NEW
voices

Volume 4:

A Journal for Emerging
Scholars of Japanese Studies
in Australia and New Zealand

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The Japan Foundation, Sydney

The vie ws expressed in this journal are those of the authors, and do not necessarily coincide with those of the editors or members of the Editorial Advisory Board.

Japanese names are written surname fi rst, except where the person concerned has adopted Anglo-European conventions. The lo ng vowel sound in Japanese is indicated by a macron (e.g. *kōtsū*), unless in common use without (e.g. *Tokyo*).

Foreword

This fourth issue of *New Voices* demonstrates the wide variety of topics and high quality of Japanese Studies scholarship being undertaken by Honours and Masters students in Australia and New Zealand.

Launched in December 2006, *New Voices* aims to support early career researchers and postgraduate students in Japanese Studies to share their research interests with as wide an audience as possible.

In order to highlight the range of Japanese Studies scholarship in our region, the scope of *New Voices* has this year been expanded to include Honours and Masters students from both Australian and New Zealand universities. I hope that *New Voices* acts as both a resource for general readers interested in Japanese Studies and as a valuable support for emerging scholars based in Australia and New Zealand to continue their research and interest in Japan.

I'd like to thank the following people for their assistance on this issue of *New Voices*: our Guest Editor, Dr Rebecca Suter for her valuable advice and support throughout the editorial and publication process; members of the editorial advisory board, for kindly offering their time and expertise to review the articles; Wakao Koike and Susan Yamaguchi for editorial assistance; and finally the 9 contributors and their supervisors without whose interest and enthusiasm this project would not have been possible.

Tokiko Kiyota
Director, The Japan Foundation, Sydney
January 2011

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Introduction

New Voices has come to its fourth edition. Since its inception in 2006, the journal has played an important role in the field of Japanese Studies by offering Australian postgraduate students and junior scholars a venue for presenting their ongoing research to a broader audience, spreading it on the national and international level. Published online and distributed in printed form to universities and research institutions across the world, including but not limited to the Japan Foundation's overseas offices, the journal has been influential in promoting innovative scholarship in the field of Japanese Studies. Some of the students that had published in the previous three issues have moved on to doctoral programs or teaching positions; some of them have since then presented their work at other venues; others have moved on to different professional careers. For all, publishing in *New Voices* has been a stepping-stone in pursuing their passion for their topic and presenting their ideas to an informed audience.

In the movie *Solanin*, recently screened at the Japanese Film Festival in Sydney, the protagonist Meiko, a young woman who struggles to find her place in the world and to fulfil her aspirations, tries to convince her boyfriend Taneda that he should pursue his dream of being a musician by applying for an audition at a record company. In a moving scene, Meiko tells the reluctant Taneda that it is only by playing in front of an audience, and opening ourselves to their judgment, that we can achieve self-realisation. Our work will only mean something if others appreciate it too. But what if they don't like it, asks Taneda. Well, says Meiko, you will never know that if you don't give it a try. Scholarship resembles creative work that way. Presenting our work to the broader community is a challenging yet indispensable moment in our personal and professional growth. Turning an honours or masters' thesis into an article for an academic or non-academic audience is a difficult, at times frightening, yet highly formative operation. Whether the author pursues an academic career or moves to other professional fields, writing out their ideas in essay form will be for them a significant step, closing one chapter and simultaneously opening a new one.

Young Taneda's audition with the record company ends up being a frustrating one. After hearing his band's performance of their signature song "Solanin," a yuppie executive suggests that the young man shift to a more commercial genre, leave the other members of the band, and sing in pair with his girlfriend as an "idol couple." "Who wants to listen to that kind of music?" asks an angry Taneda. "Well, who wants to listen to *your* music?" coldly retorts the businessman. Fortunately, junior Japanologists of Australia and New Zealand have found in *New Voices* a much more open-minded and supportive venue to present the world with *their* music. And it is high-quality music that they have produced.

The essays in the current issue are a testament to the breadth and depth of graduate studies in the field of Japanese Studies in Australia and New Zealand, spanning as diverse topics as labour law reform, visual arts, linguistics and language pedagogy, popular culture, film, material culture, as well as encompassing a variety of historical periods, from the Tokugawa and Meiji eras to the very contemporary. They also showcase an impressive range of different methodological approaches, including literary theory, historical linguistics, pragmatics, language pedagogy, sociology, ethnographical research, art history, film theory, gender studies, and cultural studies.

Within such wealth of different themes and methods, a significant proportion of the essays approach Japanese culture through a transnational and intercultural perspective, an indication of the growing importance of such an approach in the field, as well as of the increasing internationalisation of Japanese culture itself. As the theme of this year's JSAA biennial conference, "Internationalising Japan: Sport, Culture and Education" testifies, this is a crucial dimension of the country's unique role within the context of globalisation. Interestingly, a number of the essays also focus on education, both by making pedagogy an object of study, and by pointing at possible pedagogical uses of the results of their research. But the most significant commonality among the essays is the insightfulness of their analyses, and the passion each author clearly has for her or his topic. This is a source of inspiration for all academics in the field, and a further reason to hope that these "new voices" be widely heard by the global intellectual community.

Rhiannon Paget's article is an excellent example of a fruitful examination of theories and practices of education, and of their broader social and political relevance. Paget, an MA graduate in Art History and Theory from the University of Sydney currently working as Curatorial Assistant at the Clark Center for Japanese Art and Culture in Hanford, California, analyses the representation of children and childhood in Meiji Japan. Through an in-depth study of the style and content of a series of woodblock prints on ethical themes produced by the newly formed Ministry of Education between 1873 and 1887, the essay probes into the formation of new notions of children and childhood in Meiji Japan and the way those were made part of the nation-building project. In so doing, it offers precious insight into the broader question of the role of education in prewar Japan, while also contributing to our understanding of the history of Meiji visual arts.

Daniel Curtis' article takes us deeper into the theme of internationalisation. Curtis, who graduated with a First Class Honours from the University of New South Wales, performs a linguistic analysis of the use of the word *gaijin* (foreigner) within the Japanese speech community in Sydney, Australia. After tracing the historical development of the term within and outside Japan, Curtis investigates the way in which native and non-native speakers of Japanese residing in Sydney utilise the word *gaijin*

through a combination of focus groups and follow-up interviews. The author should be commended for the clarity with which he explains his methodology as well as for the analysis of the results. Curtis' proposed model of two notions of "foreignness" within the Japanese language, the "absolute *gaijin*" and the "relative *gaijin*", is original and thought provoking, and opens new avenues for further research.

Kirsti Rawstron's paper, an analysis of removal of the Labour Standards Law's Women's 'Protection' Provisions in 1990s Japan and its impact on gender equality, is also an excellent example of scholarship. Rawstron, our first contributor from New Zealand (she graduated with First Class Honours from the University of Otago) and currently a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Wollongong, skillfully combines a close examination of the debates on the issue in Japanese mainstream newspapers and a quantitative analysis of the changes in gender equality since the removal of the provisions. This allows the essay to offer a perceptive analysis of the specific case study and use it as grounds for a broader reflection on the links between media perceptions of gender and legal change, particularly in the area of so-called 'protective' legislation.

Hitomi Yoshida, an MA graduate from the University of Tasmania, examines the adaptations of the renowned girls' comic *Hana Yori Dango* in Taiwan, Korea and Japan. Investigating the complex interplay of cultural distancing and cultural proximity in the reception of the *manga* in these different contexts and its social, political, and cultural impact, the essay is in conversation with recent developments in the field of postcolonial studies and scholarship on globalisation. At the same time, through a detailed study of recurrent themes and structures through the lens of Vladimir Propp's notion of the archetype, with close attention to gender norms, the article provides an original contribution to the field of Japanese popular culture studies and gender studies.

Esther Lovely, a First Class Honours graduate from the University of Queensland, takes us back to the fascinating world of linguistics, this time connecting it more closely with language pedagogy. Her study of Japanese language learners' strategies for transliterating English loanwords into *katakana* is firmly grounded in a survey of a significant sample of first-year Japanese language students at the University of Queensland, conducted through a threefold process involving a questionnaire, a written test, and a follow-up interview. This allows the author not only to present a comprehensive discussion of the strategies adopted by JSL learners but also to offer precious suggestions for innovative teaching methods that take these processes into account.

Fusako Ota's essay on social networking sites for learners of Japanese is another inspiring example of the opportunities opened by applying linguistic research to

language education. Ota, who received a Master's degree in Applied Japanese Linguistics from Monash University, examines the use of two social networking websites, Facebook and mixi, and their application to second language learning both inside and outside classrooms. By investigating in detail the effects of the networks' positive and non-threatening environment on language learning, Ota's article draws attention to the possible pedagogical uses of these new tools, and the communities that form around them, to promote and enhance current methods of language education in more academic environments.

Rie Yamasaki's analysis of intertextuality in the movies of Mitani Kōki is one of the articles in the collection that most clearly showcase this issue's general concern with the internationalisation of Japan and the "Japanisation" of foreign cultures. By tracing in detail the references to international film and literature in the cinematography of this renowned director, Yamasaki, an MA graduate from the University of Tasmania, complicates our understanding of contemporary Japanese cinema and its transnational dimension.

Rosa Lee, a First Class Honours graduate from the University of Sydney and currently a Monbukagakushō research student at Tokyo University, similarly explores notions of influence, reception, and rewriting, from a different perspective. Investigating the rise to pop icon status of the Shinsengumi, the famous private militia recruited by the Tokugawa government to protect Kyoto from radical Imperial House loyalists in the Bakumatsu period, the article raises wider questions regarding identity formation and validation in contemporary Japanese society. Combining a comparative textual analysis of two major works featuring Shinsengumi and a study of reader response through reviews on Amazon.co.jp, Lee investigates the reasons that lie behind the continuing popularity of these semi-legendary characters and their implications for sociological analysis.

Last but not least, Amelia Groom's essay investigates an intriguing contemporary cultural practice, namely the developments of Japanese street fashion. Through the framework of Roland Barthes' and Michel DeCerteau's theories of aesthetics and technologies of power, Groom highlights the way in which Harajuku fashion challenges gender and cultural norms, ultimately undermining fixed notions of identity and authenticity.

Overall, the collection represents both the diversity and the quality of Japanese Studies in Australia and New Zealand, and its promise of a bright future. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the students for their exciting ideas and for the effort they put into turning their theses into publishable articles. My gratefulness also goes to the panel of experts that refereed the papers, for their generosity with their time and for

detailed and insightful comments that were a great help to the authors in the revising process. My deepest thanks to Dr. Tomoko Aoyama, Prof. Nanette Gottlieb, Dr. Mats Karlsson, Dr. Christine de Matos, Prof. Tessa Morris-Suzuki, Dr. Jun Ohashi, Dr. Yuji Sone, Dr. Matthew Stavros, Dr. Carolyn Stevens, and Dr. Alison Tokita, for their time and their help. Many thanks also to Wakao Koike, for his precious support not only with this collection, but with the promotion of Japan-related cultural activities throughout his appointment as Deputy Director of the Japan Foundation, Sydney. His presence has really made a difference in the Japanese cultural scene in Australia. Finally, none of this would have been possible without Susan Yamaguchi's invaluable help with the correspondence with authors and referees, with editing, and with composing the final layout of the journal. Her efficiency and kindness are a true source of inspiration, and it has been a great pleasure working with her.

I believe I can speak on behalf of the authors, referees, and editors in saying that putting together this volume has been a long, at times difficult, always highly rewarding experience for all involved. I hope that you will enjoy reading this issue as much as we enjoyed working on it.

Dr Rebecca Suter
The University of Sydney
Editor, *New Voices*, vol. 4

On the Journal's review process and format

Submissions to this issue of *New Voices* were peer reviewed by an editorial board of independent academic experts to meet the HERDC requirements for refereed journal status. The successful submissions are published online and are universally accessible at: http://www.jpf.org.au/newvoices.

Several of the essays, however, were chosen by the editor and advisory board to also be published in a physical journal format, which was distributed to universities and libraries across Australia and to the Japan Foundation's 23 overseas branch offices. The selection of these essays was based not only on quality but on an attempt to provide readers with representative examples of Honours and Masters scholarship in several disciplines at a variety of Australian and New Zealand universities.

Raising subjects: The representation of children and childhood in Meiji Japan

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Abstract

Two mutually dependent ideologies emerged during the first few decades of the Meiji period (1868-1912): universal education and nation. Both ideologies sought to redefine existing perceptions of childhood as a period of life subordinate to status, to a unifying experience for all subjects of the nation state. This paper examines coloured woodblock prints (*nishikie*) of ethical themes produced by the studio of Utagawa Kuniteru and the newly formed Ministry of Education, and Inoue Yasuji between 1873 and 1887, and the new notions of children and childhood the prints espoused. The means by which these images were distributed, their subjects, and the visual and design devices that they employed contrived to identify children with education and a new repertoire of civic duties, which bound them to the state and subjected them to new kinds of disciplinary power.

Keywords

nishikie, Meiji, childhood, education, Monbushō

Introduction

Two mutually dependent ideologies emerged during the early Meiji period: universal education and nation, both of which sought to redefine existing concepts of childhood. This paper examines new notions of children and childhood expressed in full-coloured woodblock prints (*nishikie*) issued by the newly formed Ministry of Education (the Monbushō) between 1873 and 1885. These images identified children with education and a new repertoire of civic duties, bound them to the state and subjected them to new kinds of disciplinary power.

Childhood and public institutions in the West

The implementation of widespread schooling is regarded as a turning point in the way childhood was thought about in Western societies. Part Two of Philippe Ariès' pioneering study *Centuries of Childhood* describes how the modern child emerged as

the object and product of primary state education, subject to the constant scrutiny and judgement of teachers, parents and peers.[1] According to Ariès, school prolonged the period of dependency for young people by physically and conceptually isolating them from the rest of society, hence lengthening and defining the duration of childhood. Since its publication in 1960 in French and 1962 in English, *Centuries of Childhood* has been critiqued and revised by other scholars; however, state schooling continues to be regarded as having fundamentally shaped the social construct of childhood.

Focusing on a later period of history than that covered by Ariès, Part Three of Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* describes changes in mechanisms of social control that occurred in Western societies and how they created the modern individual. In the past, power relied on its visibility to inspire submission and obedience in its subjects. Since the nineteenth century, power became increasingly anonymous and diffuse by acting directly upon individuals within their everyday lives. In the modern penal system and other institutions including schools, the object of power was not just the tissues of the prisoners' physical body, but also the internal workings of their minds. The target of power in modern Western societies, the individual prisoner, patient and of particular interest here, school child, therefore became more visible and more individualised. This was not only due to increased personal autonomy, but also a result of new means of social control.[2]

Also contingent upon the emergence of mass education for children and new technologies of power in modern societies were the discourses of nation and nationalism. Benedict Anderson defined nation as an imagined political community: imagined in that its members may be of disparate situations and entirely unknown to each other, and a community, because, 'regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship'.[3] As Meiji statesman Inoue Kaoru (1836-1915) proclaimed, 'Those who exist in one country are all interconnected… [b]ecause the interests of the nation-state and its influence extends to all nationals'.[4] Following Émile Durkheim's view of the role of formal education in the socialisation of the young into 'moral culture', Anderson identified state schools as privileged sites for transcending parochial loyalties to forge the bonds among individuals that made national collectives possible. For Ernest Gellner, nationalism, which he defined as 'the organisation of human groups into large, centrally educated, culturally homogeneous units', is similarly inseparable from state-run compulsory education.[5]

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1   Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*.
2   Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 135-228.
3   Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, p. 6.
4   Cited in Tanaka, 'Childhood: Naturalization of Development into a Japanese Space', pp. 21-56.
5   Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 35.

The Japanese education system

The mid-nineteenth century saw the collapse of the feudal Tokugawa shogunate and the construction of a modern state, founded upon the ideal of the active involvement of the entire population in the life of the nation. During the Edo period, power was relatively decentralised and regional barons, caste groups and communities held considerable powers of self-regulation. The primary concern of political authorities was to maintain harmony within and among these bodies; accordingly, the main goal of education was to exercise moral influence over social collectives and to funnel children into their preordained status groups.[6] Within such a system, the subjectivity of individual children was of little interest.[7]

In contrast, the modern Japanese state sought to integrate individuals into its institutions, mobilise them for service to the nation and inspire in them a sense of personal identification with the nation.[8] As Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901) wrote in his *Encouragement of Learning* of 1872, 'All the people of the country, whether noble or base, whether high or low, must feel that they have personal responsibility for the country'.[9] The idea that education was one of the keys to the power of the West had been in circulation for some time. Faced with threats to its autonomy from without and popular unrest within, Japan's administrators identified childhood as a time of crucial importance for making useful, active citizens out of the populace. As Inoue wrote in his commentary to the *Imperial Rescript on Education* (1891), '[if] all children receive this national education there is no doubt that our land will coalesce into one country'.[10] Childhood was thus constructed as a unifying experience for all subjects, and children, as individuals belonging to a stage of life through which all would pass, existed largely through the discourse of nation, through becoming Japanese.[11]

Rapid Westernisation

Throughout the early Meiji years, factions of Confucianists, *kokugakusha* (national scholars) and Western scholars sought control of children's education.[12] A simplified narrative of this period would describe an initial phase of zealous Westernisation guided by liberal leaders, followed by a conservative reaction during the 1880s, culminating in the *Imperial Rescript on Education* of 1890 which sought to reconcile Confucian ethics

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6   Platt, 'Japanese Childhood, Modern Childhood: The Nation-State, the School, and 19th-Century Globalization', p. 969.
7   *Ibid.*, pp. 965-985.
8   *Ibid.*, pp. 971-973.
9   Passin, *Society and Education in Japan*, p. 68.
10 Cited in Tanaka, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
11 *Ibid.*, p. 48.
12 Passin, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

with the new ideologies of nationalism and state Shintoism.[13] Mark Lincicome, however, argued that liberalism continued to disrupt state authority over education, culture and society in the 1880s and beyond, while the images that will be discussed in this article question the apparent liberalism of the 1870s.[14]

The School Commission, established in 1868 to supervise existing schools and to prepare a new educational system, was dominated by men such as Fukuzawa Yukichi, Uchida Masao (1838-1876) and Mori Arinori (1847-1889) who believed that Japan's independence could only be built upon the successes of individuals who would improve the position of their families and the nation as a whole. In 1870, the Iwakuni domain released a statement declaring, 'Now that we are all reunited in the Imperial system…we must seek knowledge broadly throughout the world, and our main task is to open schools…[to] which all, without distinction or rank, go'.[15] Participation in the life of the new nation was thus as much as an obligation of Japanese children as it was a privilege. While poor enrolment and attendance rates undermined this confident proclamation for another three decades, the creation of an "imagined community" remained a priority.[16]

Although the liberals of this initial phase emphasised knowledge over the neo-Confucian ethics that had dominated education in the Edo period,[17] and their educational aims are said to have been child-centred, obedience and discipline nonetheless occupied a central position in the imaginations of early administrators.[18] In 1871, a delegation of embasaries led by Iwakura Tomomi was sent on a two-year research tour of the USA, Europe, and their colonies. The embasaries' impressions speak of the possibilities they envisaged and the mechanisms by which they would be realised should such an education system be established in Japan. In January 1872, Kido Takayoshi (1833-1877), councillor of state and later Minister of Education, wrote in his diary: 'We went to elementary schools in three locations; and the largest had an enrolment of 1300 or 1400 boys. The discipline there was admirable'.[19] He concluded, 'We clearly must have schools if we are to encourage our country's development as a civilised country, improving ordinary people's knowledge, establishing the power of

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13   Tsurumi, 'Meiji Primary School Language and Ethics Textbooks: Old Values for a New Society?', pp. 247-261; Hane, 'The Sources of English Liberal Concepts in Early Meiji Japan', pp. 259-272.

14   Lincicome, 'Local Citizens or Loyal Subjects? Enlightenment Discourse and Educational Reform', pp. 451-465.

15   Passin, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

16   According to one estimate, in 1906 96.6% of school-aged children were enrolled in elementary school. Emig and Shimizu, 'The Challenges of Japanese Education: From Uniform Arrangements to Diversity', pp. 86-87. According to David Ambaras, such estimates only included children who were legally obliged to enrol. Ambaras estimated that in 1903, 15.7% of school-aged children were not legally obliged to enrol due to government exemptions for poor families. Comparable rates persisted for several years. Ambaras, *Bad Youth: Juvenile Delinquency and the Politics of Everyday Life in Modern Japan*, p. 41.

17   Education for the children of commoners during the Edo period was largely provided by *terakoya*, parish schools taught by samurai, priests or other members of the village elite. Reciting and copying neo-Confucian classics and copybooks were staple components of the *terakoya* curriculum. Nakae, *Edo no shitsuke to kosodate*, p. 165; Nakae and Yamazumi (eds.), *Kosodate no sho*, p. 30.

18   For example, see Passin, *op. cit.*, pp. 68 and 70.

19   Kido, *The Diary of Kido Takayoshi*, p. 118.

the state and maintaining our independence and sovereignty. It is not enough to have a few able men make good; nothing is more important than schools'.[20]

Kido's journal entry emphasises two points that interested him. First, the management of children in America was not, as it had been in the Edo period, left to social collectives and regional authorities but rather was the focus of state control. As Foucault observed, 'for a long time ordinary individuality…remained below the threshold of descriptions…The disciplinary methods…lowered the threshold of describable individuality and made of this description a means of control and a method of domination'.[21] Second, the degree and means of control impressed Kido. The day after Kido's visit, the *San Francisco Chronicle* explained that '[t]he boys were marched into the yard, where they went through their usual drill'.[22] Despite the stated aim to 'improv[e] ordinary people's knowledge', apparently, it was less the content of the education that impressed him than the rigorous discipline of the children.

The 1880s: conservativism and militarism

In 1878, Emperor Meiji (reigned 1867-1912), unimpressed by the students' ignorance of Confucian values, drafted a statement via the Confucian Lecturer, Motoda Eifu (1818-1891). The result was *Kyōgaku Taishi* (*The Great Principles of Education*), which warned that the emulation of Western ways would lead to the loss of 'the great principles governing the relations between ruler and subject, and father and son'.[23] Motoda's variety of conservatism would dominate education in Japan until the Second World War. In 1881, Article One of the *Memorandum for Elementary School Teachers* stipulated that 'teachers must particularly stress moral education to their pupils'. It continued: 'Loyalty to the Imperial House, love of country, filial piety toward parents, respect for superiors, faith in friends, charity towards inferiors, and respect for oneself constitute the Great Path of human morality. The teacher must himself be a model of these virtues in his daily life, and must endeavour to stimulate his pupils along the path of virtue'.[24]

In 1885, Mori Arinori was appointed Minister for Education. Having observed how Western governments disciplined the minds of their subjects through disciplining the body, Mori incorporated aspects of military training and a military-style uniform into the middle schools and teacher-training schools.[25] Students became accountable

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20 Irokawa, *The Culture of the Meiji Period*, p. 43.
21 Foucault, *op. cit.*, p. 191.
22 Kido, *op. cit.*, p. 118n.
23 Cited in Passin, *op. cit.*, p. 227.
24 *Ibid.*, p. 84.
25 Mori visited England on a mission in 1879. He wrote that 'military training must be carried on for the sake of physical development… But I want to make it clear that it is in no sense for the sake of military training itself', indicating that he saw the worth of such training beyond its value to the military. Cited in Passin, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-89.

for each other's behaviour - they were expected to show respect to their seniors and 'discipline' their juniors for any infraction of protocol. This emphasis on military-style discipline was adopted by elementary schools in the 1890s. [26]

The various accounts, policies, and proclamations of the early Meiji officials present a somewhat ambivalent view of children. On one hand, children were the embodiment of Japan's hopes for the new era, on the other, a source of danger that could only be subdued through a rigorous regime of surveillance, indoctrination, drills and endless recitations. The following section will examine how these views were expressed in prints that were published by the Ministry of Education.

The Monbushō prints

Background and mechanisms

From 1873, the newly formed Ministry of Education commissioned and issued colourful woodblock printed board games, toys and educational illustrations of ethical and historical subjects. The prints came with the promise: 'As an aid to the education of the young child (*yōdō*) 幼童) within the home… use these pictures as a toy when the child is sitting or lying down. And when the child reaches the age to enter elementary school, the effect will be no small matter'.[27] Variously known as 'the full-colour prints of education (*kyōiku nishikie*)', 'pictures for children and home teaching (*yōdō katei kyōikuyō kaiga*)', or 'the full-colour prints issued by the Ministry of Education (*Monbushō nishikie*)', extant sheets bearing the Ministry's seal and comprising 104 different designs are dispersed among public and private collections. The largest collection of extant prints belongs to the University of Tsukuba, Ibaraki Prefecture, Japan.[28] The *Records of the Ministry of Education* (*Monbushō shuppan shomoku*, 1884, two volumes) cite the prices for eighty sheets of *nishikie* prints in 1874 at 26 *sen* and six *ri*; however, it is unclear whether this value refers to a wholesale or retail purchase or sales price. The 95 prints held by the University of Tsukuba were assembled by Miyaki Yūitsu (1868–1953), a priest and collector of Meiji educational material. There is no information about the size of the editions of these prints, but evidently, they must have been large enough such that many prints survived their intended use, involving small children, to be collected several decades after their production.

26 Hane, *Peasants, Rebels and Outcasts: The Underside of Modern Japan*, pp. 57-58. This account evidently relates to a time after the introduction of the Imperial Rescript on Education of 1890.

27 Cited in Nagata, *Ehonkan omochakan no hensen*, pp. 31-32. I have used Mark Jones' translation from Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-230.

28 Okano, 'A study of the full-colour prints issued by the Ministry of Education in Meiji Era Japan', pp. 1-17; Okano, 'Monbushō hakkō nishikie no kenkyū', pp. 3-17. See also Furuya, 'Meiji shoki ni okeru shikaku kyōiku media seisaku no shisōteki haikei ni kansuru kōsatsu', pp. 312-321 and Furuya, 'Meiji shoki no shikaku kyōiku media ni kansuru kōsatsu', pp. 73-82.

Analysis of the prints has suggested that they are the work of six different artists, including Utagawa Kuniteru II (1830-1874), a pupil of Utagawa Kunisada (Utagawa Toyokuni III, 1786-1865). The other artists remain anonymous, although Okano Motoko suggested that they were probably other pupils of Kunisada.[29] Many high-profile *ukiyoe* artists of the Edo period, including Kunisada, Toyohara Kunichika (1835–1900), Urakusai Nagahide (active 1805-1848), and Utagawa Hiroshige I (1797-1858), designed prints for children.[30] The Meiji administration's use of popular culture as a medium for promoting civil morality was not restricted to *ukiyo*; kabuki, *gesaku* fiction (light, popular fiction) and geisha were similarly recruited for civil service.[31] Some of the types of objects issued by the Ministry were adaptations of pre-existing objects, such as board games, that were produced by commercial publishing houses in the Edo period. In other cases, they were new resources such as large-format educational wall charts that were necessary for the relatively new phenomenon of teaching groups of children *en masse*.[32] The images to be examined in the following section are the moral precepts prints (*kyōkun dōtoku*, of which eleven designs are known) from 1873, and the *Young children's exercise instruction chart* (*Yōdō etoki undō yōjō ronsetsu*, 1873). Each print is of *ōban* size (approximately 36 × 24 centimetres) and bears a seal reading 'Ministry of Education bookbindery publication mark' (Monbushō seihonsho hakkōki). In addition to these, a commercially published print titled *Gakkō gigei sugoroku* (an educational board game akin to snakes and ladders, 1887), its subject matter suggesting that the general public had begun to associate the child with new forms of discipline and national subjecthood, will be analysed.[33] The *sugoroku* board, composed of six *ōban* prints, was designed by Inoue Yasuji (1864-1889) and published by Matsuno Yonejirō (dates unknown). No price is available for this item. A *sugoroku* board, *Shin kyōgen Atari sugoroku*, by Toyohara Kunichika (1835-1900) and published by Asano Eizō in the collections of Waseda University, Tokyo and the National Library of Australia, Canberra bears a price of 30 *sen* on the lower right-hand corner. Kunichika was the foremost print designer of the 1880s, so it is likely that Yasuji's *sugoroku* board had a lower price than this.[34]

While the images contain unmistakeable signs of modernity, such as Western dress and architecture, the conservative medium and familiar Utagawa style lend a sense of continuity with the past. The new obligations of children and their parents to the state represented in the *dōtoku* prints are represented alongside older Confucian virtues

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29   Okano, 'A study of the full-colour prints issued by the Ministry of Education in Meiji Era Japan', p. 12.

30   On *omocha-e*, or 'printed toys', see Iizawa, *Omocha-e*; Herring, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73; Newland *et al.* (eds.), *The Hotei Encyclopedia of Japanese Woodblock Prints*, pp. 231, 247, 307; Tsukuba daigaku fuzoku toshokan, *Meiji no ibuki*.

31   In August 1872, the Ministry of Education stipulated that kabuki theatre must not portray emperors or embarrass them, moral righteousness was to be the theatre's top priority, and as actors were no longer considered outcasts, they must be exemplars of morality in keeping with their status. Takahashi, 'Kabuki Goes Official: The 1878 Opening of the Shintomi-za', p. 140.

32   Such materials were unnecessary in *terakoya*, where teachers taught individual students in turn. Tsukuba daigaku fuzoku toshokan, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

33   Nagata, *op. cit.*, p. 32; Furuya, 'Meiji shoki no shikaku kyōiku media ni kansuru kōsatu', p. 77.

34   Marks, *Japanese Woodblock Prints*, p. 160.

such as respect for elders, which perhaps ameliorated the novelty of the prints' message of national subjecthood and facilitated the naturalisation of the Monbushō's notion of childhood.[35] Unlike pedagogical prints of the Edo period, which were typically of lively design with text filling much of the space around the images, the Ministry's ethics images adhere to a more restrained aesthetic, in keeping with the rational spirit of the period. Images are clear and text is usually limited to the pictures' titles, reflecting possible Western sources, intended use and audience.[36] The sparseness of the text, while possibly reflecting varying levels of literacy within the target audience, was perhaps intended to encourage a discussion between parent and child of the behaviour presented in each image, and thus achieve a deeper level of moral internalisation than would have been possible from having parents simply recite a given narrative. By leaving interpretation and instruction to the parent, the prints enlisted the influence and privileged access of parents to their children, as well as giving them a sense of involvement at a time when children's education was increasingly under the control of civil servants.

The intended use of these images within the domestic sphere exemplifies the infiltration of official power into the intimate places of an individual's life by which Foucault characterised modern systems of power. Evidently, it was not enough for the state to assert control over children in the public space of the classroom. Recalling Judith Butler's thesis that 'gender is not an inner core of static essence, but a reiterated enactment of norms, ones that produce, retroactively, the appearance of gender as an abiding interior depth', many scholars have argued that modernity, specifically national citizenship, is similarly at least partly constituted through performance.[37] The Monbushō images, as Stephanie Donald and T.E. Woronov have observed of propaganda in communist China, represent the discourse of nation being repeatedly enacted through the daily repertoire of a child's behaviour and movements so as to constitute the child as a national subject.[38]

As Donald wrote of Chinese didactic posters, the Ministry's prints call children's bodies into service as intermediary figures that influence rather than order, softening the delivery of the uncompromising moral message to parents and to the adults children would become, thus promising greater infiltration of authority.[39] As a subject of praise or disapproval, the child is a non-confrontational third party, deployed to appeal to

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35   The prints combined virtues endorsed by Confucianism with new values such as co-educational schooling and position based on merit. See Tsurumi, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-261, for a discussion of the 'old' and 'new' values endorsed by Meiji elementary school ethics textbooks. See also Tanaka, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-44.

36   Utagawa school artists frequently referred to Western illustrated newspapers and magazines. Meech-Pekarik, *The World of the Meiji Print*, pp. 18-19. Other series of prints published by the Monbushō were adapted from Western originals such as *Chambers Information for the People*. Okano, 'A study of the full-colour prints issued by the Ministry of Education in Meiji Era Japan', p. 10.

37   Butler, 'Further Reflections of Conversations of our Time', p. 14; Schein, 'Performing Modernity', pp. 361-395; Schein, *Minority Rules: the Miao and the Feminine in China's Cultural Politics*, pp. 254-279.

38   Donald, 'Children as Political Messengers: Art, Childhood, and Continuity'; Woronov, 'Performing the Nation: China's Little Red Pioneers', p. 655.

39   Donald, *op. cit.*, pp. 75, 84-86.

and thus more effectively engage the adult viewer, instructing and normalising the performance of both membership to the national polity and childhood to adult and child viewers alike. Like the Chinese children of Donald's study, Japanese children were invested with meaning, yet had very little power to exercise at will.

Representations of children as national subjects

During the Edo period, *ukiyoe* prints distributed by commercial publishers represented children as examples of the social ranks, livelihoods and cultural groups to which they belonged. In the images of Suzuki Harunobu (1724-1770), Kitagawa Utamaro (1753-1806) and Chōbunsai Eishi (1756-1829), children can be clearly identified as the precious sons and daughters of affluent *chōnin* (townsmen, or members of the merchant class), courtesans in training (*kamuro* and slightly older *shinzō*) or young male prostitutes, known as *kagema*. Education during the Edo period aimed to socialise children into situations to which they were born.[40] One of the main objectives of nationalism, however, was to reorient these kinds of loyalties and tendencies to identify oneself and others with a particular social group toward the nation and fellow subjects. The Ministry's publications accordingly represented Japanese children as national subjects committed to the improvement of their minds and bodies for the service of the nation, despite, or perhaps responding to the discouraging reality that only about 30% of children went to school with any regularity during the 1880s.[41] That is not to say that any instance of heterogeneity, such as socio-economic class, is obliterated beneath an uncompromising rhetoric of nationalism. Class is made visible in these images, but only so that it may be subsumed within the new, more compelling discourse of nationalism.

The two little girls leading a blind man out of the path of an oncoming coach in *Kind girls* (*Shinsetsunaru dōjo*, figure 1) are identifiable as middle-class by their elegant kimono and intricately arranged hair, which contrast with the man's shabbier dress. On the other hand, the simple interior inhabited by the *Industrious family* (*Shusseisuru kanai*, figure 2) suggests more modest circumstances. The girl in figure 1 with her back to the viewer holds a brush and a wad of paper, suggesting that she and her companion are on their way to school; economic privilege has not made them too arrogant to care for or show respect to their elders, nor too superior to shun their duty to their nation to improve their minds. The children in the second image are not too humble to commit themselves to academic learning. Against these socio-economic differences, an alternative system of identification is implied, an 'imagined community' to which membership is determined not by class or profession but by merit.

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40 Tanaka, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
41 Hane, *op. cit.*, (1982), p. 51.

The busily weaving mother of the *Industrious family* oversees her son's writing task, anticipating the 'good wife and wise mother' (*ryōsai kenbo*) that authorities would soon promote. Apparently coined by Nakamura Masanao (1831-1891) in 1875, this phrase became the catchcry of politicians, educators and social reformers seeking to mobilise women through education for nationalistic purposes while setting limits on their spheres of mobility and influence.[42] The girl in the foreground of figure 2 emulates her mother's example, simultaneously taking responsibility for the youngest child, tending to the family's meals and reading a book. *Studying family* (*Benkyōsuru kanai*, figure 3) depicts a similar scene of female multitasking. The girls' exemplary behaviour in the above images pre-empts the views expressed by the Meiji Empress in her opening address to the Peeresses' School (*Kazoku joshi gakkō*), that:

> …upon women, whose destiny it is to become mothers of men, evolves the natural obligation of guiding, assisting, and giving culture to their offspring…Young ladies entering the institution should endeavour to attain proficiency in various subjects of study, and be thus enabled to discharge their duties.[43]

This model of girlhood differs with that set forth by neo-Confucian scholars of the Edo period, who framed a girl's moral duties mainly in terms of her status as a future or actual daughter-in-law and wife rather than as a mother.[44] Until the late Meiji period, girls were almost always represented as older siblings and only rarely appeared as young children or babies, perhaps because girls were valued for domestic work and as babysitters of their younger brothers. According to Ariès, modern childhood was granted to girls later than to boys, and indeed, in Meiji literature such as Higuchi Ichiyō's *Takekurabe* (1895-6), the novel's heroine passes from childhood into adolescence before her male playmates, while girls' school attendance lagged behind that of boys.[45] Other researchers have suggested that because maleness is regarded as the "default" gender, femaleness represents a step away from the natural (male) state of childhood.[46] The representation of girls as slightly older children is consistent with this idea that gender is a role that individuals learn to perform, despite the empress's view of motherhood as the 'natural' fate of female children.

While these diligent, morally upright figures are held up as models of a new age of progress and enlightenment, those who do not conform to this vision seem to

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42   In his speech, *Creating Good Mothers* (1875), he urged, '…we must inevitably have fine mothers if we want effectively to advance the people to the area of enlightenment and to alter their customs and conditions for the good. If the mothers are superb, they can have superb children, and Japan can become a splendid country in later generations'. Cited in Braisted, *Meiroku Zasshi: Journal of the Japanese Enlightenment*, pp. 401-402. See also Mackie, *Creating Socialist Women in Japan: Gender, Labour and Activism*, 1900-1937, pp. 39-41 and Uno, *Passages to Modernity: Motherhood, Childhood and Social Reform in Early Twentieth Century Japan*, pp. 44-45.

43   Cited in Meech-Pekarik, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-119.

44   Uno, *op. cit.*, p. 31. On the significant role assigned to fathers, see Ōta, *Edo no oyako: chihioya ga kodomo o sodateta jidai.*

45   Ariès, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

46   Jones, 'Tomboy Tales: the rural, nature and the gender of childhood', p. 118.

be throwbacks of the former regime. The romping boys in *Studying boy* (*Benkyōsuru warabe otoko*, figure 4) recall scenes of *karako asobi* ('Chinese children at play'), which were a popular theme of prints in the Edo period. *Karako*, meaning 'Chinese child' or 'Tang boy', refers to the 'Chinese style' in which the child's hair was shaved, the exotic clothing in which they were sometimes dressed, and decorative potential as a motif in visual culture, as can be seen in Okumura Masanobu's (1686–1764) *Boys Masquerading as Chinese* (figure 5, 1748).[47] The *karako* is derived from the Chinese *tangzi,* the Sino reading of the same characters. *Tangzi* were auspicious symbols of prosperity and family status that appeared on various artistic and domestic objects such as scrolls and ceramics.[48] Although the prefix *kara* referred to the Tang dynasty, it could equally apply to things of imagined Korean or generic foreign origin.[49]

Masanobu's print depicts four boys re-enacting what is probably a Korean embassy rather than something related to the Chinese, given the shape of the boys' hats and the popularity of the subject for woodblock prints. Here, the *karako* provides a metaphor for the otherworldliness of children.[50] Representing the child as the ethnic other, in particular associating the child's image with the festive and carnivalesque atmosphere of the Korean embassies, expresses the liminal position of young children in relation to the daily life in early modern Japan. Masanobu's image alludes to Shinto ceremonies in which a young child was chosen to be a spiritual medium known as the '*hitotsu mono*' ('the one'), dressed in white and carried on the shoulders of festival participants or led about on a horse, an event that appears in medieval picture scrolls such as the *Urashima Myōjin Enki*.[51] Ordinarily, commoners were prohibited from riding on horseback; this event thus involved an inversion of usual order characteristic of the carnival. Johan Huizinga saw religious rites to be closely related to children's games. Both involve 'actualisation by representation,' that is, participants *become* rather than simply mimic their roles, ascending from their daily lives into a sublime realm of existence.[52] According to the ethnologist and folklorist Yanagita Kunio, forgotten spiritual rites (of which festivals are an example) were preserved in children's games; for example, '*kagome-kagome*' is thought to have come from a shamanistic ceremony used to summon the gods through a child medium.[53]

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47 According to Kuroda, although images of *tangzi* would have reached Japan well before the Edo period, there are no images of *karako* in Japanese visual record prior to then. Kuroda 'Karako ron', p. 85. From the seventeenth century, *netsuke*, dolls and puppets in the form of *karako* appeared, while *karako odori* (*karako* dance) was one of many forms in which foreign (particularly Korean) embassies were re-enacted for many years after their arrival in Japan. Prior to the Edo period, children were typically represented naked, wrapped in cloth or wearing kimono-like garments that fastened with a tie rather than an *obi*. *Karakogami* meant a tuft at the centre of the forehead, at the nape of the neck and one above each ear. Shaving children's heads was thought to ward off heat rash. See Bolitho, *op. cit.*, p. 42 and Kumon Kodomo Kenkyūsho, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

48 Barrott Wicks and Avril, 'Introduction: Children in Chinese Art', pp. 7-8.

49 Toby, 'Carnival of the Aliens: Korean Embassies in Edo-Period Art and Popular Culture', pp. 415-456.

50 Emissaries from the Korean court made twelve visits to Japan over the Edo period. See *Ibid.*, pp. 415-456.

51 Kuroda, *Emaki kodomo no tōjō: chūsei shakai no kodomozō*, p. 27.

52 Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: a study of the play-element in culture*, p. 14.

53 Yanagita 'Kodomo fudoki', p. 23; Tanahashi and Murata (eds.), *E de yomu Edo no kurashi fūzoku daijiten*, p. 228; Iijima, *op. cit.*, p. S45.

Without a ground-line to anchor them, background figures or details to situate them within a tangible context, Masanobu's *karako* float suspended in imaginary space evoking the 'temporarily real world' common to sacred performance and children's play. Their movement separates them from linear time; the two boys on the right appear to be moving backwards, but they face the left and the parasol bearer is typically positioned to the rear of a procession. While conveying the confusion of a child-managed event, this movement further closes off the scene from the adult world of linearity, and exemplifies Honda Masuko's view of the double perception of the child at play, incessantly shifting between reality and unreality, day and night, consciousness and unconsciousness, positive and negative.[54]

Through masquerade, the boys 'mak[e] an image of something different, something more beautiful or more sublime, or more dangerous than what [they] usually [are],'[55] a state that also evokes the playful fantasy of the floating world to which this image belongs. Like *putti*, the winged infants found in visual culture of the early Renaissance, these children were not intended or perceived to be 'real', but this very fact allowed artists to express aspects of real children's lives and the way they were socially contextualised.[56] Although scholars like Kathleen Uno and Ujiie Mikito have shown that children could be socially marginalised in early modern Japan, representations of children as *karako,* associated with play and with festivals, convey the otherness of childhood as a benign, even positive quality.[57]

The *karako* thus embodied the otherness of children, the alternate reality that their active imaginations allowed them to occupy, and brought a festive otherness to the images of the pleasure-seeking floating world. This view of childhood as a liminal and non-productive time of life, however, was incommensurable with the Ministry's vision of modern Japan.[58] The man's hat and cane in place of double swords in figure 4 announce a new reality in which bullying *bushi* were as unwelcome as idle children. Where children's play is shown to have positive value such as in the *Young children's exercise instruction chart* (*Yōdō etoki undō yōjō ronsetsu*, figure 6), it is rationalised on the basis of the subjects' education and duty to maintain good health. Considering the role of play in enabling children to cognitively assimilate the adult world, turning play into training represents a significant attempt to sequester the previously inconsequential experiences and imaginative life of children in order to re-imagine them as productive and useful citizens of the new regime.[59]

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54   Honda, *Kodomotachi no iru uchū*, pp. 11-14.

55   Huizinga, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

56   According to Ariès, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries *putti* were mythological and decorative motifs, but not intended as representations of real children. In the seventeenth century, their 'ornamental nudity' spread to child portraiture. Ariès, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-3.

57   Ujiie, *Edo no shōnen*; Uno, *op. cit.*

58   Kuroda, *op. cit.*, (1994 b), pp. 76-99.

59   Takeuchi, *op. cit.*, p. 56; Donald, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

The smallest child in figure 4, head studiously bowed over his calligraphy practice while manning his family's *senbei* stall, appears as a quiet hero of modernity, rising in the world by virtue of his own hard work. Nakamura Masanao's *Saikoku Risshi Hen* (*Western Countries' Success Stories*, 1870), adapted from Samuel Smiles's *Self Help* (1859), introduced the notion of *risshin shusse* (self-advancement) to Meiji Japan and was one of the most influential publications of the period.[60] The image, like Nakamura's book, urges that the little autodidact of humble origins is not restricted by his birth, but rather is a future engineer, industrialist or statesman. Furthermore, in honouring both his family's need for him to contribute to their livelihood and his emperor's call for him to take his place as an educated and hardworking subject, the boy offers the administration's answer to parents' complaints that state education was taking valuable workers away from family farms and businesses.[61] The image distances childhood from the culture of play that *ukiyoe* artists such as Utamaro and Kiyonaga associated it with in favour of a code of rationalism, in which the actions of even small, working class children, had social and political significance.

Unfortunately, the ministry's prints had little of meaning to say about the vast population of children working outside family context including sex workers, factory workers and *komori*. *Komori*, a frequent sight in photographs from the early Meiji period, were typically lower class girls employed to carry their charges tied to their backs. They began work around the age of nine years, although some began much younger. They did not receive wages, but were paid in kind; usually in board, meals and the occasional gift, and were often mistreated by their employers and poorly fed.[62] Evidently, some children were more difficult than others to assimilate to the state's notion of a childhood of diligent students and productive subjects. The well-groomed girl with a baby tied to her back in *Diligent family* somewhat filters out the grimness of many girls' experiences.

Representations of children and disciplinary power

The images discussed so far represent children as the locus of progress and the vanguard of modern Japan. As Ariès and Foucault would argue, central to a modern idea of childhood is its discursive existence; indeed, public education thrust children from relative epistemological obscurity under the scrutiny of adults, who sought to know and control their bodies and minds alike. Foucault explained that one of the ways in which modern disciplinary power controls its subjects is through increasing the visibility of the individual, while becoming relatively more invisible and diffuse itself. The modern

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60   Passin, *op. cit.*, p. 63; Hane, *op. cit.*, (1969), p. 267.

61   Passin, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

62   Tamanoi, 'Songs as Weapons: The Culture and History of *Komori* (Nursemaids) in Modern Japan', pp. 793-817.

subject consequently internalises surveillance and monitors his or her own thoughts and actions.[63] Although the display of institutional power was indispensable to the Meiji administration's ability to inspire obedience in the populace, the treatment of children within the Ministry's prints as objectified subjects to be known and controlled suggests that the disciplinary technology that Western powers exploited were also being employed in Japan.[64] The content of the prints is reproduced in their distribution: not content with the classroom but with ambitions to penetrate the home and family, the prints demonstrate the omnipresence that state authority aspired to.

The children depicted in these images are enmeshed within a matrix of gazes. Adults peer down from open windows and children surreptitiously eye each other. Jeremy Bentham's design for the Panopticon introduced 'a new mode of obtaining power of mind over mind' by not allowing prisoners to know whether or not they were being watched.[65] Similarly, much of the surveillance operating within the *dōtoku* images is undetected by those who are being watched. In some cases, such as in *Industrious family* (figure 2) and *Studying boy* (figure 4), this is because the child is so absorbed in his or her task or misdeed that the observer is unnoticed. In other cases, such as the *Rough boys* (*Sobō no warabe otoko*, figure 7), *Boys mocking an unfortunate person* (*Nanjūmono o anadori-hazukashimuru warabe otoko*, figure 8) and *Cruel boys* (*Zuruasobi o nasu warabe otoko*, figure 9), the observer's vantage point is such that he or she is invisible to the wrongdoers, the implication being that an anonymous pair of eyes might be watching at any time. According to Foucault, '[h]e who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection'.[66]

In the *Quarrelsome boy* (*Sōtō o konomu warabe otoko*, figure 10), discipline is represented as both a display of authority and a more covert presence. A policeman intervenes, a new sight and a concrete representation of the infiltration of authority within the population in Meiji Japan. The window, revealing an interior containing the child's neglected homework and a blazing (Western-style) lamp, suggests the internalisation of discipline as knowledge and alludes to the Meiji-period slogan 'civilisation and enlightenment' (*bunmei kaika*).[67] The illustrator distinguishes the internal, subjective elements of the child from external, objective properties, deploying

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63 Foucault, *op. cit.*, pp. 202-203.
64 See Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan*.
65 Bentham, 'Panopticon (Preface)', pp. 29-95.
66 Foucault, *op. cit.*, pp. 202-203.
67 For Natsume Sōseki, 'illumination' was the soul of the Meiji period. Meech-Pekarik, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

the reproachful eye of the lamp to suggest self-discipline through guilt and shame, as well as discipline though force, symbolised by the policeman's stick.

Another means by which modern systems of power sought to exercise control over individuals was through drills and physical training. Training, which Foucault defined as the art of arranging bodies in space and time, is the means by which disciplinary power 'manifests its potency, essentially, by arranging objects'.[68] As we saw earlier, pseudo-military drills and other procedures were imposed on school students under the leadership of Mori in the mid-1860s. Images such as the *sugoroku* board (1885, figure 11), created prior to Mori's term of office began, depict children engaged in various training and militaristic exercises, reflecting and normalising this view of a child as an object to be disciplined and made useful to the country. The subject matter of the *sugoroku* board, published by a commercial publisher, indicates that the notion of a child as a disciplined national subject of discipline had begun to infiltrate the populace and be spontaneously cited within the private sphere.

The board is divided into eleven boxes under the heading 'school accomplishments' (*gakkō gigei*). Ten of the boxes illustrate different scenes, corresponding to the subheadings 'Dressmaking', 'Tug-of-war', 'Parade', 'Snow fight', 'Pleasure park', 'Kindergarten', 'Choir', 'Slide show', 'Exercise' and 'Gymnastics'. The eleventh box, the goal, depicts children receiving books under the benevolent gaze of the emperor and empress who are theatrically framed by the chrysanthemum crest.

Although the 1880s are generally characterised as a period of reaction to what was perceived as excessive Westernisation in the decade before, the *sugoroku* board represents a highly Westernised vision of modern Japan. As in *kaikae*, ('enlightenment prints'), which represented the adaptation of various foreign customs in the 1870s and 80s, all figures are dressed in Western-style apparel and sit on chairs at desks inside Western-style schools, play Western instruments and consume Western learning. The Western elements need not be read as a devaluation of Japanese cultural heritage, but rather as affirming the ability of modern Japanese individuals to adapt to change and assimilate new forms of knowledge.

It is difficult to see how some of these scenes can be characterised as 'school accomplishments', for example, the first box resembles nothing so much as the inside of a fashionable dressmaker's shop. It is as if all conceivable diversions of a child were subsumed under the umbrella of education, again, representing an attempt by the

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68 Foucault, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

Ministry to rationalise children's experiences so as to create bodies that were useful to the state. Indeed, '*sugoroku*', customarily written with Chinese characters meaning simply 'double six', has been written using characters that individually mean 'long life', 'language' and 'benefit', thus reframing the game within the context of education. The child, no matter where he or she is or what he or she is doing, is always a student and therefore contained within the institutional framework of the state.

Other scenes appear to be play, but on closer inspection, reveal themselves to be training. The snow fight (*Yuki nage*) in the bottom left-hand corner of the board appears at first to be spontaneously erupting children's chaos; however, the children are organised into two teams, each defending its own flag. Behind them looms a Western-style schoolhouse, its impassive windowpanes gazing down at them. The parade scene (above the snow fight), in which little boys march under the Rising Sun wearing military garb and formidable countenances, is brazenly militaristic. One child plays a trumpet; another beats a drum. Two boys in sailor suits watch on from their boat, although it is unclear whether they are spectators or surveillants. Although it was not required for elementary school students, even the smallest boys in the kindergarten scene (bottom centre) wear uniforms modelled on army livery.[69] The presence of adults in some of the scenes links the lives and activities of children with the lives and activities of teachers and officials and contains them within the larger category of pious acts of service to the emperor and the state.

In the scene entitled 'Gymnastics' (*Taisō*, lower right), the children stand to attention in neat rows with matching red caps, but despite the homogeneity, the artist has individualised each child, suggesting the extent of the drillmaster's ability to monitor them. We are reminded of Foucault's comments on the bell curve, that 'the power of normalization imposes homogeneity; but it individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialties and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another'.[70] No girls participate in the snow fight or the drill, perhaps reflecting popular attitudes that saw guardians' groups withdraw girls from Kyoto schools in 1881 in protest over gymnastics classes, which they regarded as 'obscene' (*waisetsu*). The offending classes were consequently cancelled.[71]

The children are not the only figures under scrutiny. Behind the drillmaster in the foreground of the gymnastics scene, another teacher watches on, who is in turn framed by the schoolhouse, the opaque windows of which conceal untold omniscience.

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69   Hane, *op. cit.*, (1982), p. 57.
70   Foucault, *op. cit.*, p. 184.
71   Shimokawa (ed.), *Kindai kodomoshi nenpyō* vol. 1, p. 103.

Despite early recommendations that teachers retain some autonomy in relation to the government, ordinances promulgated in 1880 insisted that teachers were public officers and official guardians of morality, roles that were reinforced by Motoda's *Memorandum* in 1881, as cited earlier.[72] The *sugoroku* board illustrates some principles that have been employed by modern hierarchical institutions, including Bentham's Panopticon and Japan's education system, in which individuals at all levels are subject to intense scrutiny.[73]

The Ministry of Education thus sought to redefine ideas about children that had been inherited from the previous regime. In an age when theoretically, any child of talent could hope to one day lead his countrymen, or alternatively create unrest through adherence to class or regional factions, it was crucial for the government to win over the minds of individual children. Reflecting this reality, the *nishikie* publications conveyed the view that children and what they did and thought were of singular importance to Japan's future as a strong and united country. The emphasis placed on the role of children resulted in a duality of images. On one hand, children are heroic beings, willing defenders of the nation who could be relied on to bring Japan power and glory. On the other, they are targets of relentless surveillance and rigorous discipline, suggesting an anxiety about what they might do should the government fail in its task to thoroughly indoctrinate them.

The ideas of children and childhood promoted by the Ministry do not necessarily reflect the views of the population at large. As E.J. Hobsbawm wrote, 'official ideologies of states and movements are not guides to what it is in the minds of even the most loyal subjects or supporters'.[74] Indeed, lagging attendance rates and sporadic acts of rebellion among the populace indicate that many did not share the government's view. For some, state schools were suspiciously linked to military conscription, destabilised 'traditional' society and drained rural areas of their best young minds.[75] Yet the events of the twentieth century suggest that the official ideologies with which successive cohorts of schoolchildren were inculcated had a profound influence on Japanese society.

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72 Passin, *op. cit.*, pp. 72 and 85.
73 Jansen and Rozman, 'Overview', p. 24.
74 Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: programme, myth, reality*, p. 11.
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Figure 1 – *Kind girls*
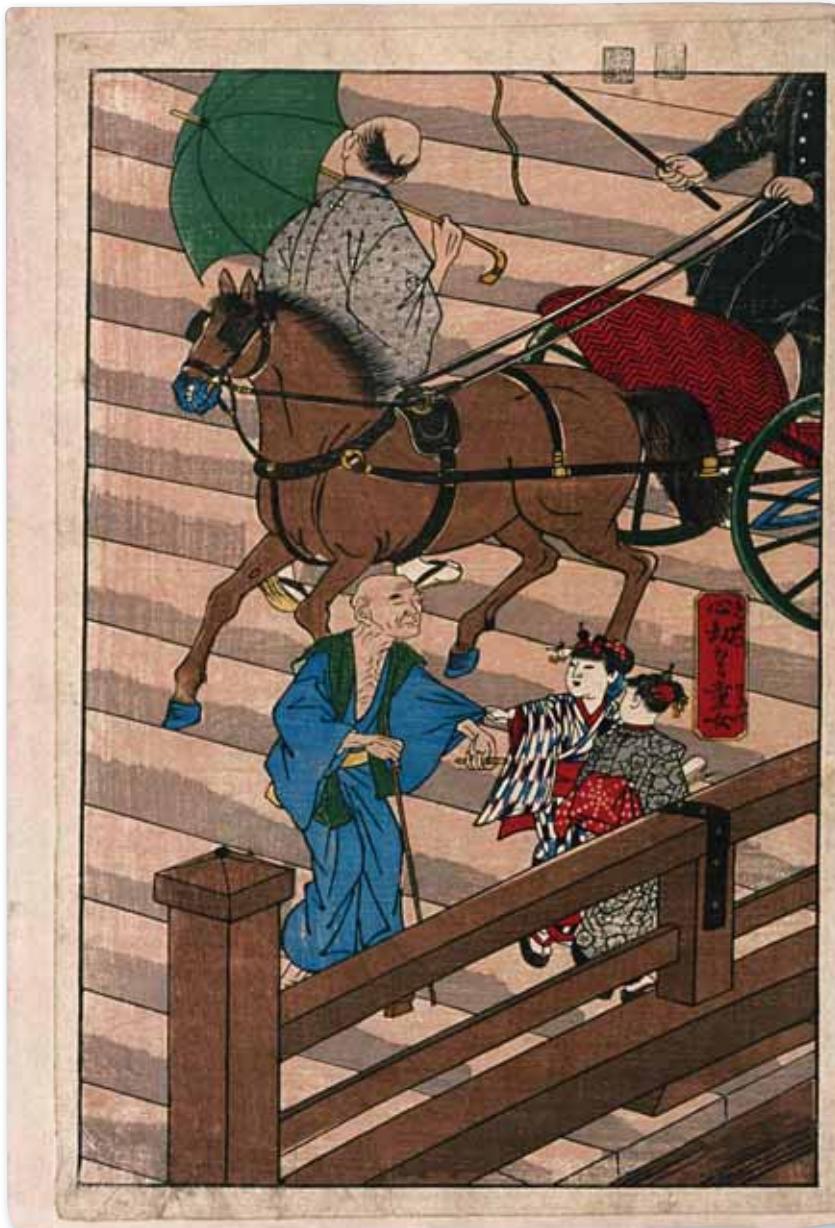
© Utagawa Kuniteru II (1830-1874), *Kind girls*, 1873, woodblock print; ōban with colours, 38 × 26 cm, Miyaki Yūitsu collection, 10088015236, Tsukuba University Library.

Figure 2 – *Industrious family*
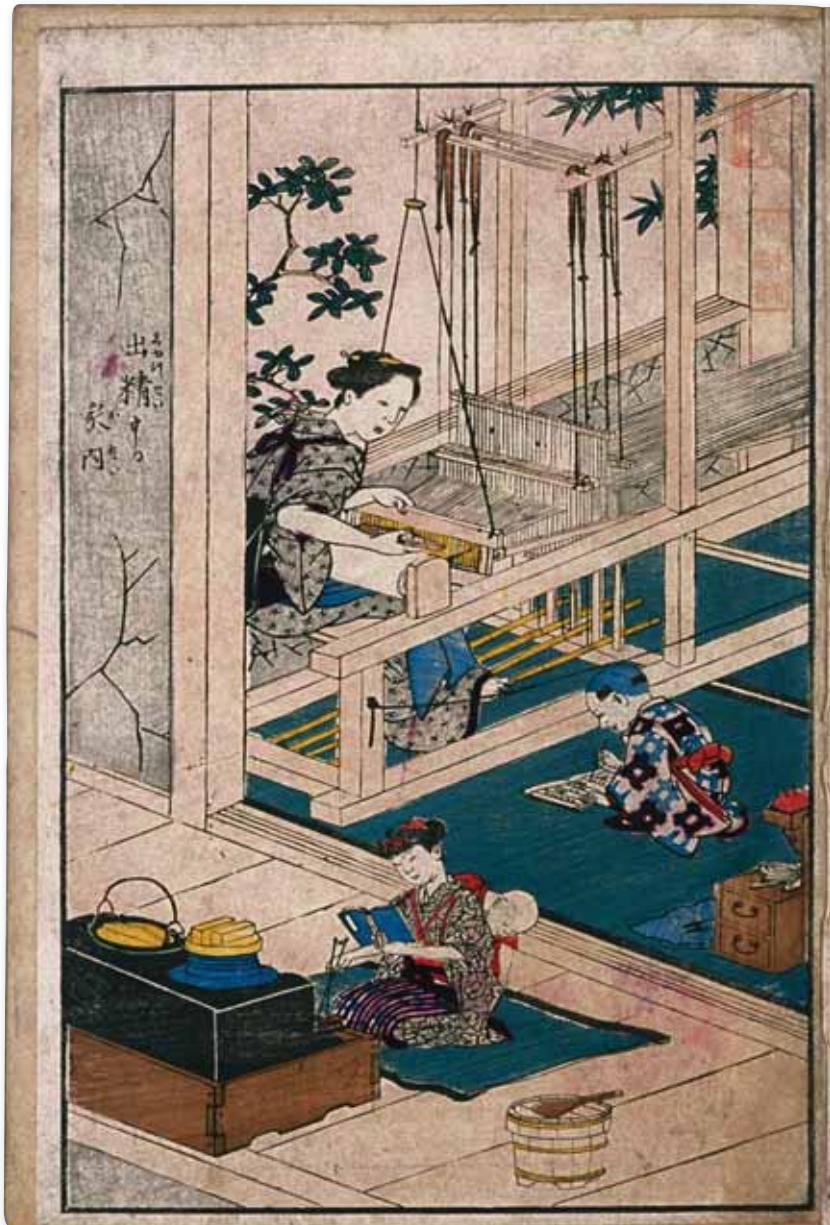
© Utagawa Kuniteru II (1830-1874), *Industrious family*, 1873, woodblock print; ōban with colours, 38 × 26 cm, Miyaki Yūitsu collection, 10088015217, Tsukuba University Library.

Figure 3 – *Studying family*

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Figure 4 – *Studying boy*

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Figure 5 – *Boys Masquerading as Chinese*

© Okumura Masanobu (1686-1764), *Boys Masquerading as Chinese*, c. 1748, woodblock print; ōban benizurie with embossing, 41.0 x 30.2 cm, Clarence Buckingham collection, 1925.1842, The Art Institute of Chicago.

Figure 6 – *Young children's exercise instruction chart*

© Utagawa Kuniteru II (1830-1874), *Young children's exercise instruction* chart, 1873, woodblock print; ōban with colours, 38 × 26 cm, Miyaki Yūitsu collection, 10088015217, Tsukuba University Library.

Figure 7 – *Rough boys*

© Utagawa Kuniteru II (1830-1874), *Rough boys*, 1873, woodblock print; ōban with colours, 38 × 26 cm, Miyaki Yūitsu collection, 10088015236, Tsukuba University Library.

Figure 8 – *Boys mocking an unfortunate person*
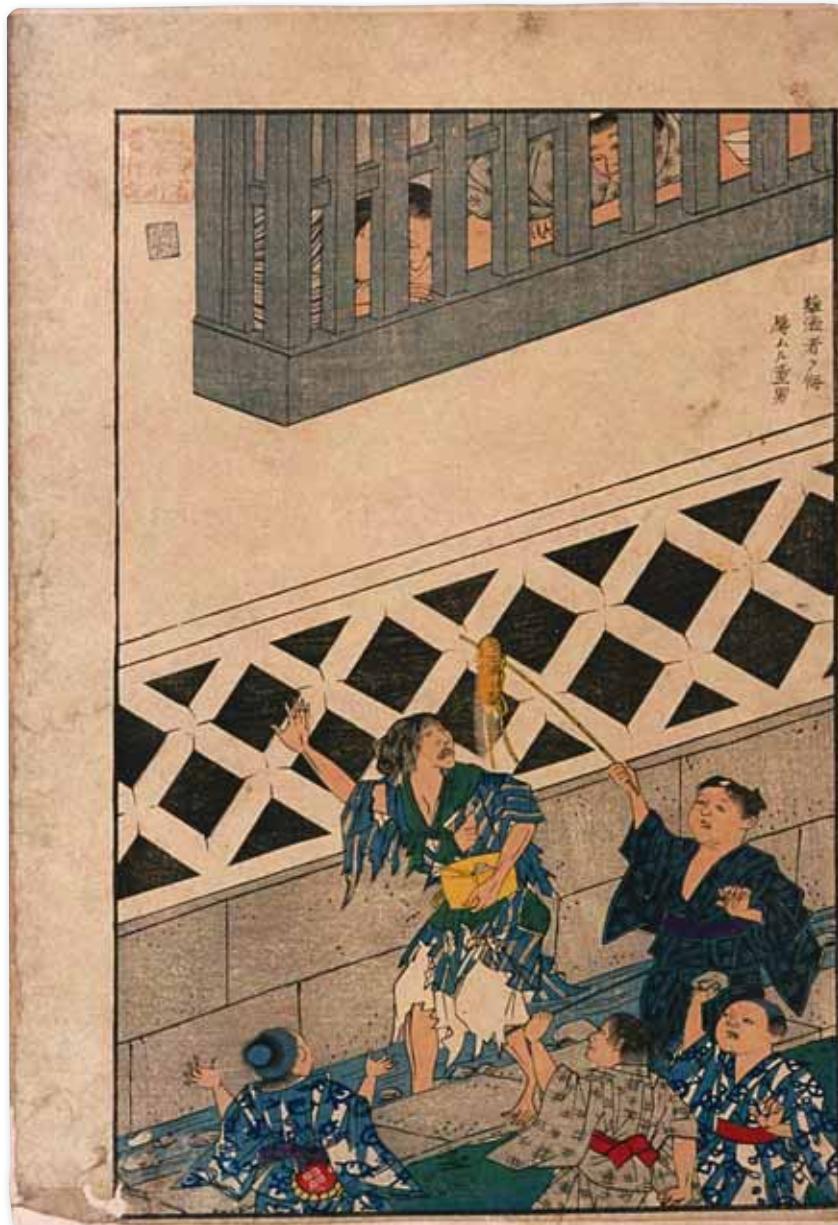
© Utagawa Kuniteru II (1830-1874), *Boys mocking an unfortunate person*, 1873, woodblock print; ōban with colours, 38 × 26 cm, Miyaki Yūitsu collection, 10088015236, Tsukuba University Library.

Figure 9 – *Cruel boys*

狡戯をなす童男

© Utagawa Kuniteru II (1830-1874), *Cruel boys*, 1873, woodblock print; ōban with colours, 38 × 26 cm, Miyaki Yūitsu collection, 10088015236, Tsukuba University Library.

Figure 10 – *Quarrelsome boy*

© Utagawa Kuniteru II (1830-1874), *Quarrelsome boy*, 1873, woodblock print; ōban with colours, 38 × 26 cm, Miyaki Yūitsu collection, 10088015236, Tsukuba University Library.

Figure 11 – *School Accomplishments sugoroku board*

© Inoue Yasuji (1864-1889), *School Accomplishments sugoroku board*, 1885, six ōban sheets, approximately 75 × 78 cm, Miyaki Yūitsu collection, 10088015215, Tsukuba University Library.

The *gaijin* at home: A study of the use of the word *gaijin* by the Japanese speech community in Sydney, Australia

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Abstract

The word *gaijin*, typically glossed as 'foreigner', has been the focus of academic interest spanning across several disciplines, ranging from studies in intercultural communication, discourse analysis, and discriminatory language. These studies have perhaps logically been confined to the context of Japan, as it makes sense to study 'foreigners' in a context in which they are indeed 'foreign'. It may be by an extension of this logic that the use of the word *gaijin* has not been studied in contexts outside of Japan at all.

This study made use of a novel methodology of focus groups and follow-up interviews to capture the use of the word *gaijin* by members of the Japanese speech community in Sydney, to ascertain empirically how members of the community use the word *gaijin*, and in what contexts such usage occurs. The article identifies the interpretations of the word of native and non-native speakers of Japanese, and discovers two models of the use of the word *gaijin*.

Keywords

Introduction

It is characteristic of communities to define themselves by stating what it is that they are not, and this is no less true in the case of some Japanese communities. The word *gaijin* (外人), typically glossed as 'foreigner', or 'outsider', is an example of this characteristic. Outside Japan, the word has become well known as a result of the boom in '*gaijin* businessmen'[1] during the 1980s and 1990s, and popular literary sources such as Clavell's novel *Gai-Jin*.[2] Within Japan, any long-term visitor is likely to become familiar with the word on a much more personal level.

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1   The term *gaijin* was commonly used in English sources in reference to foreign workers and companies in Japan in the 1980s and 1990s, see for example Huddleston, *Gaijin Kaisha*.
2   Clavell, *Gai-Jin*.

While in general use the word *gaijin* is translated in English as 'foreigner', the meaning of its composite characters gives it the literal meaning of 'outside-person', or 'outsider'. Its composition can be compared with the word *gaikoku-jin* (外国人) 'foreign-person', whose composite characters mean 'outside-country-person'. Both words are in common use in Japan, however it is the latter that is used in official documents and speeches. There is a growing debate in Japanese society over the legitimacy of the use of the former, *gaijin*, amongst a gradual removal of discriminatory language from the media and official sources.[3] This has occurred in response to a movement against discriminatory language driven by minority groups such as the indigenous Ainu population, the *burakumin*, and ethnic Korean Japanese.[4]

Although aversion to the use of the word *gaijin* is not universal, it is significant. An early online survey of foreigners residing in Japan in 1996 found that 40% of respondents considered the word to be discriminatory or racist, with the remaining 60% either unsure or not bothered by the word.[5] While studies of the word have commendably referenced aversion to its use and its occurrence in the public sphere, no empirical studies have been undertaken to establish the social function of the word, or indeed, the underlying attitudes towards its use by Japanese speakers. Regardless of whether the word is considered discriminatory by the speaker or the referent, the word *gaijin* is a clear expression of difference with complex and varying interpretations attached.

Less clear, is our understanding of how such difference is expressed by Japanese communities living outside Japan and the role that language such as the word *gaijin* plays in the expression of identity and community boundaries. In an effort to address this gap, this article will detail the results of a 2009 study on the actual use of the word *gaijin* by the Japanese speech community in Sydney, to determine the characteristics and function of such use.

The study was designed with two purposes. The first was to ascertain how the Japanese speech community in Sydney uses the word *gaijin*. The second was to identify the contexts in which the Japanese speech community use the word *gaijin*. As such, the study made use of five research questions in order to investigate the phenomenon of the use of the word *gaijin* in a foreign setting in the Japanese speech community in Sydney, Australia.

1. Are members of the Japanese speech community in Sydney aware of their usage of the word *gaijin*?

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3 Gottlieb, Linguistic Stereotyping and Minority Groups in Japan, p. 14; Michiura, '*Terebi hōsō yōgo no genzai* (Television Broadcast Language at present)'.
4 *Burakumin*: the descendants of the lower echelons of the Japanese feudal system. Gottlieb, *Language and Society in Japan*.
5 Gottlieb, *Linguistic Stereotyping and Minority Groups in Japan*, p. 97. To the best of the author's knowledge there is no more recent survey of foreign resident attitudes towards the word *gaijin*.

2. a. In what 'key'[6] do members of the Japanese speech community in Sydney use the word *gaijin*?

    b. What functions[7] are being achieved by the use of the word *gaijin*, if any?

3. a. Who in the Japanese speech community uses the word *gaijin*?

    b. Who is being referred to by the use of the word *gaijin*?

4. a. What are the 'scenes and settings'[8] in which the use of the word *gaijin* occurs?

    b. What level of formality is associated with the use of the word *gaijin*?

5. In what ways is the usage of the word *gaijin* interpreted?

To improve our empirical understanding of the word *gaijin* the study made use of Hymes' components of speech as a framework for developing the research questions as these are well established tools for sociolinguistic analysis.[9] However, for the purposes of defining the social function of the word *gaijin*, this article will chiefly draw upon the conclusions of the study in relation to research questions 2b and 5 as these generated the richest and most illuminating data.

The article will first review the literature relating to the word *gaijin*, then detail the research methodology. The article will then identify interpretations of the word and discuss its function by developing two models of the word's use.

Gaijin

While a basic definition of the word *gaijin* was provided above, this section will outline the existing literature regarding the word and the approaches used in its study. In doing so, the study can be located as addressing the general lack of consideration of the use of the word *gaijin* in a context outside of Japan, and as addressing a lack of empirical research pertaining to the word in general. A limitation of the present literature review has been the general paucity of research regarding the word *gaijin*, with a limited number of works dedicated to its study.

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6   Hymes, *Foundations in Sociolinguistics*, p. 57.
7   *Ibid.*, p. 64.
8   *Ibid.*, p. 55.
9   *Ibid.*; Fasold, *The sociolinguistics of language*; Saville-Troike, *The ethnography of communication: an introduction*, pp. 108-11; Figueroa, *Sociolinguistic Metatheory*.

Literature related to the word *gaijin* spans several academic disciplines, ranging from studies in intercultural communication, discourse analysis and discriminatory language. Although these all differ greatly in their approach to the word, works in each of these disciplines have in common an exclusive focus on the use of the word within Japan.

Ishii's[10] study of *gaijin* represents the most substantial consideration of the word in the context of studies of intercultural communication. In tracing the Japanese concept of 'strangers' through folklore as represented by tales of *marebito* and *ijin*, Ishii states that the word *gaijin* refers exclusively to those who are physically different from the Japanese (that is, white or black).[11] This focus on physical difference as a definition of the word *gaijin* is shared by the bulk of the literature, however this is a statement that seems to be taken for granted with little or no empirical evidence.

A very different approach to the study of the word *gaijin* is that taken by Nishizaka, who uses a discourse analysis approach to argue that the identities and interpretations of *gaijin*, and *hen na gaijin*[12] are achieved through interaction. Nishizaka analyses a recording of a radio interview between a Japanese host and an exchange student, in which the host uses the word *gaijin* to assert his own identity as Japanese in a situation where the exchange student displayed an unexpected proficiency in reading *kanji* (Chinese characters).[13] Nishizaka's analysis uncovers another dimension of the word *gaijin* that is not based purely on appearance, but that is rooted in the expression and assertion of identity by the speaker. However, the scope of the study is limited in its analysis of a single discourse, and it is difficult to determine to what extent other factors, such as the physical appearance of the exchange student, may have prompted the use of the word *gaijin*.

The third study of the word *gaijin* is the discriminatory language research approach, featured in the analysis of Gottlieb.[14] She offers a brief discussion of the word *gaijin* in two studies,[15] in which growing discontent towards the use of the word is documented from the 1980s, in particular the activities of human rights campaigners in Japan such as the ISSHO Kikaku group that have highlighted discrimination towards foreigners.[16] Within the discussion of the word *gaijin*, Gottlieb's analysis is congruent with that of Ishii and Nishizaka in regard to the referents of the word and its use.[17]

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10 Ishii, *op. cit.*

11 *Marebito*: 'rare stranger', *Ijin*: Archaic term for a 'foreigner' or for a person from outside one's community. *Ibid.,* p. 151.

12 *hen na gaijin*: 'Strange foreigner' generally refers to a foreigner with a high competency in Japanese and an understanding of Japanese culture; Nishizaka, 'Doing interpreting within interaction', p. 246.

13 *Ibid.,* pp. 241-6.

14 Gottlieb, *Language and Society in Japan*; Gottlieb, *Linguistic Stereotyping and Minority Groups in Japan*.

15 Gottlieb, *Language and Society in Japan*, pp. 117-8; Gottlieb, *Linguistic Stereotyping and Minority Groups in Japan*, pp. 96-7.

16 Gottlieb, *Language and Society in Japan,* p. 117.

17 *Ibid.,* p. 118.

The above studies of the word *gaijin* have perhaps logically been confined to the Japanese context. It makes sense to study foreigners in a place where they are indeed 'foreign'. It may be an extension of this logic that the use of the word *gaijin* has not been objectively studied in contexts outside of Japan at all.

The use of the word *gaijin* to refer to foreigners outside Japan has been documented briefly by Tsuda[18] in a study of *Nikkei* Japanese[19] in Brazil, where it is claimed that the word is used in the Japanese community to refer to those outside of the community. Tsuda's study is not focused on the language use of the community in Brazil, therefore little detail is provided about the circumstances in which the word is used. However, Tsuda's reference to the use of the word outside Japan supports the need to further investigate the language use of Japanese speech communities abroad.

The above brief review of the literature related to the word *gaijin* highlights two main points. First, study regarding the word *gaijin* is limited in comparison to the study of words referring to other minority groups in Japan, and second, that there are several persistent generalisations regarding the referents and use of the word *gaijin*, that are recurrent without sufficient supporting empirical evidence.

Research Methodology

While early sociolinguistic studies focused on an ethnographic approach based on participant observation,[20] in recent research interview data have often formed the basis of analysis.[21] However, this study utilised focus groups and follow up interviews (FUI) as the primary sources of data related to the use of the word *gaijin* in the Japanese speech community. This was due to the breadth of the data that could be gleaned from this methodology, and because of the well known criticisms of co-construction occurring in the more traditional interview methodology.[22] Ethics approval was granted by the university at which the study took place in May 2009.

Sampling

Six native speakers of Japanese (NSJ) and three non-native speakers of Japanese (NNSJ) were chosen from the Japanese speech community in Sydney. NSJ participants were

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18   Tsuda, *Strangers in the ethnic homeland*, p. 372.
19   Second or later generation descendants of Japanese settlers.
20   Figueroa, *Sociolinguistic Metatheory*.
21   Lo, *op. cit.*; Kotani, *op. cit.*
22   See Silverman, 'Analyzing Talk and Text', pp. 343-5; Hammersley, *Questioning Qualitative Inquiry,* pp. 89-98.

chosen to reflect a range of communicative competency with non-members of the Japanese speech community, and divided between three focus groups. NNSJ participants are included in the study in order to consider the use of the word *gaijin* by NNSJ members of the speech community, and to provide a greater breadth of viewpoints to be discussed by participants in the focus groups.

26 NSJ potential participants were asked to complete a questionnaire, providing details on their personal background pertaining to their membership of the Japanese speech community in Sydney and their exposure to contact situations with non-members of the community. The questionnaire collected information pertaining to the length of residence in Australia, and language use. Respondents were asked to rate their English ability, and the frequency with which they use the English language. Participants were able to select from one of four grades of English ability, which were adapted from the definitions of bands 4 (Limited User), 5 (Modest User), 7 (Good User) and 9 (Expert User) of the 9 band International English Language Testing System marking scale.[23]

Six potential NNSJ participants were also asked to complete a questionnaire to establish the extent of their interactions with the Japanese speech community in Sydney, their Japanese proficiency and general language background. The potential participants included both native and non-native speakers of English. As with the NSJ questionnaire the NNSJ questionnaire collected information on residency in Australia and Japan, and the respondent's language background, querying the frequency of Japanese language use, languages spoken at home and at the workplace. Respondents were asked to rate their Japanese ability, and the frequency with which they use the Japanese language.

Participants were able to select from one of four grades of Japanese ability. The definition for each of these grades was adapted from the competencies explained in the definitions of bands 4 (Limited User), 5 (Modest User), 7 (Good User) and 9 (Expert User) of the 9 band IELTS marking scale for consistency, and as the explanations for each grade reference general communicative ability rather than English specific language skills.

Selection of participants

A simple points based scale was devised[24] to rate NSJ questionnaire respondents in their level of experience in interacting with non-members of the Japanese speech community,

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23   IELTS, 'Getting my results'.
24   Derived from a points system used in Masumi-So, 'Kaigai no Nihon-go shiyō no Ibunka Sesshoku Bamen ni okeru Sōgo-kōi Bunseki', pp. 174-175.

and to rate NNSJ respondents in their level of experience in interacting with the Japanese speech community. This was done in order to consider the effect of such experience upon the use of the word *gaijin* by research participants. The scale rates participants based on their length of residence outside of or in Japan, the language spoken at their place of residence and workplace, length of language study and their self-assessment of their non-native language ability, in order to place them into corresponding focus groups. The points scheme is detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Contact Situation Experience

Variable	Value	Points
Length of Residency Outside of Japan (NSJ) Length of Residency in Japan (NNSJ)	0-2 Years 2-5 Years 5-10 Years Over 10 Years	1 2 3 4
Language Spoken at Residence	Japanese (NSJ) / Other (NNSJ) English (NSJ) / Japanese (NNSJ)	0 2
Language Spoken at Workplace	Japanese (NSJ) / Other (NNSJ) English (NSJ) / Japanese (NNSJ)	0 2
Frequency of English Use (NSJ) Frequency of Japanese Use (NNSJ)	Less than 3 times a week More than 3 times a week Every day	1 2 3
Duration of English Study (NSJ) Duration of Japanese Study (NNSJ)	0-2 Years 2-5 Years 5-10 Years Over 10 Years	1 2 3 4
English Language Proficiency	Limited User Modest User Good User Expert User	1 2 3 4

The purpose of the point scheme above was to provide a comparative measure for the level of experience that different potential participants had had in interacting with non-members/members of the Japanese speech community by taking into consideration several different factors that are difficult to compare separately. The weighting of each item was determined by altering the figures to such that the point tallies for individual questionnaire respondents were sufficiently distributed to allow for comparison. The

higher the point score of a participant, the more experienced they may be considered to be in interacting with non-members/members of the Japanese speech community. It is assumed that generally, higher levels of exposure to contact situations are likely to have resulted in a greater number of experiences with the potential to alter the participant's perceptions of non-members of the community.

Focus Groups

Focus groups have been chosen as the primary source of data as they have the potential to capture the use of the word *gaijin* as it occurs between members of the speech community, and to limit the involvement of the facilitator in the construction of responses. Additionally, the participant focus of the format allows participants to probe and challenge each other's views, a practice that seldom takes place in conventional interviews.[25] This provided valuable insight into the thought processes behind the use of the word.

The allocation of participants to focus groups is detailed in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – Focus Group Participants[26]

Focus Group	Name	NSJ/NNSJ	Age	Gender	Points
1	KimikoF13	NSJ	21	F	13
	FredM11	NNSJ	21	M	11
2	EijiM16	NSJ	25	M	16
	TomM10	NNSJ	23	M	10
3	SatomiF9	NSJ	26	F	9
	CharlotteF12	NNSJ	28	F	12

The focus groups took place in a private room at the university, and were audio and video recorded for transcription and analytical purposes, and for the purpose of review during the FUIs to follow. In each group, participants were asked to view three short

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25 Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, pp. 475-6.
26 For example, KimikoF13 = Kimiko, Female, 13 points. Participant names are presented in this way to ensure that relevant information is contained in a single code.

films.[27] Participants were encouraged to discuss the contents of each film as well as any personal experiences or observations regarding interaction with non-speech community members. Some prompts were offered by the facilitator where discussion faltered.

There are two reasons for the use of film in the focus groups. First, the film was used to provide an initial focus for what could have been a challenging topic for some of the participants, especially given the identity of the facilitator as a person who may be seen as a referent of the word *gaijin*. Second, the film was intended to provide a common reference point for analysis of participants across the three groups, as data from each group was expected to vary greatly.

The films were obtained from the Youtube website, using the search term "外人" (*gaijin*). Films were selected that contained the word *gaijin* in conversation, to act as a starting point for participants to discuss the use of the word. The films chosen were also comical, to create an atmosphere in which participants could discuss the word freely.

Follow-Up Interviews

In this study the FUI served as an opportunity for participant and researcher to explore and interpret the data gained from the focus groups, and had three main purposes. First, the FUI was used to allow participants an opportunity to verbalise the thought processes or lack thereof that accompanied particular actions in the data, and in confidence.[28] This is important as a means of circumventing the possible effect of social expectations in shaping participant's responses with other members of the speech community. Second, the FUI allowed both researcher and participant to explore any extra-linguistic behaviour that may occur in the focus group data.[29] Third, the FUI was a mechanism by which the researcher could clarify and validate existing data.[30]

The FUI is a one-on-one interview that is conducted after the transcription of the original data has been completed. The FUIs were conducted within a week of the original data collection, so that the participant's recollections of the event were clear, and were audio and video recorded for the purpose of transcription and analysis.

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27   Film 1: 'Azumanga Daioh: the Animation', Unknown episode, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kn2ogbiOuk&NR=1; Film 2: 'Azumanga Daioh: the Animation', Unknown episode, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTm2tk1yzSI; Film 3: 'Outside World News #2 - GAIJIN BANNED', http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dvm9X-aafWM&NR=1.
28   *Ibid.*
29   Fan, '*Taishōsha no naisei wo chōsa suru: Forōappu Intabyū*', pp. 88-90.
30   Muraoka, '*Forōappu Intabyū ni okeru shitsumon to ōtō*', p. 210.

The FUI gauges the participant's expectations of the study, and awareness before, during and after the study. The facilitator focuses on the participant's awareness of their own behaviour and thought processes, norms and deviations on norms, evaluation of behaviour and behaviour of other participants, while viewing footage of the data. Progression through the footage is controlled by the participant, although the facilitator may direct the participant's focus to a particular point where desired.[31]

Description of Data

The data collection methods outlined above yielded a rich array of data in two forms, the transcripts of participants' speech, and the visual record of the participants' non-verbal communication, as captured on video. The transcripts provide a record of the occurrence of the word *gaijin* in the speech of participants, while video data contain a vivid and visual record of participant's non-verbal communication, including para-language such as pauses, fillers and intonation that accompanied their speech.

Each of the focus groups took place with two participants, an NSJ and an NNSJ. The participants of each focus group are detailed in Table 3 below.

Table 3 – Details of Focus Groups and Follow-up Interviews (FUI)

Focus Group 1	Kimiko (KimikoF13)	Fred (FredM11)
Sex	F	M
NSJ/NNSJ	NSJ	NNSJ
Points (See research methodology above)	13	11
Duration of Focus Group (Language)	48 minutes (Japanese)	
Duration of FUI	1 hour 52 minutes (Japanese)	1 hour 50 minutes (English)
Focus Group 2	Eiji (EijiM16)	Tom (TomM10)
Sex	M	M
NSJ/NNSJ	NSJ	NNSJ

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31 Neustupný, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-17; Fan, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-4.

Points	16	10
Duration of Focus Group (Language)	31 minutes (Japanese)	
Duration of FUI	1 hour 29 minutes (Japanese)	1 hour 8 minutes (English)
Focus Group 3	**Satomi (SatomiF9)**	**Charlotte (CharlotteF12)**
Sex	F	F
NSJ/NNSJ	NSJ	NNSJ
Points	9	12
Duration of Focus Group (Language)	27 minutes (Japanese)	
Duration of FUI	48 minutes (Japanese)	1 hour 11 minutes (English)

Eleven interpretations of the word *gaijin* were identified in total across the three focus groups, which are discussed in detail below. These interpretations referred to particular physical, behavioural and linguistic characteristics that were associated by the participants with referents of the word.

Focus Group 1 (FG1)

Five interpretations of the word *gaijin* were identified in FG1. In total, three interpretations of the word *gaijin* were identified during FG1 by KimikoF13. The first is that a *gaijin* does not speak Japanese (K1), the second that the word refers to a white person (K2a), with particular physical characteristics, such as height and a large nose (K2b), and the third, that the word refers to a person different to oneself (K3). These characteristics are not mutually exclusive, as they lend themselves to the description of a particular group of people. The three characteristics of *gaijin* identified by KimikoF13 are congruent with the definitions of the term identified in the preceding literature.[32] KimikoF13 was forthcoming and hesitated little in identifying the above characteristics, suggesting that these were associations that she was readily aware of and that she had considered before.

Based on the above three interpretations of the word *gaijin* by KimikoF13, the word *gaijin* can be defined as an index as it is used here by a NSJ to point to a particular group, the members of which are physically and linguistically different to

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32   Gottlieb, *op. cit.*; Ishii, *op. cit.*; Nishizaka, *op. cit.*

the speaker. The word *gaijin* indexes this difference, but is also limited to those with the above characteristics.

Two interpretations of the word *gaijin* were identified by FredM11. The first was a strong nuance of non-acceptance of the referents of the word *gaijin* when used by NSJ (F2). When used by NSJ, the word is interpreted as indicating non-acceptance: an interpretation which was partly based on negative encounters with the word while living in Japan. FredM11 spoke of the issue emotionally in FG1 (see extract in Table 4), and elaborated in his FUI that he felt strongly about the word to the point that he would disassociate himself from those who continued its use. The issue of acceptance was not an interpretation raised directly by KimikoF13, however, parallels can be drawn with the notion that a *gaijin* is somebody who is different to oneself. It would seem to be this notion of difference that contributes to an understanding of the word as being associated with a lack of acceptance by the speaker.

The second interpretation of the word identified by FredM11 offered a very different understanding of the word *gaijin* to that offered by KimikoF13. In contrast to the definition of *gaijin* as a distinctly white person with certain physical characteristics, the definition offered by FredM11 was purely that of 'foreigner', a word stripped of the context of physical appearance and linguistic ability. While the conflation of the word *gaijin* to 'foreigner' may seem to be deeply related to the notion of non-acceptance discussed above, FredM11 claimed in the FUI that he did not associate the word 'foreigner' with any negative connotation. It was revealed by FredM11's utterances in the focus group and in his FUI that in his use of the word 'foreigner', FredM11 saw the referents of the word as shifting contextually based on time and place, as opposed to the fixed Japanese context constraint implied by KimikoF13's use of the word *gaijin*. Thus, the second interpretation given here can be considered separate to the first interpretation listed above.

The two interpretations identified by FredM11 cast two different lights on the indexing function of the word *gaijin* exhibited by KimikoF13. In addition to indexing difference, as an NNSJ, FredM11 interprets the word *gaijin* as indexing acceptance, and sees the word as a term used to estrange the referent from the speaker. In describing the second characteristic of the word, FredM11 provides a different interpretation of the word *gaijin*, expressing an 'ideal' interpretation of the word as a deictic index of the 'foreigner' relevant to the speaker, and separate from its Japanese context.

Table 4 summarises the interpretations of the word *gaijin* shared by the participants of FG1, along with the original utterance and English translation.

Table 4 – Interpretations of the word *gaijin* identified by KimikoF13 and FredM11

K: KimikoF13, F: FredM11

Interpretations of the word *gaijin*	Original utterance	
One who does not speak Japanese (K1)	K：なんか本当外人を見たら日本語喋れないみたいな前提でこう見てしまう↑	K: It's really like there's an assumption that if you see a *gaijin* they can't speak Japanese.
One who is referred to as a white person (K2a)	K：なんか　外人　というと　白人ってイメージがしてなんとなく　外国人と言うとそれ以外って感じがする	K: When you say '*gaijin*' there is more or less an image of a white person. When you say '*gaikoku-jin*' it's like everybody else.
One who has certain physical characteristics, like being tall and/or sharp-nosed (K2b)	K：例えば私の友達で　私の友達の彼氏が外人さんで白人さんだったんだけど　私の彼氏外人なんだと言った時に皆がへ　背高いのとか鼻高いのとか　なんか[F:金髪なの↑]そう　そうそうそう　ブロンド↑とか　なんかそういう容姿的なイメージがやっぱ外人というだけでこう付いてくる	K: For example with my friend, my friend's boyfriend was a *gaijin*, a white person, but when she said "My boyfriend's a *gaijin*" everyone was like "is he tall?" or "does he have a big nose?" like [F: "Is he blonde?"] Yeah, yeah yeah like "Is he blonde?" Just by saying '*gaijin*' those kinds of appearance based images are definitely attached.
One who is different to oneself (K3)	K：だから　こっちの大学来てやっぱアジア人同士アジア人同士で固まっちゃうというのは　まあなんか　なんとなく分かる　感じ　ちょっと嫌な気もするけど　でも分かる感じはして　だからその外人というと全く自分とは似ていない　その容姿的にも	K: Coming to this university after all I understand why the Asians group up with other Asians. I have an idea that it's a bit unpleasant, but I feel like I understand. So when you say '*gaijin*' it means that they aren't like yourself, including appearance.

Interpretations of the word *gaijin*	Original utterance	
Not accepted by the community (F1)	F:僕もう［K:何回も］何回も行っているし［K:うん］もうこれから結構長くいるつもりなので［K:うんうん］まあちょっと認め　認めてもらいたいですね K:ああ　認めてもらうということはその外人という言葉を使われるっていうのが　その認められていないという風に感じますか↑ F:そうですね K:ああ F:私達と［K:日本人と］違いますね［K:ああ］って感じがします	F: I've been many times [K: many times] and I intend to be there for a long time [K: yes, yes] and well, I'd like to be accepted you know K: Ah, so when you say you'd like to be accepted you mean that when the word *gaijin* is used you feel like you're not being accepted? F: That's right K: Ah F: I feels like "You're different from us [K: The Japanese] aren't you" [K: Ah]
Foreign background (F2)	F:オーストラリアの社会では（1.0）ほら　multiculturalだから［K:うん］別にもうインドから来ても韓国中国から来てオーストラリアに住んでたらもう外人というforeignerと呼びません	F: In Australian society (1.0) look, because it's multicultural [K: Yeah] even if you come from India, or Korea or China when you're living in Australia then you won't be called *gaijin* or foreigner.

Focus Group 2 (FG2)

Three interpretations of the word *gaijin* were identified in the discourse of FG2 participants. The first interpretation identified by the participants related to physical appearance (E&T1). When asked whether he had ever been called a *gaijin* in circumstances similar to those in Film1, TomM10 claimed that he had not, because he was Asian in appearance. Following Film 2, EijiM16 claimed that he thought the depiction of the physical characteristics of the foreigner in the film (tall, blue eyes) was "typical" of a *gaijin*. This supports the finding that there are particular physical characteristics that are associated with referents of the word *gaijin*.

The second interpretation identified was non-verbal behaviour (E1). This interpretation was identified after TomM10 related that he had been referred to "jokingly" as a *gaijin* by friends in Japan when he had difficulty using chopsticks. EijiM16 supported this claim by noting that even when a person spoke fluent Japanese that he was able to discern whether they were Japanese or not based on their body language, and that the term *gaijin* is used to refer to "those with a difference in culture".

This demonstrates that the characteristics referenced by the word *gaijin* are ultimately more complex than the more easily identified physical and linguistic characteristics. EijiM16 responded at length in his FUI about the difficulty foreigners faced in adapting to Japanese cultural practices and norms, and argued that foreigners could be identified easily by deviations from native participants' behavioural norms, regardless of linguistic ability. EijiM16 revealed that his use of the word *gaijin* in FG2 to refer to this distinction between Japanese and non-Japanese occurred involuntarily, suggesting that the word *gaijin* was deeply associated with non-verbal behaviours that are considered different to what is accepted to be the Japanese norm.

The third interpretation identified was the use of English, which was congruent with interpretation K1 identified in FG1. This finding indicates that the word *gaijin* indexes difference on multiple levels, based on observation of linguistic ability, non-verbal behaviour and physical appearance.

Table 5 summarises the interpretations of the word *gaijin* shared by the participants of FG2.

Table 5 - Interpretations of gaijin identified by EijiM16 and TomM10

E: EijiM16, T: TomM10

Interpretations of *gaijin*	Original utterance	
One who has a physical appearance different to the Japanese (E&T1)	T：背も高いし E：そうだね　うん　うん(2.0)目が青いのは↑ T：うん　目青い E：うん　ティピカルな外人と思う	T: And he's tall E: He is Yes Yes (2.0) and does he have blue eyes? T: Yes blue eyes E: Yes I think he's a typical *gaijin*
One whose non-verbal behaviour is different from Japanese (E1)	E：やっぱりカルチャーの違いで［R：はい］うんあのう　そういうのが言葉からではなんか直接何も分からないかもしれないけどこう外人というものと　こう認識させたくなるとこあるなと	E: After all it's differences in culture [R: Right] Yeah umm You might not be able to tell that kind of thing directly from language, but it makes you want to realise that they are *gaijin*.
One who is assumed to speak English (T1)	T: 外人を見たら　すぐ　なんか　その人多分英語　で通じるんじゃないかと	T: When you see a *gaijin*, right away, it's like "that person must understand English".

Focus Group 3

The interpretation of *gaijin* as indexing physical difference (C1) was identified by CharlotteF12 who claimed that the word *gaijin* was not used of her because of her Asian experience. However, CharlotteF12's understanding of the word *gaijin* differs in that it was based not on particular physical characteristics, but rather on a perception that the purpose of the word *gaijin* was to differentiate between races. CharlotteF12 claimed in the focus group that negative perceptions associated with the word *gaijin* were based on poor translation and misrepresentation, and explained in her FUI that differentiating between races was a positive thing, as it is natural for "people to put things into categories". SatomiF9 agreed in her FUI that the word *gaijin* was used in such a manner, but that she did not consider such use of the word to be discriminatory. SatomiF9 added that the word was used to indicate a person who was non-Japanese.

SatomiF9 made few original contributions as to any physical characteristics associated with referents of the word *gaijin*, and indicated in both the focus groups and FUI that she did not particularly like the word *gaijin*, and that she had not had much experience in interacting with NNSJ. SatomiF9 maintained a blank expression for much of the focus group and nodded constantly, and did not stop the tape in the FUI once of her own accord. SatomiF9's verbal and non-verbal behaviour was interpreted by the researcher as passively listening, indicating little or no previous exposure to discourse related to the use of the word *gaijin*. The above suggests that SatomiF9 did not share the interpretation of the word *gaijin* as referring to particular physical characteristics such as whiteness, due to a lack of exposure to discourse with either NSJ or NNSJ regarding the use of the word *gaijin* or the characteristics associated with its referents.

The second interpretation identified in FG3 resembled interpretation F2 from FG1. In not associating the word *gaijin* with particular linguistic or physical characteristics, SatomiF9 interpreted the word *gaijin* as indexing 'foreignness' (S1), which she defined as having been brought up in a different environment. This interpretation of the word *gaijin* displays strong similarities to the 'ideal' interpretation of the word expressed by FredM11 in FG1. SatomiF9 related that the meaning of the word changed based on the place and situation, echoing the sentiment expressed by FredM11 in his FUI. SatomiF9 further applied this logic to claim that in Sydney, she considered herself to be a *gaijin*. Thus SatomiF9's interpretation of *gaijin* differs from those raised by KimikoF13 and in FG2, in which the word *gaijin* is anchored as deictically opposite to Japanese.

Table 6 summarises the interpretations of the word *gaijin* shared by the participants of FG3.

Table 6 - Interpretations of *gaijin* identified by CharlotteF12 and Satomi F9

C: CharlotteF12, S: SatomiF9

Interpretations of *gaijin*	Original utterance	
One with certain physical characteristics (C1)	C：私的にはですね　やっぱり私は同じくアジア系なので［R：はい］それとこう　まあ似た様な経験はあまりなかったんですね	C: For me, as you'd expect, because I'm also Asian [R: yes] I haven't really had a similar experience to that.
Foreign Background (S1)	S：自分たちとは違う国の人という意味を込めた外人という言葉だと思いますよね	S: I think the word *gaijin* carries the meaning of 'somebody from a different country to oneself'.

Use of the word gaijin by the Japanese speech community in Sydney

While the above discussion details the broad interpretations of the word *gaijin* by the Japanese speech community, it is necessary for the purposes of this study to frame the use of these interpretations by the speech community in Sydney. Of the three focus groups, the first and third identified uses of the word *gaijin* by the Japanese speech community in Sydney.

In FG1, FredM11 purposefully informs the focus group of his observations of the use of the word in Sydney, stating that "in Australia the Japanese people are *gaijin*". Furthermore, the word is inadvertently used by KimikoF13 in a Sydney context, describing non-Japanese restaurant staff. In FG3, as detailed above, SatomiF9 states that she considers herself to be a *gaijin* in the Sydney context. These observations were further confirmed in the respective FUIs.

In contrast, FG2 did not identify any usage of the word *gaijin* in the Sydney context. Conversely, the participants of FG2 stated that using this word would be situationally inappropriate given the multicultural nature of Sydney, reflecting in particular EijiM16's high contact situation fluency.

Discussion

Following the above description of the data we can establish that there are multiple interpretations of the word *gaijin*, which can be grouped into two models of *gaijin*: the

portable notion of the Absolute *gaijin*, and the contextually specific Relative *gaijin*.[33] These models of the word *gaijin* function as indices that point to and define individuals or groups of people that are considered to be different to the speaker. As eleven interpretations of the word *gaijin* were identified, it became clear that the word is used by certain NSJs and NNSJs to point to referents that possess defining characteristics. Thus, the referents indexed by the word *gaijin* are dependent on the interpretations of the speaker, per the Absolute or Relative model of *gaijin* as defined below.

The role of indexing in the understanding of Japanese social order was highlighted in the volume edited by Bachnik and Quinn.[34] Bachnik encouraged a shift in the conceptualisation of Japanese society from semantic to pragmatic meaning, realised in an understanding of indexing, rather than fixed structural principles.[35] While Bachnik advanced this reasoning with a focus on a collective Japanese concept of self-embodied in the terms *uchi* and *soto*, this discussion borrows the concept of indexing as a means of mapping and identifying one's own position and identity, by both verbal and non-verbal means. This approach dictates a focus on deixis in investigating the way in which individuals conceptualise themselves and the world around them.[36] The above approach has been criticised by Hasegawa and Hirose,[37] who have questioned the linguistic evidence for the *uchi* and *soto* concept towards which Bachnik and Quinn's volume was aimed, citing examples of speech in which the Japanese self could not be conceived as collective, such as personal thoughts and mental states. Although this paper accepts that there are a number of definitions of self in a Japanese context, it makes use of the concept of indexing as a useful conceptual tool in determining the function that the word *gaijin* plays within the Japanese speech community in Sydney.

Bachnik defines an index as a scale or axis along which relationships can be gauged against a located reference point. Such indexing can be realised through any kind of communication: Bachnik provides honorifics, bowing (non-verbal behaviour as a means of communication) and choice of topic as examples.[38] For the purposes of this discussion, the speaker is defined as the located reference point, and the referent of the word *gaijin* is defined as the deictic opposite. While the notion of an index infers several degrees along a scale between the speaker and the referent *gaijin*, this study produced insufficient evidence to determine whether different terms such as the variant *gaijin-san* or the alternative *gaikoku-jin* represent different degrees on the same scale.

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33   The models may be glossed in Japanese as 絶対的な外人 (*zettai teki na gaijin*) and 相対的な外人 (*sōtai teki na gaijin*) respectively.

34   Bachnik and Quinn, *Situated Meaning*.

35   Bachnik, 'Introduction', pp. 12-20.

36   *Ibid.*, pp. 12-23.

37   Hasegawa and Hirose, 'What the Japanese language tells us about the alleged Japanese relational self'; Hirose and Hasegawa, '*Nihongo kara mita Nihon-jin*'; Hirose and Hasegawa, '*Deikushisu no chūshin wo nasu Nihon-teki jiko*'.

38   Bachnik, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-6.

The Absolute gaijin

The Absolute *gaijin* model represents the specific physical and linguistic interpretations of *gaijin* that are broadly identified in the preceding literature, and that were expressed by participants in each of the focus groups. This model of *gaijin* is defined here as 'absolute' because the referents of the model are unchanging, regardless of the location of the user of the word and the referent. In Figure 1 below, this is represented by the cline pointing away from the speaker. The Absolute *gaijin* is assumed to be the most common model.

FG1 demonstrated that such indexing may be interpreted as estrangement from the speaker by NNSJ referred to as *gaijin*. This is also represented by the cline on Figure 1 below, however it is placed in square brackets as it is an interpretation of the index by the referent. The focus groups did not produce any evidence that such estrangement is a conscious function of the word *gaijin*, however this is not discounted by the findings given above.

The Absolute *gaijin* as an index of difference offers some insight into the way its users map their relationships and interactions with those NNSJ that correspond to the characteristics associated with the word *gaijin*. Indexing referents with the word *gaijin* categorises the referents as being different, and therefore asserts the identity of the speaker as Japanese. This notion of the use of the word *gaijin* is perhaps rooted in the assumption of Japanese homogeneity that continues to be relatively prevalent in Japanese society.[39] Parallels can be drawn to the use of the word *gaijin* by the NSJ radio interviewer to assert his Japanese identity in Nishizaka's study of a NSJ-NNSJ interaction.[40] The assertion of identity of Japanese descendent Brazilians with the use of the word is another example of such usage.[41] Thus the use of the Absolute *gaijin* model is part of the way in which NSJ may present their Japanese identity when participating in an interaction with a NNSJ, or a discourse referring to an NNSJ.

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39   Sugimoto, *An introduction to Japanese society*.
40   Nishizaka, *op. cit.*, p. 246.
41   Tsuga, *op. cit.*, p. 372.

Figure 1 – The Absolute gaijin as an index

		***gaijin* (absolute)**
Speaker (NSJ)	difference (K3) ————————————→ [estrangement (F1)]	white (K2a), tall etc. (K2b, E&T1, C1), does not speak Japanese (K1, T1), different non- verbal behaviour (E1)
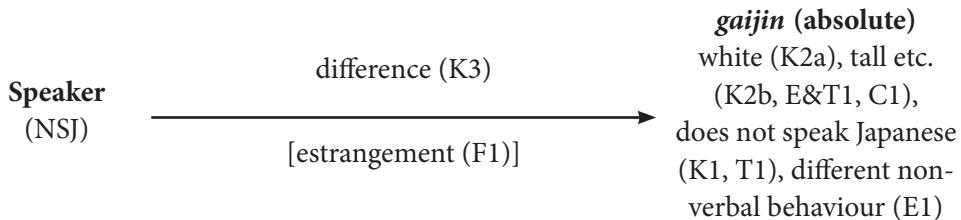
The Relative gaijin

The Relative *gaijin* model differs from the Absolute *gaijin* model in that its referent is not clearly defined as possessing particular characteristics, and as such, both the speaker and the *gaijin* are variables. The model is 'relative' because the referent of the word *gaijin* changes relative to the identity of the speaker. This model can be distinguished from the Absolute model of *gaijin*, where an ethnically Japanese NSJ can be referred to as *gaijin*, whereas such a reference is unthinkable in the prevalent Absolute model of *gaijin*. The Relative *gaijin* model indexes difference as defined by the referent possessing a different background to the speaker (F2, S1). This is represented by the cline in Figure 2 below.

In this model, both the speaker and the referent could be any combination of NSJ and NNSJ. Where the referent of the Absolute model of *gaijin* is anchored to a particular set of interpretations, which are juxtaposed to the speaker, the Relative *gaijin* is more simply a deictic term for a referent with a background different to that of the speaker.

The Relative *gaijin* model can be compared to the Absolute model in terms of the use of the word to categorise the referent as being different to the speaker. However, the notion of the use of the word *gaijin* to assert the Japanese identity of the speaker does not apply to the Relative *gaijin* model.

Figure 2 – The Relative gaijin as an index

Speaker (NSJ/NNSJ)	different background ————————————→	***gaijin* (relative)** foreign background (F2, S1)
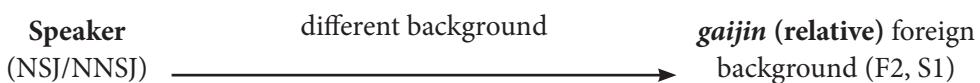
Contact situation fluency and the use of the word gaijin

As discussed above, participants were allocated points to determine the level of experience of NSJ and NNSJ in interacting with NNSJ and NSJ members of the Japanese speech community respectively (contact situation fluency), in order to consider the effect of such experience upon the use of the word *gaijin* by research participants. This was based upon an expectation by the researcher that a higher level of contact situation fluency would reduce the likelihood of the participant's use of the word *gaijin*. This expectation was challenged by the use of the word *gaijin* by SatomiF9, with the lowest point score of all of the participants. This suggests that certain individual experiences may play a large role in influencing the use of the word *gaijin* by particular individuals. However, a relationship was identified between the contact situation fluency of the NSJ participants and their exposure to previous discourse regarding the word *gaijin*, which was reflected in their participation in the focus groups. Table 7 demonstrates the relationship between the use of the word *gaijin* and the participant's contact situation fluency, as the participants are placed in order of their points from low to high.

Table 7 – Contact situation fluency and the use of the word *gaijin* in Sydney

NSJ			
Name	Points		Use of *gaijin*
SatomiF	Low	9	Use of the Relative *gaijin* model. Claimed that she herself was a *gaijin* in Sydney. Seemed unaware of Absolute *gaijin* model interpretations of the word, and displayed little or no evidence of previous discourse regarding the word.
KimikoF		13	Use of the Absolute *gaijin* model. Was unaware of her use of the word in a Sydney context. Little evidence of previous experience in discourse regarding *gaijin*, however readily discussed interpretations of the word.
EijiM	High	16	Did not use the word *gaijin* in Sydney. Was readily aware of interpretations associated with the word *gaijin*. Claimed that use of the word was inappropriate given the multicultural nature of Sydney.

NNSJ			
Name	Points		Use of *gaijin*
TomM	Low	10	Did not use the word *gaijin* in Sydney. Was aware of Absolute *gaijin* model interpretations of the word, but displayed indifference towards the term.
FredM		11	Did not use the word *gaijin* in Sydney. Was aware of Absolute *gaijin* model interpretations of the word. Evidence of previous experience in discourse regarding *gaijin* (communication strategy).
CharlotteF	High	12	Did not use the word *gaijin* in Sydney. Was aware of Absolute *gaijin* model interpretations of the word. Claimed that use of the word was justified to categorise people of different races.

When ordered by their contact situation fluency, the NSJ participants exhibit increasing levels of awareness of interpretations of the word *gaijin*, as developed by prior experience of discourse with NNSJ. SatomiF9 displayed little or no evidence of previous discourse regarding the word *gaijin*, and her use of the Relative model of *gaijin* suggests a lack of awareness of the prevalent Absolute *gaijin* model. With higher exposure to related discourse, KimikoF13 was readily aware of the interpretations of the word *gaijin*. However, EijiM16, with the highest level of exposure to NNSJ, demonstrated both an awareness of the interpretations of the word *gaijin*, and an understanding that the use of the word was not considered appropriate given the multicultural context that the speech community is situated in. Although there is insufficient evidence to identify a trend, the above suggests that increased exposure to discourse with and regarding NNSJ influences the likelihood that the word *gaijin* would be used to refer to an NNSJ in contexts outside of Japan. This limited sample also suggests that a progression exists in the evolution of the usage of the word *gaijin* between the two models from the Relative model, to the Absolute model, and finally to not using the word at all, although a progression from Absolute to Relative could be equally likely.

None of the NNSJ participants claimed to use the word in Sydney. The NNSJ participants were closely grouped in contact situation fluency points, and a relationship between the points and awareness of the interpretations of the word *gaijin* was not identified. While TomM10 and CharlotteF12 displayed a similar level of awareness of interpretations of the Absolute *gaijin* model, FredM11 exhibited the most in-depth understanding of these interpretations. FredM11 not only displayed knowledge of the Relative and Absolute *gaijin* models, but also expressed an understanding of the inappropriateness of the word in the multicultural context of Sydney. As the participants are closely grouped in points, it is likely that the individual experience of participants

is involved. While TomM10 and CharlotteF12 are Asian in appearance and have few experiences of being referred to as *gaijin*, FredM11 identifies with many of the characteristics associated with the prevalent Absolute model of *gaijin*, and as such, has increased exposure to the use of the word, and discourse regarding the word.

Conclusion

The definition of the two models of *gaijin* highlights a complexity that exists in the usage of the word that has not been explored by the literature reviewed earlier in the article. While the interpretations of the word *gaijin* defined within the Absolute model of *gaijin* have been apparent for some time, the Relative *gaijin* model introduces a novel aspect of the word that reflects a different and significant way of conceiving the relationship of NSJ and NNSJ outside of the established paradigm.

By uncovering the interpretations of the word *gaijin* in the Japanese speech community in Sydney, it was discovered that the word functions as an index of the difference of the referent from the user of the word. The word was identified as an index of difference, indexed differently in each model. The Absolute *gaijin* model was found to index referents with particular characteristics, and it was proposed that such indexing achieved the secondary function of asserting the Japanese identity of the NSJ speaker. In contrast, in the Relative *gaijin* model the referent of the word changed contextually according to the identity and location of the speaker. In this model, the word *gaijin* functioned as a demonstrative term for a person with a different background to the community that the speaker represents.

The approach of the study confirmed the prevalent interpretations of the word in the preceding literature, and uncovered a new model of its use. A similar methodology could be applied to other terms within and outside of Japan, such as *gaikoku-jin*, *imin* ('immigrant') and *nikkei-jin* ('a person of Japanese ancestry'), to empirically confirm common interpretations of the word, and to search for new and different models of their use. The influence of contact situation fluency on such interpretations could be considered in these cases.

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Evaluating Women's Labour in 1990s Japan: The Changing Labour Standards Law

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Abstract

This article outlines the legislative changes regarding Japanese working women in the 1990s, specifically the changes to the Labour Standards Law. This Law was altered in 1997 (effective 1999) by the removal of a number of provisions known as the Women's 'Protection' Provisions (*josei hogo kitei*). These gender-specific provisions restricted Japanese women from working particular jobs and hours, and limited overtime and holiday work.

The role of these gender-specific provisions is examined through a collection of articles from four of Japan's mainstream daily, widely-circulated newspapers: the *Asahi Shinbun*, the *Mainichi Shinbun*, the *Nihon Keizai Shinbun*, and the *Yomiuri Shinbun*. These newspapers were of the opinion that the provisions were simultaneously protective and restrictive towards women. The newspapers all supported the removal of the provisions in order to increase equality in Japan's workforce and society. However, all presented strong concerns that Japanese society was unable to support these changes.

This article situates the law reform within the wider context of 1990s Japan, by tracing the links between labour legislation and socio-cultural issues in Japan, particularly the low fertility rate. This article closes with an evaluation of changes within Japanese society and working habits since the removal of the provisions.

Keywords

Introduction

At the end of the twentieth century, several social issues in Japan began to gain a large amount of media attention – among them, Japan's falling fertility rate and the greying population.[1] The context for these issues was the gendered division of labour: the large household burden on women and the long working hours for men, as well as the problem

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of so-called '*karōshi*' (death from overwork).[2] Such issues can be seen as symptoms of the same underlying social problem: a lack of gender-based equality. In the 1990s, the Japanese government undertook a range of initiatives in an attempt to address these issues. One of these initiatives was the removal of the Labour Standards Law's Women's 'Protection' Provisions (*josei hogo kitei*). These gender-specific provisions placed limits on women's hours and places of work, and their removal was hotly debated within the quality mass media. Using the debate around this law reform as a case study, insights can be gained as to how the Japanese media debates gender issues such as equality, difference, and the role of 'protective' legislation.

This article examines the debate in the Japanese mass media over the removal of the gender-specific provisions. By examining items from four mainstream daily newspapers, discourses of both equality and difference are explored and contextualised within Japanese society. I begin with a discussion of the relevant labour legislation, then introduce the debate between the seemingly mutually exclusive logics of equality and difference. This framework is then applied to the Japanese situation. The arguments for and against the removal of the Provisions are addressed in a case study of mainstream newspaper articles, before concluding with recent Japanese labour statistics indicating whether there has been any improvement in gender equality since the provisions were removed.

This work uses newspaper articles to explore gender perceptions in Japan at the close of the twentieth century.[3] The newspapers in question are four of Japan's largest mainstream daily newspapers: the *Asahi Shinbun*, the *Mainichi Shinbun*, the *Nihon Keizai Shinbun* (commonly known as the *Nikkei*) and the *Yomiuri Shinbun*. By using a close case study of their texts, I provide a detailed examination of one example of gender perceptions in Japan. The perceptions within the newspapers reflected public opinion, which in turn influenced legislative change. This article makes a contribution to an exploration of the links between media perceptions of gender, public perceptions and legal change.

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2   According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, women in Japan divided their time almost equally between paid employment and housework. Men, however, spent the majority of their time in paid employment – the average annual hours actually worked was an impressive 1809 hours in 2001, compared to an average of 1715 in the United Kingdom – and less than 15 minutes a day on housework. See Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Statistics Bureau, *Historical Statistics of Japan* (Tokyo, 2008) and Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, "Dataset: Average annual hours actually worked per worker", *OECD Statistics Database* for further details.

3   For further references regarding gender perceptions and work in Japan, see, for example, Kawashima, 'Female Workers'; Kimoto, *Gender and Japanese Management*; Kumamoto-Healey, 'Women in the Japanese Labour Market'; Mackie, 'Equal Opportunity in an Unequal Labour Market'; Ogasawara, *Office Ladies and Salaried Men*.

Legislation

There are two Laws which specifically address the intersection of labour and gender in Japan. The first is the Labour Standards Law (*Rōdō Kijun Hō*, enacted April 1947, effective September 1947) and the second is the Equal Employment Opportunity Law (*Danjo Koyō Kikai Kintō Hō*, enacted May 1985, effective April 1986). The Labour Standards Law is the foundation of labour law in post-war Japan and legislates both gender equality, and gender difference, through various articles.[4]

The 1947 Labour Standards Law, the 1946 Labour Relations Adjustment Act (*Rōdō Kankei Chōsei Hō*) and the 1949 Labour Union Act (*Rōdō Kumiai Hō*) were a trio of labour laws enacted during the Occupation of Japan.[5] Under the original Labour Standards Law, gender equality is legislated by articles that guarantee equal pay for equal work, regardless of nationality, creed, social status, or gender (Articles 3 and 4). The equality provisions were counterbalanced by a series of articles which relate solely to female employees. Some of the articles address the biological reality of pregnancy – they target expectant or new mothers, and cover maternity, nursing and menstruation leave (Articles 65-7).[6] With the exception of the articles relating to menstruation leave (which was reclassified in 1986 to become part of the 90 sick days per year allocated to every worker),[7] the articles which relate to the biological reality of pregnancy have largely been uncontested.

The Articles which have been contested are those which target and affect all working women. These Articles set stricter overtime limits for women than for men (Article 61), prohibit women from engaging in late night work (Article 62), and forbid women from working in 'dangerous' occupations such as mining (Article 63). Commonly known as the *josei hogo kitei*, which could be translated as Women's 'Protection' Provisions, these provisions have proven controversial – do they protect women from Japan's harsh working conditions, or do they restrict women from achieving their labour potential? The removal of these provisions was the main amendment made to the Labour Standards Law in the late 1990s.

For some occupations,[8] the provisions were slightly relaxed at the time of the passage of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law in 1986. The Equal Employment Opportunity Law (EEOL) states that employers must endeavour to give both sexes

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4   Mackie, 'Gendered Discourse', pp. 58-67.
5   Tanaka, *Japanese Legal System*, pp. 184-5.
6   While first called for during Japan's pre-war industrialisation, menstruation leave rose to prominence in the post-war years as a 'quality of life' issue due to the lack of hygienic facilities available to women in most workplaces – see Molony, 'Equality versus Difference', pp. 135-9 for a more detailed explanation.
7   'Yappari Torenai? 'Seirikyūka' 'Shirareru no ga Iya' Nennen Genshōsuru Shinseiritsu (Hard to Take, After all? "Menstrual leave" "Don't Want Anyone to Know About It": Application Rates are Decreasing Annually)' *Yomiuri Shinbun*, morning edition, June 7, 1999.
8   Certain occupations, such as nursing, have never been affected by the women's 'protective' provisions.

equal opportunities in recruitment and hiring (Article 7) as well as job assignment and promotion (Article 8). Furthermore, employers were not to discriminate against female employees in terms of education and training (Article 9), benefits (Article 10), or the areas of mandatory retirement age,[9] retirement, or dismissal (Article 11).

However, the Equal Employment Opportunity Law had some significant drawbacks. This Law made no explicit references to indirect discrimination, was based on a policy of 'equality of opportunity' rather than one of 'equality of result', and was not supported by affirmative action policies,[10] measures for enforcement,[11] or punitive measures.[12] In addition, the EEOL suffered from the circumstances surrounding its inception. The EEOL came about as a direct result of Japan signing and ratifying the United Nation's Convention to Eliminate all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). There was strong opposition within Japan from academics and politicians of both sexes who argued that these changes would alter the 'uniquely successful culture' of Japan.[13] However, there was also support, as women within Japan mobilised both domestic and international networks to place pressure on the government.[14] The result of this was that the EEOL was not a product of a uniform change in social consensus, but rather an attempt by the Japanese government to make just enough changes to ratify CEDAW and alleviate the combined pressure of the United Nations, domestic supporters, and domestic protesters.[15]

As a reaction to the EEOL, Japanese companies developed a system known as the 'Two-Track Employment System' which in effect is a way of masking gender-based discrimination. New recruits to companies are offered two different employment tracks with very different career paths. One option is *sōgōshoku* ('integrated' or 'management' track), where the hours are long, the competition fierce, and an expectation of willingness to be transferred if required by the company. All men are directed to this track, and very few women.[16] *Ippanshoku* ('general' or 'clerical' track) has shorter hours, limited promotions, and transfers are rare.[17] Women remain under-represented in the upper echelons of management, medicine and law in Japan.[18]

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9   Before the passage of the EEOL, 'many companies required women to retire five or more years earlier than male employees, and in many workplaces women customarily took "early retirement" on marriage, pregnancy, or reaching the age of thirty', Mackie, *op. cit.*, p. 60. This had been successfully challenged through several law suits, notably the *Sumitomo Cement* case, as being unconstitutional, and as such was decreasing as a practice. See Upham, *Law and Social Change*, pp. 131-132 for further details.

10   Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan*, p. 184.

11   Iwao, *The Japanese Woman*, p. 178.

12   Nakano, 'Ten Years', p. 65.

13   Upham, *Ibid.*, p. 150.

14   Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan*, p. 179.

15   Mackie, 'Equal Opportunity in an Unequal Labour Market', pp. 98, 103.

16   Kawashima, 'Female Workers', p. 286.

17   A discussion of this system is common to most works on Japanese working women. For example, see Kawashima, *Ibid.*, Iwao, *The Japanese Woman* and Ogasawara, *Office Ladies and Salaried Men*.

18   See Kimoto, *Gender and Japanese Management*, for further details.

In the 1990s, realisation dawned within Japan that "simply outlawing direct discrimination and mandating equality of treatment was not sufficient to ensure gender equity and the promotion of individual rights."[19] As such, the decision was made to revise both labour laws affecting women. Before the Labour Standards Law was revised, Japanese female workers were generally restricted to 150 hours overtime per annum, could not work between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m.,[20] and were unable to work on holidays or in "dangerous" occupations such as mining. Japanese men, on the other hand, had no such limits on night work; they could work 360 hours overtime per annum[21] (though many worked much longer hours in the guise of 'voluntary' or what is known as 'service' overtime) and there were no limits on the jobs they could do nor the holidays they could work through. In 1990, Japanese workers worked an average of 2,162 hours a year, compared to 1,953 hours in the United Kingdom or 1,948 hours in the United States.[22]

The strong gender distinctions in terms of public and household labour expectations in Japan combined with several other issues at the close of the twentieth century to create an increasingly troubled society. The long working hours of the male population, sometimes leading to *karōshi* (death from overwork), had combined with an increasing reluctance to marry and many other factors to create a low birth-rate society. The falling birth-rate, when combined with a greying population, has the result of sharply decreasing the future working population while increasing their financial burden.[23] This is the environment in which the debate surrounding the role of gender-specific protective legislation in Japan is situated.

Labour and Fertility

The central concern in the debate over the removal of the Provisions was whether the Provisions were protective – or whether they were restrictive. Those who resisted the removal felt that the removal of the Provisions would lead to a form of negative equality – equality of exploitation.[24] Men's working conditions in Japan are notoriously harsh, and the fear was that if women were freed from the 'protective' provisions, they would be subject to the same exploitative working conditions. Those opposed to the removal argued that if women worked longer hours, they would have less children and less time to devote to their children. As Japan requires more births to counter the ageing population

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19 Mackie, 'Gendered Discourse', p. 64.
20 Exceptions were selected occupations such as nurses and newsreaders.
21 'Josei nimo Shin'ya Kinmu Hogokitei Teppai Yōkyū e Shōshin • Saiyō ni Michihiraku Jidōsha Shōren ga Hōshin (Calls for the Complete Abolishment of the Women's Late Night Work Prohibition and Protection Articles)' *Yomiuri Shinbun*, morning edition, August 2, 1995.
22 The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training, *Japanese Working Life Profile 2006/2007*, p. 61.
23 See Roberts, 'Pinning Hopes on Angels' for a discussion on these issues.
24 Mackie, 'Equal Opportunity and Gender Identity', p. 100.

and falling birth-rate, the argument held that women should not work, but rather stay home and raise more children – women should be reproducers, not producers.[25]

This argument has some considerable opposition, however. Frances McCall Rosenbluth has explored low fertility rates from an economic angle and argues that when society creates low barriers to workplace entry and re-entry for women, more children are born.[26] The higher the opportunity cost of working is for women with children, the less likely women are to undertake motherhood. In Japan, as in many other countries, the expense involved in raising and educating children may act as a disincentive. Living in Japan is expensive, particularly in the major metropolitan cities,[27] and neither childcare nor education are cheap.[28] Reacting to worries regarding Japan's future, many young people are unwilling to get married or have children. Young women in particular are dissatisfied "with the burdens placed upon them under the marriage contract, including expectations that they will quit their jobs to raise children and care for the elderly of the family."[29] Issues such as these have combined with the long life expectancy in Japan to create an ageing, low birth-rate society.

Concerns regarding Japan's low birth-rate gained prominence in the early 1990s when it was revealed that the 1989 total fertility rate was as low as 1.57 births per woman and was continuing to fall.[30] Over the last half of the twentieth century, marriage ages have increased for both brides and grooms, not only in Japan, but around the world. In Japan, late marriage has a considerable impact on fertility rates, as births outside of wedlock remain rare.[31] During the 1990s the Japanese government addressed these concerns through a series of policies, aiming to establish a framework for a more gender-equal society which has lower barriers to workplace entry and a more relaxed working environment – a society where men feel able to take childcare leave and spend time with their children and women feel able to raise their children while continuing to work. The Japanese government hoped that by making Japanese society more attractive to women as both mothers and workers that the decreasing workforce would be bolstered and the birth-rate would increase.[32]

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25 'Rōdōshō Senmonka Kaigi, Koyō Danjo Byōdō e Shishin – Josei no Shokuba Shinshutsu Sokushin e Bosei Hogo Igai Minaoshi (Ministry of Labour Meeting, Discussing Guidelines for Employment Equality – Promoting Women's Workplace Advancement without Reviewing Motherhood 'Protection' Articles)' *Nihon Keizai Shinbun*, evening edition, May 8, 1982; 'Rōdō Bun'ya no Kisei Kanwa wa Shinchō ni Koyō • Chingin Hakai no Osore Genkōhō Zesei Senketsu (Carefully Relax the Labour Force Controls: Fears of Job and Wage Destruction, Top Priority Correction of Current Law)' *Asahi Shinbun*, morning edition, January 15, 1996.
26 Rosenbluth, 'The Political Economy of Low Fertility', pp. 3-36.
27 Tokyo and Osaka are ranked as the world's two most expensive cities to live in according to 2009 Data - Mercer, *Worldwide Cost of Living Survey 2009 – City Ranking*.
28 Roberts, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-9.
29 *Ibid.*, p. 61.
30 *Ibid.* The total world replacement fertility rate is 2.335 children per woman; for a developed, East Asian country such as Japan the total replacement fertility rate is between 2.091 and 2.230. See Espenshade, Guzman and Westoff, 'Global Variation in Replacement Fertility' for further details.
31 Roberts, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-6.
32 *Ibid.*

However, it is very difficult for a government to stimulate an increase in population. Measures such as banning contraception and abortion or providing awards to particularly fecund women have been used by various states in the past in order to gain a population of sufficient quality and quantity.[33] Much like measures to increase workplace equality, these efforts can only go so far. Fittingly, since both issues can be seen as symptoms of the same underlying social problem, the Japanese government's approach to both increasing the fertility rate and establishing a more gender-equal workplace involved legislation that was based on voluntary compliance rather than governmental coercion. Knowing that what they were trying to undertake "would require change so basic and far-reaching as to shake society to its very roots… the approach [the Japanese government] adopted was persuasive, educative and meditative in character, based on the twin pillars of voluntarism and gradualism."[34]

Among the changes made in the 1990s to encourage a more gender-equal, child-rich society with which to face the new millennium, Japan revised several pieces of existing legislation that addressed the balance between paid work and family life.[35] As well as widening the scope of prohibited discrimination and introducing what might be called a "name and shame" penalty for employers who violate the discrimination prohibitions under the Equal Employment Opportunity Law,[36] Japan amended the Labour Standards Law by removing the 'protective' gender-specific provisions. The removal of these 'protective' provisions was addressed at this time in a series of articles from a number of different newspapers around Japan.

Japanese Newspapers

The Japanese media industry is gargantuan. In 1994, Japan had a population exceeding 120 million with a 90% literacy rate and 125 daily newspapers which had between them an absolute circulation of nearly 72 million copies per day.[37] These 125 daily newspapers contain a range of options, opinions and views, though the most widely read and commonly referenced are the Big Five – the *Asahi Shinbun*, the *Mainichi Shinbun*, the *Nihon Keizai Shinbun* (commonly known as the *Nikkei*), the *Sankei Shinbun* and the *Yomiuri Shinbun* – all with massive circulations and supported by widely diversified corporations.[38] These newspapers are perceived by their readers to maintain specific positions along the political spectrum, though there is little empirical evidence to support this.[39]

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33   See Pateman, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-8 for examples.
34   Parkinson, 'Japan's Equal Employment Opportunity Law', p. 141.
35   For details, see Mackie, 'Gendered Discourse', pp. 64-7 or Roberts, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-91.
36   Mackie, 'Gendered Discourse', pp. 66-7.
37   Cooper-Chen, *Mass Communication in Japan*, pp. 52-4.
38   Westney, 'Mass Media', p. 69.
39   For studies on this lack of empirical evidence, see Akuto, 'Media in Electoral Campaigning' or Lee, *Political Character*.

In this study, two newspapers from each side of the political spectrum were chosen to see if gender issues were dealt with differently between perceived 'liberal' and perceived 'conservative' papers. Both of the 'liberal' newspapers, the *Asahi Shinbun* and the *Mainichi Shinbun*, were selected, along with the 'conservative' newspaper with the widest circulation, the *Yomiuri Shinbun*. I chose the *Nikkei* as the second 'conservative' newspaper over the *Sankei Shinbun* due to the *Nikkei's* reputation as "Japan's *Wall Street Journal*". I was interested in seeing how this gender-related workplace issue was presented to the business community.

While it is common for the term *bosei hogo* ('protection of motherhood') to include both the provisions that directly relate to mothers and pregnant women and those provisions that apply to all women,[40] it was the removal of Articles 61 to 63 of the Labour Standards Law that was of particular interest. Thus, this study focused only on those articles containing the phrase *josei hogo kitei* ('women's protection provisions'). A total of 59 items between the four newspapers was found, ranging in date from May 1982 to July 2005.

My initial hypothesis was that opinions on the law reform would be split along a liberal/conservative line. This, however, was quickly disproved. Rather, all four newspapers called for the same resolution to the debate: that the provisions should be removed, and all warned that workplace gender equality in Japan would not eventuate without significant societal change. All raised concerns regarding Japanese workplace culture and working hours, as well as other gender-related issues such as the falling birth rate. While there was a large degree of consensus between the four newspapers, they had varying focuses and conclusions. The debate surrounding the *josei hogo kitei* removal was not between the newspapers, per se – there were no articles which stated that a rival paper was incorrect – but rather the debate played out in the papers, with the newspapers supporting various other actors while advancing their own opinions.

Debating the Removal – Equalising Up or Down?

The debate within the newspaper items was structured along the lines of protection versus restriction. Central to the debate regarding gender-specific legislation are the ideas of 'equality' and 'difference'. Were women different from men and in need of protection from Japan's overwhelming working environment, or were male and female workers essentially equal and the provisions therefore unfair and restrictive? Which should legislation support – should it protect gender difference, or enforce gender equality?

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40   Mackie, 'Unequal Labour Market', p. 100.

The original Labour Standards Law supported difference over equality through the *josei hogo kitei*. This argument re-emerged in the newspaper debate surrounding the removal of the *josei hogo kitei* – should the law continue to protect women's difference from men, or should it promote the essential equality between the sexes? The newspapers presented both sides of this argument through quotes from labour and business representatives before making their individual judgements, often using difference arguments and equality arguments interchangeably.

It was business representatives (hereafter referred to as 'management') that called most strongly for the removal of the Provisions. Referred to by the newspapers as *keieigawa* ('management side'),[41] *keieishagawa* ('proprietors' side'),[42] *shiyōsha* ('employer') or *keieigawaiin* ('management committee member'), management used the discourses of equality "to argue that 'equal opportunity' meant 'equal' treatment in all ways."[43] They failed to situate the long hours of the workplace within the wider social context where Japanese women shoulder the majority of household burdens while Japanese men work some of the longest hours in the developed world.[44] Management representatives argued for the law to remain as guidelines rather than provisions with punitive measures attached.[45]

Those presented in the media as being on the management side of the debate saw the provisions as restrictive; the provisions not only prevented women from working certain jobs but hindered management's hiring policies by placing legal limitations on a significant sector of the working population. The *Nikkei* was perhaps the newspaper which presented the most 'management-friendly' side of the debate, often focusing on what the changing law would entail for companies.[46] Given that the *Nikkei* is often viewed to be Japan's *Wall Street Journal* and is aimed at members of the business community, this attitude is relatively self-explanatory.

While management was united in calls for the provisions to be removed, those on the side of workers, the unions, were less supportive of this proposal. A number of different opinions emerged from union discussions, sometimes within a single union.[47]

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41 'Rōdō bun'ya', *Asahi Shinbun*, January 15, 1996; 'Koyō Kintōhō Minaoshi "Josei Hogo Kitei" Teppai ga Shōten (EEOL Review: Focal Point: Abolishing the Women's Protection Provisions)' *Mainichi Shinbun*, morning edition, June 6, 1996; 'Josei nimo', *Yomiuri Shinbun*, August 2, 1995.

42 'Saiyō • Shōshin, Danjo Sabetsu o Haijo – Kintōhō no Shishin • Shōreian Shimon (Recruitment and Promotion, Eliminate Discrimination - EEOL Guidelines and Proposed Ordinance)' *Nihon Keizai Shinbun*, morning edition, November 1, 1985.

43 Mackie, 'Unequal Labour Market', p. 100.

44 *Ibid.*

45 'Saiyō • Shōshin', *Nihon Keizai Shinbun*, November 1, 1985.

46 'Saiyō • Shōshin', *Nihon Keizai Shinbun*, November 1, 1985; 'Keizaishin, Kōdō Keikaku I Hōkoku no Yōshi – Tochi • Jūtaku, Koyō • Rōdō, Iryō • Fukushi (Economic Council, A Summary of the Action Plan Committee Report – Housing and Land, Employment and Labour, Health and Welfare)' *Nihon Keizai Shinbun*, morning edition, November 27, 1996.

47 'Jidōsha Sōren, Rōkihō no Hogo Kitei Teppai Yōkyū Hataraku Josei no Koe Haikei ni Katsuyaku no Ba Hirogetai (Confederation of Japan Automobile Worker's Unions, Demanding the Abolition of the LSL Protection Articles, Working Women Calling for More Work Opportunities)' *Yomiuri Shinbun*, morning edition, August 2, 1995.

The trade union movement has been ineffective for Japanese women as even in unions with significant female membership rates, female office-holders were still rare at the time of this debate. The large union federations in Japan have historically centred on full-time workers and unions have been enterprise-based rather than industry-based.[48] Those in part-time or temporary positions have been dealt with by the newer community and part-timers' unions. Due to the wide range of differences between unions, some unions, such as the Automobile Industry Worker's Union called for the removal of the provisions, citing the need for greater workplace equality[49] while others, including members of the Aichi Prefectural Federation of Trade Unions, called for the retention of the provisions, declaring that opening women up to harsher working conditions would be detrimental.[50]

The newspaper that provided the most enthusiastic support of the various unions with relation to the *josei hogo kitei* revisions was the *Yomiuri Shinbun*. The *Yomiuri Shinbun* mainly employed the reasoning that without the existence of the *josei hogo kitei*, women could help prop up Japan's decreasing workforce by creating a larger pool of workers.[51] The link between high barriers to workplace entry and a low fertility rate was briefly touched on by both the *Yomiuri Shinbun*[52] and the *Mainichi Shinbun*. The *Mainichi Shinbun* also addressed issues such as the heavy labour burden women face at home,[53] and called for a more relaxed working environment for both men and women.[54] The *Asahi Shinbun* was concerned that if the *josei hogo kitei* were relaxed, there were no guarantees that discrimination against women would be removed.[55] In one instance, the *Asahi Shinbun* stated that the removal of the protection articles at this stage would be putting the cart before the horse by pushing women into positions neither they nor society were prepared for.[56] However, in spite of concerns regarding death through overwork (*karōshi*) and Japanese working culture, the *Asahi Shinbun* did eventually lend its support to the removal of the *josei hogo kitei*, stating that such a severe dichotomy of roles within Japanese society is no longer acceptable.[57]

The four newspapers surveyed all supported the removal of the provisions but wished for changes in Japanese working culture. In raising concerns over the

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48 Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan*, p. 132.
49 'Josei Hogo Kitei Teppai o, Jidōshasōren, Teikitaikai de Hōshin – "Shōshin • Shōkaku no Samatageni" (Abolish the Women's Protective Provisions, Says Automobile Union's Conference Policy – "Hindrance to Promotions")' *Nihon Keizai Shinbun*, morning edition, September 5, 1995.
50 'Kisei Kanwa no Nami, Hataraku Jōken Akka ni Kikikan Kakuchi de Mēdē [Nagoya] (Everywhere on May Day: A Wave of Deregulation, A Feeling of Crisis Towards the Deterioration of Working Conditions [Nagoya])' *Asahi Shinbun*, evening edition, May 1, 1997.
51 'Nenkan 1800 Jikan Rōdō o Moru Keizaishi Rōdō Shōi ga Hōkoku (Yearly Working Hours Increased to 1800 Hours: Economics Council Labour Subcommittee Report)' *Yomiuri Shinbun*, morning edition, May 21, 1992.
52 "Danshi nomi Boshū" wa Tōranai ("Only Men Wanted" is Unacceptable)' *Yomiuri Shinbun*, morning edition, March 10, 1999.
53 'Koyō Kintōhō Minaoshi', *Mainichi Shinbun*, June 6, 1996.
54 'Rōdōhō Minaoshi Yutori Shakai o Tōzakeru na (EEOL Review: Don't Push Away the Expansive Society)' *Mainichi Shinbun*, September 5, 1998.
55 'Rōdō bun'ya', *Asahi Shinbun*, January 15, 1996.
56 'Josei Hogo no Haishi wa Yuruyaka ni (Slowly Abolish Women's Protections)' *Asahi Shinbun*, morning edition, December 20, 1996.
57 'Yuraida "Nibun Hō" Shakai "Danjo" to "Kanmin" ni Miru 96 Nen (Unstable Social "Dichotomy": "Men and Women" and "Government and People" Examined in 1996)' *Asahi Shinbun*, December 30, 1996.

hardships that women would face if asked to work the same hours and under the same conditions as men, Japanese newspapers added a new option to the 'equality' versus 'difference' debate. They, like many feminists, called for the protections to be extended to all workers, not just women.[58] Working on the assumption that gender equality in the Japanese workplace would simply be equality of exploitation, where long working hours for women combined with heavy household burdens would lead to greater social problems,[59] the newspapers in this study all argued that while the provisions unfairly restricted female workers, the lack of similar protective articles for male workers was equally unfair, and that all workers in Japan needed better protection than currently provided.[60] To use Susan Atkins' phrase, the newspapers feared that women would be "equalised down" by being forced into the harsh working conditions of men. They opined that all workers in Japan should receive the same protections, which would mean that men would be "equalised up" to a standard of working conditions equal to those afforded women.[61] As the statistical analysis later in this article shows, the fear of increased exploitation of women in Japanese society has eventuated somewhat; though the total annual hours worked in Japan have dropped since the late 1990s, it does not appear that the sexual division of household labour has equalised.[62]

The situation described by the newspapers is therefore what current feminist thinkers are calling for: an end to the mutually exclusive dichotomy and the creation of legislation that allows workers of both sexes to be different but equal. Though the newspapers considered that the provisions were restrictive towards women,[63] they felt that unless work-life balance in Japan improved, and issues such as death through overwork (*karōshi*) were addressed, removing the provisions would be premature.[64] While the newspapers all reached a consensus on much of the debate, they did have slight differences between them in attitude and focus. Of the four newspapers, I perceived the *Asahi Shinbun* to be the most reluctant supporter of the removal, with the *Yomiuri Shinbun* the most enthusiastic. The *Mainichi Shinbun* often focused on underlying social issues and the *Nihon Keizai Shinbun* detailed the specifics of the legal changes. All four newspapers expressed hope in Japan eventually establishing a gender-equal society. The remainder of this article uses statistics to analyse if the hoped-for changes in Japanese society have eventuated since the removal of the *josei hogo kitei*.

58   'Josei Hogo no Haishi', *Asahi Shinbun*, December 20, 1996; 'Shin'ya Rōdō Kisei nado, 'Josei Hogo Kitei' Teppai o – Rengō ga Jōken Tsuki Yōnin An (Late Night Work Prohibitions, etc, 'Women's Protective Provisions' to be Eliminated - The Unions Accept a Plan with Conditions)' *Mainichi Shinbun*, morning edition, May 17, 1996; '"Josei wa Ikiiki Hataraiteiru ka" (10) Minaoshi Susumu 'Hogokitei' (Rensai) ("Do Women Work Actively?" (number 10 in series): Progress in Reviewing 'Protective Provisions')' *Yomiuri Shinbun*, morning edition, July 6, 1996.

59   Mackie, 'Unequal Labour Market', p. 100.

60   While there are legal limitations on men's working conditions, these are often disregarded, particularly those related to overtime limits.

61   Mackie, 'Gendered Discourse', p. 62.

62   Tsuya, Bumpass and Choe, 'Gender, Employment, and Housework in Japan', pp. 207-16.

63   '"Danshi nomi Boshū"', *Yomiuri Shinbun*, March 10, 1999.

64   'Josei Hogo no Haishi', *Asahi Shinbun*, December 20, 1996.

Labour Conditions in Japan After the Provision Removal

The newspapers examined in this study hypothesised that when the *josei hogo kitei* were removed, several changes would occur. Women's labour force participation rates would not only increase, the length of time women would work would increase.[65] There were also fears that women would become more exploited, working longer hours outside the home while bearing the same burdens within the home. Though the links between labour and fertility rates were only briefly touched upon by the newspapers, there was an expectation that lower work entry barriers for women would lead to a lower opportunity cost of work for women, and therefore to a higher fertility rate. The following statistical analysis shows that many of these predictions have proved correct, though the total changes have been minimal.

It is important to note that, given the difficulties involved in measuring the precise social effects of a legislative change such as the *josei hogo kitei* removal, much of this analysis is largely speculative in nature. While this article shows what has happened since the provisions were removed, the precise amount of change that can be attributed solely to the removal requires further research beyond the scope of this article.

Each year, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Labour releases a report entitled "Survey on Working Women". By comparing these reports over the years, a picture develops of the changing situation of working women in Japan. There has been a definite increase in the proportion of women working in almost all age ranges since the removal of the Provisions. Though it cannot be stated that the overall increase in female labour force participation is solely due to the removal of the *josei hogo kitei*, the available data shows that more women at almost all age levels are partaking in work since the provisions were removed.[66]

65　'Koyō Kintōhō Minaoshi', *Mainichi Shinbun*, June 6, 1996.

66　It is interesting to note here the shape of the women's employment curve. This M-shaped curve indicates that it is still common for women to leave the workforce in their late 20s, most likely upon marriage or childbirth, before returning to the workplace once their children have grown. For a more detailed discussion of this topic, see Kumamoto-Healey, 'Women in the Japanese Labour Market', pp. 451-3.

Women's Labour Force Participation Rates
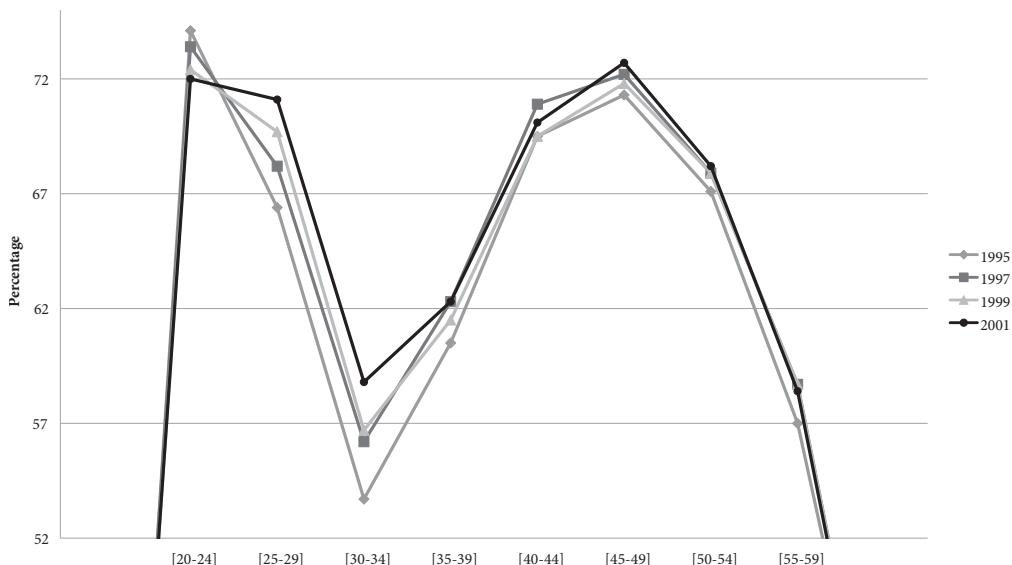
Figure 1 – *Sources: International Labour Organisation, LABORSTA Labour Statistics Database, "Table: 1A Total and economically active population, by age group (Thousands)" extracted 3rd June 2010;*
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, "Working Women's Situation, 1997", Figure 1-1.
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, "Working Women's Situation, 1999", Figure 1-1.
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, "Working Women's Situation, 2001", Figure 1-1.

While there is a subtle but definite increase in the number of female workers, the inequality of labour force participation rate with male workers remains significant. The percentage of women engaged in work has remained relatively stable in Japan, between 48.5% of women engaged in work in 1982 to 48.8% in 2007.[67] A slight decline in the percentage of women engaged in labour actually occurred between 1997 and 2002 – the period immediately after the removal. This is most likely due to wider economic factors, such as Japan's continuing economic woes and Japan's ageing, declining workforce, though legislative changes, including those discussed here, may have had some effect. In addition to the small total increase in women's labour in Japan, there has been a gradual increase in wage equality, though women's wages remain much lower than their male counterparts. In 1985, women earned 56.02% of the comparative male wage; by 2005 this had increased to 64.23%.[68] Wage inequality is slowly decreasing in Japan, though it remains one of the strongest forms of workplace inequality in Japan.

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67   Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, *2007 Employment Status Survey: Summary of Results*, Figure I-2.
68   Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Statistics Bureau, *Historical Statistics of Japan*, Table 19-36.

An increase in the number of women working and a slowly equalising level of wage parity are positive indicators of increasing equality within the Japanese workforce. However, the newspapers examined in this study expressed grave concerns over the need for Japan's working culture, in particular working hours, to change so that a better work-life balance could be achieved. To this end, the good news is that annual working hours are steadily decreasing in Japan. Since the late 1990s, annual working hours in Japan have not exceeded those of the United States, which signals a move towards a more work-life balanced society. It is likely that this represents a change in the underlying social assumptions that drive Japan's unhealthy work ethic, as hoped for in the various newspaper items examined in this study.

Annual Hours Worked
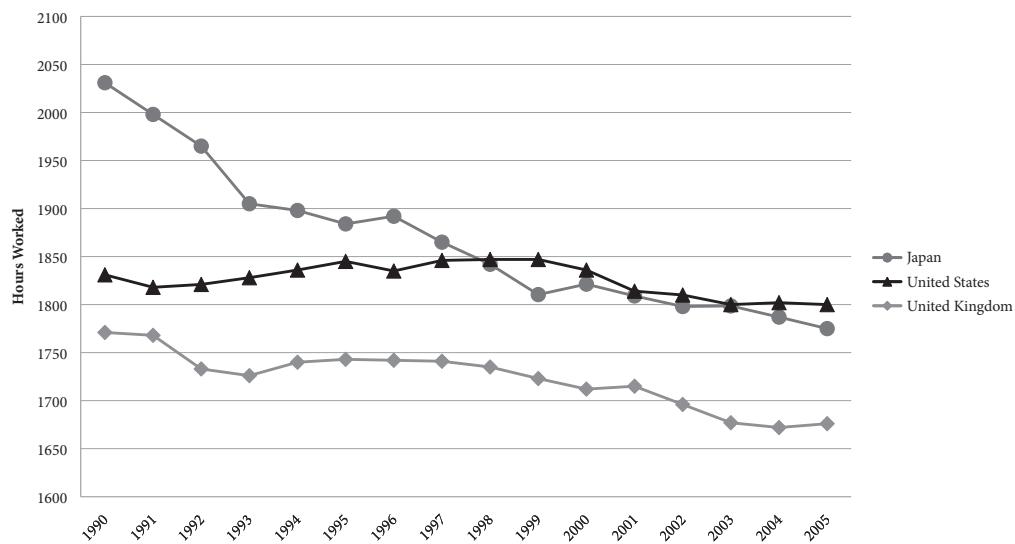
Figure 2 – *Source: OECD Statistics Database, "Dataset: Average annual hours actually worked per worker", extracted 4 June 2010.*

However, the average number of hours per day that men and women spend on domestic labour remains skewed. While the number of hours a woman spends doing housework each day has decreased from just over 3 hours in 1986 to 2 hours and 42 minutes in 2001, men still spent on average less than 15 minutes a day in domestic labour. This indicates that while support is gaining for women in the workplace, men are proving reluctant to shoulder the burdens of running a household.

Average Time Spent per Day on Housekeeping (Weekly Average) (1986 – 2001)
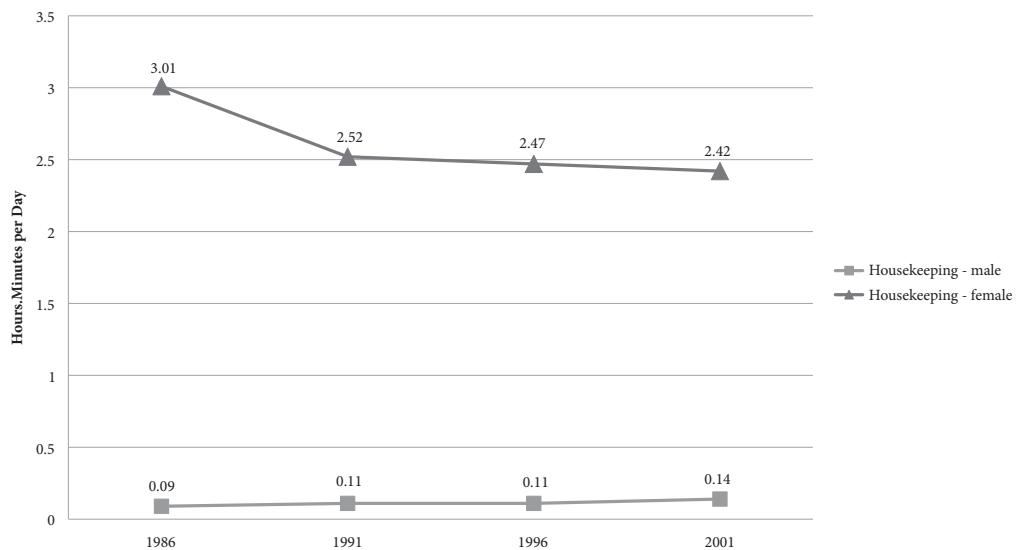
The 1992 Childcare Leave Law established the provisions for childcare leave: workers are allowed to take one year of leave to care for a child, which can be taken by either the mother or the father, or shared between the two.[69] Though there have been several revisions to this law,[70] the overwhelming trend remains for mothers to take this leave, rather than fathers – if the mother even continues to work at all.[71] While some men have begun to take paternity leave, it remains rare. 2010 marked the announcement of the first male local government official in Japan who had decided to take paternity leave (though he stated he planned to remain in the ward in case of emergencies, and would be attending a council meeting during his leave).[72] While Narisawa Hironobu's decision gained significant exposure in Japan due to its rarity, it is a sign that attitudes in Japan are slowly beginning to turn towards a more gender-equal set of social values, though Narisawa also received some criticism over his decision.[73]

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69 Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
70 See Sugimoto, 'Jendā Byōdō Seisaku', p. 179 for details of these changes.
71 Roberts, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-1.
72 Buerk, 'Japan Mayor Sets Paternity Leave 'Example'', *BBC News Online*.
73 Obara, 'Mayor Champions Paternity Leave', *The Japan Times Online*.

As the above data shows, many of the changes hoped for within the newspaper articles have eventuated. More women are working, and are remaining in work for a longer period of time.[74] Society is slowly adapting to support a healthier work-life balance, with annual working hours decreasing, though household labour remains heavily divided along gender lines. Though these are positive developments, the newspapers believed that by creating a more balanced society, some of Japan's wider social problems would be addressed, namely the low birth-rate. Unfortunately, as the following graph shows, the fertility rate has not significantly increased since the provisions were removed.

Total Fertility Rate (1950 – 2008)
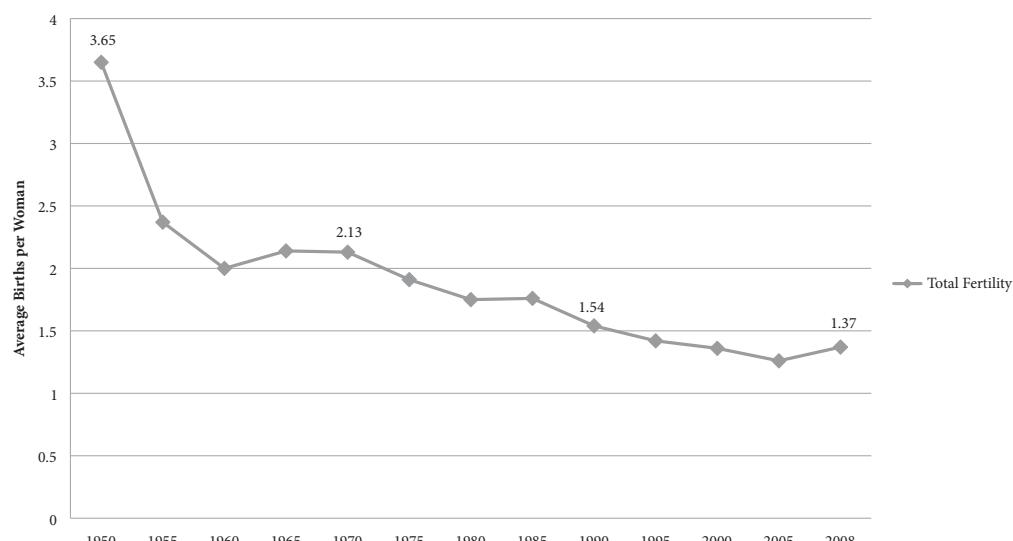
Figure 4 – *Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Statistics Bureau, "Statistical Handbook of Japan 2009", Table 2.4.*

In addition, the mean age of first marriage, for both brides and grooms, and of mothers bearing their first child are all increasing. The average age of marriage has risen between 1970 and 2008 from 24 years for women and 26 years for men to 28 years and 30 years respectively; the average age that a woman in Japan bears her first child has risen from 25 years in 1970 to 29 years in 2008.[75] The increasing tendency for women to have their first child later in life places additional pressure on the Japanese fertility rate due to the fact that Japan, unlike many other OECD countries, still "has not shown a trend

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74 This study has presented a study of women's labour changes in Japan in the last few decades of the twentieth century. For a further, more detailed examination of the changes to women's lifestyles and working patterns since the end of World War II, see Ueno, *The Modern Family in Japan*, pp. 41-59.
75 Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Statistics Bureau, *Statistical Handbook of Japan 2009*, Tables 2.5 and 2.6.

towards increases in births outside of marriage."[76] Government approaches such as the Angel Plan have not yet significantly alleviated this issue. Commentators such as Gotō Jun'ichi have remarked that it is too late to prevent this problem and that population increase measures should have been undertaken as early as the 1950s.[77]

Although Japan is slowly evolving into a gender-equal society, continuing problems such as these indicate that there is still a strong belief in the difference model of gender within Japanese society. While this was a topic discussed within several of the newspaper articles in this study, further research into the reasons behind the continuance of gender-discrimination in Japan is needed.

Conclusion

In recent decades, feminists have been torn between two seemingly mutually exclusive concepts: the individualist school of thought that argues that men and women are 'equal' and the relational school that states they are inherently 'different'. This dichotomy has informed most gendered discourses, including those regarding the role of gender-specific legislative provisions. This article has examined this argument within a Japanese context by using newspaper items regarding the removal of the Labour Standards Law's women's 'protection' provisions from four daily mainstream newspapers. The newspapers all supported the removal, stating that the provisions were unfair as men and women are essentially equal. However, they raised concerns that in removing the provisions, women were being equalised down to men's harsh working conditions, and that before gender equality could eventuate in Japan, significant changes needed to be made in Japan's underlying social structure.

By accepting one strand of feminist thought, the concept of the genders being 'equal but different', by creating a more gender equal society and encouraging women to be both mothers and workers, Japan can combat its underlying social problems and reduce such gender-based issues as death from overwork, the low fertility rate, and sex-based discrimination issues in the workplace. While legislation cannot force these changes to occur, actions such as removing the provisions have had a positive effect, with a slight increase in working women and a gradual decrease in annual hours worked indicating that change is slowly occurring in Japan. Whether these gradual changes are quick enough to offset the rapidly greying population and other social issues in twenty-first century Japan remains to be seen.

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76   Roberts, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-6.
77   Gotō, 'Aging Society', p. 9.

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The Localisation of the *Hana Yori Dango* Text: Plural Modernities in East Asia

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Abstract

This article examines the circulation and reception of the original Japanese *shōjo manga* text, *Hana Yori Dango*, through the three sites of Taiwan, Korea and Japan to both identify similarities and to investigate also specific differences between versions and how these differences relate to both cultural distancing and to cultural proximity.

The distance-closeness binary is most informed by the historical relationship Japan has had under Western socio-politico-cultural subjugation that in turn has informed the colonial relationship both Taiwan and Korea have had with Japan. The remnant of these (ongoing) relationships has directed a subjective encoding onto versions of the text adapted in East Asia. Therefore, the appearance of similarity between versions is underscored by social, political and cultural differences contextualised locally and promoted globally as a polymorphous and multilayered plurality.

Keywords

Japanese popular culture, East Asia, Hana Yori Dango, colonialism, identity-transformation

Introduction

Between the late 1950s and the early 1990s, Japan was seen as a 'miracle country',[1] an economic powerhouse that embraced an increasingly globalised network. Japan's path to modernisation, however, was fraught by its contradictory status as both an ex-imperial power and a culturally subordinated non-Western nation. From the Meiji era (1868-1912), through to the war-time era and even into the post-war years and the signing of the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty between the Allied Powers and Japan, the situation of Japan striving to be a '*rekkyō*' (Great Nation), but always subjugated to Western influence, created tension and complexity. The Japanese economic miracle concealed the hostilities created by this history behind a totalising notion of American

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1   J. A. A. Stockwin uses the term in "Series Editor's Preface" in *Globalizing Japan*.

cultural hegemony which saw Japan embrace American cultural models that expressed an idealised model of Western modernity.

The American cultural hegemony that dominated Japan, however, was skilfully appropriated and turned to Japan's advantage by using it as a model to establish a similarly all-encompassing Japanese cultural hegemony in East Asia. From the post-war era through to the 1990s, Japanese cultural products flowed into the East Asian region, thus establishing Japan as a model of Asian modernity. Nevertheless, from the start of the 1990s, the Japanese economy stalled, so that the asymmetrical flow of cultural materials between Japan and its Asian neighbours became more balanced. Throughout East Asia, markets deregulated in response to the forces of globalisation, which in turn resulted in rises in 'standards of living' as levels of industrialisation across the region gradually matched those of Japan. While the rhizomatic flow of popular culture throughout East and Southeast Asia is evident in all media and genre, this paper will focus on the circulation between Japan, Taiwan and Korea of a television drama series that first appeared as the *manga* (comic) in Japan entitled *Hana Yori Dango*. The comic was then adapted by Taiwanese and Korean television production companies for distribution in these two regions before being adapted again for television in Japan.

Examining the circulation and reception of *Hana Yori Dango* through the three sites of Taiwan, Korea and Japan will permit an investigation of the existence or otherwise of a shared East Asian contemporary space informed by a multilayered imaginary of modernity which allows for a plurality of culturally specific experiences that are 'different but equal'.[2] This article further problematises the extent to which the portrayal and decoding of modern lifestyles across national boundaries are layered and overlapped, and how 'different modes of Asian cultural modernity are articulated in them'.[3]

The analysis of the texts themselves will be conducted through a framework developed from the work of Russian formalist, Vladimir Propp. It will be argued that the representation of *Hana Yori Dango* follows a pattern of coded functions identified by Propp that constitutes the morphology of the 'fairytale'. In the context of *Hana Yori Dango*, the fairytale is a narrative supported by contemporary themes and images of youth constructing their identities in the modern East Asian urban environment.

The ready acceptance of *Hana Yori Dango* as a text and aesthetic model across East Asia - despite quite different political structures and colonial experiences over the last century in the three sites discussed - points to the story's resonance with common concerns,

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2   Iwabuchi, *Feeling Asian Modernities*, p. 165.
3   Iwabuchi, *Recentering Globalization*, p. 203.

dreams, and experiences. That common experience, I will argue, is the experience of Asian modernity problematised by the artefacts of post-colonialism and 'Confucian values'. The research direction of the paper examines the cross-cultural dynamics or popular culture flows around East Asia and is therefore not confined to one particular academic field, a perspective that follows the 'multidisciplinary studies' approach that characterises the work of scholars such as Koichi Iwabuchi, Leo Ching and Simon During.

Hana Yori Dango and its variants

The three versions of the TV drama *Hana Yori Dango* were adapted from a popular Japanese *shōjo manga* (girl's comic) of the same title.[4] The series was created by the Japanese cartoonist, Kamio Yoko, and serialised in the girls' magazine, *Margaret*,[5] between 1992 and 2003.[6] Thirty seven volumes of the comic book version (*tankōbon*) were also published during the same period. *Hana Yori Dango* has been chosen as a representative example of cultural content originally produced in Japan which was then shaped and transformed to impact on other markets in the region. During the 1990s, the comic version of *Hana Yori Dango* was imported to Taiwan and South Korea where it was extensively translated and popularised. Comic Ritz, a Taiwanese-based company, later re-produced the comics into the phenomenally successful television drama, *Liúxīng Huāyuán* (*Meteor Garden*, hereafter referred to as *MG*). Since 2001, this drama has been exported to and broadcast in more than ten East Asian countries. In spite of its presence from 1895 to 1945 in Taiwan as an imperial power, post-war Japan has had a positive relationship with its former colony, Taiwan.[7] It therefore comes as no surprise that the first television adaptation of *Hana Yori Dango* occurred in Taiwan. The four young male actors in the Taiwanese drama (hereafter referred to as T-drama) later re-grouped for the Sony Music label to form the music unit known as F4 (Flower Four), the name given to a schoolboy group in the original comic.

The success of *MG* in Taiwan led the Japanese television company TBS[8] to make their own adaptation of the original *manga* in 2005, retaining the title *Hana Yori Dango*. This was followed in 2007 by a sequel, *Hana Yori Dango Returns* (together referred to

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4   The comic has been remade into not only three official dramas (in Taiwan 2001, Japan 2005 & 2007, and Korea 2009) but also one spin-off (in Taiwan 2001), two live action movies (in Japan 1995 and 2000), one anime movie (in Japan 1997) as well as an anime series (in Japan 1996). *Hana Yori Dango* has sold over 54 million copies and has been the best-selling *shōjo manga* in Japan, http://www.toei-anime.co.jp/tv/hanadan/.

5   *Margaret* (*Māgaretto*) is a popular biweekly Japanese *shōjo manga* magazine for young girls published by Shueisha since 1963. *Margaret* Official Site, http://margaret.shueisha.co.jp/.

6   The title, *Hana Yori Dango*, is a play on words on a Japanese saying, 'Dumplings before Flowers'('*Hana Yori Dango*') literally, '*dango* (rice dumplings/pudding) rather than flowers'. 'Dumplings before flowers' is a well-known Japanese expression referring to people who attend *Hanami* (cherry blossom viewing parties). These people prefer food and drink to the abstract appreciation of the flowers' beauty. The expression has thereby come to refer to a preference for practical things rather than aesthetics/praise (*GENIUS Japanese-English Dictionary Second Edition*, Konishi and Minamide, 2003). The author of *Hana Yori Dango* created a play on words by changing the characters of the title to mean 'Boys over Flowers', rather than 'dumplings over flowers.' Note that 'boys' is normally read *danshi*, but the Japanese phonetic guide *hiragana* indicates that it reads *dango*.

7   Ching, *Becoming 'Japanese': Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation*.

8   Tokyo Broadcasting System Television.

hereafter as *HYD*). The high ratings of both productions inspired TBS in 2008 to launch *Hana Yori Dango Final* as a movie involving locations in Hong Kong and Las Vegas.[9] The popularity of both *MG* and *HYD* led to Korea producing their own local version screened by KBS2TV[10] in 2009 as *Kkot Boda Namja* ("*Boys Over Flowers*", hereafter referred to as *BOF*). The Korean version was a huge success both domestically and throughout Asia with a peak local viewer rating of 35%.[11]

Origin and Adaptation

Like all *shōjo* narratives, *Hana Yori Dango* focuses on the choices and actions that girls make to negotiate their transitions out of the safety of adolescence into the more defined states of adulthood.[12] The *shōjo* heroine is always, in one way or another, an active agent engaged against both the villains of her narrative and the social ills that created them. By deferring womanhood and its attendant responsibilities, the girl maintains the open-ended possibility of adolescence.[13] *Yukari Fujimoto* points out that *shōjo manga* is not only a realm which reflects women's desires and values, but also one in which the contemporary messages contained within the *shōjo* narrative appeals to a wider audience that includes male viewers.[14]

In the storyline, the protagonist, Tsukushi - named after a tough wild weed[15] - is a girl from an average family. She is nonetheless full of fighting spirit and optimistic cheerfulness. Tsukushi attends a prestigious college (*eitoku gakuen*) ruled by the F4 (Flower Four), a group of four male students each from a powerful and wealthy family. Although Tsukushi's family hopes she will meet a rich boy at the college and marry into wealth, Tsukushi hates everything about the college including her snobbish classmates. She especially 'hates herself' in being unable to confront the corruption and elitist authority within the school hierarchy. She just quietly gets on with attending to her studies, hoping that time in the college will pass without any incident or problems. One day, however, when she stands up for a friend being tormented by Tsukasa Dōmyōji - the leader of F4 - Tsukushi is 'red-flagged' as a rebel. As a result she is bullied by other students at the order of the members of F4. In spite of the fact that he is one of the boys

9   Official Site, http://www.tbs.co.jp/hanayoridango/.
10   KBS2TV is one of the terrestrial television channels of the Korean Broadcasting System, which broadcasts mainly lifestyle and entertainment programs and dramas. KBS Official Site, http://www.kbs.co.kr/.
11   Official Site, http://www.tnsmk.co.kr/.
12   Robertson, *Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan*.
13   Le, *Possibility and Revelation in Card Captor Sakura Through the Subversion of Normative Sex, Gender, and Social Expectation*, p. 90.
14   Fujimoto, 'Onna to Ren'ai: Shōjo Manga no Rabu Iryūjyon'.
15   *Tsukushi* means 'spores of Equisetum' (commonly known as Horsetail). Horsetail is native to moist forests, forest edges, stream banks, swamps and fens throughout North America and Eurasia. The stalks arise from rhizomes that are deep underground and almost impossible to dig out. The foliage is poisonous to grazing animals, whereas, the young fertile stems bearing *strobilus* are cooked and eaten by humans in Japan, although considerable preparation is required and care should be taken (Ashkenazi and Jacob, p. 232).

demanding her mistreatment, F4 member, Rui Hanazawa, helps Tsukushi when she is attacked by a group of male students. Following this attack Tsukushi decides that she will not tolerate any more ill treatment by F4. She then physically strikes Tsukasa as a declaration of 'war' on the F4 group.

Ironically, Tsukasa, who has never before been challenged by another student, begins to develop feelings for, and tries to woo, Tsukushi, who gradually begins to spend more time with F4. As the story progresses, Tsukasa falls in love with Tsukushi and she in turn learns how to open herself to his affection. As love continues to blossom, Tsukasa's imperious businesswoman mother discovers the couple's relationship and deems it unsuitable. She therefore does everything in her power to keep the two apart, even arranging a marriage for Tsukasa. Other complications arise as Rui falls in love with Tsukushi and, in a twist of fate, Tsukasa loses his memory after an accident. In the end, however, Tsukasa and Tsukushi learn that love (putatively) conquers all. For Tsukushi, it is a journey of regaining her self-identity, whereas for Tsukasa, it is a journey to discover his self-identity.

The following table introduces the characters from the comic and also gives the broadcast periods for each of the three television versions under study.

Table 1: Comparing versions

	Comic	**Taiwanese (T) Version** *-MG-*	**Japanese (J) Version** *-HYD-*	**Korean (K) Version** *-BOF-*
Title	*Hana Yori Dango*	*Meteor Garden* (Liúxīng Huāyuán)	*Hana Yori Dango*	*Boys Over Flowers* (Kkotboda namja)
Period	Serialized in the bi-weekly anthology magazine *Margaret* (Shueisha) 1992 - 2003 Collected into 37 tankōbon volumes.	Season1 (19 eps) 12/04/2001 – 16/08/2001 on CTS Season 2 (31 eps) 11/11/2002 – 25/12/2002 on CTS	Season1 (9 eps) 21/10/2005 - 16 /12/2005 on TBS Season2 (11 eps.) 05/01 2007- 16/03 2007 on TBS	(26 eps) 05/01/2009 – 31/03/2009 on KBS

Resource (Official website)	*Margaret* http://margaret. shueisha.co.jp/	http://www.hkatv. com/drama/ metrogarden/	Season 1 http://www. tbs.co.jp/ hanayoridango/ Season 2 http://www.tbs. co.jp/hanadan2/	http://www.kbs. co.kr/drama/f4/
Tsukushi	Tsukushi Makino	Shan Cai (Cast: Barbie Xu)	Tsukushi Makino (Cast: Inoue Mao)	Geum Jan Di (Cast: Koo Hye Sun)
Tsukasa (F4)	Tsukasa Dōmyōji	Dao Ming Si (Cast: Jerry Yan)	Tsukasa Dōmyōji (Cast: Matsumoto Jun)	Gu Jun Pyo (Cast: Lee Min Ho)
Rui (F4)	Rui Hanazawa	Hua Ze Lei (Cast: Vic Zhou)	Rui Hanazawa (Cast: Oguri Shun)	Yoon Ji Hoo (Cast: Kim Hyun Joong)
Tsukasa's mother	Kaede Dōmyōji	Daoming Feng	Kaede Dōmyōji	Kang Hee Soo

Morphology of the Folktale

Hana Yori Dango can be regarded as a modern variant of the classic Cinderella folk tale. As such, it lends itself to analysis in terms of Propp's morphology, outlined by Alan Dundes (1984) and John Fiske (1987), which regards the folk narrative as a systematic structure of coded functions.[16] In applying this Proppian logic to *Hana Yori Dango* we have taken, as representative of the three versions, the Japanese comic and TV drama names and events and aligned these against the story of Cinderella. In devising a set of coded functions, Propp examined over one hundred Russian folktales. He thereby concluded that, while characters could be permitted to have more than one functional role, all folk tale characters could be resolved into *only* seven broad character archetypes. These seven Proppian archetypes can be identified in both *Hana Yori Dango* and also in Cinderella and are listed in the following table. Fiske defines character type in terms of a 'sphere of action' rather than through the sphere of gender.[17] It needs to be noted here that in *Hana Yori Dango* the gender roles of hero and princess have been reversed, so that the heroine Tsukushi becomes a Proppian *hero* and the prince Tsukasa becomes a Proppian *princess*.

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16   Vladimir Propp (1895 -1970) was a Russian formalist scholar who analysed the basic plot components of around 100 Russian folk tales to identify their simplest irreducible narrative elements (narratemes). After the initial situation is depicted, the tale follows a sequence of 31 functions, not necessarily in strict order.
17   Fiske, *Television Culture,* p. 137.

Table 2: Archetypes

Character Type	Function	*Hana Yori Dango*	Cinderella
The donor	*Prepares the hero or gives her a magical object*	-Shizuka Tōdō (F4 friend, Rui's first love) -Tsubaki (Tsukasa's sister)	The fairy-witch
The hero or victim	*Reacts to the donor, weds the prince*	-Tsukushi	Cinderella
The villain	*Struggles against the hero*	-Tsukasa's mother, rich and powerful matriarch -Sakurako Sanjō (Hero's first 'friend' at the school)	Stepmother
The princess and her father	*Gives the task to the hero, identifies the false hero, and marries the hero*	-Tsukasa (F4 leader) -Tsubaki (Tsukasa's sister)	The Prince
The (magical) helper	*Helps the hero in the quest*	-Rui Hanazawa (F4, Hero's first love) -Tsubaki (Tsukasa's sister) -Tama (Family servant head) -Yūki Matsuoka (Hero's best friend)	Seven mice become six white horses and a coachman
The dispatcher	*Character who makes the villain known and sends the hero off*	-Rui Hanazawa (F4, Hero's first love) -Jyunpei Oribe (A boy who has a grudge against Tsukasa)	Ministers of the Court
False hero	*Takes credit for the hero's actions or tries to marry the prince*	-Umi Nakajima (the girl who Tsukasa meets in hospital during his memory loss) -Shigeru Ōkawahara (Tsukasa's fiancée)	Cinderella's Stepsisters

Propp's formalistic approach has not been without criticism. Casey et al., for example, suggests that this type of 'content analysis' is 'too crude a device to tell us much

about the way in which media texts actually work'.[18] Nevertheless, for the purpose of this study Proppian archetypes are useful for defining themes embedded in a text and for qualifying encoded contexts and characters.

Common Themes in *Hana Yori Dango*

Although the various productions of *Hana Yori Dango* have been localised to meet the preferences of their regional audiences, it is possible to identify core elements common to each version. These core elements include power struggles between the classes and gender, family unity, transformation and the affirmation of the heroine. Where the storyline is the same across versions, I have elected to use the Japanese names generically unless discussing a particular versional character. Examples taken from scenes cited in the following sections refer to all versions of the text in order to demonstrate a common thread among versions.

Power

The series is not only a love story but a drama about power and control, a theme universal to the dynamics of family, education, work and social group relations. The drama gives a microanalysis of the opposing dynamic of individual power versus the power of institutionalised expert knowledge, a dynamic that Michel Foucault refers to as the 'public right of sovereignty' versus 'a polymorphous disciplinary mechanism'.[19] The former is represented by the heroine (Proppian *hero*), Tsukushi, while the latter is shaped through the Dōmyōji (Tsukasa's family) empire.

Tsukushi is initially regarded as an outsider or 'commoner' and we see her 'common' lifestyle when after school she returns to her 'real' world where she lives in a small residence with her family and works part-time in a shop. Parallel to this, the viewer is also taken into the world of the 'establishment'. Here, F4 members walk and move about with an air of superiority, idolised by groups of students parting the way for F4 'catwalk' appearances. Tsukushi is not impressed; rather she finds the setting repugnant. She also struggles to reconcile her sense of self as a moral person, especially as her silence becomes tacit assent to the social abuses that occur in the school. After being the subject of severe bullying, Tsukushi finally makes clear her intention to resist domination by the hegemonic forces that control the school in her declaration of 'war' against Tsukasa (Proppian *princess*). When Tsukasa tries to assert his power, Tsukushi

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18 Casey et al., *Television Studies*, p. 55.
19 Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, p. 106.

knocks down the figurehead of the establishment by firing back with her own verbal assault: 'I don't care if you're the son of a plutocrat. Someone like you hasn't even worked hard for money so don't get too carried away' (*HYD*, eps.1). This event is the first step towards regaining her identity. Through this action she symbolically undermines the hierarchical structures of the school and society, an act that paves the way for her acceptance by F4 as a person of high moral standing and as a feminine peer.

In addition to creating a space for the powerless to negotiate access to social rights, *Hana Yori Dango* also demonstrates the strong moral fibre of the powerless who, for example, resist the approaches of a corrupt organisation attempting to buy its way out of a problematic situation. After getting information about Tsukushi's family background, the matriarch of the powerful Dōmyōji family visits Tsukushi's parents and offers them US$1million for Tsukushi to stay away from her son. The family turns down the offer with Tsukushi's mother pouring salt over the visitor as a symbolic gesture of cleansing that situates the Dōmyōji matriarch (Proppian *villain*) as an outsider polluted by calculating ambition.[20] Tsukushi's mother, on the other hand, claims her pride and honour over money when she declares: 'You don't understand the feeling of a mother whose child is being insulted? Do you think the poor cannot be a mother?' (*MG*, eps.10).

All versions rely on creating a tension between the gender divisions of institutionalised male self-centredness against discursive feminine resistance. When Tsukasa issues an order to a group of his fellow male students to make life hell for Tsukushi, the male gang, hormones unleashed, corners the protagonist in a sexual attack. Although she puts up a fight, Tsukushi is outnumbered and physically overpowered. This violent scene is interrupted by the abrupt appearance of Rui (Proppian *helper*), who steps in and tells the attackers to get lost. While Tsukushi's sense of helplessness has reduced her to tears, the event triggers her revolt against the forces that have attempted to violate her. The very next day she confronts Tsukasa and declares 'war'. In this way Tsukushi is portrayed not just as a target of oppression but also as someone invested with the vitality of a 'weed grass' that has the ability to rebound against male coercion.

As the story progresses and Tsukushi and Tsukasa reconcile some of their differences, violence returns in another form precipitated by Jyunpei Oribe (*Proppian dispatcher*)[21] and a group of students bearing a grudge for past bullying experiences condoned by Tsukasa. Tsukushi is kidnapped by this group in order to lure Tsukasa to a place where the group can extract their revenge on the F4 leader. In order to protect

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20 In the native Japanese religion, Shinto, salt is used for ritual purification of locations and people, for instance in *sumo* wrestling. Salt has a long history of use in rituals of purification, magical protection, and blessing in various parts of the world (Latham, 1982).

21 Jyunpei Oribe plays an important role as a Proppian *dispatcher,* who, by initiating this event, makes Tsukushi realise her true feeling toward Tsukasa.

Tsukushi, Tsukasa declines to fight back. Instead, it is Tsukushi who, although tied to a chair, does her best to protect her friend by throwing her body between Tsukasa and his attackers and taking their blows with the chair. Having made their point and seeing Tsukushi's devoted self-sacrifice the others give up and leave.

This scene represents a significant rupture in the dynamics of power and a breakdown of established structures leading to a reversal of gender roles which sees feminine power actualised and the establishment overthrown. To extend this analogy beyond the specifics of the capitalist de-odorised text and into the socio-historic context, we might see this event as a re-configuring of power relations across East Asia which situates 'masculine' Japan as conceding cultural superiority to its former 'feminine' colonial states. With this possibility in mind, it is to be expected, then, that the depiction of rupture in *BOF* and *MG* is more violent and extreme than in *HYD,* corresponding to the traumatic experience of colonisation and, at least in the case of Korea, loss of identity. The melodrama provides a 'style that can express the emotional truths of this historical reality'[22] in spite of the fact that this is concealed behind a superficial façade of universal experience.

The Family

Although there are degrees of difference between versions, the family is represented as a coherent unit throughout the drama so that familial ties and sense of duty are featured in each episode in the series. In all versions, the father either struggles and gets laid off or loses the family business, a reflection of the economic climate of Asia in the early 2000s. Faced with economic crisis, the father loses more money through gambling, forcing the family to move to a provincial area. Subscribing to rather old-fashioned ethical values, Tsukushi works part time and helps support her family members who, despite their lower socio-economic status, each make sacrifices in order to send her to the prestigious school she attends. It is the hope of the family that there she will have the opportunity to meet a boy from a rich family and marry into wealth, thereby ensuring family financial security in the longer term.

In the Asian middle class context, studiousness and success in education cannot be underestimated. Children are expected to attain the highest possible standard of education and thus be better resourced to provide for their aging parents. Jeong-Kyu Lee articulates Asiatic values as centering on 'Confucian culture and higher education in the

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22   McHugh and Abelmann, *South Korean Golden Age Melodrama,* pp. 5-7.

East Asia region'.[23] Confucianism, as a socio-political construct, is based on a 'hierarchical authoritative order' which then supports 'reciprocal humane relationships'. According to Lee, obedience to authority leads to 'homogeneously closed organisational systems' while relationships that are based on reciprocity 'lead to paternalism or favoritism'.[24] There are doubts that there is any 'natural' Confucian ethic, nevertheless, it is clearly the case that, in defining an identity based on a Confucianist model as morally superior to a corrupt West, this ethic has taken hold of the public imaginary throughout East Asia.

Tsukushi does not like the idea of attending the prestigious school. She feels very uncomfortable and 'out of place' in the environment of obedience to the hierarchal authoritative order. She confides to her best friend from the previous school, 'If not for my mother, I would not attend that school' (*MG*, eps.1). With this statement Tsukushi reinforces the position of 'family first' while also acknowledging her mother as more significant than her father. We might note that this dominance of the mother presents a significant rupture of the Confucian model outlined above. As the story progresses, Tsukasa's mother uses trickery and influential power to pull her son and Tsukushi apart, a tactic which directly affects the financial position of the families of Tsukushi and her best friend. Anticipating the possible fragmentation of her family, Tsukushi gives up Tsukasa. He also lets her go in order to focus on the business affairs of his own family. An arranged engagement quickly follows for Tsukasa, so keeping the Dōmyōji empire as an 'homogenously closed organisational system'.

The father as a direct figure of authoritative significance is absent in all versions of *Hana Yori Dango*. Tomoko Hamada's 1996 study[25] foregrounds the loss of male authoritative power of businessmen in Japan. She argues that the salary man 'has come greatly to resemble the ideal nineteenth century Victorian middle-class woman-driven by duty and loyalty, subservient and other-directed'. Hamada goes on to conclude that 'in the post-postmodern megalopolis, Japanese men, women and children - whom I have characterized as the absent father, the feminized son, the selfish mother, and the disobedient daughter - face the task of establishing new and diverse meanings of the family and weaving multiple images of work and play'.

In *MG*, (eps.5), this demand for 'new and diverse' meanings of 'family' is evident when Shan Cai wonders if her father has been promoted. Her mother exclaims, 'How can it be your Papa? Your papa will never become a manager in this lifetime – even in our home, the title of 'Manager' is held by me!'. This shows that the father in the Taiwan version

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23   Lee, 'Asiatic values in East Asian higher Education', p. 45.
24   *Ibid.,* p. 48.
25   Hamada, 'Absent Fathers, Feminized Sons, Selfish Mothers and Disobedient Daughters'.

has no status either socially or domestically. The *HYD* father, too, has a subordinate role. For instance, he looks forward to receiving a small beer allowance from the mother who controls the family's purse strings in order to pay for Tsukushi's school fees.

Two important characters in the story that carry symbolic functions as substitute family members are Rui, one of the F4, and Tama, the head maid in the Dōmyōji household (another Proppian *helper*). Devoted to empathising with Tsukushi, Rui functions as a brother/helper while also playing the third man in the story's love triangle. In difficult situations, Rui is there to back Tsukushi up and even to rescue her. For instance, Rui's first appearance in the narrative comes when Tsukushi is bullied at Tsukasa's orders and Rui wards off her attackers. This foregrounds the dynamics that operate for the rest of the drama between Tsukushi, Rui and Tsukasa.

Tama is an elderly and wise figure who functions as an advisor, a symbol of compassion, and a caretaker of traditional rules of conduct for the Dōmyōji family. Having been in charge of the day-to-day running of the household since the days of Tsukasa's grandfather – the patriarch – it is she who sets standards for the other family members. In one scene, Tama angrily berates Tsukasa's mother 'to be quiet', suggesting that she (Tama) carries a responsibility bestowed by the grandfather for all household matters. In this sense, 'new' matriarchal power is played against old patriarchal established customs.

The Makeover: Transformation and Desire

In all versions of *Hana Yori Dango,* the narrative embraces the transformation of Tsukushi in a fairytale progression from commoner to princess, a transformation aided by characters assigned with certain 'powers' to effect her destiny. While a 'tough weed' by nature who can fight her way through the mechanisms of suppression in the school, Tsukushi 'needs' to be rescued and taken care of by others. Colette Dowling (1990) refers to the unconscious desire to be saved and carried away in the arms of a man as the 'Cinderella Complex', which Dowling argues is evoked through women's unconscious fear of becoming independent and alone. While this hypothesis has some application to *Hana Yori Dango* there are two additional points worth considering within the Asian context. Firstly, it may be that the fear of becoming independent from the family is an oxymoron in the case of the girl or young woman in Asia. Independence *from* the family is different to independence *for* the family, which has been suggested as Tsukushi's motivation for attending the school. The second consideration concerns the male fear of women who seek to be independent and alone. For example, the fact that Tsukasa dresses up and transforms the wild and independent Tsukushi into someone he can

tame and control suggests a male centred motive based on fear of the unknown woman who can operate independently of a man.

The problematic of the Cinderella complex as male centred fear of female independence versus female centred fear of becoming independent is apparent in the opening episode scene of Tsukushi's first transformation following her being kidnapped and drugged by Tsukasa's bodyguards and taken to Tsukasa's mansion. Here, she is given a facial, hair treatment, a gorgeous black dress and jewellery before being taken into Tsukasa's parlour where he tries to buy her undivided, and future, attention. Tsukushi is stunned by this forced transformation which feels alien to her. Unable to compromise her feelings of selfhood and independence, she demands her own clothes and runs off.

Although this set of actions appears not to support the Cinderella complex of being swept away by a man, the purpose of this scene, I suggest, is twofold. Firstly, kidnapping and transformation identifies the protagonist as fearful and anxious when facing a crisis of self identity. In other words, there is a conflict between her present sense of self and the possibility for a future new identity that suggests 'a desire for knowledge of a hidden, perhaps forbidden, self'.[26] Secondly, the scene is used to create tension that is later released with Tsukushi's acceptance and subsequent dependence on Tsukasa's status and financial resources.

Susan Napier, in discussing Japanese *shōjo* anime, notes that, while the romantic comedy presents a world in which women are growing increasingly independent, at the same time, 'the fundamental gender division between the supportive woman and the libidinous male seems to remain miraculously intact'.[27] Napier adds that the traditions of romance become comical when the woman is endowed with powers that destabilise the conventions of hierarchy, place and status. The tension created in the dynamic of idealised stability and fantastic chaos is an important source of creative energy sustaining the *HYD* narrative. The facts of a common girl being able to enter the elitist school, being labelled as unique and, managing to capture the heart of the male figurehead become the fantastic elements that combine to produce the fairytale. However, Tsukushi cannot win the heart of the 'prince' on her own. Her transformation involves helpers, donors and rescuers as outlined using Propp's archetypes for fairytales. The 'declaration of war' scene and the 'first punch' are the counter actions defining Tsukushi as the Proppian hero and represent the moment when the cruel 'prince' is dethroned and his humanistic sensibilities awakened.

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26 Norris, 'Cyborg girls and shape-shifters: The discovery of difference by Anime and Manga Fans in Australia'.
27 Napier, *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle*, p. 197.

The roles of donor, rescuer and protector are tied to the desire of the protagonist to be transformed. In Asia, the Cinderella fairytale is often used in popular culture because women desire to be given a 'makeover' and be transformed by an external agency to effect their emancipation from the perceived narrow confinement of their lives. The typical transformation found in girls' comics, where the make-over is regarded as a marker of femininity, involves clothes and make-up.[28] The desire to transform reflects the problematic of identity in the contemporary world and reveals deep-rooted fears and anxieties about relationships and the status of the body.[29]

Tsukushi as Heroine

In *shōjo manga*, the basic theme of the 'romantic' genre over the past twenty five years has been affirmation of the young woman protagonist by another, typically a 'prince' like character.[30] Girls, generally speaking, know they are not special - not beautiful, not smart, not rich and not talented – so that the acceptance of such ordinariness by the 'prince' is the core element appealing to a reading audience. Elise K. Tipton assesses the way comic-based representations of women characterise both the preservation and subversion of traditional female roles.[31] Tsukushi upholds traditional values of passivity, self-sacrifice and virginity while also confronting and resisting corruption found within the school's patriarchal establishment.

In some respects, Tsukushi is like the protagonist in the hit soap opera, *Oshin,* broadcast on Japanese television (NHK)[32] as a morning serial between April, 1983 and March, 1984. Paul Harvey describes the heroine of Japanese morning soap opera (*asadora*) as a comic hero - comic in the sense that she is able, through her own effort, to transform a hostile environment. Harvey also points out that the heroine carries two burdens: that of revitaliser of her own family that has often been disrupted by ill-fortune, and that of seeker of a 'non-traditional' dream in which female desire for self-improvement and social innovation comes up against established power structures.[33] So, too, in *Hana Yori Dango* is Tsukushi occupied with the dual concerns of bad luck in the family and of self transformation that must confront and deal with obstacles such as social class difference, bullying and a villainous and uncompromising matriarch (and perhaps future mother in law?). The way the protagonist negotiates her way around these 'obstacles' varies between the three versions of the text and

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28 Saitō, *Kōitten Ron*, p. 27.
29 Napier, *op. cit.,* pp. 291-292.
30 Hashimoto, *Hana saku Otometachi no Kinpira Gobō Kōhen*, pp. 97-130.
31 Tipton, 'Being women in Japan 1970 – 2000', p. 224.
32 *Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai*: Japan Broadcasting Corporation.
33 Harvey, 'Nonchan's Dream: NHK Morning Serialised Television Novels', pp. 137-140.

will be discussed in the following section to determine the extent to which versional variations gesture towards a localised idealisation of (post)modernity.

Korea, Taiwan and Japan: Analysing Differences

CTS began broadcasting *MG* into Taiwanese households in 2001. The series became an instant success for viewers accustomed to and tired of viewing tedious and drawn-out 'traditional' prime-time dramas with conventions of 'local flavour, historical anguish and moral exhortations'.[34] Where older dramas set out to reinforce traditional values and established codes of behaviour, the appearance of the post-trendy drama brought a new ethos for the young in the guise of romance as a tool to explore the Self using idol role models with whom youth could identify. Compared to traditional Taiwanese prime time drama, the format was fast paced, sophisticated, urban and modern, and packaged with the latest popular music including original songs performed by F4. Nevertheless, local tastes, such as family relationships, respect for elders, generational conflicts and superstition, were also built into the narrative. Despite these localisation strategies, the flavour remained Japanese by retaining the Japanese character names and through using sets containing Japanese style interior items such as *tatami* floor mats,[35] *shōji* windows,[36] and *futon* bedding. In addition, a number of locations, such as Okinawa as an F4 holiday destination and a traditional style hot-spring *ryokan* (Japanese inn) built in Taipei by the Japanese Imperial Army during the occupation of Taiwan, added to this flavour. While locations such as these may inflame negative memories of Japan as cultural hegemon and neo-coloniser for some older Taiwanese, according to Iwabuchi, history bears no such scars for the younger generation.[37] For them, this popular culture idealisation of modernity is essentially non-political and fails to differentiate source from content. On the other hand, the Korean version has no trace of Japanese flavour - any association with the origins of *BOF* has been removed. Furthermore, a comparison of the various versions of *Hana Yori Dango* needs to address the use of character names and whether or not naming reflects any postcolonial bond between either Korea or Taiwan and Japan.

Naming and Depiction of the Heroine

MG kept the original Japanese name character read with Chinese pronunciation: exotic names that obviously indicate Japanese roots. One exception was Shan Cai (Japanese

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34   Liu and Chen, 'Cloning, adaptation, import and originality: Taiwan in the global television format business', p. 68.

35   A *tatami* floor mat is a traditional type of Japanese flooring, which is made of rice straw to form the core with a covering of woven soft rushes (Sugiura and Gillespie, 1993, p. 146).

36   A *shōji* is a door, window or room divider consisting of translucent traditional paper (*washi*) over a frame of wood which holds together a sort of grid of wood or bamboo (Sugiura and Gillespie, 1993, p. 158).

37   Iwabuchi, *Recentering Globalization*, p. 125.

phonetic sound *sugina*), the characters for which indicate the mature Horsetail (Equisetum), a tough, green, poisonous plant. The name, 'Tsukushi', invests Japanese audiences with a feeling of affinity with her character, which, associated with the image of this rural plant, further emphasises her commonality. Hence, although they are the same plant, 'shan cai (*sugina*)' and *tsukushi* evoke very different images and impressions. The transformation from the soft to the tough plant provides a metaphor for the Taiwanese experience of colonisation, indicated as growth or departure from past (colonial) experiences toward a more independent position built around self-reliance. Both Shan Cai and Tsukushi are unusual names for girls, whereas Jan Di (grass), the name of the *BOF* protagonist, is not uncommon for girls in Korea. 'Grass' Jan Di seems to be weaker than 'rural weed' Shan Cai and Tsukushi. These observations reflect the suggestion put forward by Okyopyo Moon[38] and cited by Harvey[39] that Korean women have internalised the Confucian values that subordinate women to men to a greater degree than have Japanese women who, on the whole, exist in a more liberal society.

Furthermore, all other original character names in *BOF* have also been replaced with common Korean names. NEWSEN reports (11 Sep. 2009)[40] that at a *BOF* press conference a representative of the Korean publisher announced that the company would not use the original Japanese names from *HYD* in spite of the fact that this was a condition of the production rights contract. The announcement nonetheless indicated that the Korean names would reflect the original character's implied personality. However, apart from the obvious 'weed/grass' analogy, it is hard to connect the Korean names with the Japanese original names,[41] which could be interpreted as an intentional removal of any past associations with Japan as coloniser. Ascribing new names for each character can be additionally seen as a Korean effort to create a legacy and style different from the Japanese origin.

The Heroine as a mother

In *HYD* and *MG*, Tsukushi and Shan Cai represent a mother figure or the side of femininity for which Tsukasa and Dao Ming Si (the Tsukasa character), whose own mothers are distant and unknowable, really yearn. That is, their relationship with Tsukushi/Shan Cai is based on their (unsatisfied) need to know their mother. There is a

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38   Moon, 'Confucianism and gender segregation in Japan and Korea'.

39   Harvey, *op. cit.,* p. 134.

40   http://www.newsen.com/news_view.php?uid=200909111230401020 [Korean].

41   All the Korean character names are written in *Hangul* (Korean phonetic writing system). Since *Hangul* is unable to carry implicit meaning(s), I have referred to the meaning of each character's Korean name released in the *BOF* official site [Chinese version]: [http://www.ctv.com.tw/event1/meteor_garden/]. Jan Di (Grass/weed). Jun Pyo (Emergence/representation of excellence/brightness), the name expresses Jun Pyo's position in his family as a successor of a big corporation. Ji Hoo (Heartfelt wisdom) characterised as a gentle boy able to look after and support Jan Di.

scene from *HYD* which depicts Tsukushi and Tsukasa trapped in an elevator overnight and which shows the signified bond between the couple. The physical placement of the pair is representative on the one hand of twins in the womb, but also can be read as Tsukushi letting herself be a substitute mother for Tsukasa. The scene occurs after Tsukushi has repeatedly rejected Tsukasa's overtures.

The womb image, however, is absent from *BOF* in which the pair are left at the top of a cable-car station and spend a cold night together sitting upright on a seat. The closeness and intimacy of *HYD* might be interpreted as a superior cultural intimacy (more modern, more Western, more 'colonial', more Other) with 'closeness' as a signifier for (post)modernity. In *MG*, the elevator is the set with Dao Ming Si lying with his head cradled in the lap of the sitting Shan Cai. The depiction of the cable-car scene in *BOF* represents a different interpretation of the protagonist, Jan Di, who carries less sense of a mother figure. For Jun Pyo, Jan Di symbolises the battle he must go through in order to release himself from the hegemony inscribed by his corporate family. Rather than Jan Di herself, it is Jan Di's family that plays an important part in comforting and educating Jun Pyo in matters of interpersonal relations.

Confucian values and Family centredness

In an audience study of Korean drama, Lin and Tong emphasise the importance of the reflexivity of the audience in the portrayal of different kinds of family and traditional values often interpreted as 'Confucianist'. At the heart of these Korean dramas is what Lin and Tong's informants describe as the 'Asian worldview'.[42]

The K-drama invests the family with a more central role. An example, unique to *BOF,* follows the salt throwing scene in Jan Di's house. Jan Di's mother then visits the mother of Jun Pyo (Tsukasa's character) to respectfully ask forgiveness and, also, to borrow the money that she initially refused to accept. Salt is again used in the *BOF* story to express self-effacement when Jan Di's desperate mother swallows her pride and begs for help from Madam Kang (the *BOF* matriarch). Despite Jan Di's mother's prostration, Madam Kang does not give ground easily. Instead, reflecting the hierarchical Confucian society, she coolly observes that everything has its systematic order: 'Wrongs must be apologized for, debts repaid, then help given. I am a businesswoman, so I cannot abide calculations and procedures that are not conducted properly' (*BOF*, eps.12). Jan Di's mother then takes out a parcel – a bowl of salt - which she pours over her own head in front of Madam Kang to plead for forgiveness. In this way, Jan Di's mother humbles

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42   Lin and Tong, 'Re-Imagining a Cosmopolitan 'Asian Us': Korean Media Flows and Imaginaries of Asian Modern Femininities', p. 99.

herself in order to save the family financially so that the family will be freed from losing their business and therefore able to stay together. In other words, even if it leads to a loss of face, the collective unity of family is seen as more important than the individual needs of family members.

Realism and Melodramatic differences

The sense of realism relates to the extent that the drama is both able to parallel and also be faithful to the sentiments of the *shōjo* narrative. Where *HYD* (and to a lesser degree, *MG*) invests the protagonist with power of her own agency, the Korean melodramatic spectacle of suffering results in an indigenised text mismatched with the Japanese *shōjo* narrative. The lack of realism in *BOF* is in some respects unfair, since the melodrama in this version evokes both the realism of a vicious colonial past and compressed modernisation under the surveillance of a repressive political system in Korea. Melodrama provides a style that is able to express the emotional truths of this historical reality.[43] Furthermore, when hinged to the instability of colonial oppression, the genre can provide a framework that attests to the excess of violence depicted in *BOF*. Although the visual style of all versions is sustained through fantasy and romantic comedy, the safety of that fantasy is unexpectedly ruptured by the stark and brutal school violence depicted. This violence is emphasised to the greatest degree in *BOF* when compared to the other two versions.

In *BOF* and to a lesser extent *MG*, the melodrama is further enhanced through the stylised technique of incorporating flashback scenes into the narrative, whereby sentimentality is reinforced through replaying previous scenes. This technique of recapitulation serves several purposes. Firstly it is a cost-effective production technique that lengthens the series; secondly it reinforces previously viewed scenes; and, thirdly, it assists viewers to recollect the past and to recover, 'artefacts that effectively compress forms of historical experience'.[44] Chow suggests the nostalgic response in recovering the memory of what has been lost results in a mosaic that 'produces not history but fantasies of time'.[45] Flashbacks to a previous scene or to a past period in a character's life sustain a sense of nostalgia that can also evoke a sense of pity in an audience. For example, in *BOF* Jun Pyo and Jan Di are walking through a dark park. Suddenly the park is lit with decorative lights pre-set by Jyn Pyo who asks his companion, 'Do you like it?' Jan Di nods happily, 'It's pretty. It's like Christmas'. When Jun Pyo asks what's so great about Christmas, she responds that it's a happy day. Jun Pyo, however, disagrees. 'I've

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43   McHugh and Abelmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-7.
44   Chow, 'A Souvenir of Love', p. 211.
45   *Ibid.*

never had a happy memory of it', he tells her. A flashback shows the audience a lonely little Jun Pyo being entertained by maids and his butler who also deliver impersonal gifts from his parents. This scene demonstrates the 'fantasies of time' where the present is imagined as a pastiche and the past is represented through artefacts of historical experience. For Jan Di, who associates the event with happiness, the nostalgic response is positive, whereas for Jun Pyo, the response evokes memories of loneliness. I suggest that in this scene 'Christmas' represents the period of (de)-colonisation in Korea with Jun Pyo representative of the cultural legacy of trauma for the Korean people, a legacy that Robert Hemmings argues operates from 'the same liminal space between memory and forgetting, rooted usually in the experience of surviving war'.[46] In the analogy, Jan Di maintains the historical continuity of celebrating decolonisation and the opportunity to 'move forward', whereas Jun Pyo continues to suffer from the twin effects of historical colonisation and an inability to reconciliate the past with the modern present.

Concluding Remarks

This article has investigated how modernity fashions the lifestyle and choices of East Asian youth represented through the fictional accounts narrated in *Hana Yori Dango* in order to problematise the extent to which the portrayal and decoding of (post) modern lifestyles across national boundaries allows for a plurality of culturally specific experiences. The ready acceptance of *Hana Yori Dango* as a text and aesthetic model across East Asia - despite quite different political structures and colonial experiences over the last century in the three sites discussed - points to the story's resonance with common concerns, dreams and experiences. As templates for modernity, the three regional texts of *Hana Yori Dango* when presented at the localised site of decoding carry particular indigenised imprints that are seen to have several functions.

Firstly, the text itself must have universal appeal, the template of the Cinderella story can be superimposed upon the Asian imaginary to create culturally specific contexts. The encoder, informed through the production process, acts as a mediator of consciously constructed messages that serve to confirm and reinforce the audiences' positive image of themselves. Furthermore, the post-trendy drama boom of the 1990s, which was advanced by production houses responding to the expectations of viewers, sought to reflect changes in contemporary society, particularly in the lives of women.

Secondly, the text has to be easily transposed onto a format for commodification and dispersal across cultural boundaries through the process of 'translation' whereby

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46   Hemmings, *Modern Nostalgia*, p. 3.

moving idealised (Western) images of modernity into a new cultural space creates the potential for active engagement, reflexivity and adaptation. This process provides for a plurality of Asian national cultural responses not reducible to ideas generated from Western modernity. Post-colonial theory and post-structuralism frames the narrative as 'incomplete', 'open' and 'adaptable' to a 'plurality of voices', supporting the view that *Hana Yori Dango* allows for a multiplicity of culturally specific translations.

Thirdly, the text has to provide for the 'needs' of the audience: the post-trendy drama offers a tool for envisioning the desire to create a positive self image as a global 'subject' rather than for a local colonised 'subject'. The contemporary foreign urban landscape provides the audience with an index of realism, envisioned through an 'imaginary of modernity' that provides for a 'different but equal' East Asian contemporaneity. Moreover, through choices tailor made by the television industry in order to predict and secure popularity, the illusion of direct access to specific models of postmodern lifestyles is maintained through active decoding by the viewer. In this scenario there will be a relationship between the popularity of a programme and the extent to which it reinforces the ideological position of the majority audience - a position that caters for an 'Asian worldview' based on varying degrees of Confucian ideals.

Fourthly, postmodernity as a heteroglossic phenomenon, is received, processed and 'understood' non-uniformly through indigenised texts at local sites of reception - thereby allowing for an appreciation of difference and for a multiplicity of effects. *Hana Yori Dango* succeeds in celebrating the representation of a contrived and illusory 'reality'.

This article has examined the circulation and reception of the original *shōjo manga* text, *Hana Yori Dango*, through the three sites of Taiwan, Korea and Japan to both identify similarities and to investigate also specific differences between versions and how these differences relate to both cultural distancing and to cultural proximity. The distance-closeness binary is most informed by the historical relationship Japan has had under Western socio-politico-cultural subjugation that in turn has informed the colonial relationship both Taiwan and Korea have had with Japan. The remnant of these (ongoing) relationships has directed a subjective encoding onto *MG*, *HYD* and *BOF*. Therefore, the appearance of similarity between versions is underscored by social, political and cultural differences contextualised locally and, promoted globally as a polymorphous and multilayered plurality.

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Learners' Strategies for Transliterating English Loanwords into Katakana

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Abstract

Post-World War II, the Japanese language has experienced massive influxes of foreign words and expressions into its lexicon, known as "loanwords" or borrowings. These lexical items are commonly written in Japanese using katakana symbols. Transliterating these words into katakana accurately is a primary source of difficulty for foreign learners of Japanese. Previous studies in the field of learners' transliteration of foreign loanwords have focused mainly on error analysis and no formal study has investigated the basis for learners' methods of transliteration.

Using a combination of interviews and think-aloud procedures, 21 students at the University of Queensland, who were studying 1st year Japanese courses, were surveyed. The students transliterated a list of selected loanwords and expressions into katakana, while responding to inquiries about their transliterations and verbalising their mental processes. These interviews were then analysed for evidence of strategies. The students also completed a short survey on their learning background and exposure to the Japanese language outside the classroom. Strategies were subsequently identified and the answers to the surveys were analysed for evidence of correlations between students with a higher level of accuracy in transliteration and their strategies and extra-curricular exposure.

Keywords

Katakana, loanwords, transliteration, strategies, JFL

Introduction

Loanwords have been a part of the Japanese language since Chinese characters were adopted as Japan's first writing system around 800 A. D.[1] In addition to *kango*, or words of Chinese origin, loanwords from other foreign languages, known as *gairaigo*, have been adopted into the Japanese lexicon. In 1987, Neustupný estimated that loanwords made up about 6% of the Japanese lexicon. In recent years analyses of newspaper texts have shown this figure to have risen to 10%, with 80% of loanwords originating from

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1   Backhouse, 'The Japanese Language: An Introduction'.

the English language.[2] This phenomenon has triggered government action, such as the *bunka shingikai kokugo bunka-kai* (Ministry of Cultural Affairs National Language Subdivision) paper on the transcription of foreign loanwords, public surveys by the Ministry conducted from 2003 – 2006 designed to investigate the comprehensibility of foreign loanwords to the Japanese public, and the formation of a *gairaigo iinkai* (Foreign Loanword Committee) whose mission is to replace loanwords of low comprehensibility with original native Japanese words.[3] Researchers have also conducted newspaper analyses in order to determine the rate of increase of loanwords in circulation.[4]

In the teaching of Japanese as a foreign language (JFL), the current pedagogy of foreign loanwords relies on inductive learning as defined by DeKeyser,[5] that is, individual examples of the correct form are presented to learners before the rules are explained. Hulstijn[6] states that deductive and inductive learning are by definition both part of explicit instruction because rules are always given at some point. However, few textbooks introduce these rules, even ones designed at focusing on katakana. This is evidenced in katakana resource books such as "Learning katakana words from the news - 350 Words" [7] which exposes learners to loanwords in the context of modified newspaper articles, but does not teach them about rules or strategies that may be helpful in approaching the transliteration of these words.

This is also because rules for transliteration do not exist in a single, comprehensive and consistent framework. It would be more accurate to say that there are systems of guidelines for transliteration compiled by government bodies and language researchers,[8] which show variation in their presentation, including exceptional cases, occasional contradictions between rules and omissions of certain rules from different sources. Therefore learners currently seem unequipped to engage in deductive learning on the transliteration of foreign loanwords. As indicated by the studies mentioned below, japanisation and transliteration of loanwords continue to pose common problems for learners of JFL. It is also the author's anecdotal experience that JFL learners find loanwords problematic.

An important point is that loanwords have properties that make them useful lexical items for English native speakers learning Japanese. Loanwords that are cognates have similar or guessable meanings in English compared to their original

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2   Neustupný, 'Communicating with the Japanese'.
3   Igarashi, 'The Changing Role of Katakana in the Japanese Writing System: Processing and Pedagogical Dimensions for Native Speakers and Foreign Learners'.
4   Oshima, 'Gairaigo Usage in Japan: From Cultural Controversy to a New Analytical Framework'.
5   DeKeyser, 'Implicit and explicit learning'.
6   Hulstijn, 'Theoretical and Empirical Issues in the Study of Implicit and Explicit Second-Language Learning'.
7   Sakai and Nishihira, 'Learning Katakana Words from the News – 350 Words'.
8   Kobayashi, Quackenbush and Fukada, 'Gairaigo ni mirareru nihongoka kisoku no shūtoku', pp. 48 – 60; Ohso, 'Eiongo no onkata no nihongoka', pp. 34 – 48; Kawarazaki, 'Katakana no dōnyū ni tsuite', pp. 17 – 28.

form and phonological realisation which makes them easy to remember. Japanising the pronunciation of English words when a Japanese word is unknown is a possible way of being understood by Japanese native speakers because there is also a remote chance that the word might happen to be a loan, or the word may be recognised by Japanese who have had exposure to formal English learning during primary and secondary education.[9] Therefore, knowing how to correctly Japanise English words can facilitate JFL learners' communication skills.

Previous studies in the field by Kobayashi, Quackenbush and Fukada,[10] Inagaki,[11] and Ohso[12] have used error analysis to identify stops, long vowel sounds and palatals as elements frequently transliterated inaccurately by learners of JFL. These studies have made anecdotal assumptions that learners are guided in their transliterations by either the English spelling of the loanword or by their own pronunciation. No other studies so far have attempted to investigate whether learners transliterate using other strategies.

In contrast to previous studies dealing with the transliteration of loanwords in katakana, methodologically the study reported here took a qualitative approach to investigating the strategies used by learners to transliterate loanwords into katakana. Here, learners of JFL participated in individual interviews in which they were asked questions about their reasons for deciding on a particular transliteration. Further, while transliterating any specific test words, JFL learners were asked to verbalise their mental processes in a method known as "think-aloud procedure". "Think-aloud" procedures have found application in previous second language acquisition studies, particularly those relating to studies of learners' reading comprehension.[13] In addition, this study developed profiles of individual participants, having students complete a survey about their prior JFL learning experience and extra-curricular exposure to Japanese. Due to the small size of the participant group, qualitative elements were analysed in addition to quantitative in order to identify and evaluate the success of learners' strategies for transliteration.

This study aimed to identify and then to evaluate the strategies learners use to transliterate loanwords into katakana symbols. By combining think-aloud procedures with interviews, this study took a qualitative approach so far not attempted by researchers in this area. The results provided new insight into learners' thinking and decision-making processes with regards to the transliteration of loanwords and use of katakana symbols. Analysis of the participants' learner history and extra-curricular exposure

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9   Neustupný, *op. cit.*
10   Kobayashi, Quackenbush and Fukada, *op. cit.*
11   Inagaki, 'Gairaigo hyōki no kijun to kan'yō', pp. 60 – 73.
12   Ohso, *op. cit.*
13   Leow and Morgan – Short, 'To think aloud or not to think aloud: the issue of reactivity in SLA research methodology', pp. 35 – 57.

to Japanese language also provided evidence linking certain types of exposure with greater accuracy of transliteration, which could lead to the development of an improved teaching model or a new learning resource for loanwords, which are an integral part of the evolving Japanese lexicon.

Research Methodology

In this study, three instruments were used to collect data. These were a Learner History Questionnaire, a written test and an interview in which learners were encouraged to explain aloud their reasons for transliterating a word in a particular way.

Participants

All participants were first year students at the University of Queensland, who had completed at least one Japanese language course of 178 hours in Semester 1 2007, through the School of Languages and Comparative Cultural Studies. With the co-operation of Japanese language lecturers, I was able to email students information about the study, and recruit volunteers during lectures and Japanese language conversation groups. Over a period of approximately one month, twenty-one students volunteered to participate and were recruited and interviewed. Of the 21 participants, 10 were male, 11 were female, and three were aged 21 years and over, while the remaining 18 were 18 to 20 years old. Seventeen of the participants were native English speakers, while two were native Mandarin speakers, one was a Cantonese native speaker, and one identified as Swedish/English bilingual.

Learner History Questionnaire

Participants were given a Learner History Questionnaire which asked for information on a participant's age, gender, learning stream, prior formal learning experience of JFL, and any extra-curricular exposure to the Japanese language. The questionnaire was designed to provide a more detailed indication of the scope and nature of learners' exposure to formal and informal experiences of learning Japanese. Data on the extent and varieties of exposure was later correlated with learners' strategy use and accuracy of transliteration in order to investigate which types of and how much exposure produce higher accuracy of transliteration.

Test Sheet

Participants were also asked to transliterate a selection of ten English words and expressions into katakana. Nine of these were the same as those used in Kobayashi, Fukada and Quackenbush's loanword transliteration study.[14] Their study required learners to transliterate a list of 48 words, each one involving one or more japanisation rules as posited in the aforementioned study.

Participants transliterated the words into katakana. If they wished to change an answer, they were asked to circle the original response, and write the new answer beside it, in order to preserve all data. The words selected for use in my study were those in Table 1.

Table 1. English words and expressions used in this study

English word	Japanese transliteration	Romanized representation
Beige	ベージュ、ベージ	*bēju, bēji*
Bus terminal	バス・ターミナル	*basu tāminaru*
Massage	マッサージ	*massāji*
Yellow	イエロー	*ierō*
Question mark	クェスチョンマーク	*kwesuchonmāku*
Mother	マザー	*mazā*
Tulip	チューリップ	*chūrippu*
Cash card	キャッシュ・カード	*kyasshu kādo*
Hammer	ハンマー	*hanmā*
Guitar	ギター	*gitā*

Preston and Yamagata's loanword transliteration study[15] focused on learners' accuracy in transliterating English geminates[16] into katakana, using ッ, the *small tsu* symbol representing a phonological stop. This study was based on the earlier-established premise that using this symbol appropriately is an area of difficulty for learners.[17]

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14 Kobayashi, Quackenbush and Fukada, *op. cit.,* pp. 48 – 60.
15 Preston and Yamagata, 'Katakana representation of English loanwords: Moraconservation and variable learner strategies', pp. 359 – 379.
16 A 'doubled' or long consonant, according to The American Heritage Dictionary*.
17 Kawarazaki, *op. cit.,* pp. 17 – 28; Kobayashi, Quackenbush and Fukada, *op. cit.,* pp. 48 – 60; Inagaki, *op. cit.*, pp. 60 – 73.

Lengthened vowel sounds were often transliterated incorrectly by learners, according to Kobayashi, Quackenbush and Fukada;[18] Inagaki;[19] Kawarazaki;[20] and Ohso.[21] Inagaki[22] also identified palatals as problematic.

Based on these findings, I purposely selected words and expressions that contained these problematic elements. All ten words and expressions in my list include at least one long vowel sound, and three out of the ten include a stop (ッ) – "massage", "tulip" and "cash card". Four also include one or more palatals in Japanese – ベージュ、ベージ *bēju, bēji* "beige", ク ェスチョンマーク *kwesuchonmāku* "question mark", チューリップ *chūrippu* "tulip", and キ ャッシュ・カード *kyasshu kādo* "cash card". I also investigated how students would attempt to transliterate sounds not naturally occurring in Japanese phonology, such as [ð], [ə] and [ɜː], which are found in the items "mother", "hammer" and "bus terminal" respectively.

Think-aloud procedures in Previous Research

According to Gass and Selinker,[23] the most common methodologies used in researching learning strategies are observations, verbal self-reports or online protocols (often called think-aloud protocols). However, they acknowledge that '…it is difficult, though perhaps not impossible, to observe mental behaviour of learners'.[24]

The structure of a typical think-aloud interview is as follows:

1. Students are given a task to work on, which may be a reading comprehension text, a 'fill in the blank' passage or a taped text to listen to.

2. Students are asked to describe their thoughts before, during and after the task in real time.

3. The interviewer prompts the student with general questions or reminders (e.g. 'What are you thinking right now?').

4. The student is either allowed a moment to pause and think-aloud, or the task is marked for places in which they are to think-aloud.

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18 Kobayashi, Quackenbush and Fukada, pp. 48 – 60.
19 Inagaki, *op. cit.*
20 Kawarazaki, *op. cit.*
21 Ohso, *op. cit.*
22 Inagaki, *op. cit.*
23 Gass and Selinker, 'Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course.'
24 *Ibid.*, p. 266.

5. The interview is recorded and later transcribed word for word.[25]

Think-aloud procedures were first used to investigate the processes of learning and using a language in the 1970s by Hosenfeld, who identified the characteristics of more effective readers through think-aloud procedures conducted during reading tasks.[26] Later studies conducted by O'Malley, Chamot and Küpper,[27] and Chamot and Küpper,[28] identified differences in strategies between more and less effective language learners. O'Malley and Chamot[29] used think-aloud procedures (which they refer to as on-line processing studies) to identify Language Learning Strategies (LLS) that students used and to discover in greater detail what students meant when they said they used a specific strategy.

Benefits of Think-Aloud Procedures

The advantage of the think-aloud procedure is that it has the potential to capture the learner's thought processes while they are actually performing a task. Another benefit of using the procedure is its capacity to discover strategies which have become automatic to the extent that they are only registered momentarily in the short-term memory.[30] Oxford and Crookall's paper[31] about research conducted on language learning strategies mentions a number of specific studies which aimed to discover learners' strategies by either interviewing learners, listening to them think-aloud, or by combining the two procedures, as in this study.

Limitations of Think-Aloud Procedures

O'Malley and Chamot discuss two areas for concern regarding data collected by self-report methods: the concurrence of a learner's verbal report with their actual thought processes and changes in these processes which could be effected by questions asked during the data collection.[32] Cohen[33] refuted the former concern by noting that a concurrent introspective approach such as self-observation or self-revelation, rather than a retrospective approach, can gain a more accurate picture of the learner's

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25 Hatch and Yoshitomi, 'Cognitive Processes in language learning,' pp. 66 – 95.

26 Hosenfeld, 'Learning about learning: Discovering our students' strategies,' pp. 117 – 129.

27 O'Malley, Chamot and Küpper, 'Listening comprehension strategies in second language acquisition,' pp. 418 – 437.

28 Chamot and Küpper, 'Learning strategies in foreign language instruction,' pp. 13 – 24.

29 O'Malley and Chamot, 'Learning strategies in Second Language Acquisition'.

30 *Ibid.*

31 Oxford and Crookall, 'Research on Language Learning Strategies: Methods, findings and instructional issues,' pp. 404 – 429.

32 O'Malley and Chamot, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

33 Cohen, 'On taking language tests: what the students report'.

thought processes. The latter issue was addressed by Brown et al.,[34] who noted that although it may have a detrimental effect on the learning process, thinking aloud does not tend to alter the fundamental reasoning process. Indeed, as identified by Ericsson and Simon,[35] the major internal change that occurs during the think-aloud process is that the thinking processes must slow down enough to allow thoughts to be verbalised.

In the process of conducting this study, I was confronted with each of the following limitations, and devised ways to manage them as much as possible. O'Malley and Chamot[36] found the limitation that learners, becoming sensitised to what the researcher is interested in, may invent strategies and reasons without any real foundation. This situation could arise also in an atmosphere where a participant feels pressured to provide a valid reason for every response. The degree of success achieved in a think-aloud procedure relies at least partially on the strength of the rapport and the level of comfort which the researcher is able to attain with the student. The more comfortable a student is in an interview, the less reticent they will be about sharing thoughts and reasons which may seem to them unreasonable or invalid. For the purposes of a think-aloud procedure, which is designed to capture a learner's raw and unadorned mental processes, an informal atmosphere is therefore the most conducive. It is also beneficial to inform the student, explicitly or otherwise, that there are no incorrect answers, and that all reasons have validity.

A limitation of the method from the perspective of researchers concerned with learning strategies is that with this method, learners typically have no opportunity of planning for learning and reflecting after task completion.[37] However, by providing planning time before the task, and eliciting self-evaluation from the learners after the task, this limitation can be overcome.[38]

Think-aloud procedure in this study

For the purposes of this study, participants completed a short written test as described earlier and were encouraged to explain their reasons for transliterating a word in a particular way. Participants were questioned immediately after completing task items and again after the written portion of the study, so that the strategies which they had used were still fresh in their short-term memories. In order not to influence participants' responses, I refrained from initiating discussion or criticism of their responses during the interview.

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34   Brown et al., 'A Quasi-Experimental Validation of Transactional Strategy Instruction with Low Achieving Second-grade Students'.

35   Ericsson and Simon, 'Verbal Reports on Thinking,' pp. 24 – 54.

36   O'Malley and Chamot, *op. cit.*

37   Hadley, 'Research in Language Learning: Principles, Processes and Prospects'.

38   *Ibid.*, p. 114.

The primary task of the researcher is to create an interview atmosphere most conducive to accomplishing their objectives; in this case, a low pressure, relaxed ambience.

Each participant was interviewed individually, with interviews lasting up to fifteen minutes in length. There was no set time limit; each interview continued until the participants felt they had nothing further to contribute. The participants' main task was to write down their transliterations of the English words on the test sheet, while verbalising their reasons for transliterating a word in a certain way. As they did so, I verbally acknowledged their comments and encouraged them to voice their ideas. My principal role however, was to ask participants to justify their transliterations. Questions of this nature were asked while they were transliterating test words and after they had completed the test. The following are typical examples of the types of questions I asked participants:

'So why do you think you spelt "yellow" like this?' (to Participant 12)

'Why did you put a long sound here do you think?' (to Participant 17)

'Why do you think you put small "tsu"?' (to Participant 8)

Because it has been established in previous studies that stops, long vowel sounds and palatals are frequently transliterated inaccurately by JFL learners, I focused on asking questions about participants' transliterations of these elements, or other areas where a participant expressed uncertainty or difficulty while transliterating.

Results

Upon examination of the transcripts of the participants' interviews, five distinct strategies for transliteration became apparent, which were named and characterised as follows.

Precedent (P)

The precedent strategy was used when a participant transliterated according to their memory of a word or construction to which they previously had been exposed. Use of this strategy was expressed in explanations such as, 'I've seen it before' (Participant 14), 'I've seen it on another word somewhere, a similar construction to that one' (Participant 21), '"er" is always the longest one' (Participant 17), 'In many Japanese words they used to use "shon"' (Participant 12) etc. In particular, Participant 19's comment 'I notice they like to add little sounds at the end' (Participant 19), almost describes an established rule.

Reasons under this category were usually coherent and required little interpretation to identify the inherent strategy.

English Pronunciation (EP)

This strategy was used when students transliterated a word with the goal of imitating their perception of the word's original pronunciation when spoken by English native speakers. Participants' explanations in this category encompassed those which included the word "English," for example, 'it sounded closer to the English sound' or in which they made reference to the "original" pronunciation of the word, or stated that it was 'how I'd say the word'. In some instances, participants stated that they were trying to achieve a certain sound which was present in the original pronunciation of the word; these explanations were also placed under the English Pronunciation strategy.

English Spelling (ES)

The English Spelling strategy refers to the situation where a participant was guided in their transliteration of a word by its original English written form. This strategy was commonly used when participants were confronted with a geminate (repeated consonant) in the words "massage," "yellow" and "hammer". Explanations which indicated use of this strategy were clearly and explicitly expressed compared to those indicating use of other strategies. For example reasons such as, 'because it's the double m' (Participant 4), or 'because there's i in the English word', (Participant 17), required little interpretation. As a consequence this strategy was more easily identified than the other strategies described here.

No Rule (NR)

This strategy, or lack thereof, encompasses instances where the participant could provide no explanation for their transliteration of a word. 'I don't know' and 'I'm not sure' were typical responses under this category. Statements which were considered to be incomplete or not indicative of any strategy also fell into this category. For example, in response to being questioned as to why she had used a vowel extending symbol in a particular position, Participant 20 replied 'to make it sound longer'. Although this comment was offered as an explanation, actually the participant did not provide any relevant information.

Inductive Rules (IR)

The Inductive Rules strategy was the strategy most commonly used by the participants (fifteen out of the twenty-one used it as their dominant strategy). It refers to cases where the participant transliterated according to internal rules; rules of their own formulation which they a) invented by themselves, or b) have unconsciously internalised or derived from outside sources, a process encompassing inductive learning or c) remember explicitly or implicitly, that is, with or without conscious awareness. Inductive Rules discussed here are not to be confused with established rules posited by previous researchers and Japanese government bodies, as mentioned in the Introduction. The majority of JFL learners are unaware of and lack knowledge of these established rules. Therefore these learners can construct a system of Inductive Rules without having awareness or knowledge of rules which have been officially recognised.

Explanations which indicated the use of the Inductive Rules strategy were characterised by phrases such as 'it looks right', 'it seems right', 'I think it should be like this'; all expressions that implied that the participant was transliterating according to some internal standard or yardstick. Even if they were unable to verbalise the nature of the rule or its source, such justifications provide evidence of the existence of internal systems by which some learners transliterate.

Analysis and Discussion

After the five strategies were identified, the strategies which each participant used predominantly were determined to discover the range of strategies used by individuals and whether strategic preferences exist. This was achieved by individually assigning a strategy to each highlighted explanation then counting the numerical frequency with which each strategy was used, as a proportion of the total number of reasons given by the participant. Twelve of the twenty-one participants used two of the strategies with almost equally high frequency and three of the participants each used three strategies interchangeably with high frequency (see Table 2 below).

Table 2. Participants' dominant strategy and learning background compared to test score

Participant	Score (out of 64)	Dominant Strategy	Learning Background
1	43	P	2 years private study
2	39	NR	3 years primary, 5 years high school
3	49	NR, P, EP	3 years primary, 5 years high school
4	53	P, ES	6 years high school
5	39	NR, IR	2 years primary, 5 years high school
6	53	IR, P	3 years high school, 16 months in Japan
7	47	EP	4 years high school
8	44	NR, P	5 years high school
9	52	IR, ES	5 years high school
10	40	NR, IR	5 years high school
11	49	IR, P	3 years primary, 5 years high school
12	43	IR, P, EP	4 years high school
13	38	IR	2 years in Macau, 2 weeks in Japan
14	53	IR, P	5 years high school
15	54	IR	4 years high school
16	40	IR, EP	5 years high school
17	48	IR, P	4 years high school
18	37	IR, P	None
19	37	IR	2 years high school
20	36	IR, NR	None
21	44	IR, P	None

Previous researchers[39] have made anecdotal assumptions that JFL learners transliterate loanwords only either according to their own pronunciation or according to the English spelling of the word. These are, using the terminology of this study, the English Pronunciation (EP) and the English Spelling (ES) strategies. However, the results of this study indicate that learners do not rely solely on these two strategies and in fact use at least three other strategies in addition to these.

It was revealed that fifteen out of the twenty-one learners interviewed used the Inductive Rules (IR) strategy as their predominant or one of their predominant strategies for transliterating foreign loanwords. The second most dominant strategy, adopted by twelve participants, was the Precedent (P) strategy, followed by the No Rules (NR) strategy, which was the predominant strategy of six of the twenty-one informants. In contrast only four of the twenty-one participants were identified as using the EP strategy predominantly and only two of the participants used the ES strategy predominantly. Furthermore, the ES strategy was not the single predominant strategy of any participant. This indicates that the ES and EP strategies are not used by JFL learners as commonly as previously assumed and moreover, that they are rarely relied upon as a learner's sole guide for transliteration of loanwords.

Evaluation of success of strategies

The results of the data analysis showed that predominant use of the P strategy produced a high rate of accurate transliteration. Participants who used P strategy as a supplementary strategy also produced higher rates of accurate transliteration. It was also found that participants who predominantly relied on only one strategy produced a relatively low rate of accuracy.

The highest-scoring participant, number 15, who scored 54 points, was characterised as using the P strategy second-most frequently to his predominant strategy, which was the IR strategy. This implies that his IR system may be based on rules inferred from correctly transliterated precedents and therefore is able to produce a high rate of accurate transliterations. In contrast, Participant 20, who scored the lowest, at 36 out of 64 points, used the IR strategy the most frequently out of the four strategies she was identified as using, while the next strategy used more frequently was the NR strategy. The learner's unsuccessful use of IR strategy indicates that the inducted rules are mistaken or underdeveloped at this stage.

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39   Ohso, *op. cit.*; Kawarazaki, *op. cit.*; Kawarazaki, 'Katakana no shidō: Gairaigo no hyōki no shikata,' pp. 35 – 49; Takebe, 'Nihongo kyōiku ni okeru katakana no mondai,' pp. 1 – 17; Inagaki, *op. cit.*

The P strategy was also found to be the predominant strategy of the four other participants who achieved scores higher than fifty points. One of the three participants who gained a score of 53 points used P strategy in conjunction with English Spelling (ES), while the other two used Inducted Rules (IR) most frequently after P strategy. The participant who scored 52 points had only nine justifications, five of which were indicative of IR strategy, three of ES strategy, while only one justification was classed as No Rule (NR). From these results it can be seen that P strategy as a dominant transliteration strategy tends to produce a high rate of accuracy of transliteration.

Participants who were identified as predominantly using only one strategy also achieved a range of scores. Participants 1, 2, 7, 13 and 19, who used supplementary strategies in very low proportions, produced low rates of accuracy in comparison to Participant 15 who, as mentioned earlier, used a secondary strategy with relatively high frequency. All strategies with the exception of ES were identified at least once as the only predominant strategy used by a participant. In other words, the IR strategy was the dominant strategy employed by Participants 13, 15 and 19, who scored 38, 54 and 37 respectively. These scores encompass the highest score (54) and two of the lowest scores out of all twenty-one participants. As discussed above, Participant 15 also employed the P strategy as a secondary strategy, implying that a relatively reliable basis for his internalised system of rules exists. By contrast, Participants 13 and 19 reported only minor use of other strategies. Participant 13 gave ten justifications, only two of which indicated P strategy, and one which was NR. Participant 19 gave fifteen justifications of which one was classified as ES, one as NR and two as P. This implies that learners who use IR as a single predominant strategy produce a lower rate of accuracy in transliteration. Single predominant use of P and NR strategies by Participants 1 and 2 respectively, both produced comparatively low scores, with Participant 1 scoring 43 and Participant 2 scoring 39 points out of 64. These results indicate that even a more successful strategy such as P, if not supplemented by another strategy, will produce a lower rate of accuracy comparable to that of a less successful strategy such as NR. In contrast, Participant 7's predominant use of the EP strategy achieved a relatively high score of 47 which implies that when taken as a lone strategy, this strategy produces higher rates of accurate transliteration than P and NR. Overall, the figures discussed here demonstrate that participants who predominantly relied on one strategy produced a relatively low rate of accuracy in transliterating.

Success of strategy pairs

The findings of this study indicate that learners tend to use two or more strategies when transliterating loanwords into katakana. Learners who used the IR and P strategy pair

tended to be more successful in producing accurate transliterations. The strategy pair NR and IR tended to produce the lowest rates of accuracy.

In this study the majority of the participants (fifteen out of twenty-one) used at least two or more of the five strategies. Three strategies were used by Participant 3, who used the NR, P and EP strategies with almost equal frequency, gaining a score of 49 out of 64 points, and Participant 12, who used IR, P and ES strategies frequently, which resulted in a score of 43 points. These two examples do not indicate that using numerous strategies with equal frequency improves accuracy of transliteration. However, on examination of which strategies were used in combination by 15 participants in the study, it is possible to hypothesise as to which strategies, when used with similarly high frequency, produce higher accuracy in transliteration.

Strategy pairs were found in the 6 following combinations: P and ES, NR and IR, IR and P, NR and P, IR and ES, and IR and EP. The IR and P combination was used the most frequently (by six participants) followed by the NR and IR combination, which was used by three participants. All other combinations were each used by one participant. The IR and P combination achieved relatively high scores of 53, 53, 49 and 48, from Participants 6, 14, 11 and 17 respectively. However, Participants 18 and 21, who also used this combination, produced lower scores of 37 and 44 points respectively. By comparison, the NR and IR combination used by Participants 5, 10 and 20, resulted in consistently lower scores of 39, 40 and 36 points respectively. These results indicate that overall, the IR and P combination was more successful at producing accurate transliteration than the NR and IR combination.

High scores were also achieved by Participants 4 and 9, who were found to predominantly use ES strategy in conjunction with another strategy. Participant 4 employed the P and ES combination which achieved a score of 53 out of 64 points, while Participant 9 predominantly used IR and ES in combination which resulted in a score of 52 points. Comparatively low scores were gained from the two participants who used the combinations NR and P, and IR and EP. Participant 8, who used the former combination scored 44, and Participant 16 used the latter, scoring 40 out of 64 points.

Extra-Curricular Exposure to Japanese Language

A comparison of the participants' test scores with their extra-curricular exposure to Japanese language supports the hypothesis that extensive aural exposure to Japanese language increases the tendency to produce accurate transliterations. The type of exposure also seems to influence strategy formation, and offers an explanation for the differences in score between participants who both used the IR strategy.

The majority of the participants reported at least one source of significant exposure to Japanese language from sources outside the classroom. Only participants 19 and 20 had experienced no extra-curricular exposure to Japanese. Participants received exposure from a variety of sources as shown in the table below, ranging from Japanese movies to Japanese conversation clubs at university.

Table 3. Participants' Test Score vs. Predominantly Used Strategy vs. Type of Extra-Curricular Exposure to Japanese Language

Participant	Score (out of 64)	Strategy	Type of Exposure
1	43	P	Japanese TV dramas, anime, Japanese pop music, basic books
2	39	NR	Homestay students
3	49	NR, P, EP	Manga, anime, 8 days in Japan
4	53	P, ES	Conversation club, Japanese friends, 2 week exchange, internet blogs, TV dramas, movies
5	39	NR, IR	1 week holiday, 3 week exchange, anime, penpal, Japanese friends, conversation class
6	53	IR, P	16 months in Japan, Japanese friends
7	47	EP	Movies, Japanese pop music, conversation class
8	44	NR, P	2 week trip to Japan, homestay students
9	52	IR, ES	TV dramas, books, manga, friends, regular holidays in Japan
10	40	NR, IR	6 week exchange trip, manga, e-pal
11	49	IR, P	Anime, music, homestay student, 2 weeks in Japan, friends who study Japanese
12	43	IR, P, EP	TV dramas, Japanese friends, Japanese conversation class
13	38	IR	Manga, TV dramas, 2 weeks of study in Japan
14	53	IR, P	Japanese movies
15	54	IR	TV dramas, anime, games
16	40	IR, EP	2 week holiday to Japan

17	48	IR, P	TV dramas, anime, Japanese club, 2 short trips to Japan
18	37	IR, P	Movies, Japanese game shows
19	37	IR	None/Japanese movies
20	36	IR, NR	None
21	44	IR, P	Anime

There is evidence in the data to propose a hypothesis that the different types of exposure a learner receives encourages the formation of different strategies and thus improves the accuracy of transliteration to varying degrees. Evidence to support this can be found by examining the extra-curricular exposures of the 5 highest-scoring participants. Except for Participant 14, who reported only minor exposure to Japanese movies, the other four participants received significant exposure from aural sources and some from visual sources. Participant 4, with a score of 53, listed exposure from Japanese TV and movies, internet blogs, friendships with native Japanese speakers, conversation club and a 2 week educational trip to Japan. This participant received exposure from numerous sources, mainly in aural form, supplemented by visual exposure in the form of internet blogs. Participant 6 also identified friendships with native Japanese speakers as a significant source of exposure, in addition to the 16 months she had spent in Japan. Similar sources of exposure were reported by Participant 9, who added books and manga to his list which comprised Japanese TV, native Japanese friends and regular holidays in Japan. Significant aural exposure from TV, interaction with native speakers and regular in-country experience in combination with visual exposure from books and manga produced a high score of 52 for this participant. The highest scorer, Participant 15, again reported Japanese TV and anime as a significant source of exposure, in addition to Japanese computer games. All of these sources can be classified as predominantly aural types of exposure. However, some visual exposure was gained from the computer games, as evidenced by the fact that during his interview, he stated that he had originally learned katakana symbols from their appearance in these games. From these limited examples, it can be hypothesised that significant aural exposure to Japanese, in conjunction with an extensive learning background (these high scorers had previously studied JFL for at least 3 years in high school), are optimal characteristics for producing a higher rate of transliteration accuracy.

Visual exposure to loanwords could be gained particularly from sources such as books (including manga), internet blogs, computer games and letters from pen pals, while aural exposure could be received from TV programs, movies, music and Japanese native speakers. These two types of exposure could be very useful for internalising

accurately transliterated forms. Visual exposure shows the transliteration of words or similar words that the learners can remember and copy, or from which they can extrapolate rules. Aural exposure provides examples of the japanisation of sounds. (This is arguably the most crucial skill.) In the same way, aural exposure creates a body of examples from which learners can extrapolate rules to copy examples.

A comparison of Participants 20 and 21 provides evidence to support the idea of a positive correlation between the amount of extra-curricular exposure to Japanese and accuracy of transliteration. Both these participants lacked any prior learning experience of Japanese. However, Participant 21 used the combinations of strategies IR and P and, with a score of 44, scored significantly higher than Participant 20, who received the lowest score – 36 points, using combination IR and NR. Due to the fact that their learning backgrounds are identical, the difference in score and strategy use between these two participants could be explained by the difference between their extra-curricular exposures to Japanese. In contrast to Participant 20, who reported no extra-curricular exposure to Japanese, Participant 21 identified anime as a significant source of exposure to Japanese. According to Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen[40] implicit learning (without receiving explicit instruction) requires exposure to a large sample. The more complicated the rules of the system to be learned, the larger the sample size that is required for the formulation of reliable generalisations. Thus it can be said that Participant 21, due to his exposure to Japanese language through anime has been able to form more reliable generalisations with regards to transliteration rules. This comparison of Participants 20 and 21 provides evidence to suggest that some informal exposure results in more effective strategies and higher accuracy of transliteration.

Participants 2 and 5 also provide a useful comparison which indicates that different types of strategies may be formed as a result of different types of extra-curricular exposure. These two participants each had in common an extensive learning experience of JFL, with Participant 2 recording 3 years of primary and 5 years of high school study, and Participant 5 recording 2 years of primary and 5 years of study at high school. They scored identically low scores of 39 out of 64. However, Participant 2 used solely NR as a predominant strategy, while Participant 5 used a combination of IR and NR. Participant 2's only extra-curricular exposure to Japanese came in the form of native Japanese home stay students, Participant 5 listed anime, Japanese pen pal, Japanese friends, conversation club and four weeks in total spent in Japan, three of which were for study purposes. Participant 2 may have received aural exposure through home stay students, but Participant 5 has clearly gained more aural exposure through anime, Japanese friends, conversation club and visual exposure through a pen pal. She would

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40   Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen, 'Preemptive Focus on Form in the ESL Classroom,' pp. 407 – 432.

have also received both types of exposure from her in-country experience. Although this extensive extra-curricular exposure to Japanese language did not increase Participant 5's accuracy in transliteration, it may account for her use of IR in conjunction with NR as a predominant transliteration strategy. That is, her large amount of exposure to Japanese may have provided her with enough linguistic input to internalise rules by which to transliterate, although the reliability of these rules is doubtful, judging by her low score. Participant 5's use of IR, while currently unsuccessful, could signify an intermediate stage of development, positioned between NR and successful use of IR. By contrast, Participant 2 shows that little outside exposure to Japanese can produce use of a less successful strategy due to lack of linguistic input with which to formulate internal rules.

An exploration of the interaction between extra-curricular exposure and accuracy of transliteration revealed that overall, more exposure led to higher accuracy in transliteration. In terms of extra-curricular exposure to Japanese language study, there was a tendency for participants with a high score of accuracy to have had significant aural exposure to Japanese. Further, a comparison of the scores of Participants 20 and 21, both of whom had had no prior learning background in Japanese, indicate that Participant 21's extra-curricular exposure to Japanese resulted in the use of more successful strategies, which produced higher accuracy. A comparison of Participants 2 and 5 also provided evidence to show that a greater amount of exposure can result in the use of more successful strategy types, although in this case Participant 5's score of accuracy was not increased by her use of IR in conjunction with NR.

Conclusion

Previous research conducted in the area of learners' transliteration of loanwords into katakana symbols has been concentrated on error analysis and founded on the premise that learners transliterate loanwords based on a) the original pronunciation of a word or b) the original spelling of the word. This has provided no evidence of JFL learners' knowledge of rules or guidelines that have been established for transliteration. In fact, Inagaki's study[41] was based on the assumption that learners were unaware of rules. The study conducted here was consistent with prior research in showing that students were unaware of official guidelines for transliteration. However, more importantly, all but two of the participants showed awareness of the notion of rules for transliterating loanwords.

This study identified and described 5 types of strategies that learners use when transliterating, as follows:

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41   Inagaki, *op. cit.*

- Precedent (P)
- Inductive Rules (IR)
- English Spelling (ES)
- English Pronunciation (EP)
- No Rules (NR)

Comparisons of participants' use of pairs of these strategies with their accuracy in transliterating loanwords into katakana symbols revealed that the strategy pairs of P and ES, IR and P, and IR and ES produced the highest accuracy scores on the transliteration test. That is, participants who were more successful in producing accurate transliterations were guided by:

a) the spelling of the English form of the word
b) previous exposure to the correct transliteration in some form
c) internalised rules informed by a) and b)

It was found that participants who used NR, which is effectively 'no strategy', produced transliterations of lower accuracy, even when supplemented with a second strategy. This indicates that using some conscious strategy produces better accuracy, rather than transliterating arbitrarily.

Furthermore, an analysis of contributing factors such as learner history and extra-curricular exposure, compared with participants' test scores, showed that students who had received extensive aural exposure to the Japanese language tended to use P and IR strategies, and had a relatively higher rate of transliterating accurately. This data provided evidence to support the hypothesis that greater aural exposure to the Japanese language gives learners a more reliable system of internalised rules for transliteration.

While small scale in nature, this research has revealed many questions that could be addressed in further research aimed at understanding how JFL learners learn and use loanwords of English origin. Clearly, confirmation of these results with more learners over a wider range of proficiency levels is needed. Investigating the differences between beginners' strategies and advanced learners' strategies could determine whether there is a developmental sequence in strategy use. Possible future studies could also compare native Japanese speakers' use of transliteration strategies with that of JFL learners.

The question of the usefulness of strategy training for learners also bears closer investigation. Certain learners in this study used IR successfully without such training, showing it to be a natural process. However, this was not the case for all the participants,

and pedagogical intervention may have benefits for those types of learners. Additionally, the findings of this study suggest that strategy use is highly differential. Therefore a study of the impact of learners' Individual Differences on strategy development would also be valuable.

There are also pedagogical questions that need to be answered. There are indications that explicit instruction on established transliteration rules could improve learners' accuracy. The nature and timing of that instruction is a matter for further investigation. Such investigation should take into consideration the strategies identified in this research and develop a pedagogy that develops the use of them. Explicit instruction on loanwords could develop greater accuracy of transliteration, while raising awareness in learners of the existence of established transliteration rules.

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The films of Mitani Kōki: Intertextuality and comedy in contemporary Japanese cinema

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to investigate the importance of intertextual references in the films of one of Japan's most successful contemporary comedy filmmakers, Mitani Kōki. Since Mitani consciously makes references to other films, intertextuality works as a key element to comprehend his works. Although the recognition of the references used in his films is not too significant to influence entertaining perspectives, the absence of these detailed intertextual components would prevent the films being recognised as 'Mitani films'.

By analysing all of his four films, this article will provide a useful example of the idea of intertextuality. In addition, this study will also focus on Japan in the 1990s, when Mitani debuted as a film director. This is an important point to be discussed, since his film-making approaches seem to be significantly related to the social background of the time.

Keywords

Intertextuality, Mitani Kōki, Comedy, Cinema, Japan in the 1990s

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to investigate the importance of intertextual references in the films of one of Japan's most successful contemporary comedy filmmakers, Mitani Kōki.[1] Although all texts are related to other texts,[2] Mitani's films are characterised by particularly 'self-conscious forms of intertextuality',[3] a result of his deliberate intent to embed elements from American cinema in his own work. Rather than drawing attention to the original American texts, Mitani's intertextual components are used to enrich the dimensions of his characters and storylines.

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1   I will use the name of Mitani Kōki instead of Kōki Mitani in this article.
2   Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 5; Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, p. 162; Gray, *Watching with the Simpsons: Television, Parody and Intertextuality*, p. 27.
3   Chandler, 'Intertextuality'.

Intertextuality is a term created by the Bulgarian-French theorist, Julia Kristeva (b. 1941). Although Kristeva originally applied this theory to the field of literary production, the idea of intertextuality has been developed and adopted to other fields of cultural production. The core idea of this theory is that texts, such as novels, films and plays, are always related to other texts in a way that produces multiple meanings.[4] Among many areas of cultural production, cinema is particularly considered as an intertextual medium due to its flexible nature.[5] Of all the forms of cinema, comedy seems to be the genre that can be most easily intertextualised. It can be fused together with other genres and these other genres have the potential to become comic in turn.[6]

The films of Mitani Kōki (b. 1961) provide one of the most useful examples of intertextuality in contemporary Japanese cinema. Mitani, who was born in Tokyo in 1961, originally worked as a playwright before making his cinema debut in 1997 with *Welcome Back, Mr. McDonald* (*Rajio no jikan*).[7] As is often the case with people of his generation,[8] Mitani grew up with significant American influences. In particular Billy Wilder and Woody Allen had an impact on Mitani's film-making approaches and he often references their works in his films. More importantly, these American works are actually key elements in the comprehension of Mitani's materials.[9]

Austrian-born Billy Wilder (1906-2002) is regarded as one of the most well-known Hollywood directors to date.[10] This Academy award-winning director left several masterpieces, including *The Lost Weekend* (1945), *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) and *Some Like It Hot* (1959). Woody Allen (b. 1935) is also an Academy award-winning director whose works include *Annie Hall* (1977) and *Everyone Says I Love You* (1997). After a long career in the film industry, Allen is now recognised as one of America's 'most inventive and idiosyncratic filmmakers'.[11]

In addition to the complexity generated by the intertextual components in Mitani's work, there are other compelling reasons for choosing Mitani's films as the subject of research. The first of these reasons is related to the 1990s when Mitani debuted as a filmmaker which was also a significant time for Japan as a country. This decade was actually a turning point for the Japanese film industry. During the 1990s, when Japan

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4 Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 5; Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, p. 162; Gray, *Watching with the Simpsons: Television, Parody and Intertextuality*, p. 27.
5 Strinati, *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*, p. 225.
6 Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction*, pp. 115-116.
7 This article will refer to Mitani's films using the English title. Thus, for example, *Rajio no jikan* will be written as *Welcome Back, Mr. McDonald* in the remainder of the article.
8 Hantke, 'Postmodernism and Genre Fiction as Deferred Action: Haruki Murakami and the Noir Tradition', p. 11.
9 Mori, 'Gaikōsei to Naikōsei wo Ōrai Shite Zenshin Shituzukeru Hyōgensha', p. 42; Nakōji, 'Mitani Kōki to Iu Sakka', pp. 125-127.
10 Chaffin-Quiray, 'Billy Wilder', p. 152.
11 Katz, *The Film Encyclopedia: The Complete Guide to Film and the Film Industry*, p. 28.

was going through the so-called 'lost decade'[12] after the burst of the bubble economy, a large number of new and innovative directors including Hirokazu Kore'eda (b. 1962)[13] and Shunji Iwai (b. 1963)[14] debuted. Followed by the success of these directors, more newcomers emerged and contributed to the prosperity of the industry.[15] Besides the domestic recovery, the Japanese film industry received renewed international attention in the 1990s, due to their efforts.[16]

While there are many contemporary Japanese filmmakers of comedy, Mitani's comedies remain distinct from those of other directors. Scholars acknowledge the fact that American comedy is very popular in Japan and has influenced Japanese comedy formats.[17] However, there are radical differences in the style of comedy practiced in the two countries. As a result, writers and performers of comedy in Japan have experienced difficulty in trying to adopt American comic elements into their own work. Mitani's successful efforts to emulate American comedy make his comedic style highly original and innovative, as this is rarely seen in the works of other Japanese directors.[18]

Another reason for considering Mitani's work is his place in the global consumption of films. In comparison to world famous Japanese directors such as Takeshi Kitano (b. 1947)[19] and Hayao Miyazaki (b. 1941)[20] Mitani has received limited recognition overseas in spite of the fact that some of his works were shown in other countries, little English language analysis has been conducted on his works. Nonetheless, by taking his film-making approaches such as adopting universal narratives into consideration, it becomes clear that Mitani's films have great potential to be appreciated by a more diverse international audience.[21] All these factors encourage a greater analysis of his films.

In spite of Mitani's popularity in Japan, the director has produced a mere four films: *Welcome Back, Mr. McDonald* (1997; *Rajio no jikan*): *All about Our House* (2001; *Minna no ie*): *Suite Dreams* (2006; *THE uchōten hoteru*):[22] and *The Magic Hour*

12   Johnson, 'Recovery Demands a Clear-out of Old Guard', p. 16.

13   Hirokazu Kore'eda made his debut in 1995 with *Maboroshi* (*Maboroshi no hikari*), which received international acclaim at the Venice International Film Festival. Since then, he has produced a series of quality films, such as *After Life* (1999; *Wandafuru raifu*), *Distance* (2001; *Disutansu*) and *Nobody Knows* (2004; *Dare mo shiranai*).

14   The remarkable debut work of Shunji Iwai, *Love Letter* (*Rabu retā*), was released in 1995. He has continued to produce hit films, such as *Swallowtail Butterfly* (1996; *Suwarō tēru*), *April Story* (1998; *Shigatsu monogatari*) and *All about Lily Chou-Chou* (2001; *Rirī Shushu no subete*).

15   Schilling, *Contemporary Japanese Film*, p. 71.

16   Nakata, 'Foreword', p. ix; Schilling, *Contemporary Japanese Film*, p. 7; Tanaka, *Gendai/ Nihon/ Eiga*, p. 36.

17   Barrett, 'Comic Targets and Comic Styles: An introduction to Japanese Film Comedy', p. 216.

18   Komori, 'Gekisakka, Mitani Kōki, Furikaeruto "Ibara no Michi"', p. 137.

19   The comedian-cum-director, Kitano, also known as 'Beat Takeshi', debuted with *Violent Cop* (*Sono otoko kyōbō ni tsuki*) in 1989. His *Fireworks* (1997; *Hana-Bi*), which was awarded the Golden Lion at the Venice International Film Festival, made him a well-known director overseas.

20   Hayao Miyazaki is the most well-known Japanese animator, whose *Spirited Away* (2001; *Sen to Chihiro no kamikakushi*) received the Oscar for Best Animated Feature in 2002. His films include *Castle in the Sky* (1986; *Tenkū no shiro Raputa*), *Princess Mononoke* (1997; *Mononoke hime*) and *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004; *Hauru no ugoku shiro*). The animations of Studio Ghibli (Miyazaki's studio) have contributed to world cinema as an exemplar of Japanese cultural products.

21   Ishihara, cited in Pia Mooks, p. 41.

22   This 'THE' is in the original Japanese title.

(2008; *Za majikku awā*). In this article, all four will be analysed from the perspective of intertextuality and how other texts are referred to in his films.

The discussion below will commence with an analysis of the theoretical concept of intertextuality. This will be followed by some comments on the social background to the 1990s, Japan's 'lost decade', when Mitani debuted as a filmmaker. The article will then provide a close reading of each of Mitani's four films in chronological order. In doing so, reference will also be made to film as a medium that is particularly suited to intertextuality. With regard to Mitani's four films, it will be suggested that intertextuality is an essential element to make the director's films 'Mitani-like'.

Theoretical Framework

Intertextuality

Intertextuality is a powerful theoretical framework through which to view Mitani Kōki's films. Intertextual theory is often misunderstood as merely being related to the direct influence of one writer on another, or to a writer borrowing from other texts. This, indeed, is often part of what happens in the process of intertextuality, however, from a wholistic perspective it is more productive to consider the process as involving the factors of a complete 'textual system'.[23] For Kristeva, a literary text is defined as 'a trans-linguistic apparatus that redistributes the order of language by relating communicative speech, which aims to inform directly, to different kinds of anterior or synchronic utterances'.[24] Thus, a literary text can be regarded as a process of 'productivity'[25] and also an 'intersection of textual surfaces rather than a point (a fixed meaning)'.[26]

According to Kristeva, a text is also a place for the intersection and neutralisation of dialogues taken from other texts; that is to say, a text is a 'permutation of other texts'.[27] Therefore, the inherent nature of 'textuality' can be regarded as 'intertextuality'.[28] Taking into consideration the fact that creators are consumers before they create texts and that they (the creators) are exposed to other texts, it would be understandable that texts are always intertextualised.[29] Similarly, Bakhtin, whose ideas had a significant impact on

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23   Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, p. 15.
24   *Ibid.*, p. 36.
25   *Ibid.*
26   *Ibid.*, p. 65.
27   *Ibid.*, p. 36.
28   *Ibid.*
29   Still and Worton, 'Introduction', p. 2.

Kristeva,[30] remarks that texts become meaningful only by interacting with other texts.[31] Importantly, the elements that comprise a text are not necessarily merely the product of a writer's consciousness. As Roudiez points out, texts are also influenced by the writer's unconscious.[32] Associated with this is the fact that forms of intertextual representation are also various, ranging from explicit forms to implicit ones.[33]

For instance, Mitani's second movie, *All about Our House* (2001; *Minna no ie*), shows evidence of interacting with Carol Reed's film version of Michelangelo's biography, *The Agony and The Ecstasy* (1964).[34] Mitani's movie features a scene which conveys the idea that the designer of the house, Yanagisawa, secretly respects the great Italian artist, Michelangelo. In this scene, based on a famous episode in Reed's movie in which Michelangelo demonstrates his dissatisfaction with a painting he is creating by scattering paint across the wall, Yanagisawa also throws paint across a wall when frustrated with one of his designs. By having Yanagisawa replicate the filmic Michelangelo's actions, Mitani gave his viewers an insight into Yanagisawa's spirit as an artist. In other words, that scene suggests Yanagisawa's respect towards Michelangelo without directly stating this. Viewers also learn from this scene that many differences in opinions concerning the design of the house between the young designer, Yanagisawa, and the carpenters (all of whom are a generation older than Yanagisawa) come from not only the generation gap but also Yanagisawa's notion of not being able to compromise as a professional. Thus, the information implied through these intertextual references assists in enriching audience understanding of the characters.

While Mitani's intertextual practices add depth to audience interpretations of his films, his intertextual references are not so significant as to prevent enjoyment on the part of those members of the audience unfamiliar with the source text. Younger members of the audience, in particular, may have no knowledge of Carol Reed's film on Michelangelo. However, since this information is not essential to the storyline, audiences without this information are still able to find the movie entertaining. The absence of these detailed intertextual components, however, would prevent the movie being recognised as a 'Mitani movie'. Meticulous attention to intertextuality at all levels of the production – even if others fail to notice these small details – is the hallmark of his film-making approach.[35] Therefore, regardless of audience recognition of the references used, intertextuality is an essential strategy in making Mitani's movies 'Mitani-like'.

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30 Gray, *Watching with the Simpsons: Television, Parody and Intertextuality*, p. 24.
31 Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 5; Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, p. 162.
32 Roudiez, 'Introduction', p. 8.
33 Frow, 'Intertextuality and Ontology', p. 45.
34 Reed's movie is based on the novel, *The Agony and the Ecstasy: A Novel of Michelangelo* (1961), written by Irving Stone.
35 Mitani, cited in Pia Mooks, p. 164; Mori, 'Gaikōsei to Naikōsei wo Ōrai Shite Zenshin Shituzukeru Hyōgensha', p. 42.

Intertextuality and the Media

Intertextuality has also been applied to other fields of study. Stuart Hall, for example, investigated this concept in the field of media and cultural studies via the theory of 'encoding/decoding', a model still predominantly used in those fields today.[36] According to Hall, meaning is 'encoded' by producers into a given text, after which receivers (consumers) 'decode' the meaning.[37] However, since the codes used when encoding and then again when decoding are not always identical, misunderstandings and distortions – which give a text new meanings - sometimes occur during the processes of production and reception. Therefore, as Kristeva points out, not a single meaning, but multiple meanings are produced regardless of encoders' intention. Thus, meanings are not fixed, but fluid.

The practices of 'representation' are also important here. Representation is defined as a process by which meaning is produced by members of a culture via the use of language.[38] This idea is closely related to the constructionist approach of Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure. According to Saussure, language is a system of signs that consists of the signifier and the signified. The term signifier refers to the 'form', such as an actual word and image, while the signified is the concept that is associated with the signifier.[39] For instance, the word 'red' is a signifier, while concepts associated with words such as 'blood' and 'STOP' are examples of the signified.

Moreover, there is an important premise in the notion of 'representation' which implies that nothing - no object or its various images – can have a single, fixed meaning. Meaning is fluid in different cultures as well as in different periods of time. It is the response of people at various times and in various places that creates meaning - things are made meaningful by people.[40] In this process of meaning production, decoders are as important as encoders. In fact, while every signifier is encoded with potential meaning, it is not until this is decoded by a reader or viewer that this meaning is effected in any useful sense.[41]

Similarly, according to Fiske, texts relate to other texts in both similar and different ways.[42] It is through these relationships that meaning is culturally produced for audiences. Therefore, meaning is 'not fixed in a universal, empirical 'reality', but in the social situation of the viewer'.[43] Fiske has identified two dimensions operating

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36   Gray, *Watching with the Simpsons: Television, Parody and Intertextuality*, pp. 21, 32.
37   Hall, 'Encoding/decoding', p. 131.
38   Hall, 'The Work of Representation', p. 15.
39   Saussure, cited in Hall, *Ibid.*, p. 31.
40   Hall, *Ibid.*, pp. 32, 61.
41   *Ibid.*, p. 33.
42   Fiske, *Television Culture*, pp. 115-118.
43   *Ibid.*, p. 117.

in the intertextuality process – the horizontal and the vertical. In the horizontal dimension, intertextuality works via explicit fundamental factors, such as genre and character.[44] For example, because Mitani's works are categorised as comedy, viewers expect his texts to generate laughter and humour. In other words, the genre 'pre-orients the viewers to activate the text in certain ways by making some meanings rather than others'.[45] Simultaneously, the vertical dimension is used to mobilise and fix meanings.[46] Secondary texts, including advertisements, posters and reviews that precede the release of a new film, are categorised into this group. These secondary texts help to construct certain meanings and images that function in conjunction with the primary text of the film itself. The vertical dimension most obviously operates when associated with commercial promotion.[47]

To understand how Fiske's vertical dimension functions, we might consider the advertising posters for the following films: Mitani Kōki's *The Magic Hour* (2008; *Za majikku awā*), Woody Allen's *Sweet and Lowdown* (1999), Peter Bogdanovich's (b. 1939)[48] *Paper Moon* (1973) and Frank Capra's (1897-1991)[49] *It Happened One Night* (1934).

Firstly, each poster produces meanings individually. For example, while the poster of *It Happened One Night* seems to give the impression of a love story, the first impression given by the *Paper Moon* poster, in which a frowning girl holds a cigarette, is that of a comedy. However, there are common elements that appear across all posters and have the potential to operate in similar ways in the advertisement for each movie. The moon and the sparkle, for example, are common to each poster and tend to evoke a nostalgic response.

The poster of Allen's movie, *Sweet and Lowdown*, refers to the poster of *Paper Moon*,[50] which in turn refers to the poster of the original text, *It Happened One Night*. Those familiar with the three American posters would have certain expectations raised when they viewed the poster of Mitani's movie. It is likely that they would think *The Magic Hour* would be a similar sort of movie to all or any of the American films featured in the other posters. From all these perspectives, we can see that even advertising material can include intertextual references and can orientate a prospective viewer's mind in a certain way.

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44   *Ibid.*, p. 108.
45   *Ibid.*
46   *Ibid.*, p. 117.
47   *Ibid.*, p. 118.
48   Peter Bogdanovich is an American filmmaker. He actually started his career as an actor before his debut film, *Targets* (1968), was released in 1968. His film-making approach keeps the forms of veteran Hollywood directors, such as Howard Hawks and John Ford. Bogdanovich referred to Ford's perspective of rural America in *Paper Moon*.
49   Frank Capra was born in Sicily and immigrated to the U.S. at the age of six. He directed successful comedies in succession between the 1930s and 1940s. Some of his movies, such as *It Happened One Night* (1934) and *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936), are regarded as classic screwball comedy. *It Happened One Night*, received an Oscar for both Best Picture and Best Director.
50   Hagio, 'Eiga Ai ni Michita Kokoro Yasashii Komedī', p. 40.

Intertextuality and Comedy Films

Cinema - not only Japanese cinema, but cinema in general – demonstrated a strong intertextual tendency even before intertextuality became a global concept. From the very beginning of film history, the repeat as well as the sequel has been a part of cinema. In addition, cinema, which is a medium that totally depends on a 'delicate blend of repetition', used and 'borrowed' ideas from other media, such as novels and stage-plays.[51] The inherently flexible nature of cinema as an art form – for example, the capacity to edit – in conjunction with its relative newness, has made this medium very receptive to change. Among the specific genres within cinema, comedy is the one that is most capable of being easily fused with other genres.[52]

Comedy, one of the most pervasive of all cinema genres, is said to originate from stage farces or comic novels.[53] Comedy is also divided into sub-categories, including slapstick, burlesque, parody, irony and black comedy. Since parody is defined as a piece of work that deliberately 'imitates the style' of other people or texts for the purpose of amusement,[54] this form of cinema might be regarded as the best example of intertextual material. Interestingly, it is not only comedy that produces parody – all genres actually have this capacity. This is because when a genre starts to mock its own conventions, it tends to step into a phase of parody.[55] As already mentioned, comedy is capable of integrating with other genres.[56] From these perspectives, comedy can be said to be a very inclusive and flexible genre, a fact that further contributes to its being easily intertextualised.

Cinema in 1990s Japan

Since Mitani Kōki debuted as a film maker in the 1990s, some consideration will be given to the social conditions of the time and how these impacted both the Japanese film industry in general and on Mitani's film-making in particular. The 1990s was a turning point for the Japanese film industry. As already mentioned, a large number of new directors, including Mitani, made their debut during this decade. Their increasing world-wide recognition due to the screening and critical recognition of their films at international film festivals revitalised the Japanese cinema industry both domestically and internationally.

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51 Strinati, *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*, p. 225.
52 Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction*, p. 116.
53 *Ibid.*, p. 115.
54 *Collins Cobuild English Dictionary*, p. 1202.
55 Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction*, p. 115.
56 *Ibid.*, p. 116.

Although each of these newcomers has a distinctive individual signature, many of them are 'Generation X' filmmakers. According to Howe and Strauss, Generation X refers to those who were born between 1961 and about 1981.[57] One of the most successful of these newcomers, Hirokazu Kore'eda, remarked that the directors who emerged in the 1990s come from a generation 'that never apprenticed in a film studio'.[58] The Japanese film industry has traditionally provided few opportunities for direct entry outsiders.[59] However, the emergence of the new cohort of 1990s directors saw the collapse of this long-standing industry convention.[60] This breakdown had a very positive impact on Japanese cinema since the success of the new directors resulted in more opportunities to enter professional film-making opening up to others that followed.[61]

The new generation of 1990s filmmakers received strong cultural influences from the United States. After Japanese society reduced the conflict with the U.S. that arose at the time of the 1960 re-negotiation of the *Nichibei Anzen Hoshō Jyōyaku* (U.S.-Japan Security Treaty), the country entered into a political alliance with the western superpower that resulted in American cultural influences quickly spreading throughout the whole of Japan.[62] Japanese Gen Xers, including Mitani, grew up under these circumstances where the cultural boundaries between the indigenous and American imports started to blur.[63] Thus, it can be said that, for these young artists, breaking 'Japanese' conventions did not present the serious barrier it may have for the generations that preceded them.

More importantly, the 1990s in Japan was a time of great social upheaval and transformation. This led to significant changes in the film industry itself. The decade was preceded the previous year by the passing of the Shōwa emperor, Hirohito, in January 1989, an event that ensured a clear division between the 1980s and 1990s.[64] Starting with the loss of the emperor, the 1990s was not a joyous decade for the country. The early 1990s saw the collapse of Japan's so-called 'bubble economy' leading to long-term financial stagnation and the contraction of the labour market. The degree of impact on the nation due to this economic downturn was tremendous and is evident from the fact, as noted above, that the 1990s is referred to in Japan as 'the lost decade'.[65]

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57   Howe and Strauss, cited in Ortner, 'Generation X: Anthropology in a Media-saturated World', p. 416.
58   Kore'eda, cited in Schilling, *Contemporary Japanese Film*, p. 208.
59   For instance, Hirokazu Kore'eda was a television producer while Shunji Iwai created music videos, promotional films and television dramas prior to entering the film industry.
60   Schilling, *Contemporary Japanese Film*, p. 71.
61   *Ibid.*
62   Aoki, 'Murakami Haruki and Contemporary Japan', p. 268.
63   Hantke, 'Postmodernism and Genre Fiction as Deferred Action: Haruki Murakami and the Noir Tradition', p. 11.
64   Fukushima, 'Japanese Literature, or "J-Literature," in the 1990s', p. 41.
65   Johnson, 'Recovery Demands a Clear-out of Old Guard', p. 16.

In 1995, the mid-point of the decade, two catastrophic events occurred. These were the Great Hanshin Earthquake and the sarin terrorism attack by the religious cult, *Aum Shinrikyō*. The former happened on 17th of January, striking the area around Kōbe (one of Japan's major cities) early in the morning. More than five thousand people were killed and thousands of others left injured and displaced. The massive earthquake also damaged highways, railways and major utility pipelines. However, more significant was the manner in which this natural disaster revealed serious defects in the 'system' of Japan. For instance, there were significant delays in the provision of services such as emergency facilities and water supply immediately after the disaster because of the slow governmental response. To make matters worse, the government clung to demands for 'national autonomy' and rejected offers of foreign aid.[66] Furthermore, it was also revealed that the Ministry of Construction closed its eyes to the fact that a large number of buildings actually failed to meet construction safety-standards.[67]

Just two months later, on March 20th, Tokyo's subway system was attacked by members of the cult known as *Aum Shinrikyō* who released the highly toxic substance, sarin, on selected trains running on the underground during the morning rush hour peak. Twelve people were killed and more than five thousand commuters were injured. The incident is regarded as one of the worst terrorist attacks in Japan. Again, it was not only the issue of the attack itself. As it witnessed the catastrophe unfold before it, Japanese society was forced to reflect upon the assumptions that sustained it.[68] The inability of such a large number of 'ordinary' people – most of the cult's devotees were young and well-educated - to assimilate into the society was attributed to flaws in Japanese societal function itself.[69] Although 1995 was actually the 100th anniversary of Japanese cinema, the disasters that occurred at the time completely swept away any thought of celebrating the memorial year.[70]

The socially disruptive events that happened throughout the 1990s had a strong impact on and are reflected in Japanese cinema. According to Tanaka, live coverage via the medium of television in the aftermath of the earthquake and the *Aum* incident led to Japanese people witnessing the extraordinary and tremendous panic of human drama as if these were happening in a film.[71] The dreadful images of 'reality' generated by both disasters, which went far beyond people's imagination, made viewers realise that no film could surpass reality any longer. Tanaka argues that this complete defeat of previous cinematic approaches stopped filmmakers from clinging to old styles and patterns

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66 Iida, *Rethinking Identity in Modern Japan*, p. 238.
67 *Ibid.*
68 *Ibid.*, p. 244.
69 *Ibid.*, p. 238; Leheny, cited in Roquet, 'Ambient Literature and the Aesthetics of Calm: Mood Regulation in Contemporary Japanese Fiction', p. 89.
70 Tanaka, *Gendai/ Nihon/ Eiga*, p. 37.
71 *Ibid.*

which in turn gave directors the opportunities to produce the material they wanted to in new and innovative ways.[72] It was this drastic change that brought about the recovery of Japanese cinema. Regardless of technical difficulties, Mitani's response of trying to incorporate American comedy strategies and styles into his own productions can be considered representative of the typically unconventional approaches to film-making that emerged around this time. In the case of Mitani and others like him, the chaotic social circumstances actually provided an opportunity for these young artists to step into the film industry and to produce alternative films.

The social conditions of the 1990s supported the emergence of a new group of Generation X filmmakers, in addition to contributing to total transformation of the Japanese film industry. In fact, it seems to be no exaggeration to say that the chaotic circumstances of the time provided Generation X filmmakers in particular with the opportunity to produce innovative films that permitted full rein of their individual creative talents. Despite being a dark time, the events of the 1990s were essential for the revival of the industry and also for the emergence of directors like Mitani Kōki.

Mitani's Films: The Texts and Their Intertexts

Welcome Back, Mr. McDonald (1997; Rajio no jikan)

In order to understand the operation of intertextuality in Mitani's films, it is necessary to analyse each of his references in the chronological order of production. Mitani debuted as a film director in 1997 with the typical *gunshū geki* (group comedy) film, *Welcome Back, Mr. McDonald*. The characters of this work provide comic depiction of the various human relationships among the people working in a radio station, which is a prime example of Mitani's favorite setting of 'limited space'.[73]

The film's narrative concerns a radio drama that has been written by a prize-winning amateur writer, Miyako Suzuki (Kyōka Suzuki). Although the drama is about to be aired, changes are still being demanded by the self-centred main actress, Senbon Nokko (Keiko Toda). Even during the live broadcast of the drama, the script is continuously changing. It finally gets to the point where the original script, which featured a pure love story, is completely altered turning Miyako's romantic dream into a nightmare.

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72   *Ibid.*
73   Mitani, *Mitani Kōki no Arifureta Seikatsu 6: Yakusha Kidori*, p. 116.

From its inception, *Welcome Back, Mr. McDonald* had a strong intertextual element with Mitani intentionally setting out to create in his debut work an American-like Japanese film.[74] In order to do this, the director overlaid his own understanding of the meaning of humour across American situation comedy and screwball comedy formats.[75] In fact, while filming *Welcome Back, Mr. McDonald*, Mitani strived to showcase all his knowledge about American films.[76] In other words, what Mitani decoded through American comedy was deliberately encoded in Mitani's first film.

One of the factors that clearly distinguish Mitani's movies from those of other Japanese directors who produce comedy is that other directors rarely make any deliberate attempt to adapt material from American forms of the genre.[77] Although American comedy remains a popular entertaining product, difficulties arise when a Japanese director/producer attempts to create a similar style using local resources.[78] This seems to suggest that there are radical differences between the two. Under these circumstances, Mitani's adherence to and study of American comedy appears to have given him a rare position as a Japanese filmmaker.

There is a further intertextual factor embedded in the setting of *Welcome Back, Mr. McDonald*, one that provides an example of implicit intertextuality. The film's setting of the radio station is actually copied from the command post of NASA in the film *APOLLO 13* (1995). This setting contributes well to the narrative strategy of the work in that the focus on a limited space helps the character relations look more dramatic than is the case in the actual storyline.[79] We might say that the signifier of a limited space was taken by Mitani and constructed into the signified of a radio station. In other words, Mitani consumed (decoded) the space as a command post, but produced (encoded) it as a radio station. This indicates that there can be different uses for one object depending on whether it is passively seen or actively used. Clearly these two processes are not necessarily identical.

*All about Our House (*2001*; Minna no ie)*

Mitani's second film, *All about Our House*, was released in 2001. This film features a young married couple Naosuke (Naoki Tanaka) and Tamiko (Akiko Yagi) who are in the process of building their own house. While the young couple have their house

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74 Mitani, *Shigoto, Mitani Kōki no*, p. 167.
75 Ishihara, cited in Pia Mooks, p. 39.
76 Mitome, 'Mitani Eiga no Seikō to Daishippai, Sono Riyū wo Tokiakasu!', p. 76.
77 Komori, 'Gekisakka, Mitani Kōki, Furikaeruto "Ibara no Michi"', p. 137.
78 Mitani, *Shigoto, Mitani Kōki no*, p. 205.
79 *Ibid.*, p. 76.

of dreams firmly in mind, their desire conflicts with the opinions of Tamiko's father, Chōichirō (Kunie Tanaka), who is in charge of the builders working for their house, and the designer, Yanagisawa (Toshiaki Karasawa).

It is evident that Mitani decided to take a different approach for his second production. In contrast to producing the 'American-like Japanese film' format he had used for *Welcome Back, Mr. McDonald*, the aim of *All about Our House* was to produce a 'Japanesque American film'.[80] This approach was determined by the fact that the narrative is based around a specifically Japanese experience involving, for example, Japanese ceremonial scenes and landscapes. However, in order to diminish the Japanese elements and create space for an American influence, Mitani decided deliberately to omit various scenic elements that are typically seen in Japanese films.[81]

There are two major influential references in *All about Our House*; these are Woody Allen's *September* (1987) and *Manhattan Murder Mystery* (1993) also by Allen. Although Mitani drew on a range of elements from each of these films, colours were a central focus. Each colour has been blended into a unified sense of calming orange, a strategy that is hinted at in both of Allen's films. Orange or sepia coloured lighting is a feature of American cinema. While lighting in Japanese films generally brightens the entire area of the screen, American films are often more muted in tone. This produces a highly aesthetic effect on the screen.[82] While influenced by these American strategies, Mitani also sought to create a colour scheme that matched Japanese expectations of brighter cinema lighting. In addition to producing similar lighting effects to those that might be featured in American film, he also transferred these orange shades to, for example, the clothing worn by his characters to create a warm impression suitable for a comedy about family life.[83] In other words, it is Mitani's response to produce a hearty impression via Allen's usage of orange colour.

Even though Mitani 'borrowed' the colour pattern from Allen's films, the storylines of the three films are not necessarily similar. While *September* is categorised as a home drama, the narrative is serious rather than comic. The storyline of *Manhattan Murder Mystery* is a cross between mystery and comedy. Thus, the colour scheme has been used for different purposes by each of the two directors (and, in fact, for slightly different effect in each of Allen's films). This difference seems to indicate a culturally different perception towards the orange colour. In Japan, the colours featured are categorised as *danshoku-kei* (warm colours) and, as the name indicates, considered to

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80   Mitani, *Shigoto, Mitani Kōki no*, p. 167.
81   Mitani, cited in Schilling, 'Screen Review Entertainment Show'.
82   Takama, *Shi-na Eiga to Ko-ki Eiga*, pp. 310-311.
83   Mitani, cited in Schilling, 'Screen Review Entertainment Show'.

give a warm impression. On the other hand, orange is often associated with nostalgia in western countries. Whereas Allen made the settings of his films nostalgic and mysterious, Mitani successfully encoded a warm and homely impression in the orange-coloured lighting and costumes. Besides the example of borrowing a limited space from *APOLLO 13* for *Welcome Back, Mr. McDonald*, this example of Mitani's second film (borrowing orange colour) also shows how the same object is transformed by a person from a different cultural background. As Hall points out, there are different signifieds produced in different cultures.[84]

Although there were differences in the treatment of colour, Mitani actually did replicate a number of Woody Allen's approaches throughout *All about Our House*. For instance, in the scene set in an *izakaya* (a Japanese pub), Mitani did not frame all the characters on the screen at the same time. Rather, moving away from his usual preference for long takes, he used a series of facial close-ups of each person. By doing so, an atmosphere was created which led the audience to feel as if they were in the space drinking with each of the characters. This point of Allen's approach actually comes from early Hollywood movies, such as the comedies of Ernst Lubitsch (1892-1947).[85] After this Berlin-born director started his career in Hollywood, his 'sophisticated comic style' quickly became popular and influential enough to the extent that it was imitated by many other directors. Lubitsch works are regarded as an essential part of American national cinema.[86] Thus, it can be said that elements of these classic Hollywood comedies are present in Mitani's movies indirectly via the use of Allen's techniques.

Suite Dreams (2006; THE uchōten hoteru)

Audiences would have to wait another five long years after *All about Our House* for Mitani's third film, *Suite Dreams*, which premiered in 2006. This film adopts the American situation comedy format which is overlaid across the Japanese group comedy (*gunshū geki*) style. One of the most prominent intertextual references is Edmund Goulding's classic *Grand Hotel* (1932) starring Greta Garbo.[87]

It is New Year's Eve and a few hours before a party commences at the Avanti Hotel. The film's many characters, including a world-famous actor, Kōji Yakusho (b. 1956),[88] in the starring role, encounter various difficulties as preparations for the party take place, again, in a limited space – this time, a hotel. As in *Welcome back, Mr.*

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84 Hall, 'The Work of Representation', p. 32.
85 Schwarz, 'On the Construction of Reality and Imagery in Jan Van Eyck and Woody Allen', p. 20.
86 Gemunden, 'Ernst Lubitsch's "To Be or Not to Be"', p. 61.
87 Mori, 'Gaikōsei to Naikōsei wo Ōrai Shite Zenshin Shituzukeru Hyōgensha', p. 42; Schilling, 'King of Comedy Scores Again'.
88 Yakusho is in such other films as Jūzō Itami's *Dandelion* (1985; *Tanpopo*), Shōhei Imamura's *The Eel* (1997; *Unagi*) and Shinji Aoyama's *Eureka* (2000; *Yuriika*).

McDonald, Mitani's first film, this limited space seems to provide a sense of tension and dramatic effect that exceeds that of the actual storyline.

There are intertextually important elements hidden in the names. Firstly, the name of the hotel, Avanti, was actually taken from Wilder's film of the same title.[89] The names of the four suites of Hotel Avanti actually reference the real-life names of the actors, such as Lionel (Lionel Barrymore), who appear in *Grand Hotel*. The use of these names is, in fact, a clue to the fact that Mitani is referencing the classic film. Thus, Mitani used Fiske's horizontal dimension, in which explicit elements such as genre and character produce intertextuality, so that *Suite Dreams* would be seen as a similar kind of film to *Grand Hotel*. This clue, again, would not be significant enough to devalue *Suite Dreams'* entertaining elements, however, this is what Mitani stresses and enjoys in his filmmaking.[90]

The Magic Hour (2008; Za majikku awā)

Mitani's latest film, *The Magic Hour*, which was released in 2008, also attracted large audience numbers. The storyline of this screwball type comedy begins in a port town called Sukago ('Chicago'). When the local gang boss, Teshio (Toshiyuki Nishida) discovers that his lover, Mari (Eri Fukatsu), has been cheating on him with a young gangster, Bingo (Satoshi Tsumabuki), he swears to take revenge. The only way the lovers can get into Teshio's good books is by helping him search for the legendary hit-man, Dera Togashi, whom Teshio wishes to contract for some work. Bingo, who has no idea who Dera Togashi is or where he is to be found, disguises himself as a film director and hires a third-rate actor, Murata (Kōichi Satō), to play the role of the hit-man, as a solution to save their lives.

Compared to Mitani's first three films, *The Magic Hour* shows a clear difference in the setting. Sukago is a non-Japanesque city with western-style buildings that appear to be 'caught in a 1920s time warp'.[91] The waitress, Natsuko (Haruka Ayase) comments on these unrealistic looking surroundings by observing 'It's like something out of a film. This place is always like that. This view…that building, the hotel…doesn't it remind you of a film set?' (*The Magic Hour* 2008). There is actually a similar line in Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* (1950): 'See this street! This is a fake city, made of plywood. I love this street more than any other place in the world'.[92] The similarity between these two lines indicates that the idea of using an obviously artificial and feigned town, Sukago, in *The Magic Hour* comes from Wilder's masterpiece.[93]

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89 Hagio, 'Eiga Ai ni Michita Kokoro Yasashii Komedi', p. 42.
90 *Ibid.,* p. 40.
91 Schilling, 'King of Comedy Scores Again'.
92 Taneda, cited in Mitani, *Mitani Kōki no Arifureta Seikatsu 7: The Majikku Iyā*, p. 187.
93 *Ibid.*

Additionally, Jorge Roy Hill's *The Sting* (1973) is obliquely referenced throughout the film. Many elements of the mise-en-scene, including the settings and the costumes, were actually borrowed from Hill's film.[94] While he did not overtly acknowledge the fact, Mitani also seems to have found inspiration for the music and the editing from *The Sting*. In other words, *The Sting* is partially revived 35 years later in the foreign film, *The Magic Hour*. Taking into consideration that the opening theme song of *The Sting* is taken from the classic, *The Third Man* (1949), we can easily see the extent of the circulatory system of texts.

As in Mitani's previous three films, there are also a range of references from Billy Wilder and Woody Allen in *The Magic Hour*. First of all, the broad storyline was influenced by Wilder's *Some Like It Hot* (1959), which presents as a perfect combination of gangster drama and comedy.[95] *Some Like It Hot* also supplied *The Magic Hour* with the narrative strategy of disguise.[96] While, at first sight, the Wilder film and *The Magic Hour* do not appear to have much in common, this assumption ignores the more subtle elements - including the film's general concept – that Mitani encoded from the Hollywood narrative. In fact, components of Wilder's masterpiece are pressed into 'Mitani's world' as the very foundation of the Japanese film.

One of the highlights of this film is Mari singing as she sits on the moon. As already referred to in the previous chapter, this scene is a pastiche of a scene in Woody Allen's *Sweet and Lowdown* (1999), which actually harks back to Peter Bogdanovich's *Paper Moon* (1973)[97] and Frank Capra's *It Happened One Night* (1934). In fact, the signified of the moon could be *It Happened One Night*, *Paper Moon*, *Sweet and Lowdown* or *The Magic Hour*; depending on when and where the scene is viewed.

Moreover, there is a deeper meaning in Mitani's use of this scene hidden in the lyrics of the song the young woman sings, *I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles*.[98] In Mitani's film, the words 'I'm blowing bubbles…They fly so high, nearly reach the sky. Then like my dreams they fade and die. Fortune's always hiding…'[99] actually symbolise film-making.[100] Therefore, it can be decoded that the scene is not merely a reference to Allen's film, but also Mitani demonstrating respect and honour towards cinema itself.[101] While it is not necessary for an audience to have access to this element in order to be entertained by the scene, having knowledge of Mitani's intention adds to what Hall argues is 'meaningful' in the text.[102]

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94   Mitani, *Ibid.*, p. 39.
95   *Ibid.*, p. 38.
96   Mitani, *Shigoto, Mitani Kōki no*, p. 116.
97   Hagio, 'Eiga Ai ni Michita Kokoro Yasashii Komedī', p. 40.
98   *Ibid.*
99   Kenbrovin, *I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles*.
100 Hagio, 'Eiga Ai ni Michita Kokoro Yasashii Komedī', p. 40.
101 *Ibid.*
102 Hall, 'The Work of Representation', p. 33.

In this section, Mitani's four films and the kinds of references used in his works have been outlined. It has been argued that a large number of American films are embedded both explicitly and implicitly in Mitani's works. Furthermore, it has been noted that the encoded elements of these adopted texts provide clues in how to receive or decode the films. Thus, for viewers of Mitani's films, the American texts referenced assist in the comprehension of the Japanese films.

Conclusion

This article analysed the work of contemporary Japanese film director, Mitani Kōki, with an emphasis on the 'self-conscious forms of intertextuality'[103] found in each of Mitani's four films. While Mitani's intertextual inspiration comes from a variety of sources, attention was given to the two most prominent – the works of Billy Wilder and Woody Allen. It was noted that, while familiarity with the work of these artists adds depth to audience interpretations of his films, his intertextual references are not essential to enjoy or be entertained by Mitani's material on the part of those members of the audience unfamiliar with the source texts. However, the absence of these detailed intertextual components would prevent the film being recognised as a 'Mitani film'. Meticulous attention to intertextuality at all levels of the production – even if audiences fail to notice these small details – is the hallmark of Mitani's film-making approach.[104] As a result, regardless of recognition of the references used, intertextuality is an essential strategy in making Mitani's films 'Mitani-like'.

Through Mitani's films the circulatory power of media can be observed; old films are revived and freshly re-created across borders and time. As suggested by Mitani's admiration for the two American artists, Wilder and Allen, in most cases American texts provide the intertextual foundation for Mitani's films. This means that when viewers watch Mitani's films, they actually watch American texts via the Japanese director's works. This dominance of American texts seems to represent the cultural outcomes of Americanisation, a process which, although global, operated particularly strongly in Japan over the past six and a half decades because of the post-war American occupation of Japan. From this perspective, Mitani's films are typical products of the new crop of post-1990 American influenced Japanese Gen X directors. However, it is worthwhile noting again that Mitani is in a unique position as a Japanese comedy creator due to radical differences between Japanese and American comedies.

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103 Chandler, 'Intertextuality'.
104 Mitani, cited in Pia Mooks, p. 164; Mori, 'Gaikōsei to Naikōsei wo Ōrai Shite Zenshin Shituzukeru Hyōgensha', p. 42.

There is an interesting impression about Japan from other nations. According to Barrett, Japanese comedy (*kigeki*) is little known in the West.[105] In fact, viewers and readers in both the West and in other parts of Asia have a common image of Japanese people as lacking a sense of humour, in spite of the fact that Japanese comedy actually has a long history.[106] Mitani's increasing recognition overseas as a comedy filmmaker has the capacity to dispel the stereotypical impression of an absence of comedy and humour in Japan. Through his films, foreign audiences can understand the strong tradition of comedy and humour in Japanese popular culture.

This, in fact, is one of Mitani's aims. Rather than incorporating American comic elements in his work to become individually famous overseas, Mitani's desire is to give foreign viewers a sense of the highly developed nature of Japanese comedy.[107] To be sure, he successfully changes original American signifieds through his perception to something more Japaneseque. By doing so, these signifieds fit into his storylines and turn into 'Mitani-like' elements from mere extraction from American texts. In other words, despite the fact that Mitani's texts often become meaningful by interacting with American texts, what he wants to express belongs to Japanese cinema. This cultural tangle seems to indicate the power of intertextuality; any intertextual references could communicate with each other regardless of nationalities. Thus, it can be argued that the prevalence of the theory in a large number of fields across the border partially attributes to this powerful nature of intertextuality.

In addition to his films, Mitani's plays have also reached audiences in other countries. The theatrical version of *University of Laughs* (2004; *Warai no daigaku*), which was originally produced as a radio drama in 1994 and then as a play in 1996 before it was adapted as a film directed by Mamoru Hoshi in 2004, was performed in the U.K. by British actors and also by local actors in Korea. As Mitani has noted, it was incredible that the play was favourably received in Korea, since the social background of this play is the Second World War,[108] a time of harsh Japanese proto-colonial rule of Korea. From this point of view, comedy provides the power to alleviate international tensions and to improve cultural relations. In this sense, Mitani's comedy works as a very positive form of 'soft power', particularly in this globalising world. 'Soft power' is defined as a combination of intangible resources such as 'culture, ideology and identities'.[109]

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105 Barrett, 'Comic Targets and Comic Styles: An introduction to Japanese Film Comedy', p. 211.
106 *Ibid.*; Buruma, 'Humor in Japanese Cinema', p. 26.
107 Mitani, cited in Rikkyō Journal.
108 Mitani, *Mitani Kōki no Arifureta Seikatsu 8: Fukkatsu no Hi*, pp. 99-101.
109 Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Policies*, p. 166.

While power of this kind can serve questionable political and economic ends,[110] the 'soft power' inherent in Mitani's comedies has great potential for a positive influence especially when presented in film format. As he pointed out, film is a medium that entertains people all over the world.[111] Although Mitani was a successful director and a playwright for theatre and television drama, he noticed the limitations of these two media. Theatre is a medium that is made to be enjoyed as a live performance, while Mitani feels that television drama must be seen over a series of weeks.[112] Films, on the other hand, are a one-off easily distributed format that, in effect, has 'eternal life'. Mitani said 'I am still moved by films that were made in Hollywood more than 50 years ago. Isn't it amazing? This means that, if I really try, my films may be able to entertain people all over the world decade after decade'.[113] This eternal potential of cinema may be one reason for its strongly intertextual nature. In other words, the fact that cinema has more potential to be consumed means it has more potential to be re-used (intertextualised). Currently, it is Mitani who references the texts of other directors. However, his increasing international recognition via the power of global cinema gives his works, too, the potential to be referenced and intertextualised by others.

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110 McGray, 'Japan's Gross National Cool', p. 53.
111 Mitani, *Shigoto, Mitani Kōki no*, p. 131.
112 Mitani, *Mitani Kōki no Arifureta Seikatsu 5: Uchōten Jidai*, p. 55.
113 *Ibid.*

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A Study of Social Networking Sites for Learners of Japanese

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Abstract

Social Networking Sites (SNSs) such as "Facebook" and "MySpace" have been used by many people from different countries around the world, and they have recently been applied to second language (L2) learning, both inside and outside classrooms. A number of researchers have investigated the utility of SNSs, and some language researchers have studied the use of SNSs for L2 learning in language classrooms. However, the study of the usage of SNSs for L2 learning outside the classroom has not yet been studied thoroughly, despite the fact that many communities and groups exist for users who are interested in learning L2 on such sites.

This article examines the nature and extent of SNS communities available specifically for L2 learners of Japanese, and describes the usage which is being made of these communities in particular on the SNSs, "mixi" and "Facebook". Furthermore, the beneficial aspects of using such sites for L2 learning will be discussed.

Keywords

SNS, L2 learning, mixi, Facebook

Introduction

Language learning approaches, both inside and outside the classroom, have been changing along with advances in technology. Educational institutions and language learners are getting the benefits from the flexibility and accessibility offered by computer technologies.[1] Such technologies allow second language (L2) learners to access the Target Language (TL) easily, especially outside the classroom. For example, learners have the opportunities to access authentic language usage or enrich their knowledge of culture and society through reading the TL on websites, listening to music or watching TV programs in the TL, and so forth. Interaction with native speakers of the TL by using Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) tools such as Social Networking Sites (SNSs) or instant messenger is also now possible. Moreover,

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1   Goertler, 'Using Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) in language teaching', pp. 74-84.

non-native speakers can interact with other non-native speakers who speak the same L2 through CMC tools. Such interactions through computer technologies provide many opportunities for information exchange and L2 development.[2]

One of the CMC tools, SNSs such as "Facebook" and "MySpace" have been used by many people all over the world, and have recently infiltrated our daily life. On such sites, there are many communities and groups which exist for users who are interested in communicating in or studying the L2. Many researchers have investigated the utility of SNSs, and some language researchers have studied the use of SNS for L2 learning in language classes.[3] However, the study of SNSs usage for L2 learning outside the classroom has not yet been paid much attention. Consequently, the present study will examine the nature and extent of SNS communities available specifically for L2 learners of Japanese, and describe the usage which is being made of these communities, in particular on the SNSs, "mixi" and "Facebook" which are the most popular SNSs in Japan and internationally. Furthermore, the beneficial aspects of using such sites for L2 learning will be discussed.

This study has been based on three research questions:

1. What types of communities designed for L2 learners of Japanese exist in "mixi" and "Facebook"?

2. How are those SNS communities used by learners?

3. What are the beneficial aspects for L2 learning particularly in SNS communities?

Background study

Only a few studies have explored the use of SNSs for L2 learning, thus, I will also review the literature that covers the factors that support language learning, which are relevant to the use of CMC. The following discussion is organised under features which have been suggested as being important for language learning, specifically, peer assistance, authenticity, gratification of social needs, and anonymity.

It has been suggested that interactions through SNSs among peer networks provide an ideal environment for beginning L2 learners to enhance their literacy,

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2   Smith, Alvarez-Torres, and Zhao, 'Features of CMC technologies and their impact on language learners' online interaction', pp. 703-729.
3   Pasfield-Neofitou, 'Creative applications of social networking for the language learning class', pp. 235-240.

promote academic rigour, and involve the participation of learners from a variety of different backgrounds, as well as encouraging active learning and purposeful practice.[4] Peer assistance, in face-to-face contexts, has been widely investigated in recent years. Vygotsky highlights the different degrees of accomplishment by individuals who have the help of teachers or more capable peers.[5] Although learners have limited ability to solve problems by themselves, they can exceed their limitations and reach higher levels of performance with teachers' or peers' assistance. The gap between what they can achieve on their own and with assistance is termed the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Vygotsky considers that it constitutes a generative potential for learning. Consequently, it can be expected that peer assistance may provide appropriate scaffolding for L2 learning.[6] Swain and Lapkin propose that collaborating with peers could develop better L2 learning processes through learners (1) noticing what they do not know, (2) forming and testing hypotheses, (3) using unknown language by producing before comprehending (4) talking themselves into understanding, and (5) co-constructing language or linguistic knowledge.[7] From these points of view, Swain affirms that peer interaction could foster cognitive learning.[8] Similarly, Skon, Johnson and Johnson point out that co-operative peer assistance generates higher quality cognitive learning.[9] They examined the effects on language acquisition of cognitive reasoning strategies by contrasting co-operative peer assistance and individual efforts. As a result, the study concludes that co-operative peer assistance promotes higher achievement than individual efforts.[10]

The various functions in SNSs enable the language learners to input authentic TL by reading, watching and listening to practical TL usage, and also to have opportunities to output what they have learnt through such applications.[11] As another prominent feature of SNSs, Goertler points out that SNSs enable learners to access interlocutors who are not usually available in the traditional face-to-face classroom-based learning environment, such as native speakers of the TL.[12] Therefore, Goertler identifies that such new CMC technologies are significantly valuable for L2 learners, not only for obtaining authentic materials but also because learning the way of native speakers' language usage could sustain learners' interests in the TL.[13]

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4   Blood, *The Weblog Handbook: Practical advice on creating and maintaining your BLOG.*
5   Vygotsky, *Thought and language.*
6   Lantolf, *Sociocultural theory and second language learning.*
7   Swain and Lapkin, 'Talking it through: Two French immersion learners' response to reformulation', pp. 285-304.
8   Swain, 'The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative dialogue'.
9   Skon, Johnson and Johnson, 'Cooperative peer interaction versus individual competition and individualistic efforts: Effects on the acquisition of cognitive reasoning strategies, pp. 83-92.
10   Skon, et al., *op. cit.*
11   Goertler, *op. cit.*
12   *Ibid.*
13   *Ibid.*

Importantly, the role of SNSs in the gratification of social needs should be carefully considered. SNSs are not created as a language learning device, and their basic function is for socialisation purposes. Ebersole points out that SNSs can motivate the users because the social nature of online networking lends itself to gratification of social needs.[14] From this point of view, it could be expected that not only language acquisition but also gratification of social needs might sustain L2 learners' motivation. Dixon considers that the gratification of social needs is an essential element to maintain motivation, and new communication services have replaced older media for this reason.[15] Thus, the gratification of social needs which could be obtained through interactions in SNSs would be an important supplemental element to support and enhance the learners' enthusiasm toward L2 learning.

Another characteristic of CMC is the use of anonymity. According to Kern, anonymity creates a certain distance between the participants that may contribute to an atmosphere of critical receptivity and it enhances language production.[16] In other words, the vast anonymity of cyberspace gives little pressure of the sort imposed on an individual by another's physical presence.[17] Thanks to the lack of identity, users could feel free from various forms of prejudice and could be encouraged to be more impartial.[18] Due to this aspect, some learners might be more active in L2 engagement in a CMC environment.

Methodology

Selection of SNSs

Two SNSs, namely "mixi" and "Facebook", were adopted for this study, although many other SNSs exist such as "MySpace", "Friendster", "Bebo" and others. There are several reasons why these two SNSs were selected. Firstly, "mixi" was selected as representative of Japanese SNSs for its popularity. "Mixi" was created basically for Japanese people and all instructions are written in the Japanese language, hence the majority of the users are Japanese. However, it could be expected that enthusiastic learners and non-Japanese who live in Japan could register their profile in "mixi" to have a link with Japanese people. "Mixi" is one of the first SNSs which began service in Japan, and the number of mixi's users and communities are the largest even compared to another early SNS in Japan, namely "GREE".[19] Therefore, "mixi" was regarded as the most suitable Japanese SNS for this study.

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14 Ebersole, 'Uses and gratifications of the web among students'.
15 Dixon, 'Uses and gratifications theory to predict use of computer-mediated communications', pp. 3-27.
16 Kern, 'Technology, social interaction and FL literacy'.
17 Smith, et al., *op. cit.*
18 Herring, *Computer-mediated communication: Linguistic, social and cross-cultural perspectives.*
19 Mixi.Inc., 'Jigyō naiyō'.

"Facebook", as with "mixi", was considered because of its publicity and large number of users. According to a survey which analyses the service of websites, "Facebook" was ranked as the most used SNS worldwide based on the number of monthly active users in 2009.[20] A Japanese version of "Facebook" has also been available since 2008. Hence, it is expected to have many communities related to Japan/Japanese which contain native speakers of Japanese and learners of Japanese, as it is natural for language learners to hope to interact with native speakers of the TL. The popularity of "Facebook" was confirmed by a comparative analysis with other SNSs, as it returned more results in active communities when keywords associated to Japanese learning were entered in their search using the same procedure. In contrast, "MySpace" and "Friendster" did not show communities, but individual learners who use "Japanese learner", "Japan club" or other similar terms for their user name. A few communities were found in "Bebo", however, the number of members was very small, therefore "Facebook" was selected for this study.

Selection of communities

The focus for this study was not an individuals' use of "mixi" or "Facebook" to interact with others by inviting them to be their contacts individually, but on communities which have been set up on these SNSs for those who identify themselves as learners of Japanese. There is a community search facility available in most SNSs. The communities for the study were found by entering several keywords which related to learning Japanese language such as "Japanese learners", "Japanese study" or "Japan group". Similarly, Japanese words such as "*Nihongo, Gaikokujin* (Japanese language, foreigners)" were also used to identify relevant communities. These relevant communities were further investigated through an examination of the introduction page of each community, and a total of 10 communities were selected as the result. This study selected five communities from "mixi" and five communities from "Facebook" according to their community size, activity and purpose. Moreover, two communities from each SNS, which made four communities in total, were selected for further detailed investigation based on their degree of activities.

Data collection

The data was collected by the researcher from the selected communities of "mixi" and "Facebook" as of April, 2010. From the 10 communities which were first selected, only general information such as the number of the members and the purpose of the community was gathered according to the introduction of each community and the

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20   Kazeniac, 'Social Networks: Facebook takes over top spot, twitter climbs'.

members' comments. As for the four communities selected for more detailed study, the researcher collected the posted comments from the members to the community between January, 2007 and April, 2010 in addition to general information.

Data analysis

In order to illustrate the characteristics of each community, the 10 communities were analysed by the categorisation shown in Appendix 1 (number of participants, language selection, level of activity, community purpose and whether previously existing community or not). In addition, the number of postings and reply comments in the four focal communities were counted (see Appendix 2). From that data, the frequency of interactions was then calculated. Furthermore, contributors of postings were categorised into learners of Japanese, native speakers of Japanese, Japanese language teacher, or company/community/institution on the basis of name or other information in the postings. The language(s) used for the topic title and content in each posting were also counted. In addition, the content of the postings were classified by topics, which results in categories that can be found in Appendix 3. These topics reflect important aspects of the communities for Japanese learners and the fundamental roles of SNSs such as socialisation and networking. Further qualitative analysis was carried out on the postings on each site to identify further detail about the use of the sites and the opportunities for learning provided by SNS use.

Results and discussion

The characteristics of communities for learners of Japanese

In order to examine the types of communities available for L2 learners of Japanese on mixi and Facebook, the characteristics of the 10 communities selected for examination are described. The study will not present the real community names, instead these 10 communities are given pseudonyms.

The communities for learners of Japanese on mixi

The purpose of the community "Japanese Learners Support Team" is to assist learners of Japanese. In this community, both learners of Japanese and native speakers of Japanese posted questions and advice/recommendation mainly on Japanese language and study methods, materials and so forth. The purpose of community "Chatty Foreigners in Japanese" is similar to "Japanese Learners Support Team", however, this community

utilises the community more for social purposes. Hence, not only interactions for study but also general interactions such as looking for friends and advertising events were prominently conducted. On the other hand, "JLPT Study Group" and "Japanese Learners' Diary" focus on more specific aims. "JLPT Study Group" is a community primarily used by candidates of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) to ask questions, exchange information, and encourage each other. "Japanese Learners' Diary" site provides the learners of Japanese with a space to post their diary, which is written in Japanese and corrected by native speakers of Japanese to help to improve the learners' writing proficiency. "Expatriates' Club" is a community for expatriates in Japan to exchange information on their daily life in Japan. Thus, the members interacted to share and collect information to live in Japan, and in addition, many advertisements from Japanese companies which want to hire foreign workers were also posted.

Regarding language selection in mixi, Japanese and English are used flexibly in most communities, except in "Japanese Learners' Diary" due to their expectation to write a diary in Japanese. Although not every learner was a native speaker of English, only English was observed as a common language besides Japanese. Moreover, most communities' frequency of postings was very active. Postings including "*topics*" and "*comments*" were regularly posted within two to three days on average. To distinguish the types of postings, "*topic*" indicates the first posting which is posted by the members as a new theme and "*comment*" stands for the reply to a *topic* in this study according to the presentation of mixi.

There is a significant range of participants in mixi's communities. According to each community's introduction, the five communities were constituted between 2004 and 2006. Yet, the number of the participants is not relative to the year of the community foundation. For example, both "JLPT Study Group" and "Chatty Foreigners in Japanese" were created in 2005 but the number of participants of "Chatty Foreigners in Japanese" was more than three times the "JLPT Study Group" as of April, 2010. It seems that the communities which have a particular purpose like "JLPT Study Group" and "Expatriates' Club" limit the users but more universal communities such as "Chatty Foreigners in Japanese" contain more members.

The communities for learners of Japanese on Facebook

As can be seen from Appendix 1, the number of participants in the communities on Facebook is much smaller than those of mixi. Apart from the community "Japanese Study Forum", only English and the Roman alphabet were used and the posting frequency was rare. The community purpose of "Japanese Study Forum" and "Japanese Group

of University D" is to study Japanese. However, those two communities have different features. For instance, "Japanese Study Forum" included native speakers of Japanese, and both Japanese and English were employed. The interactions were not so frequent but some members utilised the community over an extended period of time. On the other hand, "Japanese Group of University D" consisted only of learners of Japanese and used only English and the Roman alphabet, furthermore the interactions tended to discontinue. Notably, four out of the five communities are student communities studying Japanese language overseas. In fact, not only these communities but also many student communities appeared during the community search process. Facebook is well known as a tool for students to interact with previously existing community members and is commonly used to set up community pages, in contrast to mixi which tends to be used for individual networking.

The usage of the communities

In this section, I analyse the usage of SNS communities by focusing on the four communities. The results of the analysis based on numbers of postings, types of contributors, and language selection for the four focused communities are presented in Appendix 2 and a detailed breakdown of the themes discussed in each community is found in Appendix 3.

Influential factors for language selection

By observing the SNS communities, the study has found that the characteristics of SNSs influence the usage of the community for L2 learning.

Firstly, mixi is a Japanese-based SNS which provides its service only in Japanese. Therefore, a higher percentage of native Japanese speaking users were found in the two mixi focused communities as compared to the communities in Facebook. Approximately 60% of *topics* were sent by learners of Japanese and 40% were from native speakers of Japanese in "Japanese Learners Support Team". The classification of contributors was quite clear because most of them identified themselves in advance, as seen in Example 1. For both the *topic* title and the content, nearly 30% of the preferred language selected was Japanese, 50-60% was English and 10-20% was written in both Japanese and English in this community. In the "JLPT Study Group", approximately 70% of the members were learners of Japanese, while the other 30% were native speakers of Japanese, including Japanese teachers and companies. Although there is a 10% difference in the classification of the contributors between the two communities, the proportion of language selection was similar. Since 2007, mixi has required an invitation from an existing mixi user

through email, and a registration of a Japanese mobile email address for new users to participate in mixi. Due to these requirements, it is natural to assume that most current mixi users live or have lived in Japan and have some friends there. Therefore, on average their Japanese proficiency is likely to be higher than other learners, as they can understand mixi's instructions which are written only in Japanese. Therefore, the frequent usage of both Japanese and English can be observed in mixi communities.

Example 1: Members' self-identification

> Hello, everyone.
> My native language is English, and I'm still studying Japanese.
>
> *Retrieved from "Japanese Learners Support Team" in mixi*

> *Konnichiwa.*
> [Hello]
> *Tokyo ni sundeiru igirisujin no shakaijin desu.*
> [I'm a British adult living in Tokyo.]
>
> *Retrieved from "Japanese Learners Support Team" in mixi*

> Hello, Im a Japanese in Ireland, teaching Japanese to Irish husband who just finished the level 3 exam.
>
> *Retrieved from "JLPT Study Group" in mixi*

> Hajimemashite.
> [Nice to meet you.]
> *Watashi wa genzai, ōbējin no kenyūsha o chūshin ni baikaigo no ēgo o tsukainagara, nihongo o oshieteimasu.*
> [I'm teaching Japanese, using English as a medium language mainly to Western researchers.]
>
> *Retrieved from "Japanese Learners Support Team" in mixi*

On the other hand, Facebook is an English-based SNS, although with the recent addition of a Japanese version, English speakers are still the dominant users. In "Japanese Study Forum", nearly 90% of the contributors were learners of Japanese and texts were written mainly in English with some Japanese words written in the Roman alphabet. "Japan Club of University A" is a student community of an American university for those who are interested in Japan, Japanese language, or Japanese culture. The members were composed of 90% learners of Japanese and 10% native speakers of Japanese, and all the

texts were written in English or the Roman alphabet, and Japanese was not used at all. The percentage of learners of Japanese was the same as the "Japanese Study Forum", but the reason why such a high ratio of texts was written in English is probably due to the purpose of this group. The members used the SNS primarily as a contact tool to post event information, ask about other members' schedule, comment about events and update event pictures and videos and so on. Therefore, it could be anticipated that they posted in English to distribute the information appropriately and communicate quickly. In addition, they plan activities related to Japan such as Japanese tea ceremony parties and discussions about Japanese culture in person. Hence, practising or using Japanese through SNS is not their primary purpose. As compared to mixi, the significant distinctions are a much lower percentage of Japanese use and a high percentage of usage of the Roman alphabet on Facebook. Consequently, language selection in SNS communities would differ according to the community membership and the community purpose.

Contents of topics

The main topics in "Japanese Learners Support Team" were questions and introductions about matters such as Japanese language and study methods, materials and others for Japanese learning. The questions on Japanese language learning were kanji readings and meanings, a word or sentence meanings, and explanation on grammar. There were questions posted not only by Japanese learners on grammar but also by Japanese language teachers to request advice from other teachers in order to acquire better teaching methods. In addition, questions on sociolinguistic aspects of language usage were also observed, such as in Example 2. "Dondake~" is a term that has been used by a Japanese celebrity on TV and had become a popular expression when the contributor posted the question. The formal form of "dondake" is "doredake", but "re" sometimes can change to "n" in colloquial language. The literal meaning is "How much…" and it expresses the amount and level in a question form. When the term is used in isolation, the reference is implied by the context and not stated. For instance, to answer the request where one is asked to put sugar into a coffee cup, the following omission could take place: "(satō o) dondake (ireru) [How much? (sugar do you want?)]". The Japanese celebrity mentioned above used the omission type of the term as I have explained, yet he employed the word when he wanted to imply feelings such as sarcasm or lament (e.g. "dondake~ (jibun no koto kirē to omotteruno) [How much? (do you think that you are beautiful?)]", "dondake~ (watashi no koto kirai nano) [How much? (do you hate me?)]"). Owing to his novel usage, the term "dondake~" has become popular and has started to be employed to arouse an atmosphere of enthusiasm. Perhaps the learner of Japanese could not interpret when it should be used and why Japanese people were laughing when the word was used, although s/he grammatically understood the word usage.

Example 2: A question regarding sociolinguistic aspect of Japanese and comment

Topic title: *Dondake~!*

"Dondake~" no imi wa nandesuka? Terebi de mitakeredo, itsu tsukauka wakarimasen. Yoroshiku onegaishomasu.
[What's the meaning of "*Dondake~*"? I saw it on TV, but I don't know when to use it. Regards.]

Retrieved from "Japanese Learners Support Team" in mixi

In "Japanese Learners Support Team", many linguistic questions and queries, which arose through daily life, were observed. Moreover, the learners have also used the site to ask or share effective study methods, materials and so on by recommending helpful books and websites. Native speakers of Japanese were also very cooperative. Some Japanese members introduced their recommendations, and others created and updated their sites for Japanese learning according to the learners' demands.

In addition, an interesting and notable phenomenon was found in the interactions which have lasted the longest in the community. A member suggested playing "*shiritori*", namely "Japanese word chain game". At the beginning, only a few members joined the game by writing only a Japanese word without *kanji* reading when they used *kanji*. However, as some members started to add the *kanji* reading and the word meaning, gradually the number of participants increased. Moreover, they applied the word in a sentence to show how to use the word. Surprisingly, this interaction continued for more than one year. From this fact, it appears that the members in this community seem to be interested in having fun or improving their Japanese while socialising with other members. As other evidence, there are many *topics* which asked about fun ways to study Japanese such as through Japanese drama, manga, or Japanese slang, and such *topics* received many *comments*. From these points of view, the community "Japanese Learners Support Team" seems to be casually used by both the learners of Japanese and native speakers of Japanese for language study, information exchange, and also socialisation through the common language.

In "JLPT Study Group", as the members mostly enquire about JLPT, the topics posted by the community were to collect/exchange information for gaining knowledge, obtaining advantages and sustaining their motivation for the test (see Example 3). Moreover, the members posted *topics* to encourage the candidates who would take the test, and also shared the test results. There were a number of *topics* to report the success of the test such as "I passed level 1!!", and then comments by many other members to share their own result or celebrate the member's achievement.

Example 3: Information exchange for JLPT test

Topic title: JLPT Level 2

I wanted to take JLPT level 2 this July and just passed level 3 last year without revision. I want to know how hard of level 2 is.

Comment 1:

Level 2 is significantly harder than Level 3. This is why they're changing the system next year to add a level in-between.
If you barely passed 3, you will need a significant amount of effort to take 2 by July.

Comment 2:

I agree with Comment 1.
My friend aced the level 3 JLPT last year, but realistically he sees the July level 2 exam as a practice/preview for the same exam in December

Comment 3:

I suggest going to a bookstore and buying the 2007 level 2 test.
Then go here and get these books:
http://mixi.jp/view_bbs.pl?id=37954514&comm_id=285680

Comment 4:

The test for the level 2 was pretty difficult for me, but I passed it.
It's really more difficult then level 3! But if you study always, you can pass it easily!
GANBARE!!! [Hang in there!!!]

Retrieved from "JLPT Study Group" in mixi

"Japanese Study Forum" is a Japanese study group, but the interactions tended to stagnate after the members introduced themselves. Instead, some members seemed to use the community as a place to produce utterances in Japanese, but they might not expect further interaction (see Example 4). For some users, there might not be many opportunities to produce output in the TL specifically for social needs or in practical situations. Hence, this kind of site might be the only chance for them to practise use of the L2. The *topic* contents of "Japan Club of University A" were on the club event as I mentioned in *Influential Factors for Language Selection* above.

Example 4: Production practise in Japanese

> *Watashi wa kyō subarashī 1nichi o motteite, anata ga onaji de arukoto o negaimasu!*
> [I have a good day today, and I hope that you also!]

Retrieved from "Japanese Study Forum" in Facebook

Beneficial aspects for L2 learning

The following section describes the most significant ways in which the SNS sites provided opportunities which could enhance L2 learning.

Benefits for pre-existing and non-pre-existing SNS communities

Communities which were originally created in SNS had somewhat different outcomes to those which previously existed outside SNS. For example, a great deal of peer assistance was observed in the non-pre-existing communities "Japanese Learners Support Team" and "JLPT Study Group" which contain members from various backgrounds. Support, encouragement and effective information were extracted from more proficient learners, native speakers of Japanese and also Japanese teachers by answering questions, introducing study materials and useful information through postings. This is in agreement with previous studies, for instance, Blood,[21] and Drezner and Farrell,[22] in which they report that SNSs among peer networks provide an ideal environment for L2 learners. Some of the factors which support the peer interactions are authenticity, gratification of social needs and anonymity in SNSs environment. In this kind of community, members link with other members via the community, and build relationships after they have joined the group. As Goertler indicates, SNSs enable learners to access interlocutors who are not usually available.[23] To interact with such people is exciting and it is natural human nature to try to learn new things. In addition, the postings in SNSs are real questions, requirements, comments and so on from the members. In other words, the interactions are generated and flow naturally because of their particular purposes, unlike artificial dialogues in text books. For the *topic* creators, to find out the right answer for a question might be their only aim, and the *comment* contributors reply to a *topic* because they see the help which is requested. Consequently, in an SNS environment, authenticity and gratification of social needs play important

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21 Blood, *op. cit.*
22 Drezner and Farrell, 'Web of Influence'.
23 Goertler, *op. cit.*

roles, in line with Goertler's[24] and Ebersole's[25] identification of these features motivating SNS users. Another factor that facilitates the interactions is anonymity. In my research, many questions were found like Example 5, which ask about sensitive issues which might be difficult to talk about in other contexts. I suggest that such questions are facilitated due to the absence of pressure, physical distance, and lack of prejudice.[26] In the communities which are originally created in SNS, there are benefits such as anonymity that face-to-face conversation does not provide.

Example 5: A question facilitated by anonymity

>Topic Title: *Ano "minna de mata tanoshimō" tte dōyū hontō no imi desuka?*
>[Well, what is real meaning "Let's enjoy with everyone again"?]

>Hello,
>*Koko ni kono topikku īnokana, ma īka.*
>[Is this fine to post this *topic* here? Anyway.]

>*Futsūna shitsumon nandesukedo dareka kotae dōzo.*
>[This is a normal question, but please answer.]

>*Tatoeba nomikaide kyōmi no hito (nihonjin) itara futsūni mēruadoresu o kōkanshimashita, de sono hito ni "aimashō?" tte kītara sono hito kara kono kotae:*
>[For example, there was a person (Japanese) whom I was interested in at a drinking party, so I have exchanged email address with her as usual. Then I asked to meet her, and this is her response:]

>*"Īyo, itsuka minna de mata tanoshimō" tte ano "minna de mata tanoshimō" no hontō imi wa:*
>["Ok, let's enjoy with everyone someday again." Well, I think that real meaning of "Let's enjoy with everyone" is:]

>*"Anata to futari de dēto shitakunai" ka*
>["I don't want to date only with you." Or]

>*"Anata no koto kyōmi nai" ka ryōhoō ka dato omoimasu.*
>["I'm not interested in you." Or both.]

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24   *Ibid.*
25   Ebersole, *op. cit.*
26   Smith et al., *op. cit.*

Soreka hoka no imi ga arimasudeshōka?
[Are there other meanings?]

Minasan dō to omoimasuka?
[What do you think?]

Muzukashikute yoku wakarimasen><
[It's difficult for me to understand it well> <]

Retrieved from "Japanese Learners Support Team" in mixi

In summary, the new communities generated on SNS sites provided numerous opportunities for meaningful interaction, and a positive and non-threatening environment in which this interaction could take place. However, in the pre-existing communities that use SNS such as "Japan Club of University A", different types of benefits might apply. Anonymity is obviously lacking in such communities, therefore, some learners might be more careful about the selection of topics than in the situations when they can post online anonymously. In the case of using SNS as a contact tool to arrange later activities in a face-to-face setting, one may not be able to expect lively interactions for learning purposes in SNS. Yet, interacting with members who have similar interests and face-to-face contacts are the strengths of this type of community. Communicating with physically familiar members for concrete purposes is also valuable. It is also possible that online networking allows learners to more easily organise opportunities to interact face-to-face.

A 'portal' to other information and resources on the web and elsewhere

One of the reasons I focused upon SNSs in my study is due to the SNS potential as portal for obtaining information and additional skills for L2 study. Through SNSs, learners could obtain other opportunities to learn about the TL. Example 6 shows that a learner suggested a website which introduces Japanese culture, foods and study materials and contains many links about Japan/Japanese. Through these kinds of postings, learners could expand their learning opportunities with other materials which were suggested by SNS community members. In other words, communities that provide chances to obtain information from various people could present a portal point for learners to access a wide range of resources and interaction opportunities.

Example 6: Introduction of another website

Topic Title: Good site for study japanese

Here is good for study japanese.
and there is free chat for speek japanese!!
You should check it!!
http://livingjapan.blog100.fc2.com/

Comment:

good blog

Retrieved from "JLPT Study Group" in mixi

A 'safe' introduction to wider communication in the L2

When learners use websites on the Internet designed for native speakers, they sometimes encounter prejudice and abuse or find it difficult to participate. Those experiences obviously de-motivate learners' enthusiasm for L2 study. New technological tools have brought many beneficial aspects to educational fields, but such perils should also be carefully considered. Communities for L2 learners may present a safer and more welcoming site to commence online interaction.

Pasfield-Neofitou, Morofushi and Spence-Brown studied an SNS project in a Japanese language class at an Australian university by utilising one of the SNSs, "Bebo".[27] According to the survey which they conducted, the project was evaluated positively by the students due to their improvements of typing, reading, writing, and communication skills in Japanese. The students had used SNSs in their private time before the project started, but they posted mainly in English or in their first language. In my study, there are some members who wrote postings in the Roman alphabet. However, if their skills and confidence to use Japanese are gradually improved through use in a site for L2 learners, this could provide a portal into a broader usage of Japanese on the Internet.

Implications

The use of SNS may be helpful for learners to monitor their own and other speakers' language usage. Such monitoring facilitates cognitive learning and contributes to the

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27   Pasfield-Neofitou, Morofushi and Spence-Brown, 'Jisshakai eno kakehashi: Shokyūsha ni taisuru SNS o riyōshita nihongokyōiku'.

absorption of unfamiliar/unknown language usage. When they use SNS for L2 learning, it is necessary to select a community that matches the learners' requirements by considering the community purpose, members' backgrounds, how it is used, the range of languages available and so on. This is due to the different purposes of communities in SNS. If a learner wants to interact with native speakers of Japanese in Japanese language, while the majority of the members are English speakers and they use English as the medium language, the learner will not be satisfied with the community, even though the community's purpose seems to fit the learner's aim. On the other hand, it could frustrate a learner if s/he hopes to have a detailed discussion about specific aspects of Japanese language in her/his first language, while all the explanations are given in Japanese. Thus, community selection should be carefully considered.

For L2 teachers, observing the SNS communities for L2 study is beneficial as they indicate the difficulties and interesting aspects for L2 learners through their questions and how learners study the TL outside the classroom. Such information is useful for teaching and such experience would be beneficial if it were reflected in classroom teaching. In my study, for instance, there are many suggestions for ways in which learners themselves feel that the materials or study methods are effective or interesting, and these could be good indications for teachers. For example, one of the learners asked about useful game software such as for Nintendo DS for *kanji* practice, which was then responded to by another learner in the following *comment* shown in Example 7. One of the most difficult aspects in studying *kanji* for learners of Japanese is the difficulty to find an unknown *kanji*, because learners often have to rely on only the *kanji* reading. In fact, however, the learner points out that most *kanji* learning software focuses on drills to practise *kanji*. This *comment* implies how difficult it is for learners to study *kanji* by using tools around them, and what kind of materials for *kanji* study they would like to use, which can help Japanese language teachers to prepare or introduce tools for learners' study more effectively.

Example 7: Introduction of a study method by a learner of Japanese

Topic Title: Nintendo DS

Hi, I have a quick question. Recently I found out about games for the Nintendo DS that help you study *Kanji*. I bought one of them. Its a little hard for me because I don't know any *Kanji* and the game is in *Kanji*, but does help. The question is does anyone know of any good games to learn Japanese or *Kanji* on and where could I find it? Wether the game is on the DS or another system.

Comment:

If you don't mind me asking, which ones you already have? I have the following:

Simple DS Volume 10: Doko Demo *Kanji* Quiz
Kankei 1 and 2 for the DS
Simple 2000 Volume 46: *Kanji* Quiz for the PS2
Kageyama Method: Writing the first 1,006 *Kanji*

Most *kanji* software are just drills to reinforce what you already know, but I do recommend the *Kageyama* Method series. They teach you the stroke order, reading, and of course they have drills.

Go to www.playasia.com and search "*kanji*" to bring up a list of some of those pieces of software including the *kageyama* method ones.

Retrieved from "Japanese Learners Support Team" in mixi

Although there are only a few institutions which have adopted SNS tools for L2 learning courses, the learners, specifically among young generations, often utilise such new tools within their learning environment and acquire many skills. Hence, it would be worthwhile for L2 teachers to know about the tools that the learners use for L2 learning.

Conclusion

This study has investigated the use of SNS communities for Japanese learning as an L2 and examined the usage of the communities and the benefits for L2 learning by focusing on communities in mixi and Facebook. There are a variety of communities for Japanese language learning in these two popular SNSs. However, due to the fact that mixi is a Japanese-based SNS which contains many communities that were created as new groups, and Facebook is an English-based SNS which is utilised by many pre-existing groups their usage showed different features. The differences depend on the community purpose and the variety of the members' backgrounds, language selection, types of posting *topics*, purpose of interactions, and other factors. For example, in mixi's communities, which contained various types of members, Japanese and English were frequently used, while the members of Facebook communities, which did not have many Japanese members, utilised mainly English as their preference in their postings. In addition, the members of "JLPT Study Group" and "Japan Club of University A" used the communities completely as a study tool and a face-to-face contact tool respectively, due to their specific purposes. On the other hand, "Japanese Learners Support Team" and "Japanese Study Forum" were used as a learning community as well as for socialisation purposes.

As a beneficial aspect of SNSs for L2 learning, the study found that non-pre-existing communities could promote peer assistance due to gratification of social needs and anonymity, and provide opportunities to expand the learners' networks and ability to connect with multiple partners simultaneously. On the other hand, pre-existing communities gain advantages to organise opportunities for face-to-face interaction. In addition, the study found that SNSs provide a portal for L2 learners to access other information and sources, and present a safe introduction to wider communication in the L2. These are benefits for the learners which could be obtained through SNS communities.

Although the present study shed light on each community's special features, the size of the samples in my study was small and the study approach was rather descriptive, further research which covers a larger number of SNSs, broader types of communities and in-depth analysis is necessary. The number of members of each community has further increased, when compared to when the data was collected for this study. This fact indicates that more and more learners are forming and joining the communities, and have come to regard SNSs as a useful functional learning tool. Therefore, researchers and educators should direct their attention to such new tools, and the communities that form around them.

Appendix

Appendix 1: The characteristics of the 10 communities based on their introduction and postings contents

No	Community Name (Pseudonym)	SNS Source	Number of Participants (Year of Foundation)	Language Selection	Level of Activity	Community Purpose	Previously Existing Community (Yes / No)
1	Japanese Learners Support Team	mixi	6519 (08/2004)	Japanese/English	Frequent	Assistance to Japanese learners	No
2	JLPT Study Group	mixi	1235 (08/2005)	Japanese/English	Seldom	Assistance to JLPT (Japanese Language Proficiency Test) candidates	No
3	Chatty Foreigners in Japanese	mixi	9055 (01/2005)	Japanese/English	Frequent	Social group among expatriates and Japanese	No
4	Expatriates' Club	mixi	6521 (05/2004)	Japanese/English	Frequent	Information exchange for foreigners in Japan	No
5	Japanese Learners' Diary	mixi	439 (07/2006)	Japanese	Frequent	Helping foreigners' writing skill	No
6	Japanese Study Forum	Facebook	175	Japanese/English	Seldom	Japanese study group	No
7	Japan Club of University A	Facebook	191	English	Rare	University Japanese club	Yes
8	Japan Club of University B	Facebook	431	English	Rare	University Japanese club	Yes
9	Japan Club of University C	Facebook	26	English	Rare	Student group to share common interests on Japan	Yes
10	Japanese Group of University D	Facebook	52	English	Rare	Student study group to learn Japanese	Yes

Appendix 2: Analysis of numbers of postings, contributor categories and language selection for four focal communities
(N=Non-native speakers of Japanese, J=Native speakers of Japanese)

No	Item	Japanese Learners Support Team	JLPT Study Group	Japanese Study Forum	Japan Club of University A
		mixi	mixi	Facebook	Facebook
1	Total number of *topics*	434	103	55	25
2	Total number of *comments*	2260	592	16	13
3	Number which received replied comments (Range)	0-153	0-49	0-8	0-7
4	Average number of replied comments per topic	5.2	5.7	0.3	0.5
5	Contributor of *topics*	N:J = 6:4	N:J = 7:3	N:J = 9:1	N:J = 9:1
	Learners of Japanese	253 (58.3%)	70 (68.0%)	48 (87.3%)	23 (92%)
	Native speakers of Japanese	104 (24.0%)	14 (13.6%)	7 (12.7%)	2 (8.0%)
	Japanese teacher	11 (2.5%)	7 (6.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	Company/Community/Institution	66 (15.2%)	12 (11.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
6	Language selection for topic title				
	Japanese	127 (29.3%)	34 (33.0%)	0	0
	English	257 (59.2%)	57 (55.3%)	2	3
	Japanese & English	41 (9.4%)	10 (9.7%)	2	0
	The Roman alphabet	9 (2.1%)	2 (1.9%)	0	0
7	Language selection for content				
	Japanese	123 (28.3%)	32 (31.0%)	6 (11.0%)	0 (0%)
	English	220 (50.7%)	58 (56.3%)	32 (58.2%)	23 (92%)
	Japanese & English	87 (20.0%)	10 (9.7%)	5 (9.1%)	0 (0%)
	The Roman alphabet	4 (0.9%)	3 (3.0%)	12 (21.8%)	2 (8.0%)

Fusako Ota

Appendix 3: Analysis of posted topics for four focal communities

No	Topics	Japanese Learners Support Team (mixi)	JLPT Study Group (mixi)	Japanese Study Forum (Facebook)	Japan Club of University A (Facebook)
1	Self-introduction	14 (3.2%)	0 (0%)	16 (29.0%)	0 (0%)
2	Looking for friends	9 (2.1%)	1 (0.8%)	1 (1.8%)	0 (0%)
	Learners of Japanese → Native speakers of Japanese	2 (0.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	Native speakers of Japanese → Learners of Japanese	2 (0.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	Learners of Japanese → Learners of Japanese	0 (0%)	1 (0.8%)	1 (1.8%)	0 (0%)
	Learners of Japanese → Anyone	5 (1.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
3	Questions / Introduction on Japanese language	117 (27.0%)	36 (34.8%)	7 (12.7%)	0 (0%)
4	Questions / Introduction on study methods, materials etc. on Japanese	65 (15.0%)	26 (25.2%)	5 (9.1%)	1 (4.0%)
5	Questions / Introduction on Japanese culture & society	12 (2.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (4.0%)
6	Questions / Introduction on daily life in Japan	24 (5.5%)	1 (0.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
7	Looking for language exchange partners, study friends or tutors	48 (11.1%)	8 (7.8%)	15 (27.3%)	0 (0%)
	Learners of Japanese → Native speakers of Japanese	20 (4.6%)	2 (1.9%)	7 (12.7%)	0 (0%)
	Native speakers of Japanese → Learners of Japanese	20 (4.6%)	3 (2.9%)	2 (3.6%)	0 (0%)
	Learners of Japanese → Learners of Japanese	5 (1.2%)	3 (2.9%)	4 (7.3%)	0 (0%)
	Learners of Japanese → Anyone	3 (0.7%)	0 (0%)	2 (3.6%)	0 (0%)

8	Looking for jobs / Living places	4 (0.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
9	Information / Opinions on events	13 (3.0%)	1 (0.8%)	0 (0%)	14 (56.0%)
10	Questions / Introduction on English	8 (1.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
11	Advertisement of Japanese lessons	23 (5.3%)	2 (1.9%)	3 (5.5%)	0 (0%)
12	Advertisement of jobs / Living places	18 (4.1%)	1 (0.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
13	Opinions on anything	20 (4.6%)	13 (12.6%)	3 (5.5%)	5 (20.0%)
14	Introduction of community	20 (4.6%)	4 (3.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
15	Questionnaire	13 (3.0%)	3 (2.9%)	0 (0%)	2 (8.0%)
16	Selling & buying	2 (0.5%)	1 (0.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
17	Others	24 (5.5%)	5 (4.9%)	1 (1.8%)	2 (8.0%)
18	Unknown	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.8%)	1 (1.8%)	0 (0%)

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Romanticising Shinsengumi in Contemporary Japan

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Abstract

Shinsengumi, a group of young men recruited by the Bakufu to protect Kyoto from radical Imperial House loyalists in the tumultuous Bakumatsu period, is romanticised and idolised in Japan despite its limited place in history. This article attempts to comprehend this phenomenon by locating the closest crystallisation of popularly imagined Shinsengumi in *Moeyo ken*, a popular historical fiction by Shiba Ryōtarō. Antonio Gramsci explains readers are attracted to popular literature because it reflects their 'philosophies of the age', which may be discovered by examining popular heroes with their subsequent replications.

This article will identify why Shinsengumi is appealing by comparing Shiba's hero in *Moeyo ken* with its twenty-first century reincarnation in *Gintama*, a popular manga series, and by discerning reader response to *Moeyo ken* from customer reviews on Amazon.co.jp. It will be demonstrated from these studies that a likely reason for the Japanese public's romanticisation of Shinsengumi in recent years could be their attraction to autonomous, self-determining heroes who also appreciate the value of community.

Keywords

Shinsengumi, Shiba Ryōtarō, popular literature, autonomy, Japanese hero

Introduction

This article is an attempt to introduce and explain the widespread romanticisation and celebration of Shinsengumi, a previously unscrutinised, yet nevertheless fascinating social phenomenon in Japan.[1] Shinsengumi was a group of young men recruited by the Bakufu to secure order and safety in Kyoto to counter terrorism staged by unruly *jōi shishi* (Imperial House loyalists). Their contribution to history is rather limited that at most, less than a page is allocated for them in history dictionaries such as the Great Dictionary of Japanese History.[2] In short, not much is written about Shinsengumi other than their small victories and their anachronistic fate shared

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1   All translations from Japanese to English including any associated errors and omissions in this article are my own unless otherwise stated.
2   Heibonsha, *Nihonshi daijiten*, p. 1445. For Shinsengumi's history, see: in English, Turnbull, *The Samurai Swordsman*, pp. 180-192, and Hillsborough, *Shinsengumi*; and in Japanese, Matsuura, *Shinsengumi*.

with the Bakufu's downfall. However the group's popularity is the inverse of their historical relevance.

For example, a quick search on Amazon.co.jp leads to 829 results just in the category of Japanese books.[3] An unrestricted search further reveals widespread commercialisation beyond comprehension and imagination. Shinsengumi-related products range from conventional media such as novels, games, manga, films and dramas to quirky items such as figurines, accessories, pets' costumes and even an idol group, Shinsengumi Lien. Their popularity is also noteworthy since their earliest appearance in popular media could be traced back to the 1920s.[4] A critic of popular culture, Ozaki Hotsuki, notes that Shinsengumi's popularity has also been consistent throughout history in contrast to the fluctuating popularity of other historical figures from the same period.[5] Universality of their appeal is also suggested from their warm reception in other countries such as Taiwan and South Korea.[6] These factors suggest fascination with Shinsengumi is neither a trendy fad nor a manifestation of Japanese people's cultural penchant for tragic samurai.

Since historical accomplishments do not explain why Shinsengumi is romanticised and idolised, this article will discover why this particular group of young men continue to appeal to the Japanese public by looking at popular imaginations. First, it will be advanced that the characterisation of Shinsengumi in *Moeyo ken* (Blaze, My Sword)[7], a *taishū bungaku*[8] by Shiba Ryōtarō (1923-1996), is the closest crystallisation of popular romanticisation of the group. Then, the significance of *taishū bungaku* will be examined to demonstrate that a comparative study of popular fictional heroes and their replications could reveal the masses' consciousness. On this basis, Shinsengumi's popularity will be explained by comparing Shinsengumi in *Moeyo ken* and its replication in *Gintama* (Silver Soul),[9] a manga series by Sorachi Hideaki, and by discerning reader response to *Moeyo ken* from customer reviews on Amazon.co.jp.

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3   Search result is correct as of 24 June 2010. This may include multiple entries of a work because some popular works are re-printed in different formats, different editions and such. But this does not void that there is a large number of products related to Shinsengumi.

4   An example of this is Shimozawa Kan's historical fiction, *Shinsengumi shimatsuki*, first published in 1928.

5   Ozaki, *Taishū bungaku ron*, p. 430.

6   Saaler, *Politics, Memory and Public Opinion*, p. 152.

7   The novel was serialised from November 1962 to Mach 1964 in a magazine, *Shūkan bunshun* (*Weekly Bunshun*), and later published in hardcover and pocket sized editions. In this article, I use the latter, Shiba, *Moeyo ken jō* and *Moeyo ken ge*.

8   *Taishū bungaku* literally translates into mass/popular literature/fiction. Here, the term popular literature is mainly used but both mass and popular will be used to refer to *taishū* as explained in the body text.

9   In Japanese, Sorachi, *Gintama*; and in English, *Gin Tama*. Serialised in Japan since 2003, and since 2006 in the United States, the series is still under progress. I refer to the English edition, *Gin Tama*, on some occasions because I could not access the Japanese version.

Locating Popular Imagination of Shinsengumi

No other text is more appropriate than *Moeyo ken* to extract the archetype imagination of Shinsengumi in postwar Japan. Firstly, the novel was voted as the best fictional representation of Shinsengumi in a 2003 magazine survey.[10] Secondly, perception of Shiba's Shinsengumi as a close reflection of the actual figures is such widespread that whether or not they decide to follow Shiba, post-*Moeyo ken* reproducers of Shinsengumi cannot ignore his rendition when formulating their own versions.[11] Shiba's influence must be considered in the context of his reputation as a prominent national writer.[12] Being perceived as 'someone who can accurately communicate the *realities* of Japanese history rather than…a mere fiction-writer',[13] his characterisation of Shinsengumi transcends fictional boundaries and becomes a reality for many Japanese. In fact, one historian laments many texts place emphasis on Hijikata Toshizō, the vice commander of Shinsengumi, or Okita Sōji, the captain of the first unit, instead of Kondō Isami, the actual head of the organisation, because Shiba's characterisations of Hijikata and Okita are overwhelmingly popular.[14]

Taishū bungaku as a Mirror for the Masses' Philosophies of the Age

To comprehend why Shiba's heroes are popular, this article will first examine the implications of *Moeyo ken* as a *taishū bungaku*. Originating from *kōdan* or historical romances for commoners, *taishū bungaku* is rather ambiguously distinguished from *junbungaku* (pure literature).[15] It is argued that the term was initially adopted in the early 1920s to differentiate works from pure literature as well as from the more vulgar fiction.[16] Thus labelling a work as *taishū bungaku* did not necessarily connote that it was non-serious or even commercially popular.[17] Nevertheless, the two genres became qualitatively differentiated as authors of *junbungaku* were considered 'artists' in contrast to their 'artisan' counterparts.[18] This division was further solidified with the creation of separate literary awards for each style.[19] However in recent years, postwar economic expansion, development of mass media, writers' shift from one genre to another and a new generation of writers', such as Murakami Haruki's, experiment with postmodernity have further challenged the definition of pure and popular.[20]

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10 *Moeyo ken* was voted as the best fictionalisation (novel or manga) of Shinsengumi in a survey published in the November 2003 edition of *Da Vinci*, a monthly literature magazine. This information is sourced from the cover page of *Moeyo ken*. Despite my efforts, I could not obtain a copy of the magazine to verify the publisher's claim. Shiba, *Moeyo ken jō*, title cover.

11 An example of this is Sorachi's characterisation of Shinsengumi in *Gintama*. This will be elaborated later in the article.

12 Saaler, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

13 Saaler, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

14 Matsuura, *op. cit.*, pp. ii-iii.

15 Shaw, 'Contemporary Japanese Literature', p. 292. See also, Ozaki, *Taishū bungaku*, p. 33.

16 Shiraishi Kyōji is a proponent of such an argument, see Suzuki, *Nihon no bungaku wo kangaeru*, pp. 151-78.

17 See Stretcher, 'Purely Mass or Massively Pure?', and Kato et al., *Handbook of Japanese Popular Culture*, p. xvii.

18 Mack, 'Accounting for Taste', pp. 307-8.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 301.

20 Nakamura, *Contemporary Japanese Fiction*, pp. 138-143; Stretcher, 'Beyond "Pure" Literature', pp. 370-4.

For our purposes, it is sufficient to note that authors of *junbungaku* wrote more 'for the sake of other writers'[21] and were 'withdrawn from concerning themselves with political and national affairs'.[22] In contrast, *taishū bungaku* has traditionally been 'absorbed and reflected by the masses through entertainment'.[23] That is, popular literature exists precisely because the masses consider a work entertaining. Form, content and target audience of *taishū bungaku* have fluctuated across time as authors try to adapt to changes in the readers' environment and perception. In this respect, readers are indirectly contributing to the creative process as writers attempt to meet the demands of their audience.[24] Yet, the authors' determination to entertain readers continues to be a key characteristic of the genre.[25]

According to Antonio Gramsci, entertainment in this context denotes more than amusement.[26] Entertainment distilled in popular literature is 'an element of culture' as it adheres to changes in 'the times, the cultural climate and personal idiosyncrasies'.[27] These elements are produced through a careful calculation to make a novel successful by appealing to the moral and scientific 'philosophy of the age': the deeply embedded 'feelings and conceptions of the world predominant among the "silent" majority'.[28] Heroes in popular literature are thus able to attract readers because their narratives reflect the masses' ideals.

On this basis, it may be possible to locate a 'philosophy of the age' by examining how and why readers are attracted to heroes of successful *taishū bungaku*. This requires a consideration of who constitutes as the 'silent majority' in postwar Japan. Postwar *taishū bungaku* became more sophisticated and diversified as authors began to adopt a more realistic, informative or both styles of writing.[29] Concurrently, its readership expanded from the existing readership of female readers and blue-colour workers, to include the emerging middle class, intelligentsia dissatisfied with the status quo and white-collar workers.[30]

Furthermore, in the age of economic expansion and commercialism of literature, writers of popular literature such as Shiba managed to 'appeal to some

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21 Seidensticker, 'The "Pure" and the "in-Between"', p. 181.
22 Kato, *A History of Japanese Literature*, p. 288.
23 Ozaki, *Taishū bungaku ron*, p. 22.
24 It should be noted that despite their buying power, consumers, particularly fans ('poachers') of popular cultural products, are also subject to power differential against the producers ('the landowners'), see Jenkins, *Textual Poachers*, pp. 28-33.
25 Sakai, *Japanese Popular Literature*, p. 311. For a comprehensive overview of the development of Japanese popular literature, see Sakai, *op. cit.*, and Suzuki, *op. cit.*
26 Gramsci's argument is relevant to our inquiry as the Italian readership of popular literature referred to in his studies is reasonably varied like the *taishū* in this study; they include educated urban proletariat, petty bourgeoisie and illiterate or semi-literate listeners who *heard* spoken popular literature. Also, like the themes and styles of postwar Japanese popular literature, Gramsci claims that Italian popular literature is also diversified and sophisticated, encompassing remnants of 'earlier dominant literary forms (like romances of chivalry)', 'scientific conceptions of the world' as well as '"artistic" literature'. Gramsci et al., *Selections from Cultural Writings*, pp. 343-44.
27 Gramsci et al., *op. cit.*, p. 347.
28 Gramsci et al., *op. cit.*, p. 348.
29 Sakai, *op. cit.*, p. 190, and Ozaki, *op. cit.*, pp. 444-445.
30 Sakai, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

hundred thousands of readers' by successfully distilling in their works values shared by the masses, or by 'at least giv[ing] the masses that impression'.[31] Readership of *taishū bungaku,* or at least Shiba's works, could therefore be described as a large group of people from various backgrounds, connected by their attraction to a work of fiction embodying their values. In other words, the 'silent majority' could be considered as a reflection of the Japanese public.[32]

If the hero in *Moeyo ken* is our key to deciphering the masses' consciousness, how do we identify the elements of entertainment distilled in him? This requires a scrutiny of how readers locate their own model heroes and compasses since the entertainment value of a work is ultimately judged by the audience.[33] For this purpose, the practice of 'sequel-writers' who 'revive' and 'recreate' heroes of successful popular fiction with 'new material' is noteworthy since modifications are made to accommodate changing social sentiments.[34] We may therefore discover why the masses are drawn to Shinsengumi by comparing Shiba's heroes in *Moeyo ken*, the prototype of contemporary representations of Shinsengumi, with its reproductions. In turn, this could elucidate the underlying reason for popular romanticisation of Shinsengumi in contemporary Japan.

Scope of Study

For a practicable comparative study of Shiba's Shinsengumi and its replications, the scope of this research will be defined as follows. Firstly, replication of Shiba's Shinsengumi will be sourced from *Gintama*, a manga series currently being serialised by Sorachi Hideaki in *Shūkan shōnen jampu* (*Weekly Boys Jump,* hereafter *Jump*). *Gintama* is ideal because its Shinsengumi-based characters are heavily influenced by the author's interpretation of Shiba's heroes and the *real* Shinsengumi, as he claims, 'I love everything about the *real* Shinsengumi…ever since I read "Burn, My Sword". I just can't get the *original image* out of my head'.[35] The manga is also useful because in shaping the series, Sorachi and his editor are extremely sensitive to reader response collected from weekly surveys, sales data, fan letters and more.[36] That is, character-making for *Gintama* involves negotiating images of Shinsengumi held by the author as well as the readers, with the author's original input. In fact, Sorachi describes creating

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31   Katō, *Nihon bungakushi josetsu vol. 5*, pp. 573-4.

32   This is not a claim to present the readership of *taishū bungaku* as being representative of *the Japanese*. Popular consciousness derived from popular literature could only be attributed to a particular section of Japanese people, i.e. readership of the work under scrutiny. Attempts to associate values distilled in popular fiction with the Japanese public require an examination of the work's readership to assert that the values correspond to the public's sentiments.

33   Ozaki, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

34   Gramsci et al., *op. cit.*, p. 350.

35   Emphasis is my own. Sorachi, *Gin Tama Vol. 6*, p. 126. 'Burn My Sword' is the English translation of *Moeyo ken* by the manga's translator.

36   Nishimura, *Saraba, waga seishun*, pp. 31, 115, 165; Schilling, *The Encyclopaedia of Japanese Pop Culture*, pp. 228-29; and Kinsella, *Adult Manga: Culture and Power*, pp. 55, 166-9.

his own version of Hijikata Toshizō, the vice commander of Shinsengumi and the main protagonist of *Moeyo ken*, as 'destroying' real Hijikata.[37]

Another reason for using *Gintama* lies in its fandom characterised by a strong female fan base[38] and the male-oriented *Jump* readership claimed to encompass 'the under-tens to the over-sixties'.[39] Coupled with the *Jump* manga production system which strongly values and responds to fans' opinions, the nature of *Gintama*'s fandom suggests the series is shaped to meet the demands of a relatively heterogeneous and large group of readers. Representations of Shinsengumi in *Gintama* could therefore be considered as a reflection of the group's social images in the twenty-first century.

Secondly, a caveat must be imposed that in examining representations of Shinsengumi in *Moeyo ken* and *Gintama*, this article will consider the authors' renditions of Hijikata Toshizō as reflecting the public's perception of Shinsengumi as a whole. Not only is Hijikata the main protagonist of *Moeyo ken* and a major supporting character in *Gintama*, he also appears to be popularly appreciated as the epitome of Shinsengumi, the embodiment of its values and virtues. As noted previously, most Shinsengumi-related texts are focused on Hijikata, even though he is only the vice commander. The public's adoration of Hijikata is also reflected in NHK's broadcasting of *Shinsengumi!! The Last Day of Hijikata Toshizō* as a sequel to the *taiga dorama* (grand fleuve drama), '*Shinsengumi!*'.[40] As a particular genre of historical narrative that 'encourages and integrates *present* Japan by remembering and celebrating the *past*', *taiga dorama* influences, and is influenced by the zeitgeist of the Japanese society.[41] Like heroes of popular fiction, popular *taiga dorama* heroes exhibit values which resonate with the Japanese public.

However, in the case of *Shinsengumi!*, it is arguable that NHK's representation of Shinsengumi was insufficient to satisfy the public's longings.[42] The drama series was focused on Kondō, the head of Shinsengumi, and ended with his execution. Thereby Hijikata's subsequent struggles against the new government were omitted from the series. However, viewers' persistent demand forced NHK to eventually produce an unprecedented sequel about Hijikata's final days in 2006, two years after the original

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37   Sorachi, *Gin Tama Vol. 6*, p. 126.

38   For example, female readers polled by Oricon voted *Gintama* as the funniest manga in 2008. Oricon, 'Ichiban waratta manga'. Female readers, particularly *fujoshi* (literally rotten women, who are interested in original and parody works that depict romantic and often, erotic homosexual relationships), also constitute a notable proportion of *Jump* manga readership. Aoyama, 'Eureka Discovers Culture Girls, Fujoshi, and BL'. For *fujoshi*'s interest in *Jump* manga, see Kinsella, 'Japanese Subculture in the 1990s', p. 301.

39   Kinsella, *Adult Manga: Culture and Power*, p. 49.

40   Yoshikawa, *Shinsengumi!! hijikata toshizō saigo no ichinichi* and Yoshikawa, *Shinsengumi!*. NHK, or Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai, is a national broadcasting service in Japan akin to the United Kingdom's BBC.

41   Author's emphasis. Lee, 'Taiga dorama janru', p. 149. For a detailed account of the cultural ramifications of *taiga dorama*, see, pp. 161-164.

42   *Shinsengumi!* was written by Mitani Kōki, whose approach to Shinsengumi and Hijikata deviates from Shiba. Not only did Mitani focus the drama on Kondō instead of Hijikata, he used hope as a key theme for both dramas. For these reasons and also, since his hero, Kondō, does not appear to have been a popular hero like Shiba's Hijikata, *Shinsengumi!* was not selected for the comparative study.

taiga dorama was broadcast.[43] This vignette reveals that Hijikata Toshizō is critical to complete popular romanticisation of Shinsengumi. Focusing our scrutiny onto Hijikata would therefore be more productive than canvassing different Shinsengumi members or reducing Shinsengumi into a single identity.

Amazon.co.jp Reviews as a Mirror for Popular Perception

To confirm whether the metamorphosis of Toshizō into Tōshirō corresponds to contemporary readers' imagination of Hijikata Toshizō, customer reviews of *Moeyo ken* on Amazon.co.jp will be examined, since the reviewers tend to equate Shiba's protagonist with the actual historical figure.[44] These reviews are not quantitatively and qualitatively sufficient to draw a comprehensive ethnography of the fandom; only 152 reviews were published in the period from late 2000 to August 2009, and the reviewers remain anonymous. But the reviews are nonetheless useful to grasp a preliminary understanding of how readers imagine Hijikata because the time of publication is close or corresponding to the period when Tōshirō of *Gintama* is being produced. Also, anonymity of private criticism such as Amazon.co.jp reviews allows reviewers to express frank opinions. Ann Steiner notes that private criticisms commonly feature 'personal interpretation or experience of a text', expressions of 'frequently heightened emotion', the degree of which is relative to the degree of anonymity, and self-expression/ self-exposition.[45] That is, Amazon.co.jp reviews display readers' intimate interpretations and experiences about Hijikata Toshizō. Therefore, a scrutiny of these reviews could reveal the readers' perceptions of the hero.

Toshizō: an Archetype of Real Japanese Men

Before we probe the readers, let us first consider the hero of *Moeyo ken*, Hijikata Toshizō (1835~1869), who will be referred to as Toshizō to distinguish the fictional character from the actual person or other versions. He is another archetype of Japanese men idealised by Shiba, whose view of male aesthetics concedes that a *real man* dies for his '*risei to kigai* (reason and spirits) as opposed to ideologies and discourses'.[46]

Toshizō's reason and spirits lie in the determination to accomplish his aesthetics as a *kenkashi*, a fighter, rather than the more sophisticated and chivalrous samurai or

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43   NHK, 'Shinsengumi! Zokuhen'.

44   Most reviewers of *Moeyo ken* did not differentiate between the fictional and actual Hijikata in contrast to reviewers of *Gintama*, who made such distinctions. For this reason and for practicability, *Gintama* reviews have been omitted from analysis in this article. But where a reviewer made the differentiation, I noted the reviewer's perception of the actual figure as his or her view of Hijikata Toshizō.

45   Steiner, 'Private Criticism in the Public Space'.

46   Matsumoto, *Shiba ryōtarō - shiba bungaku*, pp. 13, 47-8.

shishi. The protagonist moves from the outskirts of Tokyo to Kyoto in response to the Bakufu's recruitment of the shogun's bodyguards. Together with his friends, Toshizō soon becomes the backbone of Shinsengumi, a Bakufu protection squad consisting of men from various classes and walks of life.

Having appointed himself as the vice commander, Toshizō successfully disciplines and organises the group into a powerful military corps by adopting *makoto* (sincerity) as trademark and adopting *Kyokuchū hatto*, a strict code of conduct attracting *seppuku* if violated. Such stern determination and ruthlessness award Toshizō with notoriety as the demonic vice commander among residents of Kyoto and his enemies. Concurrently, Shinsengumi's reputation also peaks with a successful raid on a secret *jōi shishi* meeting at the Ikedaya Inn.

But their glories are short-lived as Shinsengumi descends alongside the Bakufu's downfall. Kondō's execution is ordered by the new government and many core members also perish in battles. Nonetheless, Toshizō and remaining members continue to fight against the forces of the Meiji Restoration and even join the movement to establish the Republic of Ezo in Hokkaido.

Toshizō, now the republic's deputy minister for military, continues to be driven by his aesthetics as a fighter. Contrary to other ministers seeking to surrender to the new government, he charges out for the last time to fight his enemy. When an opponent soldier demands his identity, Toshizō, after deliberating for a moment, declares himself as not the deputy minister of the Ezo Republic, but as the vice commander of Shinsengumi. The stunned soldier questions Toshizō's intention, only to become further baffled when our hero proclaims, 'I believe I have already stated my agenda. If the vice commander of Shinsengumi has a reason to visit the opponent's Council of War, it is because he seeks to slash the members of the Council'.[47] These become Toshizō's last words as he falls from the soldier's gunshots. Thus an end comes to the tumultuous fate of Toshizō and Shinsengumi, and to their fleeting yet blazing appearance in Bakumatsu Japan.

As a text, *Moeyo ken* is open to numerous interpretations. To readers familiar with classic Japanese tragic heroes such as Minamoto no Yoshitsune, Toshizō may appear as another noble, but failed hero.[48] On the other hand, the close intertwining of Toshizō's life with Bakumatsu history may inspire others to read it as a nationalist

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47   *Ibid.*, p. 468.
48   See Morris, *The Nobility of Failure*, for the well-known account of Japanese tragic heroes. A close examination of the 'conditions' of tragic heroes suggests Hijikata is not one of them because he successfully pursues his cause (to accomplish himself as a fighter) unlike the tragic heroes who fail to achieve their causes. In this respect, Hijikata and thereby Shinsengumi are more aligned with the retainers in *Chūshingura* who successfully avenged their lord's death. See Morris, *op. cit.*, pp. xxi-xxii and Smith, *The Case of the Akō Gishi*, pp. 90-91.

discourse about an ambitious, youthful hero whose life merged with the making of the Japanese nation like Sakamoto Ryōma.[49] That is, Shinsengumi as depicted by Shiba could be tragic heroes, exemplary Japanese citizens, charismatic individuals, all at once or none of these. Although interesting, these interpretations do not explain Shinsengumi's popularity as they are no more than fragmented speculations, void of voices of the actual fans 'who appropriate popular texts and reread them in a fashion that serves different interests'.[50] Discovering why this particular characterisation of Hijikata Toshizō is admired necessitates an inquiry into popular perception.

Tōshirō: a Reincarnation of Hijikata Toshizō in the Twenty-First Century

Recalling that popular heroes of *taishū bungaku* become revived with revisions to meet changing social sentiments, this section will introduce the twenty-first century reincarnation of Hijikata in *Gintama*. Sorachi presents his interpretation of the popular hero by transporting Shinsengumi into a science-fiction, periodical comedy set in the fictional city of Edo, a mix of actual Edo from the Bakumatsu period and present Tokyo. In the manga series, *gaijin* (foreigners) are replaced with Amanto, extra-terrestrial aliens who invaded the land of samurai and subdued the Bakufu into their puppet. Amanto technology has transformed Edo into a hybrid of old and new; people still wear kimono, albeit in modified forms, but become hyped over the latest game console, Owee.[51] Like their real counterpart, samurai in *Gintama* are prohibited from bearing swords in public and thereby, effectively deprived of their once-honourable warrior status. Gintoki, the main protagonist and a *jōi shishi*-turned jack of all trades, is not afraid to challenge the currents of his time as he continues to carry a wooden sword. Together with his assistants, Gintoki pursues his way of the soul while working as 'Odd Jobs Gin' in the downtown area of Kabuki-cho.

In the course of their work, the Odd Jobs gang encounter many colourful residents of Edo ranging from Mademoiselle Saigō Tokumori, an *ex-jōi shishi* gay club manager, to the Shogun, Tokugawa Shigeshige.[52] These characters typify Sorachi's parodying of reality in *Gintama* as they are similar, but not identical, to the actual historical figures. Shinsengumi is likewise reincarnated with a different *kanji* name as Edo police force. With Hijikata Tōshirō (hereafter Tōshirō) as the ruthless vice commander, Shinsengumi joins Gintoki's adventures on many occasions. Material aspects of Sorachi's Shinsengumi drastically differ from those of Shiba's Shinsengumi;

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49 For a discussion of Shiba's position as a 'national writer' of Japan, and the nexus between his works and Japanese nationalism, see Keene, *Five Modern Japanese Novelists*, pp. 85-100, and Nakao, 'The Legacy of Shiba Ryotaro'.
50 Jenkins, *op. cit*, p. 23.
51 Owee is a parody of Wii, a game console produced by Nintendo Electronics.
52 Readers familiar with Japanese history may find these names humorous for they are identical except for one *kanji* character to the names of historical figures Saigō Takamori and Tokugawa Iemochi, the 14th and second last Bakufu shogun.

Tōshirō and his company ride patrol cars and use firearms such as bazookas in addition to their prized swords. Yet when it comes to personalities, Sorachi's Tōshirō is quite close to Shiba's Toshizō.

A Comparative Reading of Toshizō and Tōshirō

The most notable similarity in both renditions of Hijikata is their strong, almost-irrational determination to pursue personal objectives. Sorachi's Tōshirō is unconcerned about the interests of the Bakufu or the Japanese nation despite his position as the vice commander of a police force. Rather, he is focused solely on the interests of Shinsengumi which he and his friends such as Kondō, the chief commander, established with their bare hands. Tōshirō's dedication to Shinsengumi is akin to an obsession that when Kondō, the figurehead of Shinsengumi, loses comically in a trivial fight, the vice commander bellows in fury, 'we created Shinsengumi with nothing but our swords. I won't let anyone ruin our Shinsengumi. Should there be anyone in my way, I will simply slash them with my sword!!'.[53]

The nature of Tōshirō's attachment to Shinsengumi is revealed in an episode where the Bakufu orders Shinsengumi to protect a corrupt Amanto official from *jōi* terrorists. When his subordinates complain about the irony inherent in police protecting the Amanto official who is technically a criminal, Tōshirō simply responds Shinsengumi are not Bakufu subjects. He asserts Shinsengumi are subordinate to none other than the head of Shinsengumi, Kondō, who provided a place of belonging for them, 'uneducated rogues who knew nothing but how to swing a sword'.[54] Having self-analysed his capacities, limitations and circumstances, Tōshirō is aware that his sole talent in fighting could only be realised through Shinsengumi in times when sword-bearing is forbidden. He thus acknowledges Shinsengumi as being pivotal to his self and dedicates his life to protect it. The vice commander further explains to his men that as the head of Shinsengumi's kindness will not let him ignore anyone or even an Amanto alien in danger, Shinsengumi will gladly accede to his will and save the alien. Sorachi's character is unconcerned about the illogicality of his actions as long as it suits *his* logic that Shinsengumi, their home, is preserved by ensuring the head's authority and integrity are upheld.

Shiba's Toshizō is likewise strongly aware of his fighting and leadership abilities. Accordingly, he is determined to achieve self-actualisation by fostering Shinsengumi, a motley rabble of men from various walks of life, into a samurai organisation more

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53   Sorachi, *Gintama Vol. 2*, p. 59.
54   Sorachi, *Gin Tama Vol. 3*, p. 39.

stoic and authentic than real samurai. Thus when Toshizō is questioned whether his intention to strengthen and expand Shinsengumi stems from a desire to gain the status of a *daimyō*, a samurai lord, Toshizō strongly refutes the suggestion:

> Of course I don't wanna become one. Would Toshizō, the rebel…, be able to fill the shoes of a *daimyō*?…I'm a craftsman. Not a man of noble spirits or anyone else. I even try not to think about the current state of affairs. I just wanna build Shinsengumi into the best group of fighters in the world. I know my limits.[55]

Toshizō's stern determination to practise his aesthetics of life as a fighter is also vividly illustrated in his anachronistic, futile fights against the new government resulting in death. It is important to note that he is aware of the drastic changes to his surroundings and the irrationality of his actions as his efforts will only result in adverse outcomes. Nonetheless, his self-determination as a Shinsengumi fighter is not swayed by these factors. Rather, it could be argued that Toshizō willingly advances to his death at the enemies' hands because dying in combat as the Shinsengumi vice commander completes his self-actualisation. In short, Shiba's ideal hero is a man whose personal philosophy defies worldly logic and rationality.

The twenty-first century reincarnation of Hijikata in *Gintama* displays the same degree of dedication to personal aesthetics in 'The Tale of Disturbance within Shinsengumi', a story arc where Shinsengumi's solidarity is threatened by Itō Kamotarō's coup d'état.[56] The excerpt begins with Tōshirō becoming possessed by Muramasha, a demoniac sword cursed by the spirit of a *hikikomori otaku*, which turns the vice commander into Tosshi, a hopeless *otaku* sapped of willingness to work.[57] Tosshi is soon fired from Shinsengumi for the new persona forces him to break the very code he imposed on Shinsengumi. Concurrently, Itō attempts to take over the organisation by assassinating Kondō. But his plan becomes troubled as Shinsengumi fiercely resist to serving 'an empty person who has neither samurai ethics nor integrity'.[58] In order to save his friends, Tosshi breaks the spell of Muramasha and returns to his original self in a dramatic exposition spanning across two episodes:

> Mr Kondō, we assigned you with a duty in return for our life at your service.
> That…you must not die…you have to survive…
> Because Shinsengumi will not perish so long as you continue to exist, because we joined Shinsengumi for we admire you…

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55 Shiba, *Moeyo ken jō*, p. 401.
56 This arc spans from episode 158 to 168 in Sorachi, *Gintama Vols. 19-20*.
57 *Hikikomori* refers to a reclusive youth, who withdraws from society and refuses to interact with people other than their family for more than six months for reasons other than mental illness: Andy Furlong, 'The Japanese Hikikomori Phenomenon', p. 309.
58 Sorachi, *Gintama Vol. 19*, p. 70.

Kondō, you're the soul of Shinsengumi and we're the sword that protects it.[59]

The vice commander continues in a manner reminiscent of Toshizō's final moments in *Moeyo ken*,

> If you want Kondō's head, you've gotta beat me first.
> No one can pass through me.
> No one can ruin our soul.
> I'm the last fortress protecting Kondō, the last sword protecting Shinsengumi.
> I'm Hijikata Tōshirō, the vice commander of Shinsengumi!!)[60]

Tōshirō eagerly stakes his life to fight for Shinsengumi, the crystallisation of his life. Like Shiba's hero who even welcomed death to advance his aesthetics as a fighter, Sorachi's twenty-first century rendition of Hijikata is not afraid of fatal dangers inherent in his pursuit of personal aesthetics.

Sorachi's characterisation of Hijikata as a self-driven individual is also reflected in *Gintama*'s main character, Gintoki, who is described by the author as a 'shattered' version of the original image, i.e. 'real…Hijikata' stripped of the 'hero-image'.[61] In the same story arc, Gintoki sides with Hijikata to protect Kondō and Shinsengumi despite his past as a *jōi shishi*. During the fight, an opponent ridicules Gintoki's action as a futile effort to protect 'a grotesque, rotten country that has been devoured by the Amanto' and advises him to instead revolutionise Edo like a proper *jōi shishi*.[62] Gintoki refutes by correcting his opponent's misunderstanding of the nature of his battle:

> Not once did I fight for this cheap country.
> Whether this country or the samurai comes to an end – I don't care. I've never cared about it from the beginning.
> What I was protecting before, and continue to protect today hasn't changed one bit!![63]

These words are accompanied by a collage of the protagonist's friends, including Shinsengumi.[64] Here, an overlap of Gintoki's and Tōshirō's personalities could be observed as they both value personal kinships and consider this aspect of their personality as a guiding principle of life. Being another reincarnation of Toshizō, Gintoki is determined to live according to his ideals whether or not he is right.

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59 *Ibid.*, pp. 121-122.
60 *Ibid.*, pp. 127-128.
61 Sorachi, *Gin Tama Vol. 6*, p. 121.
62 Sorachi, *Gintama Vol. 20*, p. 9.
63 *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.
64 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Analysis

Until the end, Hijikata Toshizō in *Moeyo ken* is driven by a personal determination to actualise his talent in fighting through Shinsengumi. Similarly, the life of *Gintama*'s Hijikata Tōshirō, the twenty-first century reincarnation of Shiba's Toshizō, is driven by his determination to protect Shinsengumi. The reasons for their attachment to Shinsengumi differs slightly as Toshizō is concerned more with self-actualisation as Shinsengumi in contrast to Tōshirō, who identifies Shinsengumi as his sanctuary. However, both characters share a common attribute; their determinations are unswayed by any external influences such as changes in the political climate or in their personal circumstances. Turn of fate expels Toshizō from the status of an honoured and feared Tokugawa samurai and turns him into the enemy of the emperor and state. It also forces Tōshirō to break the very code he imposed on Shinsengumi and thereby robs his standing as the vice commander. But both characters are not dispirited by these changes; Toshizō continues to fight as Shinsengumi to his very death even though the organisation has lost all legitimacy and Tōshirō continues to fight for Shinsengumi's survival even though he has been dishonourably discharged from the force against his will.

In short, Toshizō and Tōshirō are strong and single-minded heroes who are dictated by none other than themselves. Moreover, they both have the strength to pursue their personal philosophies about life against the currents of the times. Viewed in this light, they could be described as autonomous, self-determining heroes. Self-determination theory contends humans are naturally growth-oriented beings who attempt to 'master and integrate their experiences into a coherent sense of self'.[65] Individuals are inclined to exercise autonomy, i.e. to 'regulat[e] one's own behaviour and experience, and gover[n] the initiation and direction of action'.[66] This trait could be found in both renditions of Hijikata as the character's selves form the centre of initiation and agency for their actions. In Tōshirō's case, his attachment to Kondō and Shinsengumi does not diminish his autonomy because his reliance on them is an act of volition flowing from his own assessment of his self and surroundings. In short, both characters are driven by their personal aesthetics, which are based on a strong awareness of their selves.

There is nearly forty years of time difference between *Moeyo ken* and *Gintama*. During this period, Japan and her people have experienced dramatic changes as the golden period of rapid economic expansion gave way to the bust of economic bubble, and subsequently to the Lost Decades. In light of these changes in society, it is highly noteworthy that Toshizō's almost-reckless drive to accomplish his aesthetics continues

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65   Deci and Ryan, *Handbook of Self-Determination Research*, pp. 5, 27.
66   Ryan, 'The Nature of the Self', p. 209.

to be a defining characteristic of the twenty-first century remake of Hijikata, Tōshirō. Indeed, time has not failed to mark a difference between the two versions. Tōshirō exhibits attachment to Shinsengumi as a community of comrades and considers himself as the living shield for Shinsengumi. In contrast, Toshizō considers himself as the living embodiment of Shinsengumi. Nonetheless, these characters demonstrate that modern-day consumers continue to romanticise Hijikata Toshizō as a self-determining individual who is equipped with the fortitude required to pursue one's ideals in harsh times of reality.

Readers' Imaginations of Hijikata Toshizō

To establish a stronger connection between the popular romanticisation of Hijikata identified from the comparative study and the masses, this section will present readers' perceptions of Hijikata manifest in Amazon.co.jp reviews of *Moeyo ken*. Reviews have been screened to eliminate multiple or unrelated entries and processed through a set of questions three times to create a 'circular and continually adaptive'[67] flowchart. That is, results from first and second observations were used to identify recurring themes and to re-design questions and response categories. Responses to question four are most relevant as they relate to the readers' construction of Hijikata.

Figure 1 - Flowchart of Questions

1. Has the reviewer made a positive review of *Moeyo ken*? (I.e. reviewer gave at least four stars.)

2. If yes to question one, has the reviewer made any comments about Hijikata's characteristics?

3. If no to question one, what makes *Moeyo ken* NOT likeable for the reviewer?

4. If yes to question two, how has the reviewer described Hijikata?

5. If no to question two, why does the reviewer find *Moeyo ken* interesting?

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67 VanderStoep and Johnston, *Research Methods for Everyday Life*, p. 183.

Out of 152 reviewers identified, 149 uploaded positive reviews as only three awarded *Moeyo ken* three stars or less, and 103 reviewers commented on Hijikata's characteristics. At the end of the third stage of analysis, readers' views of Hijikata could be categorised as follows: a) a tragic hero, b) someone who makes the reader proud of being Japanese, c) a self-determining individual, d) an attractive individual because he is *kakkoii* (cool), heroic or antiheroic without further elaboration of these descriptions, e) a person with a likeable personality (e.g. being humane, empathetic, down-to-earth and/or straightforward), f) a man of integrity, g) a talented individual, and h) others. The first three response categories were adopted to check if a response corresponds to likely approaches to reading *Moeyo ken* previously canvassed in the article. The latter were established after two counts of review analysis to make a coherent synthesis of the responses.

Figure 2 - Graph of Amazon.co.jp Review Analysis

- Self-determining person; 64.1%
- Attractive person; 22.3%
- Likeable personality; 12.6%
- Man of integrity; 14.6%
- Talented individual; 9.7%
- Others; 4.9%
- Tragic hero; 4.9%
- Proud Japanese; 1.9%
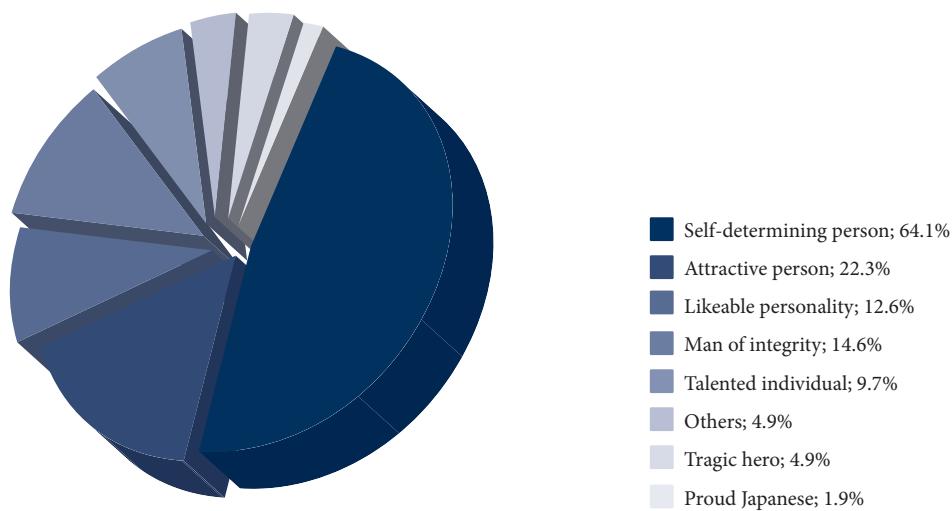
Strikingly, 64 per cent of reviewers described Hijikata as a self-determining person. Considering they could have characterised him in any manner, the majority's identification of Hijikata as a self-driven individual indicates reviewers consider this characteristic as his defining feature. A reviewer, Sūjī, quotes Toshizō's words as his or her own philosophy on life:

To Live
"The times are not a matter of concern. Victory and defeat also need not be discussed. A man must follow his envisioned aesthetics to the grave".
The words Hijikata Toshizō cast on Kondō Isami, words which also continue to torment me.[68]

Many readers appear to agree as 21 out of 23 users rated this review as useful. Others also similarly note that they view Hijikata's life as 'a compass for life', or that they could re-evaluate 'everything within [their selves], including the course of life and personal values'.[69] Not only do these responses reflect the nature of popular literature as a reflection of one's ideals, they confirm Hijikata is popularly imagined and loved as a hero driven by self-determination.

Conclusion

The following findings could be drawn from identifying popularly imagined Hijikata Toshizō as an autonomous, strong-willed hero. Firstly, as *taishū bungaku* entertains its audience by appealing to their philosophy and sentiments, readers' attraction to Toshizō in *Moeyo ken* could be evidencing their sympathy for and synchronisation with the self-determining hero. The character's appeal must be considered in light of the fact that he was formulated in tune with the zeitgeist of rapid economic development within Japan during the 1970s. Dreaming of self-actualisation amidst economic vivacity, the masses would have easily identified with Shiba's pugnacious, peasant-born hero who actualised himself into the vice commander of Shinsengumi during the dynamic Bakumatsu period. However it should also be noted that individual drives and aspirations did not characterise Japanese society in those times as Japan astonished both domestic and international observers with her display of strong communitarianism.[70] That is, the people needed to conform to social roles imposed by social and structural constraints embedded within their communities and organisations such as the workforce, school, neighbourhood and household. In this sense, individuals' desire for self-determination could have been frustrated by constraints in their social realities. It is also likely that this frustration was also aggravated by the strike of consumerism and materialism, which further befuddled individual searches for personal philosophies about life. With the demand for conformism on their shoulders and lost in the quest for self identity, the masses would have found Toshizō's strong sense of self identity and his strength to defy the conventions to actualise himself tremendously attractive.

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68   Sūjī (2006/07/25).
69   Maruchi, *Shinsengumi ni kyōmi no nai kata ni mo osusume desu* [I recommend this book also to those who are not interested in Shinsengumi] (2009/3/20) and Chīda, *Kono sakuhin wo yonde hon wo yomu you ni natta* [I began to read books after reading this work] (2004/9/28).
70   Vogel, *Japan as Number One* and Murakami et al., *Bunmei to shite no ie shakai*.

Secondly, the depiction of Tōshirō, the contemporary version of Hijikata Toshizō, as a self-determining hero in *Gintama* indicates that the masses' empathy and yearning for an autonomous hero has not diminished in modern-day Japan. Indeed, present romanticisation of Hijikata in this manner is most likely attributable to the enduring popularity and influence of Shiba's characterisation of the hero. Yet a close examination of Tōshirō's socio-historical context suggests that the nature of current demand for a self-determining hero is not identical to the masses' attraction to Toshizō in earlier times. No doubt contemporary idolisation of Hijikata as an autonomous hero is also a likely result of the public's frustration with finding and pursuing their individual goals. But they are frustrated for different reasons because it has become apparent that Japanese society has also lost a sense of direction. That is, not only are people's efforts to find their individuality being hindered by social and cultural constraints, the society is also incapable of providing the masses with a sense of direction as it is besieged by various problems such as a fading economy, increased demand for families and individuals to undertake *jiko sekinin* (self-responsibility), threats to national security and the draining pension fund, to note a few.[71] As a product of the 2000s, Tōshirō's display of self-determination should be appreciated as a response to these problems. The masses of this age have witnessed the dangers associated with conforming to social demands as the society cannot assure the people of their future course. Consequently, they face 'greater uncertainty and apprehension, and have little hope for the future'.[72] In this context, it is not surprising that Tōshirō is idolised as a modern-day hero since he is aware of the kind of life he wishes to lead, and is able to put it into practice.

This difference in Tōshirō's textual context also relates to the final finding to be discussed in this article. It has been noted that the dynamics between the vice commander and Shinsengumi in *Moeyo ken* and *Gintama* are different as Toshizō seeks death as a Shinsengumi fighter and Tōshirō risks death to protect other Shinsengumi members. This signifies a notable shift in the masses' yearnings as their contemporary hero is not only autonomous, but also shares a filial kinship with people in his surroundings. As contemporary Japanese society has become stripped of the myth of homogeneity and tainted with concerns for increasing disparity and isolation, her people have come to crave a sense of community. In this climate, reincarnating Hijikata into a lone wolf would have been insufficient to create a popular hero. Tōshirō could become popular in the twenty-first century because his strong bond with Shinsengumi members constitutes the backbone of his personality in addition to his drive for self-determination. With their backdrop clouded by frequent media reports about problems of *hikikomori*, family breakdowns and neighbours turning into strangers, the public could only admire Tōshirō, who chooses to protect Shinsengumi, his community.

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71   For an analysis of the various risks present in contemporary Japan, see Kingston, *Contemporary Japan*.
72   *Ibid.*, p. 20.

Readers are kindly reminded that popular understanding of Shinsengumi's spirit could be located in its vice commander, Hijikata Toshizō, because his dedication to the organisation and his death as the end of Shinsengumi are indispensable to the myth of Shinsengumi. In this respect, reproductions of Hijikata in *Moeyo ken* and *Gintama* could be appreciated as reflecting popular imaginations of Shinsengumi as autonomous heroes. Equating such a perception of Shinsengumi to the Japanese public's imagination requires further research involving a wider number of samples across different time periods, and a more systematic methodology. But this study nonetheless provides a foundation to understanding a social phenomenon never scrutinised previously; future studies about the relationship between popular heroes and public consciousness in contemporary Japan could begin by theorising the romanticisation of Shinsengumi as evidence of the public's desire for self-determination and a sense of belonging.

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Power Play and Performance in Harajuku

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Abstract

This article analyses the structures and implications of Japan's contemporary street fashion cultures, primarily those of Harajuku. Using Roland Barthes' analogy of *dress* and *dressing* it situates the radical subcultural styles within traditional Japanese aesthetics and in a wider history of fashion. Examining various motifs from *kawaisa* to uniforms, cross-dressing, masks and the politics of second-hand fashion, it deals with theories of authenticity, appearance and agency.

Keywords

Japanese fashion, Harajuku, performance, identity, subculture

Introduction

This study will outline a brief history of Harajuku street fashion since the late 1970s, focusing on the interplay of invention and convention, authenticity and artifice, innovation and imitation. Borrowing from De Certeau's *tactical everyday resistance* and Roland Barthes' structuralist application of *dress* and *dressing* in fashion, it will consider the ways in which the players in Harajuku change the meaning of available dress objects in the process of their individual dressing.

The article is informed by observational research done in Tokyo in 2006 and 2007 and woven throughout the text are insights from a broad range of artists and writers. The chapter *Origins and Spread* looks at the question of where fashions come from and how they are circulated. Academic accounts to date have tended to overemphasise the process of fashion imitation by the lower classes followed by aversion by the elite, when in fact the operation is more complex. The purity of subcultural styles should also not be overstated, and examination of Harajuku shows the process of fashion origin and spread to be highly layered and multi-directional. Of particular note here is the new model of fashion media that came out of Japan's youth fashion cultures of the 1990s whereby professionally styled editorial shoots were replaced by images of 'normal' people in their self-styled creations.

In considering the relationship between individuality and conformity, the study turns to Pierre Bourdieu's account of taste and distinction and recognises the inherent paradox of fashion, whereby it forms a statement of criticism as well as a shared expression of a desire for sameness. When it comes to so-called rebellious subcultural fashion, the process of commercial recuperation can be particularly problematic, but as Harajuku dress-ups are often self-consciously and retrospectively imitative they don't face this predicament of authenticity that the western subcultures they borrow from did. The highly subjective, personal and sensual relations people have with clothing is also necessarily acknowledged here.

In the chapter *Clothes Wear Us*, the discussion of the potential political dimensions of fashion opens up an examination of performativity and identity in Harajuku, particularly with regards to gender politics. Another way to consider the interplay of individuality and conformity in dress is to look at uniforms in contemporary Japan, in particular the phenomena of the fetishised schoolgirl uniform. *Kogals* are read as subjecting themselves to the paedophilic male gaze, while also evading certain structures of power by creating their own sphere of inclusion. Similarly, in the chapter *Empowered Cuties?*, *kawaii* is read on one level to be making young women present themselves as naive and vulnerable, but also to be offering them a space for rejecting the adult responsibilities they are expected to aspire to. This part of the thesis owes much to McVeigh's inquiry into uniforms in Japan and Sharon Kinsella's extensive work on Japanese cuteness.

Forming several links between traditional Japanese dress and contemporary fashion, I look at a deconstructionalist approach to dress and dressing, whereby usually hidden structures of dress are brought to the surface. Interrogating the fashion system from within that system, these teens in Harajuku bring into question the very meaning of dress. Their foregrounding of artifice is situated in a wider urge for blatant theatricality that is traced in several areas of Japanese art and life, and the aestheticising of impracticality is seen as overcoming any pretence of naturalness in fashion, and thus regaining a type of honesty. The final chapter, *New Face, New Life*, offers a consideration of the mask in Japanese culture and of performative fashion as a type of masking. Rather than something that merely hides, examples of masking in Japanese culture are used to define the mask as something that reveals while it conceals, possessing a unique capacity for truthfulness.

I do not wish to delve into myths of Japanese uniqueness or some constructed cultural collective subconsciousness, nor do I have any pretence of being able to deal with a unified or continuous 'Japan'. Points of consideration span myriad examples within this thing we call Japan, and what follows is a series of trajectories tracing a thread of ideas about self-consciously eccentric bodily presentation. Rather than being treated as some

strange, exotic enclave, the radical fashion of Harajuku is used for thinking about wider ideas relating to the possibilities (and limitations) of resistance through dressing. In the broadest sense the study comes from my longstanding curiosity about the primal human urge towards body adornment and the relationship between appearance and truth.

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Chronicle of Costumes

Underlying this study of Harajuku street fashion is the idea that clothing has less strictly utilitarian value than is commonly attributed to it. Thomas Carlyle's Professor Teufelsdröckh told us in the mid-nineteenth century that 'The first purpose of clothes was not warmth or decency, but ornament' and, 'among wild people we find tattooing and painting even prior to clothes'.[1] He found unlikely resonance with a certain supercilious feline in Meiji Japan, Natsume Sōseki's nameless narrator in his novel *I Am a Cat* who cites Teufelsdröckh and muses that 'human history is not the history of flesh and bone and blood, but a mere chronicle of costumes'.[2]

From 1977-1998 the main street in Harajuku, Omotesandō, was declared *hoko ten* ('pedestrian haven') and cars were banned every Sunday. One of the earliest style

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1   Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, p. 28.
2   Natsume, *I Am A Cat vol. 2*, p. 235.

tribes that arose in the area was the *takenoko-zoku* ('Baby Bamboo Shoots Tribe'), characterised by garish-coloured shiny robes and cheap accessories like plastic whistles, long fake-pearl necklaces, nametags, stuffed animals stitched to the ensembles, and kung fu shoes. Performing choreographed dance moves for hours on end at Yoyogi Park, they invented a vibrant sphere of inclusion where their constructed self-image made them intensely visible, but also kept them distanced from their surroundings and from the audiences they drew. Quickly becoming a popular tourist attraction, they translated the state of being under perpetual scrutiny into the pleasure of being seen.

Like the many Harajuku subcultures that came after them, their playful interpretations of place and commodities formed tactics of resistance, avoidance and escape. The radicalism of the aesthetic play in Harajuku no longer exists at the same intensity as it did in the *hoko ten* years, but the area remains a unique site of communal spectacle where all are positioned under intense public surveillance, and the separation between performers/spectators is dissolved. In accordance with Mikhail Bakhtin's carnival, the ritualized masquerade temporarily transgressed the austerity of daily life with an inversion of everyday hierarchies and social boundaries.[3]

With genres enacted in a self-reflexive masquerade without any regard for authenticity, Harajuku fashion destabilises the idea of a transhistorical body or naturally occurring agent beneath the surface. We constitute ourselves as hippy, hillbilly or hip-hop simply by looking the part: these subcultures were not grown organically in Japan but were adapted retrospectively with obsessive attention to details of dress, music, dance moves and whatever other stylistic elements, making evident that identity is non-essential. So many niche fashions have never existed side by side as in the hyperreality of Harajuku, where trendy teens celebrate the superficiality of their posed identities without denying that that is all they are.

One example is the early 2000s trend for surfer style which saw an exponential consumption of peroxide, fake tan, faux hibiscus flowers and bright blue contact lenses, rendering thousands of Japanese teens caricatures of Californian beach babes – but also something entirely new. Nothing is purely innovative or imitative and the process of repetition always introduces an element of metamorphosis. Consumers don't take things on passively or uncritically, but relocate signs from their original contexts and transform their meanings in a chaotic bricolage where the distinction between artificial and authentic is extraneous. Their imitative reproduction of images is a methodically precise process not unlike that of the Zen calligrapher: in the words of Rupert Cox, 'It is not possible to make a clear distinction between the authenticity of an aesthetic original

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3   Bakhtin, *Rabelias and his World.*

and the authenticity of its copy, when the culture of the Zen arts is about reproduction and repetition as a valued cultural aesthetic'.[4]

A Thing to Wear

According to Roland Barthes, fashion is a system comprising *dress,* the social reality independent of the individual, and *dressing,* which takes place when the subject actualises on their body the inscription of dress.[5] He aligned this broad structuralist model with Ferdinand de Saussure's *langue* and *parole* directions of language – the former being the social institution that constitutes the normative standard, the latter the individual manifestation. The fashion structure does not simply hang dress objects on passive bodies; consumers must be active in dressing themselves. The innovative dressers in Harajuku aren't rejecting the prescribed dress available to them, but adopting, adapting and altering, and thus symbolically subverting their position from the inside. Dressing – the individual use of the dress object – can lend a silent political dimension to everyday practice. In the act of dressing, like Michel de Certeau's walking,[6] authority is decentred and we are the narrators of our own experiences; but as the structure of the city restricts how we can navigate it, so too are we limited by what dress objects are available to us. We are at once fashioning the world and fashioned by it.

Changing the meaning of the dress object in the process of their dressing, Tokyo's street fashion innovators irreverently but seamlessly combine traditional Japanese dress (including kimonos, *obi* belts, *kanzashi* hair pins and *geta* sandals), modern avant-garde Japanese couture, contemporary and retro Western fashion, and completely new trends using handmade and re-assembled second-hand fashion. Their hybridity of images demonstrates the perceived Japanese skill at combining novelty and tradition, East and West, without compromising an essential identity. The styles are too eclectic to be categorised as a single subculture, but as a whole Harakuju fashion is best described as 'layered', which suggests that their bodies and identities are polyvalent works in progress requiring a patchwork of meanings.

Continually borrowing from Japan's rich visual heritage, the street fashion is as evolutionary as it is revolutionary. Putting the banal, beautiful and grotesque side by side, their radical self-presentation can be situated alongside the elaborate costuming that has existed for many centuries in Japan, like the geisha's extravagant, artificial beauty or the samurai's complex armor. The basic adult kimono (*ki mono* meaning 'a thing

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4   Cox, *The Zen Arts: An Anthropological Study of the Culture of Aesthetic Form in Japan*, p. 232.
5   Barthes, 'History and Sociology of Clothing: Some Methodological Observations', p. 8.
6   De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

wear') comes in two sizes – man and woman – and has never deviated from the basic, untailored T shape that was introduced in the 8th Century. Rather than emphasizing the human form and striving for the ideal figure, as Western dress has done, the kimono has its own structure and silhouette that is independent of the individual wearer. It retains its own elemental geometric form with little regard for the body's biological contours, an approach that can be traced in the work of contemporary Japanese fashion designers who have become known for voluminous, one-size-fits-all, layered creations.

Origins and Spread

Change in fashion has often been explained as a 'trickle-down' effect of class imitation followed by class aversion. But wearing the latest style is no longer a privilege reserved for the upper strata, and mutations in fashion cannot be understood as a simple process of diffusion from the elites to the masses. Some have presented an alternate model where subcultural innovations 'bubble-up' until they are adapted by emulating commercial bodies. Ted Polhemus, for example, boldly asserts that without the teddy boys, beats, rockers, rude boys, mods and numerous other stylistic categories he looks at, 'most of us would be left without anything to wear'.[7] Such accounts, however, overstate the influence and purity of street styles. Fashion is never merely a cannibalistic emulation or artificial promotion of new commercial trends and the relationship between fashion and so-called 'anti-fashion' is a continually dialectical one.

There is also no coherent fashion mainstream, but simultaneous fashion systems for different cultures, classes, lifestyles, age groups and localities. Some 'trickle down', some 'bubble up', some move horizontally, some remain more or less where they started. Tastes are not simply dictated and we should acknowledge the complexity and idiosyncratic sensual significance of material things in people's lives. Clothes are invested with both individual and collective facets of identity, memory and imagination. Beyond social competition, fashion comes from the primal pleasures of performance, play, creation and destruction. As Barthes tells us, it 'can be part of a dress object that has been artificially elaborated by specialists at any one moment,' and, 'at another moment, it can be constructed by the propagation of a simple act of dressing that is then reproduced at the collective level'.[8]

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7   Polhemus, *Street Style: From Sidewalk to Catwalk*, p. 6.
8   Barthes, *op. cit.,* p. 10.

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Because Harajuku fashion is less about what one wears than how one wears it, the dresser commonly supersedes the designer in generating style directions. While the emphasis on DIY practice means the individual has the agency to prescribe new meanings to things, their fashion system should not be seen as an enclave of pure innovation outside the wider power structures. Fashions often quickly percolate from the minority groups of predominantly high-school students up to global commercial bodies who reproduce their individual acts of *dressing*, and the Harajuku players remain very much bound up in Japan's systems of hyper-consumerism.

Magazines with styled editorial shoots once significantly influenced the direction of fashion in Japan, but today teenagers look at themselves represented in fashion media, wearing their own creations. According to Sharon Kinsella, the teen-oriented street style magazines that appeared in the 1990s established unprecedented interaction with their readers, inviting the young schoolgirls to their offices where they provided lounge areas and *purikura* ('print club') sticker photo booths. *Heart Candy* magazine recruited 18- to 20-year-old girls as editorial staff and the editor in chief was 23.[9] In these publications and their successors, fashion imagery consists predominantly of self-styled people. In *FRUiTS* – the monthly Japanese street fashion magazine founded in 1997 by Shoichi Aoki to document the exploding street fashion movement – there is very little advertising and the only copy is the individual's name and outfit details, giving the full agency to the wearer.

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9   Kinsella, 'What's Behind the Fetishism of Japanese School Uniforms?', p. 232.

Yuniya Kawamura describes how the relationship between producer and consumer is redefined in Harajuku, where most of the shops at the time of her research were run by young artists and students who started their own labels without any formal training.[10] She also recounts how the salesgirls at the *109* department store in Harajuku's more flashy and commercial neighbouring suburb Shibuya are major players in creating new fashion sensibilities and can become iconic *karisuma tenin* ('charismatic salesgirls') with celebrity status. It is not unusual for fashion houses to employ *karisuma tenin* as forecasters or designers, indicating that their ideas have greater currency than formal skills. These teens are positioned as the designers, merchandisers, salespeople, stylists, models, marketers, disseminators and consumers of their own fashion.

Individual Conformity

The technology of conformity in Tokyo, the world's most populated metropolis, fosters the fantasy of rebellion in Harajuku fashion. People everywhere look to be different only within permitted social parameters, but according to Donald Richie the dual existence of conformity and individualism is vital in Japan because of the emphasis on group identity. Each new fad registers a small criticism of whatever they wore before and this sort of small protest is the kind of criticism most popular in Japan, he writes: 'It is safe and yet, for a brief time, lends a feeling of individuality'.[11] In many other societies the mischievous eccentricity of Harajuku would be less subversive, and thus wouldn't have come to exist at the same extreme. Because of the conformative nature of *dress* in Japan, the intensity of the pleasure in the individualistic operation of *dressing* is heightened.

According to Pierre Bourdieu, taste is about distinction: a system of social organisation that ensures a perpetually unequal distribution of power. Aesthetic stances legitimate social differences and are 'opportunities to experience or assert one's position in social space'.[12] The need for distinction, he argues, means that there is an ongoing battle in any field between those who want to defend the traditions of the field, and the newcomers who want to render the established values obsolete. The field of fashion is one of rapid transience where things change for the sake of change and 'the permanent struggle within the field is the motor of the field'.[13] In the surveys Bourdieu conducted shortly after May 1968, he recalled that the 'avant-garde newcomers' of the Paris left bank spoke of fashion using the language of politics, saying, 'fashion has to

10   Kawamura, 'Japanese Teens as Producers of Street Fashion', p. 792.
11   Richie, *Tokyo: A View of the City*, p. 72.
12   Bourdieu, *Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, p. 57.
13   Bourdieu, 'Haute Couture and Haute Culture', p. 135.

be brought on to the streets,' and 'haute couture should be within reach of everyone'.[14] Today Harajuku may be the site where this ideal has manifested most visibly.

Fashion's greatest paradox is that it forms a statement of criticism as well as an expression of the desire for sameness. Anti-fashion does not challenge fashion *per se*; it shakes up the structure but fashion can always absorb it. In denouncing their opposition to fashion's dictums, subcultures have needed to be aware of the tastes they were avoiding, and always developed their own identifiable styles, often transforming mass-sanctioned tastes in the process. Anti-fashion statements that have sought to appear beyond concern with the frivolity of appearance could not evade being analysed in terms of the language of dress. We cannot be beyond dress, as we cannot refuse language, but in the everyday act of dressing we can become users who change established meaning and usage. Harajuku fashionistas are using their youth and inexperience in the field to their advantage by constructing a whole new value system.

So-called non-conformist countercultures often appear from the outside to be clones of one specific stylised interpretation of 'rebellion' – a nonchalance that is carefully constructed to be read as nonchalance. (Photograph by Amelia Groom).

14   Bourdieu, 'The Metamorphosis of Tastes', p. 113.

The subcultures analysed by Dick Hebdige had the ability to subvert, revalorise and disrupt, but they were 'inextricably bound up with the process of production, publicity and packaging which must inevitably lead to the defusion of the subculture's subversive power'.[15] The notion is that once the symbols of counter-cultural resistance are repackaged and sold by commercial bodies, they are stripped of any revolutionary potential. The process of recuperation has been seen as presaging the eminent demise of every fringe culture by sanitising, commodifying, and making widely available their ideas and stylistic identity.

But in Harajuku the process is different. The boundary between authentic resistance and commercial recuperation does not exist, and their outrageous styles are often hugely commercially successful from the outset. Journalists, designers, manufacturers, forecasters, retailers and pop stars from around the world keep a close eye on Harajuku – and the business magazine *WIRED* has had a regular column, *Japanese Schoolgirl Watch*, for a number of years, trying to keep track of their fads. While Western post-war subcultures, including ironically well-marketed ones, have condemned materialism in the name of 'individuality', Harajuku teenagers are unapologetic about the fact that their subcultural capital requires ongoing consumption.

Youth subcultures started in Japan, like elsewhere, when generational awareness emerged in the young and their increased spending was recognised by marketing industries. Harajuku style is entwined with entrepreneurship and expansion and the teens have no delusions or pretensions of fighting capitalism. They are aware that a lot of their radical innovations will be recuperated into the mainstream, but because their style is more about *dressing* than objects of *dress*, a level of agency is retained. The diffusion of their innovations does not dilute the symbolic power of their style because they believe in change for the sake of change. They are playing masquerade with the imagery of past subcultures that are already recuperated, and don't have the urgent preoccupation with the illusory dream of insurgence found in Western subcultures.

According to Kawamura, Harajuku street style identity is never political or ideological, but simply innovative fashion that determines group affiliation.[16] In a similar vein, Amy Spindler wrote in the New York Times that there are no politics behind the Tokyo fashion movements: 'The punk movement, when it came, was only about fashion. The hip-hop movement has nothing to do with rebellion. Boystyle has nothing to do with women's rights. If you ask the girls why they're wearing it, it's because "it's cute".'[17] It is true that in Harajuku images are taken on as though in quotation marks and incongruity is of

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15   Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, p. 95.
16   Kawamura, *op. cit.*, p. 758.
17   Spindler, 'Do You Otaku?'.

little concern as there is no fixed ideological commitment – but comparing Harajuku style to the past Western subcultures from which it borrows images is limiting because power and rebellion function differently today, and have always functioned differently in Japan.

Fashion is often set up as a non-political realm but street style is always politically charged, even when it is grounded on a thriving commercial foundation. Open rebellion is discouraged in Japanese culture, but the teens in Harajuku have a quiet, indirect and private resistance, and to dismiss them as mindless slaves to consumerism is to overlook the fact that while we are socially determined, 'we consistently search for the crevices in culture that open to us moments of freedom'.[18] Fashion, as the medium between the body and the public, allows individuals to think about themselves as subjects in the social world. If power should be viewed, as Foucault argues, 'in its ultimate destinations, with those points where it becomes capillary',[19] so then should our tactics of resistance, which can be located within the most everyday actions. Something as capillary as a man going about his urban life in a crème skirt and poncho, for example, can be tactical in destabilising the daily masquerade of gender …

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18   Wilson, 'Feminism and Fashion', p. 213.
19   Foucault, 'Lecture Two', p. 96.

Clothes Wear Us

The performativity of male and female identity is foregrounded in the playful dress-up culture of Harajuku. Valerie Steele writes, 'pity the poor man who wants to look attractive and well dressed, but who feels that by doing so he runs the risk of looking unmanly',[20] but no such pity should be granted to men in Harajuku. Besides blatant cross-dressing, which is not uncommon, men in Tokyo's youth fashion districts are at great liberty to embrace the expressive possibilities of fashion. They are often meticulously groomed with aberrant clothing, haircuts and even make-up. Shoichi Aoki launched *TUNE* magazine in 2004; with the same premise and format as his *FRUiTS* publication it is dedicated specifically to male avant-garde street fashion and shows that men's dressing in trendy districts like Harajuku is only marginally less dramatised than that of their female counterparts.

There is no taboo that transgresses all circumstances for everyone across all cultures at all times. One of several women around the world who caused outrage for being 'impostors of men', Emma Snodgrass was arrested in Boston in 1852 for wearing pants. By the 1930s women in trousers were still shocking for many but becoming increasingly chic; and today it is invisible. Vivienne Westwood worded it well: 'it's just a question of adjusting the eyes – it's only perverse because it's unexpected'.[21] Westwood, who is revered in Harajuku, is one of a select few designers who have tried a number of times to introduce male skirts, but although many gendered rules for dressing now amount to little, men still can't wear skirts inconspicuously.

While men once coveted exuberance in dress, since the Eighteenth Century western male fashion has been increasingly restricted in silhouette. Skirts/dresses are the most clearly gender-specific clothing we have (though the male anatomy is actually better built for them), which might relate to men's aversion to concealing the phallic suggestion of power, or a Freudian fear of castration. The man pictured above in the crème skirt ensemble possesses stronger implications than the overt exaggeration of drag. He is not a hyperbolic image of a woman, he is just comfortably wearing unbifurcated attire – like the kimonos, kilts, caftans, sarongs, tunics, grass skirts and togas that have been worn by men throughout history, and are still worn frequently in many parts of the world. Through his *dressing* he shows that our prescribed gender aesthetics are arbitrary.

This non-essentialness of gender is demonstrated in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando: A Biography*. Initially feeling no different after transforming from man to woman, we read, once Orlando has been wearing skirts for a while, 'a certain change was visible'.[22] She finds

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20 Craik, *Faces of Fashion: Cultural Studies in Fashion*, p. 176.

21 Wilcox, *Vivienne Westwood*, p. 24.

22 Woolf, *Orlando: A Biography*, p. 171.

herself being treated differently and becoming more modest, more vain, more fearful of her safety. 'It is clothes that wear us and not we them,' the narrator tells us, 'we may make them take to mould of arm or breast, but they mould our hearts, our brains, our tongues to their liking'.[23] There is no inherent male or female; there is only costume. This is certainly the case with the Japanese geisha (from *gei* 'performing arts' and *sha* 'person'), who undergoes elaborate rituals of preparation before appearing and behaving as a geisha. Her face is painted with a thick white paste, and on the blank surface her eyebrows are drawn in black, high on the forehead, and her lips are painted in deep red, smaller than her natural mouth. Her hair is painstakingly arranged with a special oil so as to resemble a sculptural wig, and her every movement is deliberated and stylised. She is an unapologetically synthetic beauty, a masquerade of sensual femininity. In the words of James McCormick 'she is a costume that fits a woman rather than a woman who fits a costume'.[24]

The popular Harajuku subculture *Lolita* draws on a highly feminised aesthetic derived from Victorian dolls with ribbons, lace, embroidery, bonnets, corsetry, frills, and hair in ringlets. Becoming a *Lolita* is laborious and the end result is so constructed as to indicate the performativity of all female identity. Unlike in the post-war Western subcultures, such as those analysed by Hebdige, it is predominantly females who drive the *Lolita* fashion culture and obtain the most visibility. There are, however, a significant number of males in Harajuku who adopt the look, complete with bloomers, bows and stockings. Mana-Sama is the most famous of a number of male celebrities who wear the *Lolita* style in their daily lives. His fashion label *Moi-même-Moitié* sells the sub-categories of *Elegant Gothic Lolita* (EGL) and *Elegant Gothic Aristocrat* (EGA), both centred on androgyny.

Mana-Sama is also famous as the former front man of the influential *visual kei* band *Malice Mizer*. *Visual kei* ('visual type') is a music genre that self-consciously foregrounds an emphasis on visuality, and therefore treats illusion as illusion. Its aesthetic is a combination of traditional Japanese dress with cyber-punk/goth. Like the glam rock and hair metal musical styles often compared to *visual kei*, there is an emphasis on androgyny and adulation of feminine-looking men. Many male *visual kei* musicians take on female names and personalities to become cartoon versions of femininity, acting out an idea of womanhood better than the 'real' women who follow in their footsteps. As Judith Butler suggested, 'in imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself'.[25] All gender, she says, is a form of drag as there is no core 'masculine' or 'feminine' to refer to. In a final twist, female *visual kei* fans imitate their favourite performers in Tokyo's street fashion and *kospure* (from *cosplay* or 'costume play') districts, as women impersonating men impersonating women.

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23 *Ibid.*, pp. 170-171.
24 McCormick, 'Japan: The Mask and the Mask-Like Face', p. 203.
25 Butler, *Gender Trouble - Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, p. 175.

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Many Forms of Uniform

Official uniforms were first introduced in Japan as part of its modernisation policy and today they exist with profound salience. Brian McVeigh describes Japan as 'the most uniformed society in the world', where everyone is costumed for their social role and prescribed dress forms unambiguous hierarchies in even the smallest institutions.[26] Schools in Japan regulate uniforms to varying degrees, but many dictate haircut and style, bags, socks, even underwear. However, like anywhere, students find ways to use the uniform as a platform for building their subjective identity. Far from being viewed as suppressing individuality, McVeigh found in his surveys of high-school students that the uniform can actually determine idiosyncratic expression – when everyone was in the same thing, the individuality of each person was made clearer.[27] Uniforms make the wearer visible as a member of a group but offer a veil of anonymity since the body is obscured by the instantly recognisable formalised code. The costume play of *kospure* offers temporary symbolic retreat from the seriousness of official costumes and roles, while simultaneously creating a new stage for group identity and performance, within specified spacial and temporal zones.

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26   McVeigh, *Wearing Ideology: State, Schooling and Self-Presentation in Japan.*
27   *Ibid.*, p. 84.

As Craik demonstrates, while the uniform's symbolic elements might indicate a desire for control, predictability, authority, discipline, conformity or standardisation, the reality is more nuanced.[28] The 'informal codes' of the uniform appear frequently in subversive and licentious contexts. While designed to desexualize the body by restricting movement and concealing shape and flesh, they have long been appropriated in fetish cultures. It is not surprising then that the Japanese culture of official dress breeds a unique fetishism of the uniform, the most widespread example being the adult male perversion for the uniformed schoolgirl.

The Japanese sailor-style girls' school uniform is as iconic as the kimono – there are encyclopaedias cataloguing all varieties, several companies produce miniature doll versions, and there's a thriving second-hand market for collectors. Kinsella has discussed the extent of what she calls the 'Japanese schoolgirl mania,' which she says peaked in the 1990s.[29] At this time men were purchasing phone conversations, company (*enjo kosai* or 'assisted dating'), and sometimes sex from schoolgirls, usually through specialist agencies. *Burusera* ('bloomer sailor') shops were selling schoolgirl uniforms, underwear, even gobs of saliva,[30] and, infamously, their underpants could also be purchased from vending machines.

At this time a new street style emerged in Tokyo, which, according to Kinsella, was a self-conscious response to the media frenzy. Known as *kogal* (from *kogyaru*, 'high-school gal'), their fashion sensibility was based on customised school uniforms, salon suntans, streaked and colored hair, *rusu sokusu* ('loose socks'), heavy eye make-up, painstakingly accessorised and decorated mobile phones, and elaborate nail art. They unbuttoned the tops of their blouses, rolled their sleeves up, wore ties loose and shortened their hemlines, to combine sexual naivety with overt sexiness and turn the connotations of the uniform around. The *kogal* were self-commodified, subjecting themselves to the adult male gaze but also evading it by creating their own system of inclusion. Their self-image was a reaction to, and depended on, their social visibility.

Subjectivity and Visibility

While in modern Japan all can have at their disposal a vast array of choice with regard to appearance, this democratic ideal has meant that everyone is burdened with the pressure of an ever-changing spectacularised fashion culture that implies strict surveillance and scrutiny of the self. This permanent, unconscious sense of being visible

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28 Craik, 'The Cultural Politics of the Uniform'.
29 Kinsella, 'Japanese Highschool Girl Brand'.
30 *Ibid.*, p. 104.

is only superficially escaped by the subcultures of Harajuku, where playful norm-breaking bodily presentation is encouraged and made public. Although subcultural identities are negotiated in opposition to an imagined 'mainstream', there is the same self-regulation and omnipresent panoptical scrutiny, imposing an intense pressure to see oneself and be seen in certain ways. In hedonistic Harajuku there is pleasure in power and power in pleasure: there is both 'the pleasure that comes of exercising a power that questions, monitors, watches, spies, searches out, palpates, brings to light; and on the other hand, the pleasure that kindles at having to evade power, flee from it, fool it, or travesty it'.[31]

Photography is a central part of Harajuku's fashion culture. The costumed teens take candid and posed photographs of themselves and each other for hours on end with their mobile phones and digital cameras; none of their efforts are left undocumented. The numerous surrounding *purikura* arcades allow them to stage photo shoots with their desired personas and get instant sheets of miniature photos decorated with their choice of captions and embellishments. Photographers from the various teen street style magazines also spend hours in Harajuku capturing the latest individual artistry of *dressing*. Their publications form a conversation rather than a monologue because they feature images of pedestrians in their own creations who control how they are represented and are given full credit in the publication. However, the photographers also shape the reality they document. Not only do they distort the representation through selection, exclusion and repetition, but also the very presence of their lens changes behavior. The possibility of appearing in the publications means the amateur models must forever outdo themselves and each other, to be selected for the camera's gaze.

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31   Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, p. 45.

Empowered Cuties?

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Kawaisa (usually translated as 'cuteness') saturates Japan's visual landscape with bright, juvenile and saccharine imagery, and is particularly prominent in Tokyo's street fashion cultures. Akihabara, known as Tokyo's 'electrical town' and the centre of *kospure* culture, is home to many *meido kafe* ('maid cafés') where young female waitresses dressed in maid costumes act as servants for predominantly male patrons. It was in Akihabara that I witnessed these two young girls dressed as matching French maids (one pale pink, one pale purple) in the most blatant enactment of subservience for the fetishised male gaze imaginable. They had drawn a large crowd of men who stood around them peering through their camera lenses as the girls posed in various demure ways with sweet, lobotomized expressions. The more camera lenses that appeared in front of them, the more exaggerated their staging of cuteness became.

Kawaisa often feeds into complex sexual dynamics in Japan, and it is not unusual for child-like demurity to be prominently featured in sexually charged and pornographic images. Young girls who embrace *kawaii* are often accused of making themselves politically and economically subservient, and reducing themselves to sexualised objects of the paedophilic male gaze. According to Kinsella, being *kawaii* involves 'acts of self-mutilation, posing with pigeon toes, pulling wide eyed innocent expressions, dieting, acting stupid, and essentially denying the existence of the wealth of insights, feelings, and humour that maturity brings with it'.[32]

However, the power dynamics of style are not uni-directional, and *kawaii* can exist at the level of individual dressing as an everyday tactic of empowerment. Kinsella found in her surveys of Japanese adolescents that they viewed adulthood not as a means of freedom and independence, but a period of restrictions and hard work. It offers a respite from the perceived banality of the adult world, and young women anxious about future subservience, obscurity and drudgery in married life fashion themselves like little girls as a tactic of avoidance. It is a resistance focused on uniqueness, eccentricity, spontaneity, vibrancy and playfulness. They express a 'demure, indolent little rebellion rather than a conscious, aggressive and sexually provocative rebellion of the sort that has been typical of Western youth cultures'.[33]

An aesthetic focused on the feminine, cuteness ignores or outright contradicts Japan's '"male" productivist ideology of standardisation, order, control, rationality and impersonality'.[34] Even the *kawaii* styles that draw on the most unrealistic sexualised images of women can entail transgression and subversion. The *gyaru* ('gal') subcultures

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32   Kinsella, *Cuties In Japan.*
33   *Ibid.*
34   McVeigh, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

of the 1990s and early 2000s might be described as 'prostitute chic' with their miniscule hot pants, elephantine platforms and over-dramatized make-up. The look had an incredibly narrow definition of sexiness, but it was also a masquerade that interrogated the line between 'ugly' and 'beautiful' and separated the young girls from traditional values of femininity. It could grant them ownership of their self-image, provide confidence in the male-dominated public sphere where they were encouraged to be modest and acquiescent, and allow strong bonds of female alliance.

The Politics of Reuse

Publications that cater to the *kawaii* culture, like *Cutie* magazine, encourage a DIY approach to fashion and often include sewing or crochet patterns for hand-made designs. This, combined with the celebration of second-hand clothing, makes for a thrift fashion culture that is a respite from the fetishised dictatorial big-name brands that so obsess many metropolitan Japanese. In a country where over forty per cent of the world's luxury fashion is consumed,[35] this can be read as a political gesture that can interrogate the power structure of fashion.

Immediately behind Omotesandō – where exclusive global couture boutiques glisten side-by-side with armed security guards at the doors – is the independent designer and second-hand fashion district *Ura-Hara* ('Harajuku's back streets'). Here, the affordability of fashion and eclecticism of ideas is refreshing; information is spread by word-of-mouth, shops are often unmarked and short-lived, and there is little promotional activity. The shoppers there express a triumph of dressing over dress and, like children, they are spontaneous and uninhibited in their dress up games. They often reuse mass-produced commodities in their dress assemblages – for example in the *decora* (from 'decoration') look where masses of multifarious colourful plastic toys and objects dangle from bodies and clothes.

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35   Moriyama, *Japan, the Land of the Brand, Where Luxury Goods Rule.*

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The fashion of reuse challenges the values of capitalism by forming smaller systems of inclusion and refusing participation in the ongoing pursuit of new consumer products. Reselling used items is a lucrative industry in Ura-Hara, but it is different to the capitalism of first-cycle exchange because it blurs the production/consumption divide and positions the wearer as an active meaning-maker. The subjective and fortuitous nature of value and meaning was demonstrated by designer Masahiro Nakagawa with his fashion recycling venture of the early 2000s, *Tokyo Recycle Project*. Under his label *20471120*, which had a devoted following in Harajuku, he invited people to bring him their old clothes and tell him about their associated feelings and memories. Nakagawa and his team then restructured the rejected garments into more desirable ones and returned them to their owners, undermining Japan's hyper-consumerist culture.

Mass-production and the invention of synthetic fibres were two of the earliest factors contributing to the democratisation of fashion. More recently, the counterfeit industry, eBay, recycled designer wear retail outlets in Japan like Rag Tag, and high-fashion designers doing relatively cheap lines for chain stores (like Rei Kawakubo of Comme des Garçons for H&M), have all helped the popularisation of high fashion. A multitude of cheaper products (perfumes, jeans, sports wear) also carry 'exclusive' brand names, so the aura of limited high-end production is actually widely available. One factor accounting for the recent boom in second-hand fashion is that regardless of brand name or price, fashion today is rarely exclusive. The new distinction must

therefore come from hand-made clothes or creative and ironic uses of existing styles, to form codes that are accessible to a select group only.

In Ura-Hara, like on Omotesandō, shoppers are buying scarcity. The marginal local designers produce stock in limited numbers and exclusivity is maintained by rapid change of codes that are accessible only to those with the cultural capital to comprehend them. Being able to find and wear second-hand things in new ways is a mark of independence and a quiet resistance against the fashion system's dictums. They use experimental dressing to communicate with wider society their disillusionment with it. They are costuming their alienation and, at times, questioning the very meaning and function of dress.

All Dress is Fancy Dress

A recurring motif in Harajuku style is the donning of lingerie or corsetry on the outside. An under-garment on top of an outer-garment has lost its original function of reforming the figure and exists as an aesthetic object in its own right. It is a gesture that brings to the surface the hidden mechanics of dress objects and the fashion system. The style harks back to the early careers of Jean Paul Gaultier and Madonna, and also to the traditional Japanese dress where the open gaps under the sleeves of the kimono draw attention to the interior of the dress structure, bringing to the outside the complexity of layering that goes on beneath the surface. At the high-end of the fashion system, there is also the leading Japanese label Comme des Garçons which has often been discussed as 'deconstructivist fashion' in the way it has continually expressed an undoing of the process of construction with things like loose threads, stitching or lining on the outside of the garments and a general undone/unfinished look.

We tend to think more about how clothes are adapted to the body than the ways the body is adapted to clothes, but donning underwear as outerwear can turn this around. According to Richie the kimono is rarely designed to fit the wearer: 'the wearer is designated, as it were, to fit it'.[36] Similarly, in a popular footwear style in Harajuku where the shoe is shaped to separate the big and second toes, we find evidence of how clothing shapes the body. The style comes from the traditional *geta* and *zori* sandals that are worn with *tabi* socks that allow for the strap between the toes (construction workers, farmers, gardeners and rickshaw-pullers in Japan also wear split toe boots called *jika-tabi*). According to the Belgian surrealist René Magritte, 'Everything we see

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36   Richie, *The Image Factory: Fads and Fashions in Japan*, p. 32.

hides another thing, we always want to see what is hidden by what we see'.[37] Like his *Le Modèle Rouge* series of paintings from the mid-1930s, the *tabi* footwear shows that our feet and the shoes we usually wear are heteromorphous.

New contexts give rise to new meanings: the dress taken from the female body and put on the male body transgresses social codes and becomes a new signifier. Similarly, in another popular Harajuku trend where the dress is taken off the body altogether and pinned on top of the wearer's clothes, the dress loses its position as a dress and questions the very meaning of fashion and clothing. Worn outside the outfit as something purely decorative, akin to jewellery, it comments on the operation of a dress for framing the body and aestheticises non-functionality. It brings into question the normalcy of the norm and asks, as George Bernard Shaw's Dunois in *Saint Joan* did: 'All dress is fancy dress, is it not, except our natural skins?'. Harajuku fashion, with all its excess and subversiveness, differs from mainstream style only in interpretation. The uniform of a blue suit, white shirt and tie for the salary men around Tokyo Station has no intrinsic meaning but masquerades as natural and through its social use becomes invisible. A deconstructionist approach to dressing dismantles this invisibility.

New Face, New Life

> "But you are still thinking in terms of a life with a real face. The mask does not deceive and is not deceived. How about putting on a new mask, turning over a new leaf, and starting another life?"[38]

As a remedy for the disfiguring burns he has suffered, Kobo Abé's scientist in his 1964 novel *The Face of Another* builds himself an entirely new face and enjoys the instant freedom and pleasure of anonymity. The mask allows him to act without being identified and to occupy the ideal point of surveillance – the obscured tower in the centre of the panopticon. It gives him a new life, one where he sees without being seen, and in a similar vein performative fashion occupies both a hyper-visible space of spectacle, and a veiled sphere of invisibility. The more eccentric the masquerade the more attention it earns, but the more the wearer disappears behind it. Peering through the eyeholes of their literal and figurative masks, teens in Harajuku revel in their simultaneous visibility and anonymity: they are as interested in standing out in a city of twenty million, as in hiding their biological bodies from identification.

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37 Torczyner, *Magritte: Ideas and Images*, p. 172.
38 Abé, *The Face of Another*, p. 163.

Consideration of the ubiquity of masks and masked faces in historical and contemporary Japanese art and life is beyond the realms of this paper, but a brief look at the Japanese *nōmen* ('Nō mask') will aid our discussion on performativity. *Nōmen* function as a means of depriving the actor of any individuality by formalising, codifying and generalising the emotions he expresses. Ze-ami, who is attributed with founding Nō in the 14th century, advises that even the actor performing without a mask must still keep his face completely inanimate, 'as expressionless as a mask'.[39] But what makes the *nōmen* unique amongst all other masks is in fact its uncanny ability to change expression. Rather than a fixed alternate identity they offer fluid states, albeit within set types. Whether it is the character of nubile young girl, jealous woman, passionate warrior or wise man, the mask can display amusement, grief, joy, horror, distress, determination or any other nuance of human emotion, depending on the angle at which the actor places his head and the shadows that are cast on the mask's surface.

Appearing in virtually every culture on earth, masks embody the human desire to transform the biological body via self-made images, which is the same desire that drives the strange modern phenomena we call fashion. Representing us while hiding us, masks both reveal and conceal. If we consider fashion a means for constructing and projecting an image of our perceived identity, masking can be, more than deceptive frivolity, active self-expression. Oscar Wilde's famous words 'Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth,'[40] are echoed by Akira Kurosawa who wrote that 'Although human beings are incapable of talking about themselves with total honesty, it is much harder to avoid the truth while pretending to be other people.'[41] Both used the mask as a broad analogy for the creative process.

As in many parts of the world, in Japan it was historically believed that a lady of quality had a fair complexion: it signified being rich enough to not have to work outside like the weather-beaten peasants. Upper class women were whitening their skin as early as the seventh century: they shunned sunlight, powdered their faces white, and later moved on to more complicated procedures involving bleaching and white lead, which had devastating effects. After a series of lead poisoning deaths the government banished the lead cerussite face-whitening ingredients in the nineteenth century, but many non-lead whitening products are available today as the pale face continues to be esteemed.

The value of the white face was challenged by the 'black face' subcultures that emerged in Tokyo's Shibuya district in the late 1990s, which saw the faces of young

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39   Ishii, 'The Nō Theater: Mirror, Mask, and Madness', p. 29.
40   Wilde, *The Artist as Critic*, p. 389.
41   Kurosawa, *Something Like an Autobiography*, pp. 188-189.

girls artificially darkened beyond recognition. The most iconic figure of the movement was Buriteri, a *karisuma tenin* ('charismatic salesgirl') who is said to have pioneered the *ganguro* ('black face') look. She named herself after the black soy sauce used on yellowtail fish (*buri*) in teriyaki cooking (*teri*). The constructedness of Buriteri's self-image possessed an honesty that was in line with Jean Baudrillard's thoughts on make-up: 'How can one mistake this 'exceeding of nature' for a vulgar camouflaging of the truth? Only falsehoods can alienate the truth, but make-up is not false, or else … it is falser than falsehood and so recovers a kind of superior innocence'.[42] Like any Japanese person with bright blond hair, she was making no attempt at authenticity. Often worn with a centimetre or two of black roots, the ganguro's hair was self-consciously fake, a reference. Like transvestites, they were more interested in the signs of femininity than any idea of naturalness.

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An urge for blatant theatricality can be traced in many areas of Japanese art and life. Barthes was intrigued with the performativity of emptiness in the Bunraku puppetry, and the way in which it 'exhibits simultaneously the art and the labour'.[43] The wooden puppets of Bunraku have painted, mask-like faces and the three men required to manipulate each one are in clear view on stage at all times. This is much like the theatre of fashion in Harajuku, where no attempt is made to hide the artifice of it; the

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42   Constable, 'Lies Make-Up and Nietzsche', p. 197.
43   Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, p. 54.

labour is an integral part of the performance process and there is no 'back-stage' for preparing costumes and make-up. Because they are nearly all high-school students, Sunday is the day they come from all over the country to parade their latest creations, though on weekdays spectators can wait until after school hours for them to arrive. They often step off the train in plain clothes or school uniforms and commence preparation in full view of passers-by. There is no integrity of an original because, in Richie's words, 'as in any dramatic presentation, the only integrity is that of the performance'.[44]

The categorisation of appearances as deceptive, frivolous, decadent or unimportant distractions or distortions of an imagined deeper existence that is beyond mere sensation dates back to Plato, whose allegory of the cave put deceiving surface image (shadows) in opposition to the 'real' essential truth (the sun). But if we depart from the idea of a total, obscured truth, we can re-examine self-decoration and find there is no reason why that which is on the outside is less genuine than what is hidden from public scrutiny. In Japan, the material and the aesthetic are given high prestige because they matter to people's internal sense of self and give substance to their external world. Fashion does not have to be seen as a superficial gloss wrapping a 'true' body or self, it can be seen as an active process of bringing things outside, an aggrandizement of an identity that is mediated with the social. Beyond narcissistic posing, the bravely fantastical, hysterically incomprehensible dressing in Harajuku can be seen as a public service that exhibits the marvellous in the mundane, embodies fantasy and optimism, and re-imagines the type of beauty that is culturally admired.

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44   Richie, *Tokyo: A View of the City*, p. 109.

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