categories are not very significant for the purpose of analyzing how manga has succeeded in France. As a consequence, I feel entitled here to analyze manga as a whole. Another important point to note is that all the series among this Top Ten are from the 1990s (*Dragon Ball* and *City Hunter* started in Japan in 1985 and 1986 respectively but have lasted well into the 1990s), and so are most of those which appear in the more detailed results in Appendix I. However, it remains to be seen if my analysis could apply to the gigantic production of the first generation of *mangaka*.[7]

5 My poll was intended for students and above, although some teenagers have also responded, but these were too few to get significant results.

6 For more detailed results, see Annex I.

7 As more and more works from Tezuka Osamu, Shirato Sanpei, Tatsumi Yoshihiro, Chiba Tetsuya and the like are being published — or will be published soon — in France, this would be possible in a not too-distant future.

I . Manga as a manufactured product

1. Cultural products as the new pillar of developed economies

As globalization leads to the delocalization of material commodities production, goods that are 'chiefly non-material', like services of all kinds, R&D, design and cultural products, are becoming a pillar of the most advanced economies. It is no coincidence that the world's two most highly-developed countries — the USA and Japan — are also today's biggest exporters of cultural commodities. This has been true of the USA for a long time, but it is new for Japan, and all the more surprising as its culture was traditionally seen, even by the Japanese themselves, as being very specific. This ran contrary to European and American cultures who claimed to have a universal quality and were therefore naturally exportable. Nor is it a coincidence if the easing of trade restrictions on cultural commodities has led to a clash between the champions of the global market and the defenders of the cultural exception. As for any product, the conflict is about commercial principles, with the major exporters (USA, Japan) pitted against those anxious to protect a waning cultural production capacity (France) or a developing one (Korea).

From an economic point of view, cultural products offer numerous advantages compared with industrial products. They are often inexpensive to develop and manufacture. They can be produced in a variety of formats thanks to the media mix which reinforces their impact and increases profits. On the one hand, they are consumed almost immediately, which leads to a frenzied demand for more; but on the other, they can be exploited for decades, like the Beatles' repertoire. The dissemination of cultural commodities takes numerous forms, which are becoming less and less concrete, thus allowing new producers to bypass existing controlled distribution channels. Lastly, although manufacturing techniques are simple and it is very easy to copy the finished product, the know-how required to develop them is very hard to emulate.

From a broader perspective, cultural commodities also enable the countries that dominate the market to propagate their value systems. And so they are endowed with a 'soft power' which can be used to promote these countries' national interests in various areas, as shown by Joseph Nye (1990, 2004). Cultural products are not at all the only vehicles of soft power, but they make a large contribution. We could well ask whether there is a connection between the rapid expansion of Japanese popular culture worldwide in recent years and the dwindling influence of the dominant US culture as a reaction to the Bush administration's ruthless policy of hegemony.

2. The comparative advantages of manga in the global comics market

Manga has been the driving force of the success of Japanese cultural commodity exports. True, *anime* television series preceded manga in the European market, and Japanese comics do not enjoy the same recognition as the animated films of Miyazaki Hayao, for example, and probably generate smaller profits than video games. But it is manga that provided the television series as well as the video games industries with their imaginary universes, value systems, often their plot lines, and even the graphic designers' labour. And so it is fair to say that the Japanese cultural export industry basically relies on manga.

The first key advantage of manga compared with its main competitors in the global marketplace, French *bandes dessinées* and American comics, is being a mass industrial product, manufactured on far more massive scale. In 2002, the manga industry produced some 1.5 billion copies — magazines and books combined (SKK 2003) — as against 40 million French *bandes dessinées* (Caractère 2004, Internet) and 110 million American comics.[8] As a result, manga is much cheaper; the French consumer can buy up to 300 pages of manga for 6 to 9 €, whereas a 46-page comics album can cost over 12 €. Furthermore, the volume of production gives manga more commercial muscle than its competitors. Many Japanese series exported to France are long enough to supply the market for several years at a rate of one volume every two months, whereas the most successful French and Belgian *bande dessinée* series like *Astérix* and *Tintin* would provide the Japanese market with barely two compilation volumes (in the standard *tankōbon* format of about 300 pages) in total; even if they sold well, it would be a one-off success.

In their national mass market, the Japanese manga producers have developed a marketing strategy which relies on products tailored to each category of customer down to the most specialist niche market. In France, the narrowness of the market has forced publishers to adopt the opposite strategy. The only way they can sell millions of albums is to produce series that will appeal to all their customers, children and adults, at the same time. The slogan of the weekly *Tintin* comics magazine, 'Pour les jeunes de 7 à 77 ans' (For the young at heart from 7 to 77), perfectly encapsulates this strategy. Most of the bestselling *bandes dessinées* are 'one size fits all' series, neither truly for children nor adults — like *Astérix* or *Lucky Luke*; furthermore, they are confined to a single genre, offbeat humour, for the plot lines cannot be 'adult' (drama, love, sex, social issues) at the risk of losing the children's market, and only humour will appeal to adults in stories with plot lines aimed at children. This rather narrow genre alone is not enough to create a mass market.

8 Estimation from Schodt (1996), p. 50.

The Japanese cultural commodities industry is also unrivalled in the way its various branches interact to develop media mixes the likes of which do not exist in France. As well as boosting profits, these media mixes open up distribution channels that make it possible to circumvent national protectionist policies. Manga could penetrate France, first of all, thanks to TV series, or, among today's generation, to computer-and-cards games (*Pokemon*, *Yu-Gi-Oh*); 95% of my respondents discovered manga this way. Manga gained popularity against the hostility of parents, teachers, the media, the government[9] and the major *bandes dessinées* publishers, who boycotted them. TV series, OAV, and DVD of animated films were a way to overcome this hostility by creating a demand directly among young people[10] and this demand was exploited then by new young publishers who were themselves fans of TV series and Japanese animated films. The media mix of TV series, animated films and computer games created both this demand for manga and the entrepreneurs who filled it.

To help create the market — or because they were not very interested in exports at the beginning, or both, the Japanese publishers then sold manga publication rights at cut-price rates; now, once the market has been consolidated, they can sell the rights at a much higher price. Separated by a quarter of a century, there is a striking similarity between the manga industry's success story and that of the other major Japanese export industries, such as the automobile. The strategy is the same. The first stage is to consolidate in a captive national market, shielded from competition, and develop comparative advantages in terms of productivity and costs. The second stage is to forge ahead in the export market by practising dumping and bypassing protectionism using innovative methods. While the automotive industry delocalized its production to the heart of 'enemy territory', manga has surreptitiously circumvented its defences by using new distribution networks.

If one adds that the manga industry has many other points in common with the major Japanese export industries — for example the dual structure (major publishing houses which organize the production of numerous small or family studios) and a highly-trained labour force (amateur *mangaka* who learn the trade in clubs and *dōjinshi*, the extremely developed world of fan publications) — then the success of manga outside Japan can be analyzed *mutatis mutandis* like that of any other industrial product. But strategy alone would not have been sufficient if manga had not also been a product of superior quality in this very specific field of cultural commodities — or rather what I call 'pure pleasure products'.

9 As exemplified by the Kriegel Commission (2002), appointed by the French government to examine the problem of violence and pornography on television, which denounced the (mostly Japanese) animated series for teenagers shown on French television.

10 This is how the things went, rather than a deliberate strategy by Japanese publishers, who did not seem to have been fully aware of the potential of manga as an export product before the mid-1990s.

II. Manga as a 'pure pleasure product'

1. What is a 'pure pleasure product'?

A 'cultural' product is defined not so much by its material nature (book, film, CD, work of art) as by the fact that necessity is not the prime consideration in the act of purchasing it, unlike commodities that fulfil basic material needs such as food products or textiles. However, this boundary is hazy; the purchase of so-called 'cultural' products can have a practical purpose (such as 'How to...' books, which the buyer hopes will help to improve his or her life), while the fulfilment of material needs can be devoid of any necessity (like a dinner in a three-star restaurant, or a haute-couture garment). But for products like a novel, a music CD or a manga book, the act of buying seems to be driven by a quest for pleasure as an end in itself. That is why, in the following part of this analysis, I shall abandon the hazy notion of 'cultural product' in favor of that of 'pure pleasure product', the very antithesis of the 'basic needs product' on which I have modelled my definition.[11]

To understand what makes manga so successful in this commercial niche, beyond the comparative advantages resulting from its mode of production, we must first of all explain what the consumer is looking for — in other words, what is 'pleasure' when it is not derived from the fulfilment of a material need.

In each person's subconscious, the alchemy of 'pure pleasure' has three components. First there are the constants shaped by primitive impulses (the desire for power, the search for security, sexual desire), and by the scenario common to the development of all human beings living in society (the primal trauma of separation from the mother, the painful discovery of the principle of reality, the turmoil associated with adolescence, etc.). The second is the forms these constants take depending on each person's own history, and the third is the particular culture combined with factors such as education, age, or social category. The combination of these three components determines the objects which give each individual pleasure in possessing them, as well as the situations or scenarios that are pleasurable when he or she experiences them directly or vicariously, via one kind of media or another.

And so a 'pure pleasure product' will attract a customer base that is all the broader in that it will be both 'full' of constants common to the human species and 'empty' enough to let each person invest it with their own story and with the cultural specificities associated with place and time. In this sense, teddy bears, dolls and the warrior or fairy costume appear as prime examples of 'pure pleasure products'. They are simple aids that allow each child to make up their own story mixing various

11 'Pure' is to be understood in the sense of having no relation to any basic material need, including that of improving one's situation.

quantities of the three ingredients as required. It is this infinite plasticity that explains why they never go out of fashion.

But what is the function of the story for which the 'pleasure product' acts as an aid — or, to use an alchemy image: what is the function of this reaction for which it is the catalyst? It aims to satisfy six fundamental psychological needs: the wish for power, which makes pleasurable controlling through possessing or learning things; the need for achievement (to experience gratifying situations, even if vicariously); the need for security (to re-live familiar situations which made us feel good); the need for excitement, which prompts us to seek violent adrenalin-pumping emotions or feelings of different kinds; the need for escape (to remove ourselves from the mundane which is little gratifying or stressful); and lastly the wish to be different from other people. A pleasure will be all the more intense if it satisfies all six needs at the same time. This happens when a person experiences a situation in which they feel powerful and recognized, which arouses intense feelings, uproots them from their everyday life and turns them into an entirely different person. In this sense, the ideal pleasure is unquestionably that experienced by serial killers and, to a lesser degree, junkies—this last comment being just meant to highlight the fact that the satisfaction of the six needs is hardly compatible with day-to-day social life. It assumes means of escape from reality, be it for the most mundane vicarious satisfactions (reading, films, video games) or the radical marginalization of the serial killer, by way of physical escape (holidays) or joining virtual communities (the internet). Escape is therefore not only one of the six needs, but also, more broadly, a 'technical requirement' essential for their fulfilment.

2. Manga: a 'pure pleasure product' of superior quality

Manga — at least the kind of manga (mostly *shōnen manga* and *shōjo manga* from major magazines like *Shōnen Jump* and *Margaret*, but in the 1990s nevertheless transcending the age and genre categories) which opened up the French market — appears to be a better 'pure pleasure product' than American comics and *bandes dessinées*. It draws more powerfully on the great constants of the subconscious, is a better receptacle for personal stories and cultural variables, and responds more fully to the six fundamental psychological needs.

2.1 Manga and the alchemy of pleasure

Anybody who has flicked through *shōnen* or *shōjo manga* knows that their plot lines feed on the traumas, fears, and primitive desires of adolescents worldwide: the pain of separation from the mother, conflict with the father and rebellion against authority, issues around virginity, the fear of rape in girls and that of castration in boys, uncertainties over sexuality and the teenage personality, and even violent death. A classic example is *GTO/Great Teacher Onizuka*, the *shōnen manga* by Fujisawa Tōru which is the second most favorite series among manga fans of both sexes in my survey; all the girls are raped or threatened with rape, nearly all the teenage protagonists have to face the prospect of an immediate violent death, and the hero himself is killed at one point (although resuscitated). All families are at loggerheads or lone parents and, as typical in manga, the characters are entirely obsessed with the loss or preservation of virginity. In the USA, on the other hand, these subjects have been censured by the 'politically correct' or banned by the Comics Code; French *bandes dessinées* have been shying away from them, both because of the genre's pretensions to being an art form and its 'one size fits all' strategy. Manga plots therefore have a dramatic intensity and a crudeness that European and American consumers are not accustomed to.

This intensity also results from manga's mode of production, in particular its publication in serial form which requires new plot developments every 25 or 30 pages, and the length of the series, which allows the author to flesh out the characters. It is also linked to market conditions, characterized by fierce competition; the formula for a successful series is immediately copied, and the *mangaka* are constantly forced to raise the ante in a way similar to the competition in the fast food market. Since all hamburgers and all chips are similar, only quantity is left as the variable to oust the competition (the 'Supersize' strategy); similarly, many *mangaka* keep adding more drama, more sex or more violence in order to cope with competition.

If the intensity of manga's plot lines is one reason for its popularity among French consumers[12] weary of a certain blandness in *bandes dessinées*, the often cruel *mise en scène* of the subconscious can be disturbing or shocking. But the skill of manga is to let the readers do as they please by appropriating the work to suit their own personal history and culture. To assist this appropriation, the *mangaka* — especially those who have been the most successful in the French market up to now — use processes that are generally alien to *bandes dessinées* and American comics.

The first consists of mixing opposing genres in the same series — comedy and drama, the extraordinary and the mundane, violence and romance, the realistic and the absurd — and this blend allows the readers to impart the tone that suits them. Here again, *GTO/Great Teacher Onizuka* is a

12 In my study, it is the second most frequently cited reason by fans to explain their love of manga (70%).

classic example, where the constant evocation of violence, especially sexual, and death-related, does not prevent the series from being entertainingly funny — and it is no coincidence that it ranks second favorite among the French fans interviewed. The second process consists of setting extraordinary action in the most familiar surroundings (school, neighbourhood) or of endowing characters similar to the reader (schoolchildren, high-school students) with super-powers. The third is to present the reader with a very broad range of characters to identify with: the major series offer so many archetypal characters (the hero, the cunning character, the show-off, the big tough guy, the short fat guy with glasses etc.), that everyone can find one to identify with.[13] French, Belgian and American comics writers are also familiar with this formula, but their short, less dramatic story lines offer much less scope for identification. Furthermore, unlike *bandes dessinées*, manga allows the reader to identify even with the baddies, because there is no clear boundary between Good and Evil, and heroes often overstep the line: classic cases are the character of Tetsuo in *Akira* and that of Vegeta in *DragonBall*, the two series that have been the most effective in opening up the French market to manga. And — as the icing on the cake — the manga readers are often allowed to write their own stories, especially if the *mangaka* (as Ōtomo did with *Akira*), once again leaves the ending open.

Manga thus incorporates the three components of the alchemy of pleasure. On the one hand, the great constants of the subconscious give the plots their characteristic intensity. On the other, the reader's own history, personality and culture are given free rein to determine the tone of the story, choose the hero and even end the tale. Manga thus achieves the feat of being both very 'full' (too full even for readers of *bandes dessinées*, who often lose the plot) and very 'empty'. It is literally crammed with materials from our collective subconscious, characters, and action. But, insofar as it does not impose a tone, a hero or a univocal meaning on the reader, manga is empty, or at least infinitely flexible. This plasticity explains why the genre has been able to break out of its original cultural and historic sphere and why its French readership is socially and culturally very diverse, as my study shows, ranging from the provincial high-school student and the unemployed living in the run-down Paris suburbs to 'bobos'[14], the product of France's top universities who move in financial or European lobbying circles, and even a tax inspector.

However, manga do seem to be imbued with one unequivocal meaning. They give adolescents the most moral life lesson possible: for boys, it is 'friendship, effort, victory' (the slogan of *Shūkan Shōnen Jump*), and for girls, 'endurance, friendship, marriage'. But this lesson is repeated so many times throughout the series and is so familiar to the readers that it could be argued — subject to a

13 The most typical series offering an extremely diversified range of characters to identify with are *Dragon Ball*, *Naruto*, *One Piece* and *Fruits Basket*, but also *20th Century Boys* for a more mature audience, all 5 belonging to the Top 10 series in my survey.

14 *Bobo*: short for *bourgeois bohème*.

more in-depth study on this question — that they see it as a familiar convention or stylistic device that is all the easier to accept as this moral message does not prevent the plot from teeming with extreme situations and shocking images. So although manga is not exactly 'devoid of meaning', since it does embody one, this meaning is 'empty', so little does it intrude upon the (French) reader's imagination.

2.2 Manga and the six fundamental psychological needs

It would be hard to find a cultural product that presents the desire for power and the need for achievement as extensively as manga. 'Fulfilling their dream' (*yume o kanaeru*) is the ultimate goal that the hero attains at the cost of both a bitter internal struggle and an endless series of confrontations with all kind of competitors or evil characters — as in *Dragon Ball*, *One Piece* and *Naruto*. But while those who identify with Songoku, Luffy or Naruto obtain immediate satisfaction, our survey shows that identification is not the most widespread mode of consumption among French manga readers.[15] This presents no obstacle; manga can fulfil the need for power and achievement in other ways. Its inexpensive cost, the fat books and lengthy series make it easier for avid manga readers than for collectors of the slim *bande dessinée* albums to build up spectacular collections. On top of this, there is the plethora of goodies and posters.[16] In addition, there is also the gratifying feeling of developing a knowledge of a country and a culture very different from our own and — last but not least — the pleasure of the light — or not so light — erotic 'fan service'.

There is no need to emphasize the need for excitement. Many manga best liked by French fans give even to the most aloof or blasé reader a good shot of adrenalin. The action-packed stories, exaggerated intensity of the feelings and situations and erotic titillation have no equivalent in comics, which have been emasculated by the politically correct, or in *bandes dessinées*, whose artistic pretensions make them steer equally clear of Grand Guignol or gore outrageousness, unbridled comedy like *Friends* and the mawkishness of TV soap operas — forgetting that all these genres have a popular mass-market following.

Manga also satisfies our need for security. It is a dramatic, violent world, but there are no surprises. The readers make their way through *shōnen* and *shōjo manga* amid signs, symbols and graphic codes that all the *mangaka* use to some extent and which they know by heart. They find

15 In our sample, it was only the third reason cited by fans explaining their enthusiasm for manga (40%), a long way behind escape (70%) and the intensity of the characters and the plots (65%). But the result would probably be different with a proportion of the younger and less sophisticated readership.

16 Nearly all fans in our survey buy them.

the same situations repeated over and over again, the heroes suffer the same trials and tribulations, and there is always the same moral message. Even the sustained rate at which the books come out fulfils the reader's need for security by guaranteeing them to get their 'fix' every two or three months (whereas *bande dessinée* fans never know when their favorite author will grace them with a new album, which they might sometimes wait years for).

On top of this, there is the kinship of the fan community, which *bande dessinée* readers do not experience. Our study showed how structured this world is and how it constitutes a true social space where people come together. Even though the replies which attest to an extremely high use of the Internet[17] cannot be considered as a valid indicator, given the means by which the questionnaires were distributed, and even though the sample is made up of the most active section of the readership, it is significant that more than one respondent out of five belongs to a circle of fans beyond the online chat rooms, that 80% of them 'regularly' or 'sometimes' exchange their manga books with other fans, and that nearly all of them say they know other fans and 'talk about manga with them'.

The fulfilment of the need to be different also seems to be a major manga pleasure factor. The fan has knowledge and an expertise that are unusual. While anybody can buy a manga, not everyone is capable of understanding all the codes, finding their way through the host of characters, remembering the ins and outs of plots that run for 3,000 pages and knowing the work of the famous *mangaka* in detail. Fans' tendency to surf the web to read series in scanlation[18] before the *vulgum pecus* (despite the relative discomfort of this method) is part of the same need to differentiate themselves through their expertise, as is the surprising number of those who state they want to learn Japanese[19] and have even embarked on lessons[20].

The distinctiveness that gives enthusiasts an edge is boosted by the fact that manga is still far from being accepted in France. More than half the respondents state that they have sometimes been the subject of curiosity, more than a third, sarcasm, and more than a quarter, disapproval. Half of those who are working fear that their love of manga carries a social risk and prefer to conceal it from their colleagues. In the last few years, manga has become more mainstream: Taniguchi Jirō won a prize at the Angoulême festival in 2003 — which is for comics what the Cannes festival is for the movies industry — and manga is sometimes getting favorable reviews in such sophisticated mainstream media as *Télérama* and *Le Monde*[21].

17 100% of the sample uses it for information and around 86% join in discussion forums.
18 Two thirds of the respondents do so. *Scanlation*: translate, scan and put a manga online.
19 Two thirds of the working adults and more than half the students and young people.
20 25% of the respondents (apart from those in work, who do not have the time).
21 *Télérama* is a weekly cultural magazine cherished by left-leaning intellectuals, especially teachers. *Le Monde* is the most influential French daily among the establishment.

But this does not affect our respondents much, as the *mangaka* honoured by the intellectual establishment — like Taniguchi — are not the ones they prefer.[22]

Lastly, if escape provides the most appropriate means of satisfying the six above needs, here too manga enjoys advantages compared with *bandes dessinées* or American comics.[23] This is thanks to its exotic origins and its borrowing from a non-western history, mythology and folklore, but equally to the *mangaka*'s skill in playing on time and place, and having their heroes travel to all four corners of the earth and the galaxy, and to every imaginable time frame. Out of the ten favorite titles cited by the students and working adults answering my survey, only two — *Nana*, by Yazawa Ai, and *Monster*, by Urasawa Naoki — have a realist contemporary setting; all the others transport the reader to purely fictitious worlds, other eras or supernatural dimensions.

This is only a crude analytical framework which I have outlined to explain as methodically as possible how manga has become a crucial component of cultural globalization that goes hand in hand with economic globalization. It still begs for a more detailed comparison between manga and its competitors concerning each of these six points. But anybody who is the least bit familiar with the universal world of comics will be able to add their own examples to the framework.

III. Manga as a vehicle for soft power

Another purpose of my survey was to analyze the soft power influence that Japan is likely to gain from the fad for manga in France. Surprisingly enough, what I have found is not quite new and sometimes paradoxical — beginning with the fact that, while it might be presumed that all manga fans love Japan, this is only partially true; taking all ages and both sexes together, less than half of the respondents find Japan '*sympathique*' (likeable), and only 40% of the students do.[24] This suggests that the use of manga as a vehicle for soft power cannot be taken for granted, and that the image of Japan among manga fans is complex.

22 Out of 177 titles cited by the working adults in our survey, there are only 2 by Taniguchi, and only 1 out of 207 titles cited by the students — and each one has been cited only once.

23 American comics once had a comparative advantage over *bandes dessinées* with their Wild-West and anthropomorphic characters, but these figures now belong to the common cultural domain.

24 The item 'likeable' only ranks 4th among the adjectives selected by the working adults to describe Japan, and 6th among the students.

1. An image that is not very original

First point to note: the traditional base on which the image of Japan in France has rested since the 1970s (Bouissou 1994) — the decade when Japan became visible once more in the French media and in publishing, and when it shrugged off the bad image inherited from World War II for that of the model of economic success — remains unchanged among manga readers. For them, the archipelago still seems to be a 'very different' country, 'full of spirituality' and 'hard-working'. Insofar as the most popular series among manga fans are not — at least at first glance — those which best convey the values of spirituality and the work ethic that come to mind when they think of Japan, it is tempting to conclude that they have a pre-existing image of Japan in their minds, on which manga only builds. This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that the older the readers are, the more firmly rooted this traditional image is[25], and the less they feel that manga has changed it[26].

And yet major elements of traditional Japanese imagery are missing: harmony and consensus. The two items 'inner peace' and 'harmonious, consensual' achieve very low scores.[27] It is tempting to explain this by the fact that *shōnen* and *shōjo manga* plot lines are based on the torments of adolescence and confrontation. And yet, even the most violent series often end with the restoration of harmony for the community and inner peace for each character.[28] It would appear that the readers, as we suggested earlier, pick and choose, taking from manga what pleases them and ignoring what does not suit them. Alongside the image of a Japan that is 'full of spirituality' and 'hardworking', French readers have in their minds a second image which does not fit notions of harmony and 'inner peace': that of a country full of 'contradictions'[29], 'stressed out'[30] and, in particular, 'uneasy over its sexuality'[31].

There is nothing surprising in this. Insofar as the painful insecurities of adolescence and young people's experimentation with love and sex are the stock in trade of *shōnen* and *shōjo manga*, it would have been surprising if Japan seen through these media had appeared to be comfortable with herself mentally and physically. But this bias does not explain everything. Well before the French market opened up to manga, the notions of contradictions and ruthlessness were already central to

25 The three items achieve an average score of 60% among working adults, of 57.6% among students and 53.6% among the youngest interviewees.

26 37% of working adults derived only a 'classic, with no surprises' view of Japan from manga, as against only 25% of students and 6% of the youngest interviewees.

27 Between 2% and 7% according to ages.

28 Emblematic in this respect is, once again, *GTO*, the second most popular manga among students and working adults of both sexes.

29 57% of working adults, 52% of students, 38% of the youngest interviewees.

30 43% of working adults, 42% of students.

31 40% of working adults, 37% of students (of whom 35% also consider it to be 'repressed').

the negative image of Japan that came to be superimposed (without obliterating it) on the traditional positive image during the 1980s, culminating in open japanophobia which was only dispelled by Japan's crisis (Bouissou 1994: 108–109). There too, it would seem that manga fans inherited an image forged over about a quarter of a century — which would explain why, as with the traditional positive image, its resonance depends on age.[32]

The image of Japan in the eyes of manga readers thus appears to be rather unoriginal. Overall it corresponds with the mixture of japanophilia/japanophobia that have dominated the French media and public opinion since the end of the 1980s. And so manga does not appear to have — or has not yet — brought in anything new (which should disarm the critics who accuse it of sullying the image of Japan as well as the minds of French youth).

2. Elements of a revival

All the same, it is not apposite to conclude that manga is not a powerful vehicle for soft power. The survey shows that it does attract a new audience to Japan; only 15% of the youngest respondents were interested in Japan or Asia in general before beginning to read manga. The percentage is not even half of students (46%) and it is 57% of working adults. Manga also gives the country a new image? — or at least people think so: nearly two thirds of the respondents consider that manga has 'changed their view of Japan'. Even if this 'new image' is often no more than the updating of the old image buried in the collective French subconscious and even if 'new' does not always mean 'positive', the very fact that manga fans think that they are discovering something new proves that times are changing. Furthermore, manga fans' interest in Japan is very keen: three quarters of the respondents (and 92% of the younger ones) want to go and visit the country; two third would like to learn the language; half would like to meet Japanese people and 'find out more about Japan', and 15% would even like to find a job connected to Japan. On top of this, these newcomers display a strong missionary zeal[33] which will amplify the impact of manga as a medium, and more than three quarters of them state that they will continue to read manga at age 50, thus providing for a long-lasting influence.

Consequently, manga appears as an effective medium for drawing attention to and conveying messages about Japan to a new audience. Noticeable is the fact that at least a section of this new audience — the one that replied to our Internet survey — is socially and culturally well equipped, in

32 The three items score an average of 46.6% of working adults, 43.6% of students, but only 20.3% of the youngest interviewees.

33 Around 80% of the respondents have already lent their manga books to one or several people with the intention of converting others.

sharp contrast with the still-too-common image of the manga fan as a semi-illiterate youngster from suburban ghettos. If one adds that the bulk of the manga audience has not been taken into account by the survey because of the Internet bias, and that this neglected fraction is the youngest and the more popular one, the real impact of this medium is certainly more powerful and more diversified than measured by the survey. The survey suggests that manga's soft power potential is strongest among the younger respondents, because they are less knowledgeable about Japan. Less influenced by pre-existing representations, through manga they build up an image of Japan that is much more favorable than that of their elders; they find it less shocking, more likeable, less stressed, less repressed and less prey to contradictions. Unfortunately, given the nature of the sample, this result only has a very low indicative value and needs to be confirmed by a new study aimed at secondary school pupils, which I am currently developing.

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Appendix I. The Most Liked Series Among French Manga Fans (Students and People in Work). (Survey Bouissou — 2005)

The fifteen most popular series among male students (in order of popularity):

20th Century Boys (Urasawa Naoki), *GTO* (Fujisawa Tōru), *One Piece* (Oda Eiichirō), *Dragon Ball* (Toriyama Akira), *Monster* (Urasawa Naoki), *Gunnm* (Kishiro Yukito), *Akira* (Ōtomo Katsuhiro), *Hunter x Hunter* (Togashi Yoshihiro), *Planètes* (Yukimura Makoto), *City Hunter* (Hōjō Tsukasa), *Nana* (Yazawa Ai), *Evangelion* (Sadamoto Yoshizuki), *Berserk* (Miura Kentarō), *Slam Dunk* (Inoue Takehiko), *Naruto* (Kishimoto Masashi)

The fifteen most popular series among working males (in order of popularity):

Dragon Ball, GTO, 20th Century Boys, One Piece, Monster, Nana, City Hunter, Hunter x Hunter, Bleach (Kubo Taito), *Berserk, Basara* (Tamura Yumi), *Hokutō no Ken* (Hara Tetsuo), *Sanctuary* (Ikegami Ryōichi), *Gunnm, Banana Fish* (Yoshida Akimi)

The ten most popular series among female students (in order of popularity):

Nana, Fruits Basket (Takaya Natsuki), *X* (CLAMP), *Détective Conan* (*Meitantei Conan,* Aoyama Gōshō), *City Hunter, 20th Century Boys, Naruto, Hikaru no gō* (Obata Takeshi), *Angel Sanctuary* (Yuki Kaori), *Ayashi no Ceres* (Watase Yū), *One Piece, Hanakimi* (Nakajō Hisaya), *Dragon Ball, GTO, Monster, Fushigi Yūgi* (Watase Yū)

The fifteen most popular series among working females (in order of popularity):

20th Century Boys, Nana, Gunnm, Fruits Basket, Say Hello to Black Jack (Satō Shūhō), *Fushigi Yūgi, Saint Seya* (Kuramada Masami), *GTO, Hanayori dango (*Kamio Yōko), *Monster, Naruto, RG Veda* (CLAMP), *Ayashi no Ceres* (Watase Yū), *Evangelion, Bleach*

Jens Balzer

The Roses of Coconino: Reading the *shōjo* in *Krazy Kat*

1. Comics for girls

During the last five or ten years, comics readers in Europe have rushed to embrace manga. There are several reasons for this. One of the most important may be the rediscovery of sex. This does not only refer to what the yellow press and uninformed writers in daily newspaper art sections define as the reason for manga's enormous success, namely, the excessive portrayal of nakedness and sexual acts in an imagery that seems pornographic and — owing to the linkage of eros and cuteness in manga — to European viewers often pedophilic as well.

The rediscovery of sex means the rediscovery that potential comics readers have a wide variety of distinct interests according to their age and their gender. Until the mid-1990s, comics in Germany — and in the US and the French-speaking world as well — targeted male teenagers, and were consumed by adult men recapturing their youth through reading material.[1] Typical role models were the heroes of the thirties, forties and fifties: adventurers occupied with traveling around the world (*Tintin* by Hergé) or superheroes occupied with saving it (from *Superman* to *Spider-Man*). The fact that girls and young women might interest themselves in comics as well became obvious only when manga grew into an international phenomenon.[2] The broad array of 'girl-themes' is one of the most important reasons for manga's success in the European and American markets.

Nowadays, German comics publishing houses differentiate between potential buyers in ways that are reminiscent of Japan: they offer *shōnen manga* for boys and *shōjo manga* for girls, as well as magazines for both groups. Editors, or even publishing houses, specialize in one or the other. In 2002, Carlsen Verlag published the first German manga magazine aimed exclusively at a female audience: *Daisuki*, and Tokyopop Verlag in Hamburg, which is managed by a former Carlsen editor, explicitly targets adolescent girls with about eighty percent of its collection. *Shōjo*-fandom has already led to the success of German comic artists such as Christina Plaka, whose work is inspired by the characteristic aesthetics of *shōjo manga* (see Balzer 2004). Whereas *shōjo* in Japanese means a certain kind of 'girl', in European languages the loanword refers mainly to the respective manga genre.

1 The vital tradition of girls' comics in the US ceased in the 1960s and was only to be revived in the niche of the Underground comix (see Robbins 1993/1999).

2 The lack of women's and girls' issues in American comics has been prominently criticized by Scott McCloud in his essay *Reinventing Comics* (McCloud 2000:100–109).

2. Ornamental roses undermining representational naturalism

Typical of *shōjo manga* is not only the proliferation of female characters and romantic topics, but also a distinct aesthetic regarding the relationship of image and texts. What for European readers seems to be a characteristic of manga as an art form is really the result of the innovation of *shōjo manga* during the 1970s. This becomes apparent if we look at older manga from the postwar era such as Tezuka Osamu's *Astro Boy* (*Tetsuwan Atomu*) which was clearly influenced by American mass culture and followed the lead of European and American action comics from the thirties and forties. The narration is straightforward, the scenarios are distinct, and the page layout is orderly. The stories show scant interest in the psychological dimension of the characters and try to reach their goal with as little digression as possible. The physiognomy of the characters is taken from Walt Disney; the narrative structure echoes Hergé's *ligne claire*.

But in the 1970s, *shōjo manga* did away with conventional layouts, working instead with a much more open idea of the relationship between text and images (Berndt 1995: 101–119). The female artists of the innovative *Magnificent-24-group* (*24-nen-gumi*) not only scattered scenes all over the pages, but also garnered them with digressions and introspections in form of flash-backs and thought-imagery, and even more with all kinds of symbols, stars and flowers. The idea was to add emotional depth to the visual language of the comics in a way that girls would find stimulating. The weight of the story itself is reduced in favor of that which cannot be portrayed: in *shōjo manga*, as Ōgi Fusami relates in her instructive essay *Gender Insubordination in Japanese Comics for Girls*, female Japanese comics artists of the 1970s tried their hand at a kind of 'female writing' that distrusted representation, and in this sense concurred with feminist literary criticism (Ōgi 2001: 174).

The wish to overcome aesthetic naturalism in representation, Ōgi continues, was linked to a basic political skepticism regarding the naturalism of the dichotomy of the sexes; it questioned the 'natural' determination of gender identity. An important feature in the new *shōjo manga* of the seventies, a feature which is prominent in the works of the *Magnificent-24-group*, "avoided centering on women as subjects, and thus subverted the gender convention of previous *shōjo manga*" (and of previous *gekiga* and *shōnen manga* as well) (Ōgi 2001: 176–177) — by replacing their heroines with characters of ambivalent gender. Ōshima Yumiko's characters switch between masculinity and femininity. Ikeda Riyoko's historical romance situated on the eve of the French Revolution, *The Rose of Versailles* (*Berusaiyu no Bara*; Fig. 1),[3] is told from the point of view of a woman disguised as a

3 *Berusaiyu no Bara* was serialized in *Shūkan Margaret* magazine 1972/1973 and is available in various Japanese editions. In English language, only the first chapters are translated within 2 volumes (*The Roses of Versailles* 1981). *The Roses of Versailles*, 2 vols., Tokyo: Sanyusha 1981. A complete German language edition of 7 volumes has been published by Carlsen Verlag in 2003–04 (*Die Rosen von Versailles* 2003–2004).

commander of the Royal Guards called Oscar, letting the text, as Ōgi points out, "gradually shift from presenting a woman's life to depicting a person free from fixed gender ideology" (Ōgi 2001: 184).

Ikeda's ornamental, luxurious page layouts not only represent the origin of those aesthetics which European and American audiences consider to be 'manga-specific'. With cross-dressing Lady Oscar, she also anticipates an interest in travesty and gender-bending which is characteristic of modern manga. We find this wildly popular theme even in Takahashi Rumiko's (although not published in that genre) *shōjo*-influenced anime and manga series *Ranma 1/2* whose hero/heroine is a gender-shifter (Napier 2001: 48–62); in the androgynous-bisexual characters of Ozaki Minami's manga series *Zetsuai*, as seen in the *shōnen ai* (boys' love) and *yaoi* genres that have evolved from *shōjo manga* and count as separate subgenres with their own target audiences since the late 1990s.

Fig. 1: Ikeda Riyoko: *Berusaiyu no bara*, vol. 2, pp. 354/355 © Chūōkōronsha 1987

3. Subverting gender-roles in comics

The sexual differentiation within the genres during the 1970s heralded a subversion of gender roles which would have been unthinkable in Euroamerican comics of the time, even though this era had written sexual liberation on its flags. There were, of course, a large number of feminist comics — Trina Robbins' emancipatory comics, for example, or the works of the *Wimmen's Comix Collective*, or the young Roberta Gregory's superhero-travesty *Super Dyke* (Robbins 1993: 123–140; Gregory 1994; Balzer 1995; Robbins 1999: 47–110). Still, even while criticizing dominant gender relationships, the

narratives stayed within a range of sexual identities that was broadened but not subverted — next to the determination of heterosexuality we now find a variety of determinations regarding homosexuality.[4]

The same holds true for the superhero-comics — even though it was during this time, the sixties and seventies, that the motive of physical metamorphosis became ever more abstract as well as prominent within the main narrative. In the Silver-Age-Comics of Jack Kirby, Stan Lee and Steve Ditko, in the stories of the *Fantastic Four, X-Men* and *Spider-Man*, the characters are constantly changing back and forth from one bodily state to the next. However, a change from one gender to the other, even if only in the area of costumes, seems to be as much a taboo as it is in underground comics.[5]

To European and American audiences it seems that Japanese comics culture contains an affinity to gender-bending, and to travesty, that is missing in Euroamerican comics. It is extraordinary to think that even during a time when Euroamerican comics were closely linked to pop music — namely, the sixties and early seventies — none of them showed any sign of being influenced by the androgynous glitter of Glam rock, the central pop phenomenon of the era, while, on the other hand effeminate pop heroes such as Robert Plant can be found in *shōjo manga* like Aoike Yasuko 's *From Eroica with love (Eroika yori ai o komete)*.[6]

This is not to say that Euroamerican comics never occupied themselves with travesty or gender switches at all. Those interested in these topics must go back to the first half of the last century — a time when there was practically no contact between Japanese and Euroamerican comics.[7] Here, we find a form of comics narration that contains the central attributes of *shōjo manga*, the ornamental aesthetics of a 'female writing' as well as the subversion of gender identity. Think of the ornamental layouts in series like *Little Nemo*, effeminate men like *Pa Perkins* in *Polly and her Pals*, the amusing gender switches in Richard Outcault's *Buster Brown* and the strange bisexual cuties in Rose O'Neill's *Kewpies* series (Armitage 1994: 106–144; Robbins 1993: 5–22). The most interesting and successful example of an early American '*shōjo manga*' is, of course, George Herriman's newspaper comic series *Krazy Kat* which was published from 1913 to 1944.[8] In this never-ending, unfulfilled love story, we find a male dog (Offissa Pupp), a male mouse (Ignatz), and a cat of indeterminate sex (Krazy Kat) in the starring roles.

4 Issues of sexual "subversion" in comics finally occur in the 1990s, for example in the *Dirty plotte* comics by Julie Doucet (see Balzer/Frahm 1993).

5 On the history of evocation and repression of homosexuality in superhero-comics see Dirck Linck's instructive essay on *Batman & Robin* (Linck 2004).

6 Ongoing series, started in 1976. The English language edition contains 6 volumes so far (2004–2006).

7 For the few exceptions, especially the impact of George MacManus' *Bringing Up Father*, see Lent (1995).

8 Reprints of *Krazy Kat*-Sunday pages are available by Eclipse Books (8 vols. containing the years 1916–1923), Fantagraphics Books (6 vols.; 1925–1936, ongoing edition) and Titan Books (2 vols.; 1935–1937). Samples of the daily strips can be found in McDonnell et al. (1986: 90–107) and Affolter/Hangartner (1988: 79–94, 111–142).

4. *Shōjo*-esque *Krazy Kat*: Masochistic pleasure, unstable representation, and ambivalent gender

For thirty years, Herriman's comics series presented an endless variation on one basic theme: Krazy Kat's love for Ignatz Mouse, which he/she expresses by singing ballads to him and calling him his/her 'l'il ainjil' in vain. Ignatz Mouse's only response lies in throwing bricks at the cat. And yet the cat's devotion to the mouse is incessant, deeply founded and so obviously compulsive, that Krazy sees even the barrage of bricks as a declaration of love. In this way, desire, directed at the mouse, is transformed and becomes synonymous with the masochistic desire to be pelted with bricks.

Not to be deterred, Ignatz satisfies Krazy's masochistic desire over and over again. Perhaps is this because he wants to be punished in a similar way? Typically, at the end of an episode he is thrown into jail by the local police sergeant, Offissa Pupp, the bulldog. Pupp, meanwhile, is head over heels in love with Krazy, but is spurned by him/her as relentlessly as the object of his attraction is spurned by Ignatz. Instead of being thankful for the protection Pupp offers against the brick-launching villain, the cat lingers outside the prison, gazing adoringly, and dejectedly, at the incarcerated Mr. Mouse.

The intricate triangle that binds dog, cat, and mouse determines all *Krazy Kat* comics. The main motif is staged again and again, more or less prominently. We find it at the center of episodes, at their periphery, in endless modifications, in strange aberrations — in short, used in countless variations as the comic's central source of comedy.

Another way of looking at it would be to see the endless dynamics of this triangle as a circular structure, a circle of eternal recurrence which ties the characters together, placing them in the twilight zone of an 'intermediate' time, a place where linear causality no longer exists. There is no other narrative correlation connecting the separate incidents, there is no continuous time line, and therefore also no 'chronological' progress that would link the episodes to one another as parts of a continued story. *Krazy Kat* comics can be seen as a perfect example of the *shōjo manga* subgenre *yaoi*, taken literally a short form for *yama nashi, ochi nashi* and *imi nashi* — without climax, without ending (or, the point of the story), and without meaning (see the definition in Ōgi 2001: 186) — which describes *Krazy Kat* to perfection.

Being *ochi nashi*, sacrificing the 'ending' towards which a comic story could develop, is a result of the specific production circumstances of the early cartoons. As serial products, the episodes had to meet conflicting expectations. On the one hand, they had to be recognizable. On the other, they had to be autonomous so as to attract readers who only dipped into the funny pages occasionally. In this respect, *Krazy Kat* is no different from most of the other comics published in the sports or entertainment sections of American newspapers since the turn of the century. What makes Herriman's comics

unique is the mechanism he generated in order to come to terms with the paradoxical twist in serialization, a mechanism that seems specifically designed to meet this purpose, namely masochistic repetition.

In her monographic study on 'masochistic aesthetics', Gaylyn Studlar has commented on the peculiarities of masochistic desires in detail. She proposes the notion that a masochistic aesthetics could be seen as an expanded and less literal version of the older idea of an *écriture feminine* presented by Hélène Cixous and others (see Studlar 1998). In this, she follows the Freudian theory that sees masochism as an essentially female phenomenon, contrasted by a male, climax-oriented desire. Male desire ultimately craves satisfaction. Female or masochistic desire finds fulfillment in situations in which fulfillment always seems to lie just out of reach. The classical, linear forms of narration correspond to a male desire to gradually eliminate all imbalanced forces and their counterpart, reluctance. It is precisely this goal that masochistic desire lacks (see Deleuze 1967). Instead, it is *yama nashi* and *ochi nashi*, without climax and without ending. In masochism, pleasure and aversion are not linked together by linear time. Instead, they meet in the process of repetition. Masochism is not triggered by the promise of desire satisfied, but by the prospect of persistent mirroring, duplication, or re-evaluation.

In Herriman's work, the idea of 'masochistic aestheticism' is elevated to a basic principle. Not only does it determine the coherence between isolated issues of the comic story, it is also crucial within the process of representation as such. This is documented most clearly in the staging of space. As we have seen, in *shōjo manga* like *The Rose of Versailles* the content of panel backgrounds stands for the inner world, feelings, and emotions of the protagonists. Similarly, the 'drifting landscapes' of Herriman's mythic Coconino County, home to Krazy, Ignatz and Pupp, do not refer to any discernible outer reality. Instead, they symbolize the textures of desire that is the leitmotif of these comics. In almost every image, the scenery changes: stars, clouds and the sun appear and disappear, stones, rocks, bushes and trees are continually changing their morphology.[9]

Owing to this ambiguous relationship between 'objects' and 'signs', the reader's gaze is diffused. It is impossible for him to stay in control of the imagery of Coconino County. The reader's dispersed gaze is deprived by Herriman of 'pertinent objects'; still, it is precisely this loss of visual control that generates its libidinous subtext — as a masochistic visual pleasure.

Within this deconstruction of the idea of stable representation or sovereignty of the gaze lies mirrored that other deconstruction defined within the comic story, namely the ambivalence of gender in the main character. While the 'sadistic' Ignatz is clearly defined as a male mouse, Krazy's gender

9 For an analysis of Herriman's landscapes and his use of the central perspective see Groensteen (1997) and Balzer (2002).

is constantly changing. For Ignatz, Krazy is a 'he'. Offissa Pupp adores the cat as a 'she'. When Krazy dresses up for a masked ball in a tutu and a ball dress, this act, for Pupp, contains no element of masquerade.[10]

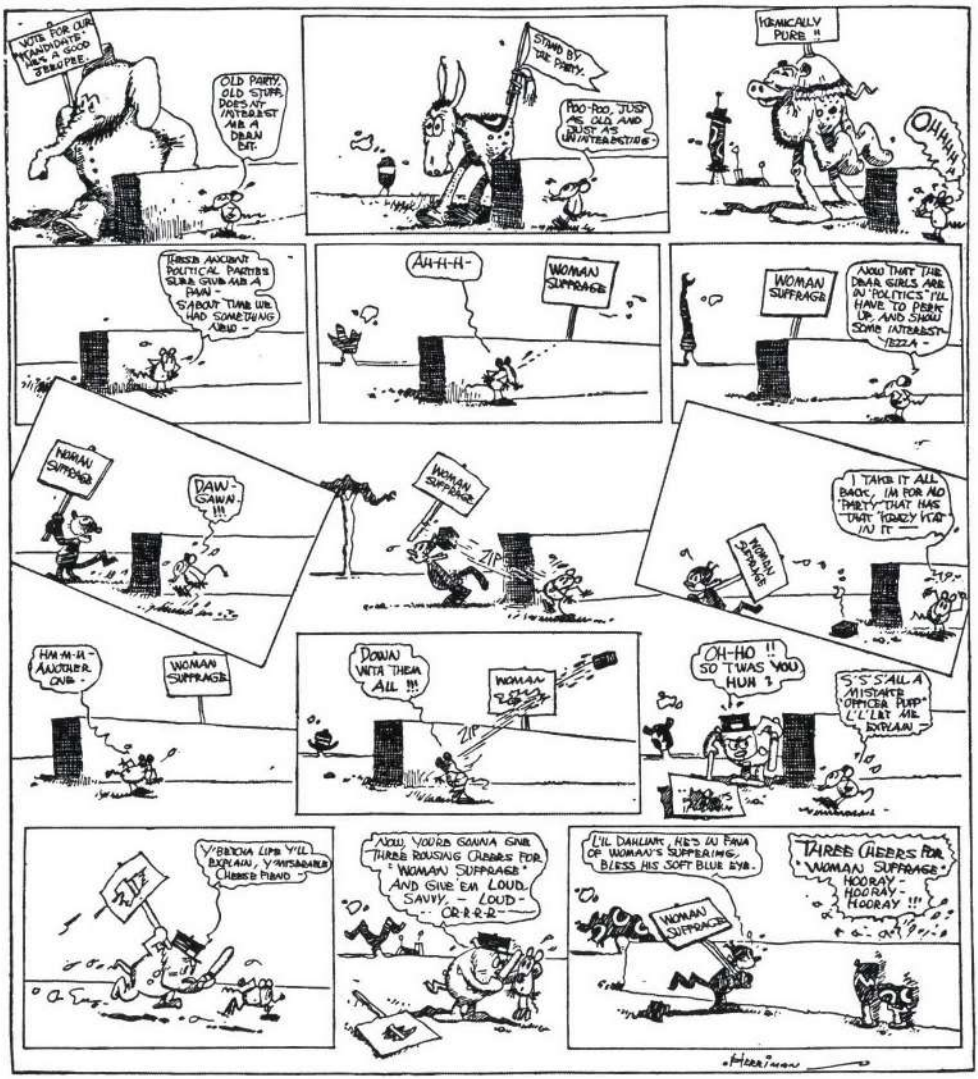

Fig. 2: Election campaign in Coconico County (Sun 25, April 1920).
Source: *Krazy Kat* vol. 5, p. 22 © Eclipse Books 1990

10 The fact that Krazy is "androgynous, but willing to be either" has been recognized as early as 1924 by the critic Gilbert Seldes in his famous essay *The Krazy Kat That Walks By Himself* (reprinted in: McDonnell et al. 1986: 13–24, quote: 17). During the reception history of *Krazy Kat*, several references to Krazy's indefinite gender can be found (e.g. Morgan 1987), but a systematic examination only starts with the emergence of postmodern gender studies (Crocker 1994/1997) — accompanied by examinations of Krazy's indefinite race (Inge 1996 incl. further bibliographical links).

In the *Krazy Kat* episode published on Sunday, April 25, 1920, Herriman dramatizes an election campaign in Coconino County (Fig. 2). Krazy Kat is demonstrating for the Women's Suffrage Party. Ignatz, of course, will have to throw a brick at the cat — doesn't 'suffrage' derive from 'suffer'? One block away, however, Offissa Pupp is lying in wait for evil Mr. Mouse, prepared to chastise him and let *him* suffer (for his atrocious deeds). Not only does Pupp — as a representative of the law — protect the rights and legitimate claims of his female fellow citizens, he is also determined to forestall unlicensed brick-throwing. The fact that Krazy insists on misjudging the bricks launched at his/her head as a sign of love on the part of the mouse also brings a certain ambivalence to the mouse's incarceration. Might this seemingly unavoidable act of penalization be interpreted as the fulfillment of a masochistic desire in Ignatz himself?

Herriman's parody of masochism and sexual identification not only waves off any facile preconception of gender roles. It also mocks the oedipal regulation of desire as such. Krazy seems to have encountered certain problems in the oedipal phase of his life and has not yet succeeded in disconnecting from his mother. 'He', therefore, appears to be a 'she'. And what else could Offissa Pupp's actions be aiming at, if not at trying to submit the masochistic relationship between Krazy and Ignatz to a process of oedipalization? Pupp never ceases to insist that Krazy's masochistic delusions are in reality the expression of an authentic injury, allowing him to lock up Ignatz, which in turn facilitates his advances towards the cat whose interests he has so valiantly defended. Pupp has no interest in remaining a puppy. He wants to grow up and become a papa.

However, like all other desires in Coconino County, Pupp's longing for Oedipalization remains unfulfilled. The story of his desires is, again, *yama nashi*, without climax, *ochi nashi*, without ending, and *imi nashi*, without meaning. It cannot be read psychologically, in terms of a meaningful subjectivity. Instead, it has to be interpreted in a structuralist, psychoanalytic mode. At the end of every episode, Krazy resolutely turns down Pupp's declarations of love. At the beginning of every new chapter, Ignatz is free (miraculously, since the cartoon never once accounts for ways and means he employs to break out of prison). As an 'impossible ritual', the idea of escape stands for the blurred machinery hidden behind the story's endless loop of desire. In this sense, escape remains repetition's 'little secret'.

In this way, the oedipal regulation of desire and the closure of representation are both interrupted by the gap between two episodes. Ignatz' path from punishment to freedom is never examined within the entropic state characterizing desire, and in the same way, Krazy Kat's sexual vacillation between 'masculinity' and 'femininity' are not shown. In one instance, the coherence of the ongoing narrative is undermined. In the other, the definiteness of Krazy Kat's visual appearance

in the comics is subverted. In this way, the deconstruction of narrative closure stands triumphantly linked to the deconstruction of sexual identity.

The 'political' dimension of Herriman's 'aesthetic' repetitions in his work manifest themselves in these aporetic images of sexuality. Herriman's representational ambivalence provokes a 'masochistic visual pleasure'. Within this context, even the most familiar aspect of sexual identity finds itself submerged in ambiguity. Herriman's sexually indifferent characters not only parody the idea of a 'naturally' given sexual identity, but also satirize the relationship between sex and gender. The process of sexual masquerading in anthropomorphous animal figures does not point towards any 'natural' materiality of the body. There is no basic sexual differentiation that could be used to define 'cultural' gender roles. Instead, an unmitigated indifference manifests itself in the bodies of the animal figures as their materiality. Compared to this, any differentiation could be nothing more than a *pastiche*.

The deconstruction of sexual difference is a defining element within the repetitive structure of every *Krazy Kat* narrative. It is crucial within the structure of eternal repetition that forms the joy and delight of these masochistic creatures. 'The lives of human beings progress in a circle', whispers Ikeda Riyoko's Lady Oscar before breathing her last during the storm on the Bastille. But the deconstructive potential of eternal repetition that Herriman employs in his *Krazy-Kat*-stories is not an option in Ikeda's historical comic, which ends conventionally with the death of the heroine. The epic structures of manga and their fixation on narrative closures define the limits of the emancipatory potential in Japanese comics. In order to truly deconstruct sexual ideology, we have to go back to the repetitive structures of Euroamerican newspaper comics. The fact that the majority of Euroamerican comics has shown no signs of interest in exploring this home-grown potential is, of course, a tragedy of different kind.

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Pascal Lefèvre

Overlooked by Comics Experts: The Artistic Potential of Manga as Revealed by a Close Reading of Nananan Kiriko's *Kuchizuke*

Although manga keep invading the European and American comics markets, taking a bigger share each year, most European and American comics specialists do not rank manga as artistically or historically important as their own. This is at least indicated by a recent international survey, the Portuguese project of the "100 Comics of the 20th century" (see Dean 2002). Yet, anyone who wants to study the comics medium should also analyze manga, not only because there are more comics printed in Japan than in America or Europe,[1] but also because manga are very interesting in themselves with regard to their way of publication, consumption, their content and form. In order to demonstrate this, I will attempt a close reading of a short manga by Nananan Kiriko, *Kuchizuke*, after having discussed the attitude of comics experts towards manga, as revealed in the above-mentioned survey. Not being a japanologist, I will look at this survey and the Nananan manga as a European comics researcher with a broad interest in the comics medium, who thinks the comparison of various productions to be absolutely essential for his work.[2]

I. The international survey "The 100 most important comics and authors"

In 2004, the comics festival of Amadora and the Portuguese comics centre in Lisbon invited comics specialists from various countries to participate in their survey: "100 Comics of the 20th Century". Their aim was

> to reflect through a wide selection of the best and most representative comics upon the very essence of comics: its special place in culture and society, its original contribution, its heritage, its legacy, its beauty, its influence, its future. (Invitation letter)

1 A comparison of American, European and Japanese comics publishers can be found in *Capital*, No. 148, January 2004.

2 I like foremost the approach of Nananan: not only because it is a non-traditional way of story-telling in comics, but also because my own short intervention in the creation of comics was based on a similar approach. At the same time when Nananan debuted in Japan, I drew my first comic, *Berlin* which was published under another title (*J'étais touché*) in the Belgian avant-garde publication *Frigobox 4* (1995). This short comic was also a minimalist one whereby the story was fragmentally told and the reader had to puzzle the various fragments into a signifying whole. The panels were rather empty: they contained very few lines. There were hardly recognizable characters and various drawing styles, but with various visual rhymes: falling hair, falling leaves, and wreathes in the first and last plates. Like Nananan, I was looking for a more sensitive or poetical approach to comics.

After an initial debate in 2002 at the Amadora comics festival, on 26 January 2004, the Portuguese organizers sent a letter to experts around the world.[3] They asked them to make two lists: one including the 100 most important comics of the 20th century, and another one citing the 100 most important comics artists:

> We are aware that a survey of this kind is more a reflection of a specific period and of its participants than the establishment of a canon. [...] However, we would like that it would be as vast as possible, for the wider it becomes, the most productive and enlightening it will be. In spite of its obvious limitations, we wish to give this project an ambitious international proportion. We ask each one of you to choose your favorite comics and/or those you consider the most important, the best representative. You should use a 'subjective objectivity' favouring in your own perspective, taste and importance, influence and fascination, without disregarding the unjustly forgotten or overlooked comics. We emphasize that this is a choice among comics all over the world, and so the national comics should be included in the general selection. (Invitation letter)

The criteria according to which the specialists were selected remained hidden as did the complete list of participants, but one year later, the results of the survey finally appeared in public. Among the 100 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 3 from Japan, the latter being *Akira* by Ōtomo Katsuhiro, *Hadashi no Gen* (*Barefoot Gen*) by Nakazawa Keiji, and *Kozure ōkami* (*Lone Wolf and Cub*) by Koike Kazuo and Kojima Gōseki. Given the fact that Japan has been the biggest producer of comics for the last decades, this is a remarkably low number. Except for the absence of any work by Tezuka Osamu, this choice did not come as a surprise: the selected works were all relatively early translated into English, French or some other European language. Furthermore, in the case of *Akira,* the cinematographic success of its animated version contributed to the appreciation of the manga series (which was by the way completed only years after the film). In addition, a list of the 100 most important comics artists of the 20th century was made. Except for the French woman Claire Bretécher, it was an all-male list, and again only two *mangaka* were selected: Ōtomo and Tezuka.

These results can probably be explained when traced back to the participants of the survey. Almost one quarter of the 100 specialists were Portuguese, and many of them without any international reputation in Comics Studies. Yet admittedly, not one single Portuguese comic or author was selected. So, it cannot be stated that the Portuguese-speaking people were very nationalistic towards their own productions. By and large, the panel was dominated by representatives of two of the main 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 from Canada, Germany,

3 Among the international participants listed were well-known scholars such as Paul Gravett, Maurice Horn, Thomas Inge, David Kunzle, and some comics' authors, such as Mort Walker and Gilbert Shelton.

Hungary, Switzerland, Finland, Japan, Sweden, India and Singapore. So, among the participants there were only three Asians of whom only one was Japanese. No wonder the above-mentioned results occurred.

Only a small percentage of Japanese manga is available in translation, and even a specialist can only vote for things he knows. If there had been more Japanese or even Asian experts, likely the ranking would have been different. Generally speaking, the survey suggests that people choose comics they grew up with. American comics were and are still widely published and figure prominently in most historical accounts of the comics medium. In contrast to other art forms, there are still extremely few historical works which consider comics worldwide (one exception being Knigge 2004) and they usually dedicate only a few pages to manga.[4] Though manga are not yet canonized in Europe and North America, since the 1980s several books focusing on manga have been published in European languages, starting with Frederick Schodt's in 1983.[5] Noteworthy is the fact that while women are underrepresented in continental European Comics Studies, Manga Studies on the other side seem to attract female academics (e.g. Jaqueline Berndt, Sharon Kinsella, Sonia Luyten, Susanne Phillipps) primarily. While most of those books recognize the artistic aspects of manga, many European and North American comics critics and researchers still do not recognize their aesthetic potential, or better, they do not rank works by *mangaka* as high as those by their own domestic authors. Nevertheless, manga can be as artistic as American or European comics — as will be argued in the following analysis.

II. A close reading of an alternative manga, Nananan Kiriko's *Kuchizuke (Kisses)*

Kuchizuke (*Kisses*) is a short manga of 9 pages and 1 title page by the young Japanese author Nananan Kiriko (*1977).[6] It was originally published in November 1994 in the famous Japanese avant-garde magazine *Garo*, shortly after her debut there the previous year, and later republished in her first Japanese anthology *Water* (1996). But here, its English translation (in the first English anthology of Japanese alternative manga *Sake Jock. Comics From Today's Japanese Underground*, Fantagraphics

4 See Blanchard (1969), Fuchs/Reitberger (1971), Kurtzman (1991), Peeters (1993), Moliterni/Mellot (1996), Sabin (1996), Havas (1997), Gaumer (2002). Only Knigge (2004) pays relatively more attention to manga than do those other books.

5 Schodt (1983), Groensteen (1991), Berndt (1995), Schodt (1996), Luyten (1999), Natsume (1999), Kinsella (2000), Moliné (2002), Gravett (2004), Masanao (2004), Schmidt (2004).

6 Only quite recently some of her work has been translated into some European languages: in English in the experimental manga anthologies *Sake Jock* (1995), and *Secret Comics Japan* (2000), in Italian in *Rose del Giappone* (1995) and a collection of short stories titled *Pale Pink* (2005), in French *Blue* (2004) and *Everyday* (2005). *Blue* was also adapted in 2003 into a live-action movie by Andō Hiroshi.

1995) will serve as the main object of study.[7] Nananan's *Kisses* attracted me because of its rather experimental approach. This short manga is in many ways different from the average European or American comic.

Mainstream comics may tell imaginative and fantastic stories, but their characters are always placed in a seemingly consistent universe and their narration respects more or less the traditional expectations of narrative, i.e. clear chronological and causal linking. Though drawing is by its nature essentially different from photography, in mainstream comics the artwork tends to be quite referential: often, the various panels of a comic look like various shots from a possible and coherent world. Nevertheless comics are essentially an elliptic medium: they never show the reader all the phases of a story or single action, but they select significant fragments. Generally, these ellipses do not cause any problems for the reader. The plot and the style help the reader to fill in the gaps, to smoothly link the various panels. Dialogues, actions, characters and backgrounds seem to continue quite fluently from one panel to another. But most of these classical rules are broken in *Kisses* as will be demonstrated in the following close reading.[8]

Before the analysis, the story itself needs to be addressed. *Kisses* is about a love affair that involves three youngsters: two young women, Nobu and Ayu, and one young man, Ryōsuke. On the basis of the plot the fabula (or virtual chronological storyline[9]) can be reconstructed as follows:

1	Ayu and Nobu are long-time friends
2	Nobu is living together with her boyfriend, but he is unfaithful
3	Therefore Nobu asks for refuge in the home of Ayu, and she warns her not to make the same mistake, that is, fall for "such an asshole"
4	For some time the two women are living happily together
5	But after a while Nobu announces that she wants to return to her former boyfriend, Ryōsuke

7 Although the plates are arranged in a Western reading direction from left to right, the plates themselves are not mirrored (and thus not adapted to the changed reading direction). Of course, the Japanese signs are also replaced by the English alphabet, but some small Japanese onomatopoeia remained untranslated.

8 This reading was first presented at the 2004 Bologna conference "The troubled line. Emotion and irony in comics" and published in Italian (see Lefèvre 2005). I am much obliged to Jaqueline Berndt for sending me copies of the Japanese version and her useful comments.

9 The fabula is never given and can only be guessed at, for it is a construction by the reader based on the plot, which is the actual arrangement and presentation of the fabula. Style is the systematic use of the medium's devices (drawings and texts) and interacts with the plot in various ways. For a theoretical discussion of the difference between fabula, plot and style see Bordwell (1985: 48–53) or Bal (1997: 3–8). Both base their distinction on the Russian formalists, but use another term for plot: Bordwell 'syuzhet' (sujet) and Bal 'story'. For 'style' Bal uses 'text'.

6	Ayu prepares a good-bye gift for Nobu: she uses several new toothbrushes and wraps them together
7	Nobu goes back to Ryōsuke
8	Left by Nobu, Ayu is torn apart by strong emotions: she has clearly developed some romantic feelings for Nobu and cannot cope with the departure of her love.

Table 1: Storyline of *Kisses*.

Contrary to most comics, the fabula is not presented in a straight chronological manner; its plot is rather a-chronological. Moreover, the visual part only shows fragments from segments 4, 5, 6 and 8; the verbal covers partly the same segments, but refers also to the other segments 1, 2, 3 and 7. Consequently, the plot is to such a degree fragmented and selective that the reader is left behind with only a few pieces. Furthermore, the style also demands attention and six patterns of salient formal techniques can be identified: 1. slight deformations, 2. unstable 'colors', 3. white spaces, 4. few faces or eyes, 5. the important role of text, and 6. visual rhymes.

1. Slight deformations: the expressivity of forms and lines

At first look, the artwork may seem quite realistic. Nananan does not use any of the dominant manga styles: she does not draw big eyes, nor exaggerated poses or explosive action scenes; she does not use speed lines or other ideogrammatical signs. On the contrary, for a manga, her visual style looks extremely restrained. Despite this realistic impression, some slight deformations are noticeable. Especially in the first panel, the two women are of remarkably slim stature (Fig. 1): they are rendered in elegant long shapes. Nananan exaggerates their slimness and their physical height. The slimness of the first panel later resonates with the fine shape of the toothbrushes and with the hanging underwear. But later, when Ayu crouches on the kitchen floor in an embryonic pose, the elegant long lines become suddenly shorter and stockier. This interesting contrast stresses the difference in emotional state between the two panels: at first both women were having a good time with many laughs, and so they stretched upwards, but after the departure of Nobu, Ayu crumbles. The difference is also emphasized by the changed viewpoint. In the beginning, the other kitchen scenes seem very balanced with strong vertical and horizontal lines. The first panels place the spectator almost perpendicular to the scene, bringing him/her quite close to Ayu, whose body the frame cuts in parts. But in a later panel depicting the emotional breakdown, the viewer sees her complete body in one frame.

Now the angle is higher and oblique, and the dominant lines are suddenly diagonal. The scene is literally and figuratively out of balance. Balancing is, after all, an important theme in this comic, as we will later see again.

Fig. 1: Slight deformations of shape. Source: *Kisses*, pp. 56/57 © Fantagraphics 1995

2. Changeable 'colors'

Another break in superficial realism is the fact that objects do not have a stable color. Although this manga is not a full-color comic, the whites, blacks and grays refer to colors — almost like a black and white photograph can refer to a colored world. Examples of unstable coloring are Ayu's hair, lips and dress, but also the toothbrush. It changes its color on the second plate from white to gray. In a later panel, we see her using a black toothbrush, but we cannot be sure that this is the same as before because there is clearly a huge choice of toothbrushes in her house. Ayu's dress is also rendered differently: four times in black, and once in grey. Although we cannot be sure about the toothbrush and the dress, we can at least assume that the hair and the lips belong to the same person. The hair of Ayu is rendered differently in various panels: six times in black and twice in gray. In the first panel of the second plate, her lips are quite striking, because they are really black; in the second panel they are as white as the complexion of her head and hand.

Furthermore this second panel of the second plate suddenly offers a close-up in a series of medium shots. The use of three uniform colors (white, black, and gray) accentuates the flatness of the picture.

This changeable coloring disorientates the reader. How can he/she be sure that all these panels really belong to the same sequence, to the same time frame? Doubts set in; explanations are being looked for. There seems to be some continuity, especially in the action, but, for example, we cannot be completely sure that the action in the second panel follows the action of the previous panel. The different graphic treatment may for instance suggest a flashback.

3. Toothbrushes in white spaces

Nananan's drawing style possesses some personality. She prefers sober gentle lines and, above all, she is fastidious in her choice of what to draw. The majority of her panels have no background. She mostly isolates characters or particular objects, placing them in a white environment, which exists not only within the panel frames, but also between and around them on the page. Unlike most European authors, Nananan clearly does not feel the need to fill her pages completely with panels. How to stress a panel by placing it separately on a page, is something, also the Canadian artist Chester Brown understands very well (see *The Playboy* and *I Never Liked You*).

The white spaces within the frames tempt the reader to complete the picture of the panel. Like in traditional Chinese paintings, they are not necessarily empty, rather the white can refer both to fullness and emptiness. By erasing any décor, the drawn figures become more highlighted. This manner of representation invites the reader to ask why a particular object is represented and the rest not, and whether there is a meaning behind these foregrounded daily life objects. On the eighth plate, Nananan presents a panel with a roll of tape. The reader can guess that this tape was used by Ayu for wrapping the toothbrushes together as a goodbye gift for Nobu. At the same time it is an interesting object, because before a piece of tape could be used to pack things together, this piece must have been separated from the roll. Thus a piece of torn-off tape can refer to the rupture of a previous bond, in this case the break between Nobu and Ayu (Fig. 2).

But why are toothbrushes heavily emphasized in the first place? In half of the panels there is at least one toothbrush present. Furthermore the largest panel of this short story offers a view of various toothbrushes and their containers. The toothbrushes obviously play an important role in the story. But why does Ayu who is probably a lesbian opt for such an ordinary gift? A toothbrush is phallic by its shape, but also by its use really intimate. There are in fact very few instruments we put partly inside our bodies. Even without a phallic association, such as Ayu not being able to compete with

Nobu's boyfriend, the fact that she uses each toothbrush by herself before she binds them together as a good-bye gift tells about her desire for intimate physical contact with Nobu. The final thoughts of Ayu suggest this connection: "It's kind of funny Nobu. You'll use my good-bye gift without even knowing it, completely unaware as I cover you in kisses… I like that" (Nananan 1995: 63). Unpacked toothbrushes in their boxes would have been a more sterile gift, but already used toothbrushes become a truly personal one.

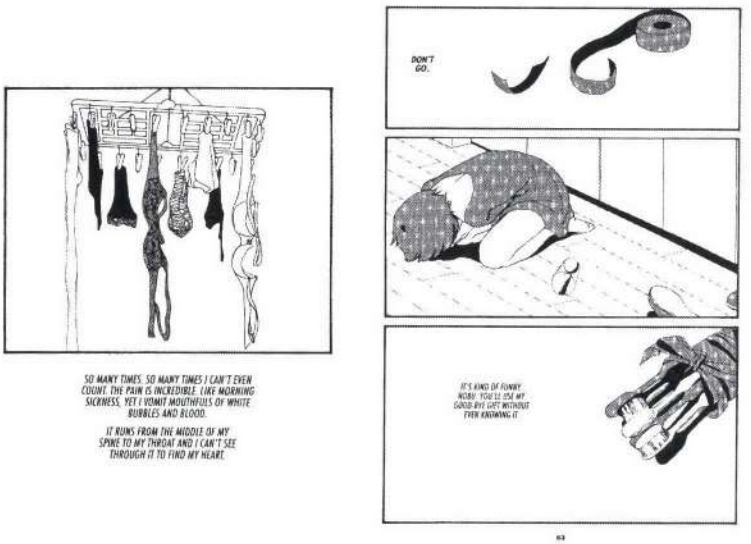

Fig. 2: Good-bye gift for Nobu, Ayu losing balance. Source: *Kisses*, pp. 62/63 © Fantagraphics 1995

4. Few faces or eyes

Another important aspect of Nananan's visual style is her framing and *mise-en-scène*. While in most manga or comics faces are of paramount importance, Nananan seldom shows complete faces. In *Kisses* there is only one full profile. In some other panels only parts of faces are being shown, and in the majority of the panels there are no faces at all. Avoiding faces is unusual in visual storytelling, because the representation of faces is of paramount importance. It happens that some comics use only 'talking heads' (especially in gag comic strips like *Peanuts*, or *Garfield*, etc.). In the history of comics, there are only a few examples of faceless storytelling. A quite unique example is the French album *Carpet's Bazaar* by Martine Van and François Mutterer (1983). In this story of 44 pages, the reader never sees the faces of the two protagonists. They even do not have names; they are just called

hero, 'Héros', and heroine, 'Héroine'. Unlike *Carpets' Bazaar* in *Kisses* there is something more at work than simply a stringent self-imposed constraint. Nananan does not forbid herself to show a face, but she restrains herself from doing so. Nevertheless, she is well aware of what she is doing. She knows that in direct human communication the eyes play a crucial role, but she denies the reader the possibility of looking into the eyes of the characters. Only once can the reader see two eyes, but at that very moment the rest of the face is obliterated. Nananan is provoking the reader; she is playing a game of hide-and-seek. The reader gets only some pieces of the puzzle, and moreover not all those necessary. With the pieces Nananan offers, the puzzle is far from complete and above all, the pieces she offers are ambiguous. More than once, it is unclear how the various pieces fit together. So, the reader has to use his/her various mental capacities to fill in the picture, to complete the story. Unlike other manga or comics, closure is far more difficult. Nevertheless, despite these troubling sensations, the reader can experience a considerable emotional impact by reading this story. It seems not necessary to give all the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle; the reader can be very apt and sensitive to quite incomplete works. Almost every comic leaves pieces of information out, but not as far-reaching as Nananan's. Her manga is exploring the limits of storytelling, and it still works.

5. The important role of text

Although text and pictures seldom seem to fit easily together, the text helps the reader a great deal to understand the global story and to reconstruct the fabula. At the same time, the text itself poses some problems. It is not completely chronological; it is fragmented, and the difference between speech and thoughts is not always crystal clear. Yet even without being completely certain, the reader can make a fair guess about who is the respective source of utterances. Apart from small onomatopoeia (which were not all used in the English translation), there seem to be two main verbal sources: speech and thoughts namely by the two female protagonists (see Table 2: the uncertainties are placed between brackets). There is only diegetic text (Ayu's and Nobu's), no extradiegetic expressions.

	Speech	Thoughts
Ayu	1, 6	(2), 7, 8, 9
Nobu	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	(2), (4)

Table 2: Diegetic text sources in *Kisses*.

Nobu's speech dominates the verbal part of this short manga. Only in the last three pages do the thoughts of Ayu take over, whereas in the first panel there are only some laughs. In the beginning, the reader is left unaware of Ayu's perspective, which in the end appears to be crucial for understanding the more profound meaning of the story.

Nananan does not use extradiegetical signs to indicate the status of the text fragments (no thought balloons or changes in lettering). Nevertheless, in this ambiguity, the reader is able to grasp the broad lines of the story, although not everything, and that is important.

6. Visual rhymes

The pictures clearly are not meant to illustrate what is being told. Text and pictures do not always seem to fit easily, but the pictures give us more information and add new elements by showing us things that the text does not tell. It is quite possible that most panels show fragments of the situation after Nobu has left Ayu. We see the terrible consequences of her departure. Every morning when Ayu brushes her teeth, the toothbrush reminds her immediately of the departure of Nobu (because of her good-bye gift). Again and again, Ayu experiences an emotional crisis and crouches on the kitchen floor.

The text never mentions the drying racks which figure prominently in two panels, but the reader can link both text and images. The fact that in the second panel there is less underwear hanging can be linked to the departure of Nobu. Furthermore, the drying rack is brought out of balance after Nobu is gone. There is of course a material explanation (less weight on one side of the drying rack), but there is also a symbolic one, namely that the emotional balance of the living together of the two women has been broken. Moreover, such a drying rack with intimate clothing indicates the closeness between the two, which is also revealed by the panels where they are laying together under a blanket on the same futon.

Like the panels of the drying rack, there are more visual rhymes in this short manga: for instance there is the visual rhyme of the extreme close-ups of the eyes, and there is the visual rhyme of a hand and toothbrushes. First the two panels with the eyes resonate but not completely: the first one shows a close-up of two closed eyelids, but it is uncertain to whom they belong. The text "Nobu! Hey Nobu!" is probably a call from Ayu (Nananan 1995: 56). But what is shown here? Nobu with closed eyes hearing Ayu calling her, or Ayu with closed eyes remembering the time she called Nobu in the past? A similar close-up of the two eyes returns four pages later exactly in the same spot on the page. This is an example of 'site', of nonlinear linking. The second panel is higher; the eyes are open

and looking upwards. Remarkably, it is the only panel of the whole comic where two eyes are shown. In this second panel of the eyes there's another text: "Ayu, you should never fall for an asshole like that. I already made that mistake, O.K.?" (ibid: 60). The words come probably from Nobu, expressing her frustration about her relation with Ryōsuke. But why are the eyes looking upwards? Is it Ayu who becomes more confident that Nobu will choose her? Is Ayu opening herself for the possible love of Nobu, now that the boy is out of sight (Fig. 3)?

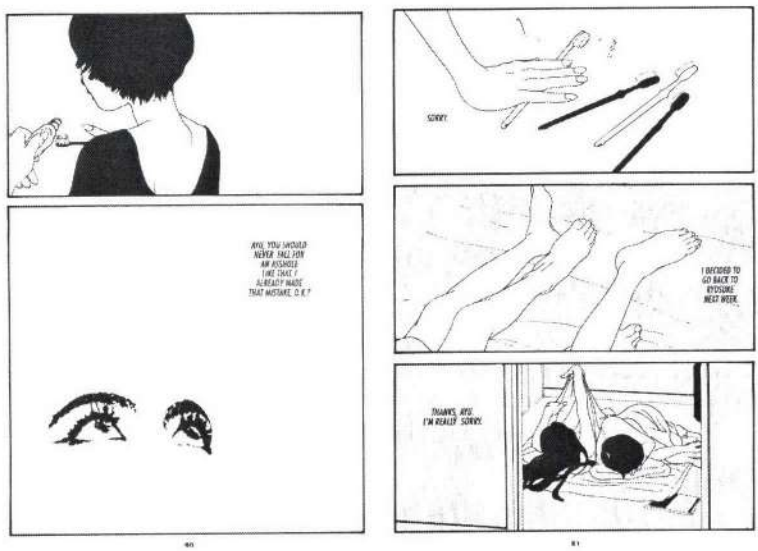

Fig. 3: Few faces, opening eyes, and toothbrushes. Source: *Kisses*, pp. 60/61 © Fantagraphics 1995

Another visual rhyme is a panel with a hand and some toothbrushes. There are too few indications to be completely sure if it is the same hand, but judging from the context, the reader is made to believe so. In other panels only one person is brushing her teeth, probably Ayu when she is alone after the departure of Nobu. Thanks to the black dress, it is possible to link the first panel with the hand to the same person. In the second panel even the smallest cue is lost due to the framing, but thanks to a similar composition and a similar action (throwing down a toothbrush), both panels can be linked. The only difference is that in the second panel there are more brushes. Anyhow, tooth brushing seems to trigger strong emotions in Ayu because she crouches on the floor. This toothbrush reminds her not only of her good-bye gift, but also of the love lost.

On a deeper level it probably resonates with more erotic feelings, like those suggested earlier in regard to the possible phallic associations of the toothbrushes. More than once lips are mentioned: Ayu says that Nobu has beautiful lips and that she covers Nobu in kisses, which is, above all, the title of the story.

Conclusion

Although manga began their conquest of the American and European comics markets already in the 1980s, by the turn of the century they were still perceived as being of lesser importance by American or European comics specialists. The largest and most international survey (the Portuguese one of 2004) showed that manga did not rank high among European and North American comics specialists when asked to make a list of the 100 most important comics and comics authors of the 20th century. However, the results of this survey should not be over-evaluated, and it should not be over-criticized either in regard to the anachronistic establishment of a canon. It was above all an interesting project, because it offered an insight into what a certain group of experts believes to be artistically important in comics.

From my point of view, manga certainly deserve recognition. Therefore one interesting example Nananan's *Kisses* was analyzed in detail. This close reading showed that one can tell a complex story, suggesting a rich world of emotions in only nine plates or eighteen panels and very few words. Every single panel seems thoughtfully constructed: a deliberate choice avoiding backgrounds and facial portraits. Although the characters seem more realistic than those of classical minimalist comics, their faces are less visible. By isolating objects such as toothbrushes or a drying rack, those objects become marked, intensified and emblematic. Such a poetical approach invites the reader not only to enjoy the beauty of forms and shapes, but also to look for a deeper sense behind them. Simple daily-life gestures become almost dramatic acts. Such a comic seduces rereading both on a sensitive and a sensual level. In *Kisses* the reader has to scan the images for small variations, for resemblances and differences. Rereading is thus crucial. By not telling too explicitly, by omitting much, by carefully choosing particular objects or actions, a comic can approach the reader in a non-conventional manner. Comics like Nananan's *Kisses* are closer to poetry than to prose. By not using the typical comics' techniques as caricatural deformation or classical plot organization, one can tell very interesting stories. Less can be more.

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Yamanaka Chie

Domesticating Manga? National Identity in Korean Comics Culture

Focusing on Korea's comics (hereafter *manhwa*)[1] and especially their producers, this papers investigates how valid national frameworks like 'Japan' and 'Korea'[2] can actually be when it comes to an examination of popular culture in the age of globalization. It considers not only media-specific characteristics, but also the aspect of comics discourse, that is, what kind of significance is attributed to manhwa by various people, and how their assumptions interrelate. Drawing upon Korean Studies in Japan — among others the publications of Tei Taikin — I will foreground the image of Japan as Korea's 'Other' which has been both indispensable to the formation of Korean nationalism and closely tied to manhwa culture.

The first of the three sections below introduces which stance the producers of contemporary Korean comics take towards allegedly native manhwa on the one hand, and manga as Japanese comics on the other, while the second section illuminates the historical background of relating comics to nationalism. It provides an outline of the evolution of manhwa culture paying special attention to the formative influence on manhwa of Japanese manga due to pirated editions. Resulting in a peculiar hybridization, this influence is not just to be discussed with regard to manga's dominance though; it also brings to the fore historical issues usually suppressed by the creators of Korea's comics culture. Why editors, critics and artists are not able to address the era of pirated editions as part of manhwa history will be traced back to the problematic 'Japan bashing' in Korea in the 1990s. The third and final section explores changes in Korean comics discourse under the influence of globalization, and points to the emergence of new ways of pursuing nationalism.

1. Striving for independence from Japanese manga

Currently, Euroamerican and Asian fans of manga are becoming more and more familiar with manhwa too, but most of them are probably incapable of distinguishing the two just by their looks. Not even Korean manhwa publishers feel completely sure when it comes to drawing that line. Assuming that foreign readers — like themselves — fail to recognize Korean particularity, they are trying eagerly to

1 The transcription *manhwa* is used by the Korean Culture & Content Agency (KOCCA), http://www.koreacontent.org/weben/inmarket/Ns_knews_list.jsp (2006/01/04); some people transcribe the word as *manwha*.

2 In this paper, the Republic of Korea, also known as South Korea, is referred to as 'Korea'.

raise an awareness of manhwa's distinctness from manga. What underlies their obsession is nationalism. Throughout the course of history, manhwa producers have nurtured a kind of nationalism which defines something as domestic by explicating that it is not Japanese. I will come back to this topic in section two. Meanwhile let me just mention one example. In July 2003, the major comics publisher Daiwon C.I. Inc. launched the comics magazine *Tokebi* [Ghost] in France which sold 60,000 copies before long (Fig. 1).[3] It had "100% manhwa" written on its cover, while inside it featured an article on manhwa history intending to highlight its difference from manga. With strategies like this, Korean publishers have been trying to popularize their comics abroad, and their attempts to establish a new brand on the global comics market are also receiving support by the government which, among other things, sponsors their participation in international book fairs. But while state officials and managers are facilitating the promotion of manhwa in this manner abroad, those who actually sell them are not able to determine a respective 'essence'.

Fig. 1: *TOKEBI* Magazine, No. 1, July 2003 (2003/06/26)
© Daiwon C.I. Inc. 2003

This applies even to those readers who consume exceptionally large amounts of both manhwa and manga. Among them, one particular work was debated in great length on the Internet: the comics series *Shin angyō onshi* [New Angyo Onshi; in Korean: *Shin amhaeng osa*], created by the Korean artists Youn In-wan and Yang Kyung-il,[4] but edited by and published in the Japanese manga magazine *Sunday GX* (Shōgakukan), starting in April 2001 (Fig. 2). This historical fantasy action comic deploys characters from classic literature as well as the official rank system of the Joseon dynasty (or: Chosŏn

3 see http://www.kocca.or.kr/ctnews/eng/SITE/data/html_dir/2003/06/29/200306290004.html (found 2006/04/01)
4 Their comics *Island* were the very first manhwa to be published in German in 2002.

dynasty, 1392–1910), which led some readers to claim its 'Koreanness' as something only expressible by Koreans. Others opposed this view pointing to the Japanese editorial system as the main framework and to the fact that the series was created with Japanese readers in mind.

In the end, the debate revealed that a distinction between manhwa and manga cannot be derived from the style of single works, but only from readers' communities and what they agree on. Thus, the pursuit of an essentialist 'Koreanness' resulted in the discovery that such a thing does not exist. Nevertheless, the producers of manhwa still cling to it, and not just for the sake of securing corporate profits.

Fig. 2: Youn In-wan/Yang Kyung-il: *Shin angyō onshi*, vol. 1, cover
© Shōgakukan 2001

2. Historical background: being concerned with manhwa's 'Koreanness'

The wish of publishers as well as government officials to draw a clear line between Korean and Japanese comics must be traced back to the more general context of Korea's cultural situation. Because Japan exercised colonial rule over the Korean peninsula between 1910 and 1945, the Japanese, their products, and also their culture as a whole have continued to meet with strong disapproval. Many Korean-Studies scholars in Japan assume that such feelings have contributed significantly to Korea's nationalism, among them political scientist Kimura Kan. According to him, the first president of the Republic of Korea from 1948–1960, Rhee Syng-man (1875–1965), utilized a 'comparative nationalism' in order to praise the Korean people. In his speeches, he portrayed Japan as much more

cruel and mighty than it actually was, which by contrast helped glorify Korea's history of struggling against and finally defeating Japan (Kimura 2001: 345). With regard to everyday life, it has also been pointed out that after the liberation, when values were changing profoundly, Korean identity was often understood in terms of a mere absence of things Japanese (Tei 1998: 91-92). However, confirming one's identity by means of comparison with or even denial of Japan was not limited to the immediate postwar period. The anthropologist Tosa Masaki spoke of "the habit of constructing one's self-portrait by utilizing 'Japan' as one's mirror" (Tosa 2004: 214).

This kind of nationalism did not spare popular culture. Under the stringent policies applied after 1945 in order to eliminate all Japanese elements, that is, the scars of colonial rule, imports of Japanese popular culture had also been forbidden on principle until 1998. By removing anything Japanese, people imagined and created Korea as a 'non-Japanese' culture. But despite the prolonged prohibition of Japanese popular culture, some parts of it were imported nevertheless and secretly consumed. In other words, although Korean nationalism was formed by means of refusing Japanese products, some of these very products were still welcome. Under such circumstances Koreans were bound to find a balance between their being attracted to things Japanese on the hand, and feeling obliged to boycott them on the other. One may assume that this ambivalence reinforced both the pursuit of a particularly Korean identity and the definition of this identity by its distinctness from Japan.

It was precisely this cultural situation that triggered the desire to draw a clear line between manhwa and manga — among publishers, government officials and comics readers alike — and unless people eliminate that desire, the actual hybridity of manhwa will not really be addressed in Korean comics discourse. Comics historians like Son San-ik and Park In-hwa, to mention only the most authoritative, trace the history of so-called modern manhwa back to cartoons and comic-strips which appeared in Korean newspapers at the beginning of the 20th century. It goes without saying that under Japan's colonial rule many Japanese cartoons and comics were brought over to the Korean peninsula; however, today's manhwa histories — for example by the above-mentioned authors — overlook them deliberately (see Son 1996, 1998; Park 2000). This can be traced back partly to the postwar ban on Japanese popular culture under which manga officially did not exist in Korea. Since this ban focused, among other things, on prohibiting the 'exposure of Japanese people and their language in public', Korean translations of manga appeared in the disguise of manhwa and were consumed not as foreign, but domestic comics.

Yet, in contemporary manhwa histories, the very existence of such pirated editions is still being denied. If it is addressed at all, then only pejoratively as part of a 'shameful past'. Even comics artists who were involved in creating pirated manga are not willing to talk about their experiences. As long as considerations of Japan's influence on Korean culture are put under taboo, it is difficult to

actively question the transformation which occurred to manhwa through producing copied editions of manga (see for example Son 1998: 71; Do 1998).

However, a careful examination of these pirated editions reveals much more than just an allegedly bad impact caused by Japan. First of all, it is necessary to distinguish between at least two periods of Japanese influence: pirated editions produced prior to and after 1985. While the first were adaptations in the sense that they involved a 'localization' of manga into manhwa, the latter appeared to be 'copies', mechanical reproductions of the respective Japanese originals.

2.1 Before 1985: The age of manga piracy

Prior to the late 1980s, many pirated versions were less imitations than adaptations, with recognizable traits of their adaptators' drawing styles. Take for example *Galchae* [Applause], one of the most popular comics series of its time (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3: Kim Yeong-suk: *Galchae*, vol. 1, cover © Seocyo media 1980

According to the cover, it was created by a Korean woman named Kim Yeong-suk, but in reality, the author was male, and not only one person. *Galchae* was made in one of the 'manhwa factories', where the majority of comics destined to be distributed as so-called rental manhwa solely through pay-libraries came from at that time. Within the studio system of the 'manhwa factory', comics were manufactured by way of an efficient division of labour, stretching from the separation between

scenario and artwork, to the assembly-line composition of all parts under the supervision of the head of the 'factory'. Generically, *Galchae* was a *sunjeong* (pure-in-heart) *manhwa*,[5] a girls' comic actually derived from at least two Japanese *shōjo manga*. Its artwork appears to be influenced by the female manga creator Uehara Kimiko (*1946) for the early period, and for the latter era by Ashibe Yūho (*1949). However, characterized by the 'factory' style, the story differs from the Japanese sources which it partly draws upon while at the same time blending it with original portions and patchworking the reproduced scenes regardless of their original context.

As *Galchae* shows, with pirated editions artists did not only pursue their creative intentions; they also had to satisfy numerous demands, comprising readers' preferences as well as governmental censorship. Thus, the Japanese boxer comic *Ashita no Jō* (*Tomorrow's Joe*; in Korean: *Dojeonja Hurikein* [The Challenging Hurricane]) which in the original version ends with the protagonist's death, concludes with a happy-ending in the Korean version in order to meet readers' expectations. Likewise the Korean version of Takemiya Keiko's famous boys'-love manga *Kaze to ki no uta* [Poem of wind and trees] was titled *Serjia* in line with the transformation of the male protagonist Serge to the female Sergia and, correspondingly, the change of the setting from a boarding school for boys to one for girls, which was imperative to pass the censor. Such alterations were common in the field of pirated editions published in the 1970s and 1980s. From this, it can be inferred that Korean manhwa was shaped fundamentally through the appropriation of Japanese manga. However, this interrelationship with Japan through comics was limited to the creators; readers did not have direct access to manga at that time.

2.2 After 1985: Copying the manga-magazine style

As clarified above, pirated editions of Japanese manga were transformed by Korean artists into hybrid comics. Yet, such editions disappeared after 1987, when the democratization of Korean society commenced, the exchange of information with foreign countries was liberalized, and 'copies' of Japanese manga appeared in large numbers on the market. All these factors caused changes within Korea's comics culture which so far had been progressing rather slowly.

As distinct from the previous adaptations, Japanese manga were now mechanically copied, their pages merely turned and their lines translated practically word-for-word. A major part in this new 'copy' culture was played by comics magazines, weeklies or biweeklies, the number of which burgeoned when Korea's media culture began to flourish under the conditions of democratization. They

5 The older transcription of the word reads *soonjung*.

'imported' both best-sellers like *Dragon Ball* and *Slamdunk* from Japan's leading manga magazine *Shūkan Shōnen Jump* (at first without copyright contracts) and the publication system these comics were indebted to, that is, the concept of manga magazines as anthologies with several concurrently running manga series. Yet, whereas in Japan magazine serialization usually precedes book editions by the same publisher, in Korea, these correlated formats were separated; often manga had already been published in book form by a different company before the respective magazine series even began. Faced with such competition and eager to put it out of the running, magazine publishers began to make copyright contracts. This resulted in manga being published under the name of their Japanese authors and gaining visibility on the Korean comics market. Thus, by the mid-1990s, the share of legally-published Japanese manga had increased to more than 50%; adding to the vast amount of pirated 'copies'. Manga apparently dominated the Korean comics market.

This proliferation of Japanese comics, in other words the shift from insider knowledge about manga to their general exposure, engendered fierce criticism in Korea. Consuming manga became a societal problem which many more people than merely comics authors and readers felt concerned about. Without going into detail, I would like to point to the phenomenon of almost hysterical reactions by people who did not even read comics, which indicated this medium's position within Korean society. In the 1990s, manga was, although a part of the then rather disdained popular culture, assigned significance insofar as it corresponded with Korean-Japanese relations. Yet, besides that issue, it was not possible to discuss comics in public; the voices of actual readers were drowned out by cries of indignation. In order to cope with this situation, manhwa researchers and creators developed an inclination to look upon the pirated editions as part of a 'shameful past' and deplore the fact that manhwa were influenced, unfortunately, by manga. Whoever discussed comics in the 1990s remained inevitably within this political framework.

Meanwhile the influx of manga 'copies' supported decisively by the new comics-magazine market, gave rise to the proliferation not of manga in general, but of a specific kind: the quickly-drawn and quickly-consumed series of the most successful Japanese weeklies. Before long, domestic artists were expected to discard the older style of both rental manhwa and manga books, and conform to the necessities of weekly serialization, which was enthusiastically embraced by readers. Mentioned in passing, the issue of whether manhwa had to wait for Japanese manga first to be 'speed up' (in regard to the tempo of its production as well as consumption) calls for examination. Already rental manhwa were characterized by high-speed publication and even called 'everyday comics'. What made the production system of the above-mentioned 'manhwa factory' possible in the first place was the fact that this kind of comics had always been easy (and therefore quick) to draw. But although certain traits of a domestic tradition can be detected, it is also a matter of fact that many Korean comics fans recollect

reading comics in the 1980s at a much slower pace; especially in the genre of *sunjeong manhwa* for girls, it was common to deploy a large number of verbal device. But comparative historical analyses in regard to both narrative structure and pictorial expression are still to be conducted.

Japanese manga columnist Natsume Fusanosuke has pointed out that manga's recent suitability to globalization derives from the peculiar format of the manga magazine and its favorization of comics which are easy to draw, to read, and to copy.[6] Since this highly skilled kind of comics has been taken in by the Korean market via 'copying' in the 1990s, the ultimate emergence of globally successful manhwa might not come as a surprise. In fact, such manhwa have been emerging since the beginning of the new millennium. All this contributed to significant changes pertaining the issue of Korea's national identity; however, the inclination towards insisting on own's distinctness from Japan remains, as I shall demonstrate in the following section.

3. Comics as part of a national image strategy in the age of globalization

Regarded as something vulgar in Korea, comics were initially excluded from the realm of 'culture'; only by reference to Korean-Japanese relations could they be made a subject of public discourse. But since the late 1990s, the attitude towards popular culture in general and towards comics in particular has altered remarkably.

Beginning with the Asian financial crisis of 1997, Koreans' awareness of their country's involvement in globalization increased and brought about gradual modifications of their world view, up to and including the sphere of everyday life. In addition, Korean popular culture started to receive foreign attention to such a degree that, in China in 2000, the catchphrase *hallyu* (in Japanese *hanryū*/ Korean trend) was coined. Accordingly, in the discourse on popular culture, Korea rethought its bias towards Japan and began to consider the wider region of Asia, followed by Europe and America. As a result of these changes, it became possible to discuss comics beyond the previous political framework of Korean-Japanese relations. On top of that, from 1998 onwards, the government of Kim Dae-jung pursued a new cultural policy, first acknowledging 'movies and video games, animated films and comics' to be a part of 'culture', and shortly thereafter, in 2001, establishing a special governmental division in charge of fostering cultural content which was regarded to be of the utmost importance for the nation's future. Such policy was driven by a focus on popular culture as a potential domestic industry, yet in order to sell it abroad, its Korean particularity had to be defined in a way

6 Natsume Fusanosuke at the Symposium "Sekai no naka no Nihon manga" [Japanese comics in the world], organized by Jaqueline Berndt, Dōshisha University, Tanabe campus, 19 November 2004. See also Natsume 2005.

understandable to people who were neither Korean nor Japanese, in other words, without exclusive reference to Japan. In this way, while discovering the 'world' through popular culture, Koreans' perception of Japan has gradually shifted away from their previous image of the 'Other' which had provided them with a mirror of national particularity.

At present, the protagonists of the manhwa culture industry strive strategically to create a distinctive image of 'Korea'. This tendency is especially strong among those upcoming editors and critics who themselves were (and still are) passionate comics readers. Promoting manhwa abroad in cooperation with the government and the large publishing houses, they seem to be very well aware of the fact that the difference between manhwa and manga derives less from essentially different pictorial styles and narratives, but rather from an image strategy (which is not to say that they are no longer pursuing 'Koreanness'). Indicative of this was Korea's self-presentation at the International Comics Festival in Angoulême in 2003 (see KOOCA 2003), an annual event which has been held since 1974 with the support of the French Ministry of Culture. With 20,000 visitors attending in recent years, this festival has evolved into one of the most important international comics fairs offering not only exhibitions and lectures, but also plenty of opportunities for completing copyrights transactions and selling comics-related merchandise. The main focus has usually been on *bandes dessinées*, i.e. French and Belgian comics, but in 2001, Japan was invited with an exhibition curated by Natsume. In 2002, the USA was the special guest, and in 2003, when the festival celebrated its 30th anniversary, Korea was highlighted as a comics nation. Two weeks before the opening ceremony, the head of the Culture Industry Bureau at the Korean Ministry of Culture and Tourism stated as follows:

> Our exhibition is a fine opportunity to demonstrate to the world market the excellency of Korean manhwa and its discriminativeness from Japanese manga. [...] This occasion will lead to both the vitalization and international advancement of our manhwa industry by means of constructing a foreign comics network. (Yonhap News 2003)

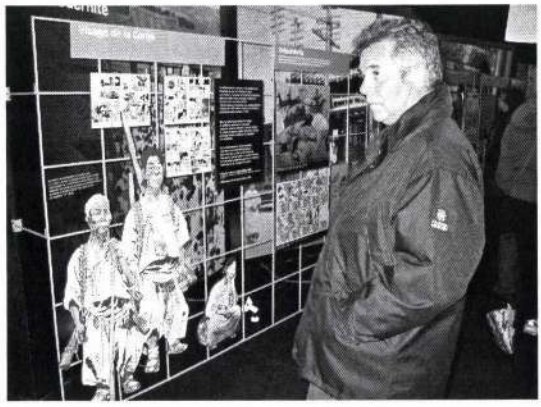

Fig. 4: The Korean exhibition at the international comics festival © by author

The Angoulême exhibition was coordinated by the Korea Culture & Content Agency (KOCCA), an external government organ, which entrusted a team of experts, comprising mainly young manhwa researchers and critics, with the realization of the project. Titled *La Dynamique de la Bande Dessinée Coréenne*, the exhibition consisted of four sections. The first one provided a historical overview of manhwa's evolution and its close ties to everyday life (Fig. 4), whereas the second focused on contemporary Korean comics, introducing young artists like Kwon Yoon-joo and Lee Hyang-woo. The third section illuminated recent achievements of developing comics contents for mobile phones, and the final one presented digital comics created by university students. In addition, there were outdoor performances of traditional Korean tightrope walking in order to make a further impact with regard to the proclaimed Korean 'dynamism'. According to comics researcher Kim Nak-ho, one of the members of the preparatory team, this show of traditional culture was situated as follows:

> Similar to traditional Korean dance, this kind of folkloristic performance is very colorful and extremely dynamic, it has a story and involves a prolonged exchange. In this way, it resembles what we envision as comics: visually appealing, and also telling a story. We wanted to demonstrate that this is characteristic for Korean culture in general.[7]

Thus, the Korean organizers foregrounded their culture's aptitude to raise comics in an environment firmly rooted in national traditions. Underlying this bias was the fact that hitherto in Europe manhwa had been treated as a subcategory of Japanese manga, and precisely this motivated the organizers to stage their comics as something specifically Korean. Yet, they were equally concerned with "catering to the image of East-Asian comics as represented by Japanese manga".[8]

Realistically, they expected the majority of exhibition visitors to be fans of Japanese manga, less interested in manhwa's distinctness than in its resemblance. After all, manhwa has accomplished its capability for international circulation by resting heavily upon the form of Japanese manga. In the end, the organizers framed manhwa in an exotic manner by means of folkloristic 'Korean' performances in order to sell it as something novel and slightly different from manga. Obviously, they felt the necessity to exhibit not just manhwa works but cultural distinctness as well.

7 Interview with Kim Nak-ho at the Korea Culture & Contents Agency, Seoul, on February 17, 2003, by the author.
8 ibid.

Conclusion

Released from constraints by the historical framework of Korean-Japanese relations, manhwa are now being grasped as part of a globalizing popular culture, as the example of Angoulême suggests. Yet, the old framework has not vanished; instead it is being shifted strategically to a new platform: the 'world'. In this process of globalization, popular culture which has finally gained autonomy, is being sheathed with a new discursive space, and this space is giving rise to a relationality which escapes being defined by regional differences and their unique historical, political, and economic contexts. Under such circumstances, allegedly self-evident national frameworks such as 'Korea' and 'Japan' lose their validity for the study of popular culture. What needs to be analyzed then is how such assumptions come into being in the first place. In this way, the globalization of comics poses fundamental questions in regard to contemporary culture and society.

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Steffi Richter

Reading *Reading Manga*: Personal Reflections by a Japanologist

1. Inside-Outside

My considerations on this book are both 'personal' and 'japanological' for the following reason: similar to Cultural Studies, Manga Studies (and Media Studies in general) aim for the symbiosis of connoisseurship based on lived experiences on the one hand and intellectually acquired (studied) sciences on the other. The ideal case would be academics with their distanced outsider view taking the dedicated insider view of manga readers, critics, and collectors seriously, and use not only these, but also their own insider experiences as a basis for their analysis of manga (and comics in general).[1] In consequence, self-referentiality is no longer a taboo, but an absolute prerequisite for such research, since it relativizes their claims of 'truth' and opens them up to communication. This has become all the more relevant with the globalization of manga, since the insider-outsider issue has taken on a second, trans- or intercultural dimension. The understanding of manga *in* Japan is by no means equivalent to its understanding *outside* of Japan. For European fans, 'Japanese' signifies "a globally mobile mixture of aesthetic and cultural attributes at the expense of local specific aspects, while simultaneously undermining nationalizations. It thus becomes a platform for exchange between young people of different national origins" (Berndt 2005: 134). Elsewhere, Berndt (2002) describes this 'traveling concept' as "manga escaping 'Nippon'" (*'Nippon' kara nogareru manga*).

My personal experiences in 'reading manga' fall short of the first insider-outsider dimension mentioned above. That they exist at all is due to my profession as a japanologist concerned with modern culture. As such, my interest in Manga Studies was sparked primarily by the second dimension of this insider-outsider perspective change — that of transculturality, for example, the problem of 'Japaneseness'. The subject of this essay will be one specific aspect of this interest: based on three patterns of 'Japaneseness', I will investigate a potential complicity that has existed since the middle of the 19th century and still exists today: that between western japanologists and Japan enthusiasts in general on the one hand and representatives of japanism-ideologies in Japan on the other in the process of constructing such national cultural identities.

1 Moreover, a profound (non-academic) insiders' interest in the research results of Manga Studies would be very desirable.

Before embarking on this investigation, I would like to point out the two primary reasons for my interest in the manga phenomenon[2]. My dealing with this subject here — as a German japanologist, in a book about manga — again bears the danger of 'japanising' manga. However, I am at least aware of this predicament. Within this back and forth between 'in' and 'out', between pop culture and scholarly culture, I will try to help develop an intercultural and interdisciplinary language that facilitates a better understanding of the concept (Lindner 2000: 113/114).

Firstly, my own students have confronted me with manga. After all, since manga have spread far beyond Japan, they have also motivated many young people in German- speaking countries to study Japanology.[3] As a regular visitor of the Leipzig book fair, where the event 'Manga and Anime' has firmly established itself and occupies a significant part of the exhibition space, I have become an occasional buyer of manga. This began with my encounter with works by Shiriagari Kotobuki (*1958), whose *Futago no oyaji* [The uncle twins] (2002) or *Chikyū bōeike no hitobito* [People who defend the world] (2004) was an aesthetic and intellectual pleasure. And with *Barefoot Gen* (Nakazawa Keiji, *1939, German 2003/04), I was compelled to devour each of the four volumes immediately upon its publication. Does this 1973 work exemplify the opinion of those manga experts, to whom it represents "a comforting medium of simplification and redundancy which reduces complexities" (Berndt 2007: 5/6), and is thus easily consumable for inexperienced readers such as myself? However, I had to give up after the third volume of Inoue Takehiko's *Vagabond* (see also Köhn in this book). And *Der Lachende Vampir* [The Laughing Vampire](Suehiro Maruo, *1956, German 2003) is a good example for those who suggest that comics are "a highly challenging medium which unites the incompatible" (for example, "acts like reading and watching"; ibid.), and not just casually consumed.

The second reason is tightly connected with a transcultural and intermedial research project on historical revisionism in contemporary Japan and East Asia.[4] It is concerned, among other things, with the following questions: how and in which magnitude are not only history textbooks and academic discourses of history, but also manga as an element of mass-media popular culture part of the (re-) construction of stable (primarily national) identities? Can manga, dealing with events of the past and at the same time (as fictional narratives) playing with meaning, convey historical knowledge and be useful in terms of historicity? Or should they be considered as 'heritage' as construed by David

2 These two reasons have made me invite Jaqueline Berndt, an aesthetics and arts specialist internationally renowned for Manga Studies, to Leipzig in summer term 2005. Once more, I would like to thank the *German Academic Exchange Service* (*Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst*) for their generous and kind support.

3 This is also — although not systematically — testified to by interviews with our students of Japanese Studies at Leipzig University. Nonetheless, they may have basically different interests: translation, manga as part of popular culture, or views of an exotic Japan which are also distributed by magazines such as *Banzai!* (2001–2005) or *Daisuki* (2001–), German versions of Shōnen Jump and its girls' manga equivalent.

4 See the homepage of the Volkswagen Foundation Project at Leipzig University: http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~oarev

Lowenthal, as a popular subjective way of viewing the past, an attempt at redefining history in terms of particular current interests that operate with selective forgetting and ignoring (Beier 2000: 12)? Maybe this concept is useful for characterizing those manga series of Kobayashi Yoshinori (*1953), which are considered revisionist for their explicit, ideological content, but similarly are accepted as manga due to certain aesthetic and medial attributes: "Even if the messages are rejected, Kobayashi merely uses a different setting for the oscillation between fact and fiction typical for manga". He allows his readers "access to a fictional reality", and purposefully "intersperses the serious fiction with funny elements" (Berndt 2004: 214).

2. Manga: Escaping 'Japan' to become 'Japanese'?

I have previously mentioned how 'Japaneseness' in manga is expected by European fans. And quoting Berndt, I have just mentioned additional characteristics that have been extended or made more specific by the other contributors to this book. Bouissou, for instance, refers to the culture industry as a "pillar of the most advanced economies" in the context of 'non-material' manga — in this case being an important medium of Japan's 'globalization'. Thus, connecting the 'delocalization' of cultural products with manga as a 'pure pleasure product', they are "both 'full' of constants common to the human species and 'empty' enough to let each person invest it with their own story and with the cultural specificities associated with place and time (see Bouissou, p. 155). The political scientist Bouissou aligns manga with other 'pure pleasure products' such as "teddy bears, dolls, and the warrior or fairy costume", and thus avoids their essentialization.

But, as mentioned before, 'western' japanologists lacking the perspective of cross-national, structural comparison have to ask themselves how far their investigation of the 'Japaneseness' in manga once again contributes to the reconstruction of Japan as something exotic, for instance, by the re-localization of Japan, for example, its re-territorialization, or by questioning ('historical') authenticity of certain periods and incidents in manga whose stories are dealing with the past. Are we japanologists not — consciously or unconsciously — engaging in a 'complicity' with certain (neo-) nationalist powers within Japan who have welcomed the metamorphosis of manga into a 'Japanese' part of global youth culture since the 1990s? In times of crisis, the latter can no longer call upon economic growth as a unifying factor. And so the once-shunned manga has now become an accepted aspect of 'Japanese culture' and is used to strengthen the self-assertion of the nation — especially since it is being consumed by other countries, a development which is usually rarely achieved by contemporary Japanese culture (Berndt 2002: 54/55).

Is this a development similar to what once happened to the understanding of woodblock prints depicting stories from the 'Floating World' (*ukiyo-e*), in particular the most colorful among them, the *nishiki-e*, albeit in a different historical context? These emerged primarily in the metropolis of Edo (present day Tōkyō) in connection with a certain form of 'salon culture' during the last third of the 18th century. It brought together the educated military aristocracy (samurai) and commoners — who were strictly separated into hierarchical divisions in everyday life — for 'elusive worldly pleasures'. The *nishiki-e* developed out of the so-called 'calendar pictures' (*e-goyomi*). These rebus-like *e-goyomi* depicted the length of the months in the following year. This was necessary because the calendar system, which was based on both sun and moon (*taiin taiyō reki*) at that time, led to 'moons' (months) of different lengths. It also required the addition of a 13th 'moon' from time to time, so that the seasons would not be misaligned. These calendar prints became increasingly elaborate, and special meetings were arranged to exchange these prints as gifts. As time progressed, these meetings turned into contests where the artists competed for the honor of having produced the most beautiful print (*e-goyomi kōkankai*). Many artists were supported by wealthy patrons whose regular commissions allowed these artists to refine their techniques (Kobayashi 1996: 8; Hara 1996: 14). Due to their elegance and wit (which Kobayashi compares to the parodic character of the haikai-poetry; ibid.), these prints became extraordinarily popular. It is also possible that the precise declaration of length and amount of the 'moons' was meant to inform the often-debt-ridden samurai of when they had to repay their installments to their creditors, mostly rich Edo merchants.

Popularity, intellectual play with (originally 'serious') meaning, and commercial nature — even during their bloom in the late Edo period (1600–1868), the *ukiyo-e* were not only unpopular with, but also repressed by the ruling military elites. A century later, the *ukiyo-e* again brought about a discussion when the new intelligentsia, committed to modernization, decided to integrate this art into the newly emerging national canon. On the one hand, this canon was modeled after the modern 'European' and its striving for the ideals of the 'true, the good, and the beautiful'. In the latter, intellectuals, such as the art historian and critic Okakura Tenshin (Kakuzō; 1862–1913), were convinced that they had found a space in which Japan was on par with the 'West' — in art as "the expression of the highest and noblest of our national culture" (Okakura 1970: 9).

> Great art is that before we long to die. But the art of late Tokugawa period (Edo period, S.R.) only allowed a man to dwell in the delights of fancy.
> [...]The Popular School [...] lacks that ideality which is the basis of Japanese art. Those charmingly colored wood-cuts [...] made by Outamaro, Shunman, Kiyonobu, Harunobu, Kionaga, Toyokuni, and Hokusai, stand apart from the main line of development of Japanese art, whose evolution has been continuous ever since Nara period. (Okakura 1970: 198/99)

On the other hand, it was precisely the works of the aforementioned *ukiyo-e* artists (among others) which inspired the European avant-garde to a new "Japanese way of seeing" (Berger 1987: 195) and evolved into a source of Japonism. The euphorical reception of the West thus followed its own logic — what Berger calls the *exotic* in precisely this 'Japanese way of seeing' which served "to liberate from the bonds of isolation, to kindle imagination" in Great-Britain and France (ibid.: 201). But the orientalist gaze of Europe and the USA was nonetheless one of the reasons why the works of late Edo — which Okakura described as being only superficially graceful — in the end (although hesitantly and selectively) were included into the artistic canon, and thus became part of tradition, now defined as *national*. Being more and more withdrawn from the context of their actual historical origin, and simultaneously inscribed into a national-historical one, these works contributed to an early formation of 'Japanese-ness' (*nihon-rashisa*), which can be described as an elitist-aesthetic one.

However, the utmost expression of this 'Japanese' essence was seen in the fine arts and intellectual literary traditions attributed to the Court and the culture of the military aristocracy, for instance, Buddhism, in particular Zen-Buddhism, and the seemingly closely connected depth of the way of tea, calligraphy, or Nō theatre. These evoked admiration in Europe. And considering the topics on Japan investigated by European academic circles or exhibited in Western museums at that time, the kind of 'complicity' that I have mentioned before becomes apparent; 'Japan' was systematically and/or historically 'composed' as a national cultural entity based on these topics. At the same time, this entity, in its (primarily aesthetically conceived) otherness, reveals something about the 'West' itself and its own measures of value, canons of knowledge and arts, with which it has been and still is constructing its identities.

Due to Japan's economic success in the 1960s, another pattern of 'complicity' in the construction of 'Japaneseness' between Japan and the 'West' (for example, European and US-American japanologists) emerged, which I would like to call a Japaneseness based on 'the everyday culture of the middle class'. In the following description of this pattern, the constituent elements can only be listed, whereas in reality their interconnections are much more complex. In the context of the so-called 'economic miracle', a 'middle-class society' had developed by the 1970s. At the time, 75% of the population considered themselves to be part of the "middle middle" class (Gordon 2003: 268). Middle-class-oriented, mass-produced, and high-quality everyday products such as electrical appliances or cars which were increasingly exported, provided an important material basis for this self-perception, becoming a source of rising national pride (the so-called 'high-tech-nationalism'). This success was the result of forms of large enterprises' management (primarily in electronics, automotive engineering, and machine tool manufacturing) which were identified with 'Japan' in general, and, especially in the late 1970s, 'discovered' by the 'West' as a possible model in order to overcome crises

of growth and structural development. An example of this development is Ezra F. Vogel's book *Japan as number One*, published in 1979. But, as was the case with Western avant-garde's Japonism, the image of Japan as an 'iron triangle' of bureaucracy, politics, and industry which was now construed by American economists and sociologists, was subsequently taken on in Japan, and in turn presented to the world as part of Japanese self-perception. It was actually Vogel himself who had published *Japan's New Middle Class: The Salary Man and His Family in a Tokyo Suburb* almost a decade earlier in 1971 — a study proving empirically that Japan is far from being an egalitarian society, and that there was (and is) only a small part of the Japanese population (a third or a fourth) that could benefit from the large enterprises' social and financial privileges for permanent staff members.

Since the beginnings of the 'bubble-economy' in the 1980s, this 'middle class and everyday cultural' pattern of Japaneseness was modified in at least two different ways. Firstly, the "new intermediaries of culture" (Bourdieu 1987: 510), for example, marketing specialists, declared that the masses would spread up into so-called 'partial masses' (*bunshū*) which created their own lifestyles. According to these specialists, this would have been achieved due to the growing purchasing power in a strongly consumerist society and the 'Japanese system of flexibilized mass production' (that is to say, the mass production of low-cost products in varied diversity and production quality [Berndt 2005: 22]). Japan would therefore develop into a society of "soft individualism" (Yamazaki 1984). Secondly, the Japanese government called upon consulting groups of social scientists engaged in the cultural sector, business people, and bureaucrats who were to consider Japan's culture and its future. Furthermore, a *Report on the investigation of politics by a group assigned by Prime Minister Ōhira* (*Ōhira sōri no seisaku kenkyūkai hōkokusho*) had already stated in 1980 that:

1. Japan had succeeded in 'the modernizing drive in order to catch up (with the West)' and had eventually surpassed the 'model' of developed Western countries.
2. Japan had also succeeded in modernization and industrialization; thus, the dichotomy of modernity and tradition had become obsolete. Now Japan had to focus on a post-industrial society reaching far beyond modernism.
3. Such a 'period of overcoming the modern' (*kindai o koeru jidai*) was identical to a 'period of culture' (*bunka no jidai*) in which great emphasis was laid on the quality and values of life. It was necessary to reinterpret and re-evaluate Japanese culture including its underlying 'Japanese' community interactions.
4. This 'return to traditions' by means of positive self-affirmation of the Japanese culture (as national culture) sought to relativize the Western culture and to put in contrast the 'Western world perspective' with the 'Japanese perspective'.
5. Japan as a global economic superpower had to make its own positive contribution to such a multilateral world in order to be an 'international state'.
6. It was indispensable to undertake administrative reforms of the political and economic system of the high growth period. (Kang/ Yoshimi 2001: 65/66)

This culturalism induced 'from above' was enforced under the Nakasone-cabinet of the mid-1980s (1982–1987) — for example, the state-financed *International Research Centre for Japanese Studies* (*Kokusai nihon bunka kenkyū sentā*) was built in Kyōto in spring 1987.

After the collapse of the speculative bubble in the 1990s the modifications of Japaneseness mentioned above — firstly, the notion of the 'partial masses' whose members could be 'softly individualized and diversified' via consumption of everyday and pop cultural products; and secondly, the 'nationalism of the cultural period' which was initially based on tradition — both met the following 'fate': over the past few years, these hailed diversifications of lifestyles have been replaced by populist slogans such as 'winners vs. losers' (*make inu vs. kachi inu*), or critically discussed as 'disparity', 'new social differentiation', or 'society of the lower middle' (see the best-seller of the same name [*Karyū shakai*] by Miura Atsushi 2005). In the meantime, the 'new culturalism' propaganda has swollen into (and is perceived in East Asia as) a form of offensive neo-nationalism. According to Yoda, this neo-nationalism is implied to be paradoxically interwoven with neoliberalism and its rhetoric. By separating economics (global capital) from politics (nation-state), both criticized postwar Japan (the so-called 'Japan, Inc.') from both ends of the spectrum; neoliberals felt Japan was too dominated by provincial 'Japanese' politics which would repress the necessary capital flood, while neo-nationalists complained about Japan being led only by economic interests, and thus having abandoned her ethnic-cultural specificity. Both sides argued within the old logic of the modern dichotomy of the 'particular inside' (the Japanese nation-state) and the 'universal outside' (the world, capital). "Neoliberals' celebration of globalization [...] is usually framed by the rhetoric of national interest. Their prescription for the Japanese economy and people to swallow the bitter pill of liberalization and rationalization is typically packaged under the familiar call to endure hardship for the sake of building national strength." (Yoda 2001: 637) And the neo-nationalists "must defend the autonomous sphere of the political in form of the nation-state as the irreducible horizon of identity" (ibid: 641).

Since the 1990s, manga can also be viewed from the perspective of this paradoxical nexus: having initially 'matured' in the domestic market, it now expands into global space as part of a culture industry. After having developed into an important economic factor, this once-shunned culture becomes a politically significant point of reference for shaping national identity "framed by the rhetoric of national interest". Obviously, stating that manga is 'expanding outward' and the notion that something once particularly ('Japanese') is globally distributed and recognized are part of the same logic. How can this be articulated otherwise? Why does dichotomization, when localizing the complex connectivities between 'global' and 'local' into a specific territorial 'here and there' or 'inside and outside', always tend to essentialize and nationalize instead of being understood as transnational networks of social relationship?

As I have mentioned before, within the search for a common language, the central tasks for those undertaking Manga Studies are:

- As delineated at the beginning, they should communicate both inside and outside perspectives. In this transdisciplinary approach, they may analyse manga (synchronically) as an economic, political, medial, or cultural phenomenon.
- By being transcultural, they could both view 'Japan' as a procedural place of their origin and development and perceive those social spaces into which they 'permeate' and in which they become variations of manga as a result of already existing versions and needs of reading.[5]
- Historically (diachronically), they should search for continuities and discontinuities, both in aesthetic forms (e.g., the relationship between Hokusai manga and today's *story-manga*) as well as in content (e.g., *bushidō* not only in its corresponding time and space, but also in its contemporary depiction in manga, see Köhn in this book). Especially this is an expansive field of work for japanologists. We will continue to investigate 'Japan' and 'images of Japan' using specific analytical methods which allow us to follow their/our own investigational interest and to strive for objectivity. But instead of pitting our results against other 'images' in hierarchical claims for objectivity, it would be more reasonable to accept these 'images' as equal part of our research. The characterization of manga as "a highly 'subjective' medium dealing primarily with its reader's dreams, projections, and longings" does not only suggest that "it is therefore also a highly ideological medium reproducing certain images of, for example, 'Japaneseness'" (Köhn in this book). It *also* suggests that the readers themselves should be taken in our investigational view as *co*-producers of such images and meanings. Finally, the readers (and 'consumers' in general — as described by de Certeau 1988), as active participants in the discourses, always present additional interpretations of 'Japan' — whether we (the 'japanologists') like it or not.

(Translation from German: Katrin Gengenbach)

5 As Bouissou did for France, such localizations are not yet investigated for other 'Western', i.e. post-industrial, societies, even if there is a tendency in Germany to begin research. The investigation of formations of virtual manga communities (which lack physical presence) still is barely investigated, too.

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Glossary

24nen-gumi	'Magnificent-24-Group'; of female manga artists in the 1970s
bishōnen	literally: 'beautiful boy'; often appearing as sexually ambiguous character in girls' manga
dōjinshi	fans' manga artwork
gakushū manga	learner's manga
gekiga	'dramatic picture'; realistic manga of the mid-1950s and 1970s
genbaku	abbreviation from *genshibakudan,* nuclear bomb
Hokusai manga	Hokusai (1760–1849): famous artist, painter, wood engraver and ukiyo-e maker. The 15-volume 'Hokusai manga' was published in 1814
jidaigeki	historical TV dramas
manhwa	Korean comics, equivalent of Japanese manga
nihon-rashisa	Japaneseness
seinen manga	young adults' (men's) manga
shōjo manga	young girls' manga
shōnen ai	boys' love, mostly in young girls'/women's comics
shōnen manga	young boys' manga
sunjeong manhwa	'pure heart'-manhwa, genre dedicated to girls, such as Japanese *shōjo manga*
tankōbon	higher quality paperback-sized compilation volume of a particular manga series, usually collected and not thrown away
ukiyo-e	images of the 'Floating World, popular woodblock prints of the Edo period
yaoi (yama nashi, ochi nashi, imi nashi)	subgenre of young girls' manga (without climax, without ending, and without meaning)

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Since the late 1990s, Japanese comics, or manga, have become established as a globally-successful print medium. Striving for the transcultural and transdisciplinary exchange between Japanese manga researchers, European comics experts, and japanologists, this anthology addresses itself to readers who take an interest in cultural, historical, and theoretical reflections on reading manga. Its first part focuses on the case study of Nakazawa Keiji's *Barefoot Gen* (*Hadashi no Gen*, 1973–1987), paying special attention to its reception in different cultures. Because of its subject matter *Barefoot Gen* provokes explorations of comics' potential to narrate history realistically which is the object of attention in the second part. Finally, the third part highlights a variety of topics related to the impact of manga on other comics cultures. In accordance with the fact that Comics Studies can be conceptualized only as a multidisciplinary field of research, the contributors to this anthology deploy a variety of angles: from Media History and Cultural Studies to Linguistics and Social Sciences as well as Gender Studies and Aesthetics.

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