

# **Facing East**

**International Scholars  
on Japanese Culture**

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## *Foreword*

Modern Japan and its culture is an ever popular field of interest and academic research in Europe and the world. By far, Japanese studies are the most popular of other Asian countries, while The Land of the Rising Sun remains a perfect concept of a Far Eastern island country to many. It is exotic, idiosyncratic, and full of paradoxes and exceptional, rich culture. It combines traditional centuries old arts, nurtured local traditions with futuristic, state-of-the-art inventions, science fiction like megalopolis and groundbreaking technology. It is a business centre and an attractive touristic destination.

It is not surprising that virtually every aspect of Japanese culture has been and currently is being studied, researched and written about. The chapters presented in this book testify to this notion. They cover a very wide spectrum of topics related to studies on Japanese culture. The authors come from diverse cultural and academic backgrounds and have incorporated different methodologies and themes in their essays.

This book contains articles whose common point is an international approach to various aspects of Japanese culture. The majority of the authors have participated in a Japan Foundation 6-month course for Specialists in Cultural and Academic Fields in Kansai Institute in Japan academic year 2013–2014 or have an otherwise academic link to Japan Foundation. The texts presented here have resulted from research conducted as a part of a doctoral or post-doctoral research work.

Klaudia Adamowicz is a PhD candidate at Centre for Comparative Studies of Civilisations of Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland. Her main research interests include contemporary Japanese culture, transculturality, the theory of subcultures and audience research in cultural institutions. In her text she analyses Wolfgang Iser's popular theory of transculturality as a research method on the example of *visual kei*

phenomenon. She is a Japan Foundation 6-month scholarship awardee in the year 2014–2015.

Alari Allik a lecturer on Japanese literature, religion, and philosophy at the Tallinn University since 1997. His research is focused on self-narration of medieval Japanese Buddhist writers. He has also done some translation studies including translating Japanese poetry. In his text he analyses the notion of hyper-authorship in the writings of two Medieval Buddhist writers. Marina Kozlova has graduated from State Pedagogical University in Novosibirsk (Russia) majoring in theory and history of arts and Japanese language. Her research interests focus on Japanese modern art and architecture and its comparison with Western traditions. In the chapter she reveals and characterizes the central categories that spatial perception of architecture in Japan is based on referring to works by three major contemporary architects: K. Tange, T. Ando, and T. Itō.

Yunuen Mandujano is a PhD Candidate in Social Sciences at Autonomous University of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. She holds a Master Degree in Studies of Asia and Africa – Specialty Japan from El Colegio de Mexico, Mexico. Her research interests include Japanese media, cultural nationalism, media sports and gender discourses in popular culture. She wrote an chapter about dominant national identity discourses in Japan on the example of two case studies – football players and pop-cultural celebrities.

Dr Marco Pellitteri obtained his PhD in Sociology and Social Research from the University of Trento (Italy). He is a JSPS Research Fellow (2014–2016) at Kōbe University, working with Prof. Kiyomitsu Yui. His book *The Dragon and the Dazzle: Models, Strategies, and Identities of Japanese Imagination – A European Perspective* (2008, Eng. trans. 2010) was published with the support of the Japan Foundation. In his chapter he presents the first findings of the survey on manga readers in Europe conducted by the 'Manga Network'.

Kamila Sosnowska is a PhD candidate at Centre for Comparative Studies of Civilisations of Jagiellonian University. She holds a MA in Film Studies from Jagiellonian University (2009). Her research interests include Asian cinema and popular culture, especially Japanese contemporary cinema and TV dramas, Japanese education system, gender studies and the role of women in Japanese society and culture. Her chapter analyses the phenomenon of *ijime* (bullying) in Japanese schools and its cinematic image in three chosen films and TV dramas.

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is Japanese travel culture with a main focus on Onsen and the Elderly Population in the Japanese Mountain Villages in Yamaguchi, Japan. Her text deals with the theme of touristic and everyday life patterns of the Japanese.

Adam Uryniak is a PhD candidate Institute of Audiovisual Artsof Jagiellonian Univeristy and film director. He has a MA in Film Studies and his research interests focus on pre-war Polish cinema, genre cinema and contemporary Japanese gangster films (T. Kitano, T. Miike). His chapters analyses the transcultural motifs in Jim Jarmusch's film *Ghostdog: The Way of the Samurai*.

James White is a doctoral candidate at The School of East Asian Studies (SEAS) at the University of Sheffield. His doctoral work is exploring how gender was understood in the beer and advertising industries via beer advertising. In his chapter he analyses four models of gender which have appeared in Japanese television advertisements during the post-war period and how these four models have evolved and their relation to masculinity and femininity in Japan.

He combined account of these diverse to different elements of Japanese world has created a rich transcultural mosaic. The authors, sociologists, anthropologists, culture and media specialists from around the globe face East in their own individual ways, but all end up looking at Japan and its fascinating culture.

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Kamila Sosnowska  
(Kraków, September 2014)



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## **Transculturality as a Method on the Example of *Visual Kei***

### **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to present the theory of transculturality treated as a method of researching Japanese contemporary culture. According to Wolfgang Welsch the essence of transculturality lies in transcultural networks which are built based on the category of fascination, presence and proximity. As I show on the example of *visual kei*, these terms are especially relevant in reference to Japanese culture which seems to be transcultural in its structure. Describing the characteristics of *visual kei* I show the way in which local elements are linked with foreign ones leading to the creation of a new network combining the elements from both of them, at the same time bearing a brand new quality. Presented example can be a starting point for future considerations in the field of Japanese culture.

This paper's problem arose when preparing for Students and Young Scholars Conference in Asian Studies which was held in Poznań in May 2014. The main topic of the conference was to show manifold methodologies which can be used in Asian studies. The importance of the issue lies in the fact that the array of possible methods has not yet been established. The aim of this article is to examine the theory of transculturality treated as a scientific method to study Japanese culture. As my own academic interests concentrate on Japanese contemporary culture I decided to show the method using the example of *visual kei*. As so far too little attention has been paid to *visual kei*, the significance of my research also lies in the possibility of showing the meaning and essence of this still unknown Japanese phenomenon.

The paper has been divided into three parts. The first one deals with the definition of transculturality mostly based on Wolfgang Welsch's theory. The next part refers the discussed issue to the specificity of Japanese culture which can be perceived as transcultural in its original structure. In the last section of the following study the phenomenon of *visual kei* will be regarded as a clear illustration of the earlier conclusions. Put together, these results suggest that transculturality can be used as an effective method in researching Japanese culture.

## Transculturality

This part of the study will examine the concept of transculturality. Another term bearing the similar meaning is 'transculturation' which was coined by a Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz. Even though both terms have a similar meaning, I will not analyze it here in more detail as it lies outside of my area of interest at this point. However, it is worth mentioning that the term 'transculturality' was first used by Wolfgang Welsch who referred it to the field of aesthetics. I have also decided to continue using the word 'transculturality' as my considerations will apply to the area of aesthetics and related fields.

Welsch starts his reflection with the criticism of Johann Gottfried's Herder's conception of culture. According to this old theory, cultures were homogenous, national in its nature and ethnic boundaries between them were easy to identify. To describe it Herder used the metaphor of spheres which meant that different cultures are unable to communicate with one another and a mutual understanding is beyond their reach. The only way of contact that may exist between them is clashing without the possibility of exchanging or mixing (Welsch 2002: 85–86). What is more Welsch's criticism goes towards not only Herder's theory of national cultures, but also towards interculturality or multiculturalism. It stems from the fact that according to Welsch, all such theories perceive culture as autonomous islands instead of transcultural networks (Welsch 1998: 200–203). Now we come to the essence of Welsch's theory which is based on the assumption of transcultural networks. Those networks do not run by national borders, but are created transnational leading to the existence of a new diversity. Every network is built from diverse components, and in turn various meanings can be attached to each of the components, creating manifold configurations. Therefore the new diversity does not emerge

from the difference between national or geographical areas, but is caused by the distinction between transcultural networks (Welsch 2002: 87).

In transcultural networks the relationship between cultures is subjected to change. They are no longer divided as in Herderian theory, but mixed – becoming inner-contents or satellites for each other. It should be noted that this hybridisation does not effect in chaotic mixing, but rather a mutual interpenetration resulting in forming new inner structures and relationships between networks. What is more, networks are involved in the process of continuous change. They never reach their final form, instead their dynamic nature forces them to the constant transformation (Welsch 1998: 203ff).

All these changes in the way in which we understand and interpret cultures and their relationships can be properly expressed in the already mentioned term – transculturality. Its linguistic structure suggests the multiplicity of culture, but what is more important – it also includes the meaning of transition. The aim of transculturality lies in transcending the border of traditional culture theories by showing the ways in which differential cultures tend to transgress one another to build transcultural networks. What is more, Welsch suggests that this kind of interpenetration is not the phenomenon that emerged lately, but was already present in the historical cultures. Surely the scale of diffusion was smaller as because of a less effective flow of information (Welsch 2002: 86ff). However, it is worth mentioning that the theory of transculturality is not concentrated on showing the change of culture relationships, but the way of understanding these relations – both in the presence, and in the past. This is especially meaningful when discussing the Japanese culture which according to Welsch tends to be transcultural in its origin. This tendency or even characteristic is not something that appeared recently as an effect of excessive contact with the West. On the contrary - it was already visible in the process of creating the Japanese culture that is now perceived as traditional and Japan-distinctive (Welsch 2002: 90ff). Therefore, here we reach part two of this paper.

## **Transculturality of Japanese Culture**

As mentioned above, the essence of transculturality lies in the change of interpreting cultures not in the way they create their mutual dependence. It is especially true in reference to transculturality of Japanese culture, because it seems that even if the term ‘transculturality’ may be new, the

Japanese culture was as transcultural in the past as it is today. The new way of culture perception allowed to get sight of its inner nature and the mechanism of action.

When considering Japanese culture we should be conscious that it is impossible to analyze its structure and characteristic without the simple fact that it was always closely connected with other Asian cultures; especially China and Korea, but also India. After the opening of Japan to the West in XIX century European and American influences joined earlier Asian waves. The cultural components which are considered Japanese are in fact very often of foreign origin and their Japaneseness lies in the way they were transformed and then adapted. The final product was very often so different from the original one that we can without a doubt conclude about its Japanese nature (Welsch 2002: 86ff).

Sergei Arutyunov indicates ways in which the foreign elements are transformed by non-European cultures. Japan can be treated as a very clear example of this process. Components can be either subjected to mutual mechanical penetration or synthesis. Other way of treating foreign elements may consist in adopting it and then using in a traditional way. Without going into details we can conclude that it is very rare that foreign elements remain in their clear form; mostly they are transformed and as a result they gain a new quality (Arutiunow 1984: 296ff). Later in this article I will refer to all these three methods.

Even in the beginning you can go as far as to claim that Japanese have not created anything new. However, they have created a better and more sophisticated version of everything (Welsch 2002: 96). Welsch quoted Ryousuke Ouhashi who said that the constant and stable essence of Japanese culture does not exist. It can rather be compared to the water which can be adopted to the shape of varied containers it is poured into (Welsch 2002).

Apart from the lack of essence of Japanese culture it is also worth mentioning that differential and seemingly contradictory components can co-exist accordingly. Adopting the new element from foreign culture does not mean that the old one must be deleted. Different styles and models can be actual at the same level – instead of being contradictory they can complement one another (Welsch 2002). Ortiz indicated the stages of the process of transculturation, which in sequence consisted of deculturation (the loss of previously actual elements) and neoculturation. The latter process should be understood as a creation of new cultural phenomena bearing the signs of all elements that took part in its course (Romanowska

2013: 144). An attempt to refer these stages to Japan can end in a failure, because Japanese can successfully execute the neoculturation without the preceding deculturation. All components can easily create one fluid, but the still distinct culture. Having this reflections in mind, we can easily understand Welsch's statement that Japanese culture can be treated as being transcultural in its nature. This might easily lead one to infer that Japanese culture is also especially well prepared for the increased degree of transculturality that is present in the contemporary culture (Welsch 2002: 92). These findings suggest a strong importance of transculturality for all Japanese culture researchers. Following that statement, the aim of this study is to investigate transculturality in link to Japanese culture leading to the conclusion that it can be treated as a scientific method during researches.

Nowadays the term Japanization is mostly referred to the popularity of Japanese culture (especially popular culture) in other Asian countries, but also in the West. Lately Japanese soft power in the shape of pop culture is spreading across the world. As this could be a topic of another paper I am not going to develop it here. My aim is to point out that Japanization can also be understood in another meaning which is connected with the way Japanese borrow foreign cultural components and then Japanize them – make them Japanese.

This raises questions about the way Japanese choose differential components to Japanize them. Welsch has introduced the term 'proximity' to demonstrate the way Japanese adopt foreign components. In fact, he states that Japanese does not make a distinction between foreign and own in reference to the origin. They have a tendency to concentrate on the sense of closeness and relevance that can be found in cultural phenomena of foreign origin. Instead of contrasting own – foreign, they rate cultural components by the category of close – far. What is considered as close can be easily adopted, Japanized and as a result is treated as Japanese in its characteristics (Welsch 2002: 92ff).

The meaning of proximity is related to two epistemic arguments which according to Welsch are responsible for transcultural flows between cultures – presence and fascination. The feeling of 'presence for us' of given cultural components leads to their adaptation. Their origin does not matter to us contrary to the personal feeling of importance which can be elicited even through seemingly far phenomena. The sense of presence goes hand in hand with fascination which draws the individuals or groups (both micro and macro levels are involved) to chosen works regardless

of their context and geographical origin. This mechanism is commonly at work nowadays, but seems that in Japan it was applied through all history (Welsch 2002: 90ff). The next part of this article will concentrate on showing the example of presence and fascination resulting in producing a completely new cultural product.

## **Transculturality of *Visual Kei***

In this part I shall describe and analyse the way in which the phenomenon of *visual kei* can be interpreted based on the method of transculturality and using concepts which are connected with it. After providing the conceptual theoretical framework I will attempt to show the chosen example of phenomenon visibly built as a transcultural network where every net was composed through the selection of relevant, close and fascinating elements.

Before I turn to further analysis it is necessary to clarify what is meant by *visual kei*. As the phenomenon is still new to the academic world it is especially important not to leave any uncertainty around this term.

Broadly speaking, *visual kei* is a specific style in Japanese alternative music. The word 'style' should be highlighted as this phenomenon is very often confused with a specific genre of music. In fact, bands which belong to this style can represent very different genres of music and they can change it during their musical career. The distinctive feature of the phenomenon is that all bands use visual effects understood in a very broad sense. They are visible not only in musicians' images, but also in their promotional videos, during concerts or even on CD covers. In *visual kei* music is equally important to the general image of the band or musicians. It is well reflected by the words of Takehito from the band Ayabie: „Well, the interesting part of being *visual kei* is that *visual kei* is a whole media. Of course music is important, but besides the music itself, *visual kei* has more ways to present itself – visually, the costume, the atmosphere” (“INTERVIEW ~ AYABIE”).

The world 'visual' refers to the broadly developed visuality of Japanese culture which is associated with pop culture (anime, manga, games etc.), but also with the traditional culture (e.g. theater). Japanese tend to look for pleasure through art (regardless of its kind – the border between pop culture and so-called high culture has always been very fluent in Japan) through senses not the rational understanding (Kawatake 1990: 224).



This feature has led to the emergence of a refined visual culture. In reference to *visual kei*, word ‘visual’ is usually associated with the slogan of famous X Japan which was: „Psychedelic Violence Crime of Visual Shock”. In fact, the word was used earlier by strongly glam rock – inspired bands like Visual Scandal or Murbas whose motto was Visual Violence. X Japan latter only followed that path (“History of visual kei”).

The world ‘kei’ means a system, lineage or a group<sup>1</sup> and is used to classify different segments of Japanese pop culture. The phenomenon was previously known as visual or visual rock until it was gradually injected into the framework of popular culture gaining ‘kei’ in return. Even if I classified *visual kei* as a pop cultural phenomenon it is worth highlighting that the style is a part of an alternative culture (referring to Yoshio Sugimoto’s division of pop culture into mass culture, alternative culture and folk culture) (Sugimoto 2003: 244). In the nineties *visual kei* has its golden age and was widely popular gaining millions of followers. However, nowadays it is mostly a niche music with an uncertain future. Not to lengthen the general introduction I will go to the last feature I would like to mention – almost all *visual kei* musicians are men. Women are really rare to find and when you finally do they are almost indistinguishable from men. I will come back to this feature in further analysis.

Even if I defined *visual kei* so easily, practically speaking the term is difficult to grasp and clearly indicate. The phenomenon consists of many styles which differ in quantitative or qualitative use of visual images which leads to the inability of defining distinct borders. Some bands represent very modest look, but their style is still classified as *visual kei* because of their origin, while others place themselves outside *visual kei* family as an effect of their reluctance to be explicitly classified. On the other hand, some bands represent a very heavy image with dark make-up, Goth clothes and a general gloomy aura and next to them we can easily find musicians with colorful images representing the spreading trend of *kawaii* (usually translated as “cute”, when in fact this term is more ambiguous). There is no place in this paper to continue this matter, but it’s important to bear in mind that the term *visual kei* is rather vague and difficult to clearly define.

*Visual kei* consists of two main waves. The first one was mainly present in the eighties and was strongly inspired by glam rock. In the second one starting from the nineties the most visible were Gothic-Victorian motifs. In

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<sup>1</sup> Based on wakan dictionary.

the beginning the aim was to be original and to shock the audience through a heavy use of visual effects. The second wave which emerged when the first one was on the verge of dying, excelled in showing visual beauty through refined and dark aesthetics. Good examples are images and music by the then very famous Malice Mizer ("History of visual kei").

As shown above, both waves were strongly based on Western motifs – glam rock music and Goth-Victorian aesthetics. Later, when *visual kei* took on new faces the source of inspiration was enriched by many other motifs which are now present in the phenomenon. To anyone who had even a fleeting contact with *visual kei* the presence of Western motifs seems an obvious fact. Japanese are under a strong charm of the West, especially Europe, and tend to idealize or even romanticize it. As Asagi from band D stated: „Forests or impressive castles, wine or dresses. The image of the Middle Ages is still strong in me” (“Interview with D” 2011). Japanese *visual kei* is inspired by European languages, stories, characters – both real and historical; even the look of Caucasian people strongly attracts them as indicated by their often appearances in *visual kei* promotional videos. A country that is particularly popular among European countries is France. It’s perceived as the center of European culture and the capital of elegance and grace. Reasons for such a perception can be found in the popularity of „The Rose of Versailles” manga or in the *chansons* performed by a famous cross dresser Miwa Akihiro. Combined, it all suggests that *visual kei* remains strongly influenced by foreign motifs. It was not only created as an effect of fascination by Western glam rock and then Goth rock music, but later on foreign elements were constantly present, too. The situation we meet here is not a simple adaptation, but rather a process of creating transcultural networks composed from foreign, Japanese and mixed components. As a result, it is no longer possible to easily differentiate one from another.

Such a fusion could have only been created thanks to the sense of proximity that was found in the foreign elements chosen to be incorporated. Welsch’s keyword – ‘proximity’ enabled glam rock, Goth-Victorian aesthetics and many other Western-based themes to become a part of Japanese culture. The only question that remains now is to ask: where exactly was this proximity found or rather felt and how did it shape a new quality that was later taken as Japanese?

The first thing to start with is the fact that *visual kei* is sometimes called Japanese Kabuki Rock or straightly kabuki rock. It has its origin in the album of *visual kei* singer Miyavi „This Iz the Japanese Kabuki Rock”. Kabuki appears to be a crucial word here. Kabuki is a classical Japanese

theater established in 17th century during Edo period. Its distinctive characteristic lies in the sophisticated aesthetics and elaborated costumes and make-ups. A spectator who is used to a Western theater could be rather surprised as kabuki is far from the coherent action of Western plays. The course of the performance is rather developed through the succeeding dances and songs building a general atmosphere that should be felt rather than understood. An introduction, a body and finally conclusions – typical to European plays – cannot be found here as kabuki's plot puts emphasis on inner experiences. It is achieved thanks to the sophisticated aesthetics of Japanese theater which is based on the principle of *youshikibi* – the beauty of forms. All elements of performance must be strongly stylized and unnatural – as detached far from reality as it is only possible. This artificiality comes from the aesthetic ideals of Japanese townsmen from Edo Period when this kind of theater was created. The performance is generated through *kata* – memorized patterns of acting which used on stage create a sense of exaggeration and redundancy (Mezur 2005: 25ff).

The presence of such an aesthetics enabled *visual kei* to be created and then adapted to Japanese culture. It is also worth mentioning that *visual kei* musicians straightly use the term *youshikibi* to describe their aesthetics and visual goals, to name Versailles – *visual kei* band currently on hiatus – as an example. Both kabuki and *visual kei* builds their aesthetics on an ideal of *jinkou no bi* – artificial beauty which should be incorporated not only into a general look, but also to all stage behaviours. Apart from *youshikibi* other elements of kabuki aesthetics are also present in *visual kei* as I discuss it in detail in my book *The Image of Man in Visual Kei* (Adamowicz 2014). What I wanted to state here is the strong meaning of kabuki to *visual kei* in all its aspects. Quoting a musician Kaya: „I simply like *visual kei* music, and actually I also like kabuki, and with both *visual kei* and kabuki, I think Japan has a culture the world can be proud of. I try to have an appreciation of live kabuki, and learn from the colours they use, the production, and the story formulas” (“Sapporo Music Naked Full Interview” 2008).

When talking about the theater it is necessary to mention the character of *onnagata* – a man who plays the roles of women in the kabuki plays. The new aspect of closeness appears at this point – in kabuki as in *visual kei* all roles are played by men. When Japanese had an opportunity to see David Bowie wearing a dress on the cover of „The Man Who Sold the World” album in the seventies they were able to perceive it as being close, because of the image of *onnagata* they had in mind. What is more, cross dressers were also present in media and were not seen as transvestites,

but as *neo-onnagata* – people rated them through visual not sexual categories, as Westerners tend to (previously mentioned Miwa Akihiro is the best example of a so-called *neo-onnagata*) (Armstrong 2002).

The popularity of Gothic-Victorian elements since the nineties until now can also be explained through the terms of transculturality. Japanese are prone to horror stories from Buddhist and Shintoist tales to contemporary j-horror movies. *Hyakumonogatari kaidankai*<sup>2</sup> – a parlour game from Edo Period is a clear example of this matter. A specific characteristic of Japanese scary stories is the strong presence and meaning of visual images building an atmosphere of terror. In Japanese horror fear is not evoked through frightening action, but is caused by mysterious and incomprehensible images, a slow culmination of suspense which leads to the audience's sense of discomfort and insecurity. The same mechanism is present in kabuki and in *visual kei*. The pleasure Japanese had in ghost stories made them adopt the same genre from abroad which they found close to their own tastes (Adamowicz 2014).

It is also worth mentioning that Gothic elements after being transformed into their Japanese versions are not the same subcultural trends we know from our European ground. It is a clear example of using foreign elements in a traditional way which was described by Arutiunov. All styles not only goth, but also punk for example, were visibly redefined. Japanese tend not to concentrate on ideologies or rebellion typical for subcultures in the Western understanding, but rather make efforts to create an elaborate image or even kind of colourful masquerade (Ohanesian 2009). Foreign subcultures were used according to the local characteristics – they were adjusted to be experienced through the senses. Such an approach of individuals is typical for subcultures in postmodern understanding, but seems that in Japan the cause does not lie in postmodern changes, but rather in their original tendency to trigger emotions through senses instead of generating additional meanings.

Strongly stylized aesthetics, dark elements, cross-dressing or even homosexuality which has its long tradition in Japanese history (also in media and pop culture) can be easily associated with incorporated foreign components. In fact it is impossible to indicate where a Western motif ends and a Japanese one starts – boundaries have been erased. Anal-

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<sup>2</sup> The game consists in lighting 100 candles and then extinguishing one of them after telling one ghost story. When all candles were finally put out ghost were expected to appear.

gies in Japanese and Western cultures networks brought to existence the sense of proximity which caused the emergence of a new, completely different network. At the same time, it could be easily adopted and treated as Japanese in its nature. *Visual kei* followers are not only fascinated by something new and fresh – as Japanese were by glam rock in the eighties (to point Mana's devotion to Motley Crue as an example) – but also are able to find elements that bear meaning and importance for them as individuals. Additionally, this feeling of proximity allows them to see the phenomenon as a local one.

However, the Japaneseness of *visual kei* does not only lie in incorporating relevant components and mixing them with Japanese ones or in using foreign elements in a traditional way. Mechanical connection (according to Arutiunov's division) is also widely present – Japanese motifs are directly included in images and music and are easy to distinguish and indicate. It is especially visible in the substyle of *visual kei* – called *wa kei*. As the name suggests, it mostly concentrates on Japanese motifs. They can be presented in musicians' clothes, accessories, scenery, stories, but also in music through using Japanese melodies and instruments like *koto* or *shamisen*. Those *wa*- motifs are very often linked (and easy to distinguish) with the foreign ones – a traditional *kimono* matched with elaborated glam rock- inspired hairstyle is one example. Some bands, like the non-existent Kagrara, build all their concepts on the idea of showing Japaneseness through rock music, but many bands have a *wa* period or a *wa* album, while rest of the time they concentrate on other sources of inspirations. Apart from *wa kei* two other Japan-inspired styles can be found in *visual kei*: *angura kei* and *ero guro kei*. They are both based on 20<sup>th</sup> century Japanese artistic movement showing a more recent side of Japan's problems and its way of artistic expression.

This study has shown the way in which the transculturality can be treated as a method of researching Japanese culture – in this case, the pop cultural phenomena. Many components of different origins can be joined into a transcultural network and in effect it is impossible to clearly point the boundaries between them. Foreign elements can also be used in a new way creating a new quality. The concepts of 'presence', 'fascination' and 'proximity' can be very useful to understand the flows between cultures which are nowadays significantly more frequent than ever in the past. Simultaneously, ideas of transcultural networks, flows, components, analogies and variances should be developed to help interpret not only Japanese culture, but also the content of all contemporary culture.

Following examples of coherent fusion of cultures the mechanical connection was also illustrated. It is important to mention that the situation of a clear mechanical juxtaposition is very rare and usually it is a case of mixture of elements. The transcultural network is finally built.

*Visual kei* is constantly changing and developing – new sub styles arise. *Kawaii*, *wa kei* or the outwardly distant aesthetics of French aristocracy – different models can smoothly coexist and complement each other. The transculturality of *visual kei* lies in flows of close elements and japanizing the foreign ones resulting in the creation of a new quality. Even if components can be taken from the West, the final product remains Japanese. When we name it transcultural instead, it makes it even more Japanese as Japanese culture tends to be transcultural in its structure.

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## Chōmei as a Reader: Discovering “Self” in the Writings of Yasutane

### Abstract

Yoshishige no Yasutane (931–997) and Kamo no Chōmei (1155–1216) both engaged in Buddhist self-writing on the path to rebirth in Pure Land. Chōmei followed the example set by Yasutane and allegedly even chose the sinograph ‘*tane*’ 胤 for his dharma-name Ren’in with the Chinese reading ‘*in*’. In the present article I will take a look at how Chōmei / Ren’in constructs his textual identity based on the image of Yasutane discovered in reading. His main goal was to mimetically follow the example set by the earlier generations of practitioners. I will argue that through forming karmic links (*kechien*) with outstanding writers one could connect with the literary space provided by a group of interlinked authors. Following Mikhail Epstein’s ideas I have called this kind of mimetic relationship between authors hyper-authorship. Hyper-authorship cannot be reduced to any ‘real’ person and exists in the shared space of virtual authorial identities that are discovered in reading. The values and expressions common to these authors did not belong to any single individual and were freely shared by a community of people who followed the same path.

*Life itself is a quotation.*

Jorge Luis Borges

### Chōmei’s Library

Over the centuries Kamo no Chōmei (1155–1216) as a writer has received a lot of attention. He has been praised as one of the outstanding masters of prose during the medieval era who efficiently used the intricate possibilities of Japanese-Chinese mixed style to express his ideas

about the impermanence of the world and the joys of secluded life in his most important work “An Account of My Hut” (*Hōjōki*, 1212). During the time he was working on this famous piece of self-writing, he also collected hagiographic tales of Buddhist practitioners who aspired towards awakening and rebirth in paradise. These tales finally found their way into the *setsuwa*-collection “Tales of Religious Awakening” (*Hosshinshū*), which is strongly influenced by the tradition of compiling canonical tales of ideal rebirths (*ōjō*) initiated by Yoshishige no Yasutane (931–997).

It is a well known fact that Chōmei deeply admired Yasutane, who renounced writing poetry as the transgression of “crazy words and ornate language” (*kyōgen-kigo*) and embraced Buddhist practice in preparation for ideal moment of death. In 986 Yasutane assumed the dharma-name Jakushin and dedicated himself to Buddhist practice. In 1204, more than two hundred years later, Chōmei similarly renounced his life as a court poet and became a Buddhist writer under the name of Ren’in 蓮胤. It has often been pointed out that the character ‘in’ 胤 in his name might be taken from Yasutane 保胤, although there is no conclusive evidence that this is the case. Although both ‘ren’ and ‘in’ are common characters used in names, it still tempting to think that there is a deeper connection between the names Ren’in and Yasutane then just coincidence.

Usually whenever we discuss two authors being interlinked in some intimate way, we tend to see the connection on the level of real historical persons or what Wayne C. Booth has called “flesh-and-blood persons (FBP)” (Booth 2005: 75). We end up discussing how the experiences of Yasutane as a concrete historical person moulded the life of another historical person – Kamo no Chōmei. Rarely does one consider the fact that what Chōmei encountered in reading Yasutane’s works such as “The Record of Those in Japan Born in Pure Land” (*Nihon ōjō gokurakuki*) or “The Record of the Pond Pavilion” (*Chiteiki*), was the implied author (IA), which is the effect of a certain ideal person created by the historical person’s writings. Wayne C. Booth has said:

In every corner of our lives, whenever we speak or write, we *imply a version of our character* [emphasis added by me] that we know is quite different from many other selves that are exhibited in our flesh-and-blood world. Sometimes the created versions of our selves are superior to the selves we live with day by day; sometimes they turn out to be lamentably inferior to the selves we present, or hope to present, on other occasions (Booth 2005: 77).

There is always a multiplicity of selves at work in any process of writing, and literature offers a space for experimenting with different possible perspectives. Paul Ricoeur has even called literature “a vast laboratory in which we experiment with estimations, evaluations and judgements of approval and condemnation” (Ricoeur 1992: 115). When authors like Yasutane and Chōmei engaged in first-person narration, they not only documented their historical reality as “flesh-and-blood persons”, but they wanted to impart to the reader a certain image of themselves as authors. The reader, in turn, would reconstruct the ideal version of their authorial identities based on their experience of reading the text. Therefore in reading we rarely encounter the historical person, but rather the image left behind by the writer. One may of course attempt to reconstruct the “flesh-and-blood person” based on the information found in the writings, but it will always be just an educated guess<sup>1</sup> and might be even very misleading when it comes to describing the motives of action of the real person.

What I want to attempt to unravel in the following is the process of reader’s reading reader’s of readers – Allik attempts to read Chōmei who is a reader of Yasutane who in turn reads different Chinese authors like Jiakai and Baijuyi. Each of these stages involves certain amount of distortion, since every author sees the other through their own “lenses”. This becomes especially evident in the places, where one author tries to incorporate the other into his own work through citation or adaptation of an earlier work. The present article in itself is an example of such a distortion, where a writer from a different era and completely different cultural background attempts to read a text belonging to the very specific cultural milieu of medieval Buddhist writings. But these distortions in turn reveal the inner structure of writings such as *Hōjōki* – how some qualities of a literature engage a reader in a certain way, giving birth to various readings. This in turn helps us to notice how literature itself works, how the image of author can be created based on reading a literary work and assigning meaning to the different parts of a text.

Chōmei as a reader, compiled his own textual self from a variety of sources and was therefore also very conscious of the fact that whatever he himself is writing is going to influence a subsequent generation of writ-

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<sup>1</sup> By concentrating on the implied author in this article, I do not want to downplay the importance of historical research. Any reliable biographical information about the author helps us to understand how the “flesh-and-blood person” and the implied author relate to each other. I only want to emphasise that one cannot be reduced to the other.

ers. He seemed to be conscious, that the text is inhabited by a reflection of himself – the implied author – whose existence is governed by the laws of literature. The future generations would never see his “true self”, but the image of it left behind in literature. It was this image that would also be used by the subsequent generation of hagiographers. These writers might engage in writing his life story largely based on the reading experience of his texts and use this as a main source of information. Therefore, one had to be very careful to “imply a version of one’s character”, as Booth said, through one’s self-writing which would engage the future readers and writers in a certain way. This would in turn lead to a satisfactory version of one’s life story, which would perpetuate a certain desirable image of an author.

What do I mean by saying this can be exemplified by looking at the passage where Chōmei describes his library. This is one of the main sources of information about his reading practices and the way written texts relate to his life in a secluded hut:

Toward the north end of the west wall, beyond a freestanding screen, there is a picture of Amida Buddha, with an image of Fugen alongside and a copy of Lotus Sutra in front. At the east end of the room, some dried bracken serves as a bed. South of the screen on the west side, a bamboo shelf suspended from the ceiling holds three leather-covered bamboo baskets, in which I keep excerpts from poetry collections and critical treatises, works on music, and religious tracts like *Collection of Essentials on Rebirth in the Pure Land* (McCullough 1990: 388).

This passage does not give us any hints about the way he reads different writings, but rather describes the position of some important texts in relation to other objects in the room. His copy of “Lotus Sutra” is placed in front of the image of Fugen, while Genshin’s *Ōjōyōshū* is placed in one of the bamboo baskets. The strict organisation of the outer space (the placement of furniture, writings and musical instruments) seems to reflect the economy of the inner space of the author. The strict rules he applies to the arrangement of objects in the room is in accordance with the ascetic practices he uses “to teach his mind” (see Miki 1995:43). Thus the objects in the room all support a certain type of “self” that would inhabit such a room. For any reader of *Hōjōki* they are not *real* objects (although the hut can be and has been physically reconstructed based on this description), but rather conceptual objects found in reading the text which allow a certain type of implied author to emerge. The well organised room that includes the essential library is clearly opposed to the troubles of the im-

permanent world, providing an ideal stable environment for self-development. In this kind of space one should be able to prepare for one's last moment of contemplation and be reborn in Amida's Pure Land.

As a modern reader of this text I see myself looking over the shoulder of Chōmei as he reads Genshin, Yasutane and other writers in preparation for death. I cannot help but think that the author who inhabits this small hut I have discovered in his writings would have most happily agreed with Jorge Luis Borges, who saw Paradise as a kind of library. This library appears as an ideal organisation of space, where different selves are interlinked through their writings. But this somewhat idealised image of the library also reminds us that we should not read such passages uncritically, as if they represented an unadulterated historical truth. This is an imaginary library that is situated in the space of literature which reflects other such libraries discovered in reading one's predecessors. The particular library Chōmei had in mind when writing about his own arrangement of scrolls was probably Yoshishige no Yasutane's library described in "Record of the Pond Pavillion":

I enter the western hall, contemplate Buddha Amida, and recite Lotus Sutra. After eating I enter the eastern hall, open my scrolls and meet the wise men of past. Emperor Wen of the Han dynasty is a ruler from another age, who kept expenses low and let his people be at ease. Bai Juyi is a teacher from another age, who excelled in poetry and relied on Buddha-dharma. The Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove are friends from another age, **who kept their bodies in the sun [court] but their minds in the shade.** [emphasis added] I meet a wise ruler, a wise teacher and wise friends (Yanase 2008: 125).

We will return to the underlined part of this passage later, but suffice it to say now, that Yasutane imagines the various authors he encounters through the writings in his library as possibly even more real than some of the actual people he met during his everyday activities in the Heian court. In his understanding, reading allows one to transcend the limits of time and space and to connect with likeable and wise people from different ages. Yet these people, who he encountered while reading the characters written on scrolls, should not be confused with real historical persons. Clearly Yasutane describes here various implied authors who serve as "teachers" for the reading self. In other words Yasutane models his literary self after various "selves" discovered in reading. Yasutane (FPB) might have also read some other books, which were not so serious in nature or perhaps he even felt bored with reading altogether on some days. But Yas-

utane as an implied author confines himself to deliberate and respectable selection, which addresses the reader in a very specific way.

Let's add to this discussion yet another personal library, as described by Yasutane's "wise teacher", Bai Juyi. Both Yasutane and Chōmei were influenced by the description of his humble abode in the "Record of the Thatched Hut on Mount Lu". The short passage does not mention any particular names or titles of writings, but informs us about restricting the number of scrolls to a minimum, which was also an important theme taken up by Chōmei. Bai Juyi writes:

I have used slabs of stone for paving and stairs, sheets of paper to cover the windows; and the bamboo blinds and hemp curtains are of a similar nature. Inside the hall are four wooden couches, two plain screens, one lacquered *ch'in*, and some Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist books, two of each kind (Yanase 2008: 117, Watson 2002: 9).

The different libraries of Chōmei, Yasutane and Bai Juyi mirror each other and seem to exist in a very similar emotional space. Clearly, Chōmei's library found in *Hōjōki* is constructed based on his reading of Yasutane and Bai Juyi and designed to give a similar impression of the pleasures of secluded life. There is one big difference, however, which one cannot leave unnoticed. Both Yasutane and Baijuyi mention Confucian, Daoist and Buddhist books, while Chōmei (IA) restricts himself to Buddhism only. Although in other parts of *Hōjōki* the influence of Daoism and Confucianism can be seen, the writings belonging to these traditions are not mentioned as centrepieces of his library. Could these texts have also been in Chōmei's (FBP) actual library and omitted only in the description of it?

Indeed, what do we know about Chōmei's actual library? Could it have been different from the image presented by his self-writing? There are some differences of describing the books in different manuscripts (alternate versions of manuscript do not mention Lotus Sutra, see Yanase 2008: 100), but overall the impression we get from the variants of the text is the same: his collection is very minimalistic and all the scrolls fit into three baskets on a small shelf. One naturally becomes very curious reading the phrase "*Ōjō yōshu* and other writings like it" (*Ōjō yōshu no gotoki shōmotsu*) and wonders what might have been the other texts. Yamada Shōzen's extensive research on the citations found in *Hosshinshū* reveals that Chōmei relied on a wide array of sources in addition to the above-mentioned texts. These include *Hōbutsushū*, *Ōjō-shūin*, *Ōjō-kōshiki*, *Hōwa-hyakuwa* and many others (Yamada 2013: 37). Some of these might

have been cited by memory, but in many cases the source text must have been consulted, which has led Yamada to conclude that Kamo no Chōmei must have had access to a larger library than the one he described above. He suggests that Chōmei may have relied upon the collection of writings in Hōkaiji temple, since it was situated near his hermitage in the Hino mountains.

These facts clearly show that Chōmei as a “flesh-and-blood person” wanted to give readers a certain impression of his ideal library, which belonged to the implied author – one of the ideal selves of Chōmei. Instead of telling the reader about texts scattered on the floor and numerous trips to Hōkaiji to check some sources, he edits out this information to bolster the sense of a serene self that appears in his writings. This brings the image of the author closer to the model of the person striving for good rebirth (*ōjōnin*). It was this pattern that Chōmei moulded himself after in his old age after he had left behind his life as a court poet and devoted himself to Buddhist practices under the dharma-name Ren’in.

## Model of Self Presented by Jakushin

From the example of Chōmei library above we can see that the authors are intimately interconnected through imaginary spaces found in reading literature. Including a certain type of description in one’s own writings helped to generate a certain type of self (implied author), which would enhance the image of the author. These selves do not belong to any physical person – they are freely available to those willing to alter and develop their self in the “vast laboratory” of literature mentioned by Paul Ricoeur.

When we look at how the canon of Buddhist stories of rebirth was formed, we see a tendency to mimetically follow the models established by one’s predecessors<sup>2</sup>. The self was not something that belonged to an

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<sup>2</sup> Following a particular model in one’s own life has a very long tradition in Europe, too. Foucault points out that for the ancient Greeks writing was seen as a practice through which one transformed accepted discourses into principles of action. In Greece personal notebooks, called *hupomnēmata*, had a function of building the self through the process of rewriting the models presented by others: “[...] the intent is not to pursue the unspeakable, nor to reveal the hidden, nor to say the unsaid, but on the contrary to capture the already said, to collect what one has managed to hear or read, and for the purpose that is nothing less than the shaping of the self” (Foucault 1997: 211). A similar idea of moulding oneself after a certain model was also widespread in the medieval Christian culture of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

individual, rather it was something shared by people who engaged in Buddhist practice. This concept of self was facilitated by the idea that karmic links (*kechien*) existed between people throughout their various rebirths. Literature also helped to connect people, since it was widely believed that karmic links could be created by reading the story about a person who achieved good rebirth (*ōjōnin*). Thus one did not have to be physically present during the moment of good rebirth in order to create a karmic connection, but could do so through experiencing the tale describing the event. This gave life writing a very specific role as the mediator of the merits accumulated over the course of one's life. A lot of attention has been given to the protagonists of these stories of exemplary lives and deaths, but rarely do we think about the people who collected and compiled these stories into what is now seen as the canon of Buddhist rebirth stories. By compiling these powerful stories, the writers often became the actors in subsequent tales themselves. This certainly happened to Yoshishige no Yasutane, whose story is transmitted in many different collections including Kamo no Chōmei's *Hosshinshū* we are going to take a look at shortly.

Following the narrative model of recounting the stories of extraordinary monks and nuns presented in Jiakai's "Treatise on Pure Land" (*Jingtulun*) Yasutane introduced a new genre to Japanese Buddhist literature, which was not only descriptive, but was also considered to be prescriptive for the followers of the Tendai branch of Pure Land Buddhism. His compilation "The Record of those in Japan born in Pure Land" introduced the stories of "over 40 different people" in Japan who had achieved good rebirth. These stories provided life stories, which serve as models for those who aspire to be reborn in the Pure Land. It was believed that by conforming to this model one could reach the true self which was devoid of any delusion and achieve good rebirth. There is no doubt that the religious impact of this book was enormous, but we also have to take into account the influence on Japanese life writing. This book introduced the basic model of the hagiographic tale, as well as the self-reflective narrative found in the preface of the collection.

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As Carolyn Walker Bynum points out, the "twelfth-century religion did not emphasise the individual personality at the expense of corporate awareness" (Bynum 1982: 85). There was a great concern with how "roles are defined and evaluated, how behaviour is conformed to the models" (Bynum 1982: 85). Medieval writers therefore usually modelled and expressed themselves based on established types instead of relying on their "individual" views.



While compiling this book Yasutane (FPB) might have been conscious of the fact, that his own example as a practitioner of Pure Land Buddhism and as a compiler of *ōjōden* tales could influence subsequent generations of readers and writers. The preface, written in first person mode, presents the ideal image of the follower of these teachings:

Since an early age I have contemplated Amida Buddha and after becoming over 40-years old my motivation for it grew still stronger. I continued intoning the Name with my mouth and visualising the ominous signs of Buddha in my mind. Walking, standing, sitting or lying down – every single moment I did not forget practicing and kept on going disregarding any difficulties. I did not fail to venerate any statue of Amida Buddha or the picture of Pure Land found in temples, halls, pagodas or mausoleums. I did not fail to form a karmic bond (*kechien*) with any person aspiring for [good] rebirth whether monk or layperson, man or woman. I did not fail to research any sutras, treatises and commentaries, which expound the merits of practice and explain its consequences (Inoue and Ōsone 1974: 2).

As a compiler, Yasutane had to remain in the background in order to give the stage to the *ōjōnin*, who are the protagonists of these stories. Thus all the stories in the collection are presented through the gaze of the omniscient narrator, and the author never reveals his presence in the stories. But the preface, written in the first person, beginning with the masculine first person pronoun “I” establishes what Philippe Lejeune calls the autobiographical pact: anything said from this point forward is the reflection of the author himself. The first person pronoun “I” inside the text truly refers to the historical person Yoshishige no Yasutane. But this referentiality does not mean that the author’s statements should be read as belonging to the “flesh-and-blood person”. The Yasutane we encounter in reading this passage is still the implied author – a certain idealised conceptual person who presents a model for the future generations of compilers to follow. It is designed to impart a certain image of the self, which could be acquired by those who wanted to follow a similar path of self-development.

Ōe no Masafusa (1041–1111), the compiler of “Further Tales of Rebirth in Our Country” (*Zoku honchō ōjōden*), appears to be one of the diligent readers of Yasutane’s collection, as well as an admirer of the image of the “self” transmitted by this text. He provides his reasons for the new collection of tales: “I have searched high and low fields for stories and included those left out from the earlier records in addition to those which have happened later” (Inoue and Ōsone 1974: 223). One of the most important additions to the new collection is the tale of Yasutane himself, which

appears under number 32. This hagiographical tale briefly summarises Yasutane's achievements in court and mentions how he surpassed his fellow university students. He appears as a person of outstanding knowledge who was awarded a position in the Office of Letters (*goshodokoro*) while still a student. This makes the impact of Yasutane turning to the practice of *nenbutsu* under the dharma-name Jakushin even stronger.

In the following passage we can observe how the preface of *Gokurakuki* is quoted in order to give the reader important information. Masafusa includes additional commentary written in small characters (see the sentence in *italics*), which establishes a reliable connection with the quoted source text:

Since an early age he wished for the Land of Utmost Bliss in his heart (*this wish can be seen in the preface to the Stories of Japanese Rebirths*), and as soon as his son had come of age he decided during the 2nd year of Kanna (986) to enter the Path of Buddha (*dharma-name: Jakushin* 寂心).

He travelled all over the country and organised various Buddhist events. Whenever he found a statue of Buddha or a scroll of sutras, he would never pass them without stopping and paying respect to them. He venerated them formally, like he would in the case of rulers in the court. Although he mounted strong oxen and sturdy horses, he always shed tears and was sad because of it. His compassion was extended to all beasts and creatures.

He passed away during the 3rd year of Chōtoku (998) in Nyoirinji temple. A certain person told about his dream: "To benefit all beings he [Yasutane] shall return from the Pure Land and enter this *sahā* world once again". Through this it was known how deep his realisation truly was (Inoue and Ōsone 1974: 247).

Notably this story uses material from different sources to strengthen the image of the author of *Gokurakuki* as an extremely compassionate being. Since the characters in his dharma-name refer to his identity as a person with a "sad heart", the copious amounts of tears he sheds in the story serve to strengthen the idea that his true nature is somehow embedded in his very name. The tendency to lament and cry loudly becomes the most prominent feature of the stories about him in the *setsuwa* collections such as *Uji shūi monogatari* (2: 140) and *Konjaku monogatari* (19: 3). He is filled with deep sadness for any being who would be deprived of rebirth in the Pure Land, and he is ready to sacrifice everything he has in order to avoid this situation. It is interesting how without quoting the actual words of Jakushin the affective connection with Jakushin's true state of mind is created. Just mentioning his "heart" (*kokoro*) as it "can be seen in the preface to the Stories of Japanese Rebirths" is enough to evoke the image of

the author which enables the readers and listeners of the tale to intimately bond with the initiator of the *ōjōden* genre.

Kamo no Chōmei's account of Jakushin, found in *Hosshinshū*, starts out by informing us that Jakushin was already longing for the Buddha's way in his heart while serving at the court. This double identity as court scribe and one who aspires towards a good rebirth becomes a central core of this account. According to Chōmei, the protagonist had a quality "to be deeply moved by things" (*koto ni furete awaremi fukaku nan arikeru*, Miki 1995: 94). This remark once again relies on the image of the author invoked by the dharma-name Jakushin meaning "sad heart" – his deep sadness is yet again amplified in the Chōmei's version of the tale.

Chōmei further elaborates on Jakushin's compassion towards animals, which is mentioned in Masafusa's account and also in the versions included in *Uji shūi monogatari* and *Konjaku monogatari shū*. Chōmei tells us that a simple trip, which would normally take only few hours for any normal traveller, would inevitable transform into a whole day long adventure for Jakushin. He would get off the horse every time he saw a temple, hall or even a tombstone (*sotoba*) to formally venerate the holy places (again Yasutane's foreword for *Gokurakuki* is used). Whenever there was green grass, he would let the horse wander freely about transporting the rider here and there while the animal ate to its heart content. When the stable boy admonished the horse for doing this and beat him violently, Jakushin started to cry and shouted: "Doesn't the fact that this animal should not hesitate to come so close to us compared to all other beasts mean that there is deep karmic consequence from previous lives at work here? This might have been my mother or father in the past. What great evil has led to such a situation, how sad!" (Miki 1995: 96). While he lamented and raised a ruckus over the issue the stable boy had nothing to say for his defence and left in silence.

Until this juncture the storyline more or less follows the earlier versions of this story although Chōmei does add his own literary flavour to the tale imagining the dialogue between characters. Right after the above-cited scene he intervenes as a visible narrator who adds a personal comment from his own perspective. He quotes Yoshishige no Yasutane's "The Record of the Pond Pavilion". Because his nature was like this, he wrote in *Chiteiki*: "The body is in the sun [court], but the heart is in the shade" (Miki 1995: 96). Let us take a closer look at what is happening in this quote. Quoting another author is never a simple matter of embedding the original discourse into one's writing. As Meir Sternberg reminds us):

“What is cited in the subject’s name is one thing; what the subject originally said or thought is another” (Sternberg 1982: 108). That is to say, the inset (quote) is always influenced by the frame (the context of the quotation), and whenever quoting is involved there appear “manifold shifts, of not reversals, of the original meaning and significance” (Sternberg 1982: 108). In the above case these shifts are clearly visible, and we can observe how the new frame offered by Chōmei’s tale influences the meaning and significance of the cited text.

First of all this passage seems to present a case of misquoting. If we look at the original text in the Yasutane’s preface (see underlined sentence p.2) we see that the words “the bodies are in the sun [court]; the hearts are in the shade” (以身在朝、志在隱也) are used to describe the Seven Sages of Bamboo Grove – a group of “good friends” Yasutane admired. Of course Yasutane subscribed to their ideas, but he did not claim these words to describe his own situation. However, in Chōmei’s version, the quote is clearly connected with the first-person perspective of Yasutane himself. The reader is led to believe that he wrote these words in *Chiteiki*, because “that’s what his mind (*kokoro*) was like” (Sternberg 1982: 108). The words are no longer used to describe the detached nature of Chinese poets, but to reveal the innermost thoughts of Yasutane himself. Secondly, we can clearly detect an ideological shift from the classical Chinese thought to Buddhism. In *Chiteiki* Yasutane adheres to three teachings – Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. But since Chōmei is writing a collection of Buddhist tales he omits the references to these other teachings and adheres to the image of Jakushin as a Buddhist writer. Thus the meaning of the word “shade” in the citation also appears to refer to taking refuge in Buddha-dharma and staying away from the worldly influence’s through Buddhist practices such as “contemplating Amida” and “reciting Lotus Sutra”, both of which are mentioned in *Chiteiki*.

In *Chiteiki* Yasutane leaves us with the image of the Court Scribe who lives like the layman Vimalakīrti – he can remain calm and collected even while participating in the activities of the court. He does not feel the urgent need for complete seclusion in the mountains or some remote area:

Though as master of house I hold office at the foot of the pillar, in my heart it’s as though I dwell among the mountains [...]. I have no wish to bend my knee and crook my back in efforts to win favor with great lords and high officials, but neither do I wish to shun the words and faces of others and bury myself away in some remote mountain or dark valley (Watson 2002: 32).

In his story Chōmei purifies the image of Jakushin from all of the elements that might distract the reader from imagining him first and foremost as a Buddhist writer. To do that he retrospectively revises the image of Yasutane / Jakushin to better conform to this ideal. In *Hosshinshū* he wants to acknowledge him as a writer who belongs to the *ōjōden* tradition, which entails ignoring the aspects of *Chiteiki*, where Yasutane talks about staying in the court and following the Vimalakīrtean ideal of overcoming the duality of here and there – city and mountains.

This omission is ultimately necessary, because the implied author found in reading the preface of *Gokurakuki* does not ideally overlap with the implied author found in reading *Chiteiki*. Thus one ends up concentrating on one of these images and editing the text from the selected perspective. This process, in turn, displays how literature, even when it uses factual material and first-person autobiographical sources, always conforms to the most important rule – the story itself must give a clear and concise image of the protagonist and help the reader to identify with the events of the tale. Chōmei as a reader and writer is not so much interested in historical truth and the “flesh-and-blood person” as he is interested in the image of the author that is created by the text. Undergirding this tendency is the notion that author’s image is used as model for practitioners and literature should use all means necessary to transmit it efficiently.

### Chōmei speaking as Yasutane: Hyper-authorship in *Hōjōki*

We saw earlier that after becoming a recluse, Chōmei modelled himself after two implied authors – *literati* Yasutane and compassionate practitioner Jakushin. The connection with Yasutane / Jakushin might have even been deep enough for him to have used one of the sinographs in Yasutane’s name to build his new identity. If this were the case, his dharma-name itself becomes a certain type of quote – an attempt to overtake the identity of the other – which testifies to the deep affinity he felt with his predecessor. This affinity can certainly be seen in *Hōjōki* which is modelled after the example of *Chiteiki*. The deep connection between these texts can be seen both in the structure of the work, as well as in the different ways the words of Yasutane are embedded into the work. The most notable case of adapting *Chiteiki*’s words in *Hōjōki* is presented in the following passage, which, in Yasutane’s version, goes:

Then there are humble folk who live in the shadow of some powerful family: their roof is broken but they don't dare thatch it, their wall collapses but they don't dare build it up again; happy they can't open their mouths and give a loud laugh; grieving, they can't lift up their voices and wail; coming and going always in fear, hearts and minds never at rest, they're like little sparrows in the presence of hawks and falcons (Watson 2002: 27).

Renin rewrites this passage in the following way (I'm using Watson's translation in both cases here in order to highlight the similarities of style):

If a person of insignificant social standing lives by the gate of some great and influential family, in times of profoundest happiness he does not venture to rejoice too openly, and when sorrows oppress him, he cannot lift up his voice and wail. Never at ease in his comings and goings, timid and fearful each waking moment, he is like a sparrow drawing near to the falcon's nest (Watson 2002: 62).

What is interesting here (besides the fact that Chōmei does not mention his sources – a point we will discuss later) is how once again the framing discourse changes the nature of the narrative. In the first case Yasutane is worried about the poor planning of the city, which does not make best use of the space available. He is annoyed, that the eastern sector of the capital has too big a population and “towering mansions are lined up gate by gate [...] [while] little huts have only a wall between them eaves touching” (Watson 2002: 27). Reading this we get a sense that the author is a man who worries how to effectively organise the city building certain types of buildings in designated areas and leaving enough space for them to truly thrive. Whereas in Chōmei's case, the rewritten text is framed differently to express difficulties of life in this world. He connects this passage to the general theme of *Hōjōki*, which is the impermanence of built environment and hardships people encounter in this world. The empirical description given by Yasutane becomes something that exemplifies the roots of human suffering and outlines the reason why one should leave the capital behind. Yasutane writes in order to improve the capital, but Chōmei writes to escape the capital – that is, to prove that such a place is not suitable for living. Yasutane speaks about the real issues of the capital, whereas for Chōmei description of the capital is a metaphor for the inequality inherent in life. Thus again the two authors who emerge from reading the two accounts use the same words, but do not say the same thing.

The words in the passages are “extremely similar” (Miki 1995: 27), but they transmit a slightly different meaning. As Yamada Shōzen has said, this is what Chōmei does – he rearranges the words of others to make them

look like his own writing and does not mention where he takes his material from (Yamada 2013: 37). This kind of appropriation of other's writings can be seen both in *Hōjōki* and *Hosshinshū*. When we look at this practice from the modern perspective, it certainly seems to lessen the value of his writings as an original author, since we can claim this to be plagiarism. Even in medieval context quoting without mentioning the source is only done when one can be certain that the original text is well remembered by the readers. For example, in Japanese poetry it was perfectly acceptable to borrow a few lines from one *waka* and a few lines from another *waka*, adding only a few original words of lines into one's text, but in the case of prose the rules appear to have been slightly stricter. However, the point I am making here about authorships suggests that there is a way to approach this issue without resorting to the rhetoric of "original" and "copy".

Of course, looking closely at these practices of quoting and adaptation makes it increasingly difficult to praise the author for his beautiful sentences, as has been the tradition over the centuries in Japan. But even if since the words and sentences themselves are indeed taken from someone else, I think there is no malicious intent in appropriating other peoples work through the process of rewriting. In fact, relying upon other sources in this way could even be seen as a form of writing wherein the "self" is striving to become completely "other". It could be seen as a form of self-writing where one reuses sentences from other sources as one's own, in order to reimagine himself according to a chosen model. As such, when one truly embodies the model, one can speak with the words of the model.

This notion of writing has always been the case in the literary space of Mahayana sutras, where authors can acquire the position of the Buddha and expound dharma from the Buddha's perspective. Indeed, in the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter of "Lotus Sutra", called "Preachers of Dharma", it is said that the only way to attain the ability to preach dharma is to become one with Buddha by wearing his robe and sitting in his seat:

Medicine King, if there are good men and good women, who after the Thus Come One has entered extinction, wish to expound his Lotus Sutra for the four kinds of believers, how should they expound it? These good men and good women should enter the Thus Come One's room, put on the Thus Come One's robe, sit in the Thus Come One's seat, and then for the sake of the four kinds of believers broadly expound this Sutra (Watson 1993:166).

Putting on the Buddha's robe was seen as an act of embodying the Buddha, which enabled one to speak from the authorial position of the Buddha. Thus



authorship in such a space of literature becomes a network of different authors expressing the voice of one particular “self” belonging to Buddha. Mikhail Epstein has used the term “hyper-authorship” to describe a similar phenomenon in the modern age of writers writing similar texts. He says:

Hyper-authorship is a paradigmatic variety of authors working within the confines of one (allegedly one) human entity. A hyper-author relates to an author as a hypertext relates to a text. Hypertext is dispersed among numerous virtual spaces that can be entered in any order, escaping any linear (temporal or causal) coherence. Hyper-authorship is dispersed among several virtual personalities that cannot be reduced to a single “real” personality (Epstein 2000).

To restate this in Booth’s terminology, there exists an interlinked space of implied authors (virtual personalities) that cannot be reduced to any single “flesh-and-blood person”. These virtual personalities seem to be available to anyone who starts writing about a certain type of experience. And, importantly, the relationship between them is not historical (in other words the earlier text is not seen as the original with the latter representing the copy). From this point of view it is possible to rewrite *Chiteiki* or *Hōjōki* even today without quoting anything directly, but using all the same words and sentences in the same order, on condition that the author has perfectly embodied the virtual author and is able to “wear his robe” and “sit in his seat”, thus acquiring the new “self” for expressing one’s ideas.

Let us take a look at one more example from *Hōjōki*. Chōmei talks about how he has already lived in the hermitage for five years, and during that time many people he knew in the capital have died. Although no first person pronouns are used in this part of the text, the account is nonetheless very intimate, as it unfolds using the suffix for personal recollection *-ki*, which is employed when one is talking about actual experiences. Therefore the truths he arrives at seem to be very individual and to stem from his personal experience. He goes on to say that he prizes above all the opportunity to know oneself, which, we should note, sounds like a famous Greek maxim *gnothi seauton* (“Know thyself!”). McCullough’s translation stresses this similarity very nicely: “Knowing myself and knowing the world, I harbour no ambitions and pursue no material objectives. Quietude is what I desire; the absence of worries is what makes me happy” (McCullough 1990: 391, Yanase 2008: 214).

Now it would be tempting to think that this process of “knowing myself” refers to the Chōmei (FBP) who has finally arrived at some deeper understanding. In particular, the Greek connotations would suggest to the



Western reader like myself that author has arrived at his unique identity. But in the light of the previous discussion, I feel that this “self” belongs in fact to all those who have arrived at a similar authorial position. It is a shared “self” presented by the virtual personality of the one who would speak about such a matter. This virtual personality enables one to construct a certain type of implied author, who can transmit ideas about the value of reclusion for understanding one’s true nature. This same authorial position was available for Bai Juyi, Yasutane and many others who “put on the robes” of detachment and distanced themselves from mundane matters. In this shared space it is only natural then, that one can seamlessly include others’ words into one’s own writing. From this position, it becomes completely understandable that even in passage where Chōmei talks about understanding oneself, he uses the words of his “good friend” found in reading *Chiteiki* when talks about choosing friends. Chōmei writes: “Friends esteem wealth and look favours; they do not necessarily value sincere friendship or probity. I prefer to make friends of music and nature” (McCullough 1990: 391). Yasutane writes: “If in being a friend one thinks only of power and profit and cares nothing about the frank exchange of opinions, it would be better if we had no friends. So I close my gate, shut my door, and hum poems and sing songs by myself” (Watson 2002: 33–34). Yet again Chōmei does not quote his source, because there is no need for it – these claims do not belong to any person. There is no “original”. Bai Juyi has said, that a “place with a good view does not have an owner” (Kawaguchi and Shida 1965: 175). This is the place where Chōmei stands when he uses the words of his predecessors. The perspective of the acquired textual “self” has no owner – it is a way of looking at world that belongs to anyone who embodies the ideals of a simple life.

## Conclusion: Towards Multiple Selves of Chōmei

In talking about the “self” in autobiographical writings such as *Hōjōki* we should take into account the possibility that the speaking self has been heavily influenced by the specific models from whose perspective one speaks. The vast array of different sources found in Chōmei’s writings constitute a collage of different ideas, which all facilitate the emergence of certain type of textual “self”. Chōmei as a flesh-and-blood person was striving towards awakening and was involved in everyday Buddhist practices

to become a true *ōjōnin*. He followed the model of his predecessors, intoning *namu-amida-butsu* and reciting the Lotus Sutra. Through this practice he existed in the space of karmically interlinked historical persons. Chōmei as an author, on the other hand, also follows particular models in writing by adopting the positions of certain speaking “selves”, which helped him to easily express his ideas. Writing in such a way constitutes a practice of “teaching one’s heart”, by virtually adopting the position of the other one could overcome the bounds of one’s limited self. Through practice of writing the implied author Chōmei exists in the space of shared virtual identities that facilitate certain types of discourse.

One of the subsequent tasks for reading and interpreting the works of Kamo no Chōmei lies in making a clear distinction between these two modes of existence of the author. The stories and facts concerning the identity of the singular historical person should not overshadow the multiplicity of selves found in reading his works. Moreover, the shared identities discovered in the space of literature should not be reduced to the perspective of one unique historical person. This process of accepting the somewhat fictional nature of the autobiographical self is, of course, difficult and bound to encounter some criticism, particularly from the historians, who would like to use *Hōjōki* as one of the central sources concerning the “truth” about Kamo no Chōmei’s life. However, literature does not appear to be a reliable source for constructing these types of historical narratives. Clearly, Chōmei is what Boris Tomashevsky has called “the writer with biography” – somebody whose facts of life form a supplement, but only a supplement, for making sense of his works. Tomashevsky points out that these types of writers often start to live by the rules of literature – their lives are modelled after their work and not vice versa. In that sense, the only Chōmei we truly encounter and build a connection (maybe even a karmic link) with is the implied author Chōmei, who vastly overshadows the flesh-and-blood person of whom we continue to know so little.

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## **Communicative Model in Modern Japanese Architecture**

### **Abstract**

The article is devoted to the revealing and characterization of the central categories that spatial perception of architecture in Japan is based on. Provided analysis of those categories leads to understanding its role in forming the image of traditional Japanese architecture; which also gave the explanation of the structures and shapes of contemporary Japanese architecture. To underline this statement, meaningful works of three notable modern Japanese architects were selected. A special attention is given to the revelation how in order to produce the communicative act between the viewer and himself, those architects use the categories of emptiness, interval and shadow in their buildings according to their own perception of space.

Social existence of the person requires an ability to communicate and collaborate with other human beings and to build on this foundation the basic structures and institutes. The art for its contemporaries assumes the role of the leading transmitting mechanism by which the information transferring and interaction is provided.

Architecture is considered as a special form of art, organizing and assembling the masses of material in space. According to art theorist Umberto Eco, the architecture represents a special kind of communicative system (Eco 1998: 203–207). The minimum unit of the system includes the communicative act. To reveal the paradigm of how the architecture is able to transmit the information and provide social interactions we must define the so called communicative model. In each communicative act

there is a *sender* as well as *receiver* of information, in terms of architecture those are the architect and the individual or the society.

The architect uses the materials (concrete, wood, glass) – *transmitting means* – to create a certain shape, according to the *idea* he has to transmit by his building, which represents *the message*. Moreover, there is a *code*, which is necessary to link the idea to the building.

The components of the communicative model are permanent, but the content can change, depending on historical context.

Form of architectural work contains internal communication and the way of interaction of material elements and the spaces between them works of architecture and the environment, according to sensory perception. The main problem of forming the architectural environment in European tradition is the interactions of space and masses – the foundation on which the architecture as language system is based on. In the immediate experience of the artist and the spectator mass and space are almost inseparable, their interaction is the mainstay of artistic influence architecture.

But there is no such pattern in Japanese architectural tradition. Three central categories, that spatial perception of architecture in Japan is based on, are the following: *emptiness, interval and shadow*. These categories due to the stability of the application can be regarded as invariants of Japanese culture (Konovalova 2011: 433).

It is important to bear in mind that these categories fully exist in close interactions and gain strength only with exposure to their complementarity. As a unit they form a meaningful and artistic field, which reflects the continuity of traditions for Japanese people. This is confirmed by the latest architecture that shows its connection with the tradition not only formally, but on another – perceptual – level, involving semantic and aesthetic components. The most notable modern architects, while creating their pieces, tend to maintain a sense of space, historically bred by Japanese culture. Proposed set of spatial categories bears symbols and meanings that constitute the essence of Japanese culture.

Architects insert their works in the cultural context, taking full advantage of the artistic possibilities offered by the combination of such categories as “emptiness”, “interval” (*ma*) and “shadow” for organizing architectural space. However, each master demonstrates his point of view by using traditional iconic spatial categories in his own way, according to his notion, what becomes a distinctive feature of their professional path.

In order to disclose the triad of these fundamental spatial categories we have to look into the history and trace their origins, content and artistic value in medieval Japan, and its contemporary forms.

Buddhism brought in an important concept of the Absolute and gave the category of “emptiness” a new matter. Emptiness in Buddhism has no negative meaning, on the contrary, it is the substance reconciling all contradictions. It is perceived as unlimited and indefinable. According to religious beliefs, while merging with emptiness, one merges at the same time with Buddha and finds Him in the essence of himself. The consequence of such religious beliefs was that emptiness has become one of the most meaningful points in art.

In the technology of ink painting, inherited from China, some areas on paper or silk remain intact, creating “emptiness”. These clear areas embody a kind of interval or innuendo thereby stimulating the viewer’s imagination. Emptiness seems as a boundless space, which is the beginning of all things, from which the ideas and forms arise. That means that the forms and ideas are enclosing and existing in an empty space, without certain embodiment though. As the result, emptiness has an influence on emotions and feelings, perceived by human subconsciously as the model of the universe.

The aesthetic values of Japanese culture were strongly affected by this philosophy and its seeds were noticed in all kinds of fine arts, including traditional Japanese ones (*ikebana*, *chadō* etc.) and urban planning. It is manifested broadly in the architecture as well. Katsura Imperial Villa ensemble (built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century) conveys subtle harmony of Japanese aesthetics. The empty space of its interiors possesses the basic artistic sense.

While creating an atmosphere of calm and concentration, the feeling of emptiness will accompany visitors in tea house. The place that defines philosophical mood of the ceremony is represented by *tokonoma*. It is the only “decoration” of the tea room, in which a roll of monochrome painting and a bouquet of flowers are placed.

In traditional Japanese house it is impossible to see things piling up in the rooms. Therefore, if you remove the *fusuma* and *shōji* (sliding doors) inside the house, it will be only one canopy over the empty space. The infinity and depth of space, the aesthetics of simplicity and expressiveness is highlighted owing to the category of “emptiness”.

In Japanese culture at the level of world perception there is a ground that is capable of combining the opposites, which are mutually exclusive –

kind of a “grey area”. Eastern philosophers were avoiding unambiguous definitions, they believed that it would stop the movement of thought, and used allegories instead. In other words, in Eastern way of thinking the hint was significantly more effective than directly speaking words. Perhaps, this negative attitude to any extremes and contrasts in Japanese culture has led to the situation when the so-called grey area – the central link of thinking structure – has come to play a leading role.

In language the capacious concepts that convey the Japanese perception of the grey area appeared. At the same time, linguistic categories reflect the many facets of its semantic content. The concept of *ma* – the significant symbol of understanding space, also has a philosophical meaning – “to give the space a rhythm”. Japanese explain this concept in many ways. For example, in modern dictionaries *ma* is interpreted as: 1) a binding area; 2) an exchange zone; 3) an interval; 4) a pause in music or dance; 5) a moment of silence during the recitation; 6) convenient (favorable) time, the time change; 7) a room in the house; 8) empty space etc. *Ma* is also used as an adverb with connotation of “between”, “among”.

There are many definitions of *Ma*, but the general sense is the idea of pause and emptiness. *Ma* represents some of the blank areas that everyone can give, within certain limits, any meaning. This is “conceptualize spatiality” or “interspace” – the semantic gap in various spheres of culture, expressing hostility of Japanese to “contacting” antagonisms. More clearly *ma* is defined in one of the dictionaries of old Japanese language as: “a required interval between two consecutive things”. As a symbol *ma* is connecting, not separating. The hidden mystery of the connection finds its expression in mainstream art. In the performances of *No* theatre, when the image of grief or tragedy abruptly changed to joy, there is a compulsory moment of immobility. It allows to suppress inconsistency of antagonisms in order to combine them and produce a change of mood. This is the moment of expression of *ma*.

One of the most distinguishing qualities of Japanese architecture is its merger with the natural surroundings, which forms the principle of an “open building”. Although the house is located in an open nature area, it is completely closed for the eye of a stranger. There is usually a thick garden, planted along the perimeter of the house. It isolates the building even better than the stone wall with windows in European tradition, frequently facing onto a noisy street. The open gallery (*engawa*) encircling the traditional construction, hides rooms from the eyes of the stranger. The “grey area” is embodied in the traditional architecture as *engawa*, which



is intended to express the relationship between nature and architecture, and bring together various architectural groups (Kurokawa 1988: 53–54). Owing to *engawa* architecture in Japan is connected with nature; it opens the structure to nature and at the same time, includes the nature itself in the architectural construction. In other words, *engawa* takes a role of the interval between the outer and inner space. Such an intermediate zone between the interior and exterior natural environment in traditional houses is a multipurpose space for relaxation or taking visitors for a cup of tea. Moreover, visitors sitting in the gallery, are neither in the garden, nor at home. *Engawa* includes both spaces – here they mix and flow one into another.

It is also interesting how this “interval” function of *engawa* reflects on the choice of materials. Wood and bamboo used in its construction provide a smooth transition from the rocks, plants, herbs that fill the surrounding space to *shōji* and *tatami* made from paper and straw arranged in the interior of the house. The gallery connects two areas by using the particular materials and promotes continuity of internal and external spaces that are as vivid and diverse in their structure that can be considered as contrasting. Vegetation and rocks in their original natural form can be safely confronted with *shōji* and *tatami* – the hand-made product, but between them there is an interval – processed wood.

The “grey area” is primarily characterized by its darkness. Shadow is a compulsory content of a traditional house. There was no furniture provided in it, so it is basically a blank space surrounding dwelling rooms by shadow. The main semantic core in this case is focused on an empty *shadowed* space.

Desire to obscure, to hide an object from prying eyes can be found in the location of sacred architecture – *shintō* shrines in particular. German architect Walter Gropius after visiting two large pieces of East and West architecture – Ise Grand Shrine and Parthenon, tried to identify the spatial characteristics of structures and penetrate the basis of their differences. The comparison of these outstanding works of architecture will allow to reveal essential differences between Japanese and Western cultures.

This comparison is significant because both structures were erected in the period of transition from the heroes’ era to the era of state formation, and both are considered as symbols of their cultures. The difference between these two structures seems obvious. Parthenon is built on top of a hill to be visible to everyone, it bathes in sunlight, and is full of grandeur, while the shrine is surrounded by four tall fences and is hidden in the

middle of a thick forest (Okano 2012: 25–26). Hence, we can produce Parthenon as an evidence to man's confidence that he can conquer the nature. Western culture exists on the basis of the subordination of nature, its conversion and use for human needs. In order to create a perfect order of things, the Chaos must be overcome. This attitude gave birth to the existing opposition "nature vs culture" in the Western world. On the contrary, in Japanese culture the idea about the importance of the Chaos was formed. According to this idea, the Chaos gave life to all beings on the planet. In order to emphasize that the Japanese refer to linguistic forms that express the importance of enigma, depth – *oku* in Japanese language. This term has a lot of meanings, all of which show the desire of Japanese to "wrap up the object" or to move it away into the shadow. Furthermore, many religious *Shintō* ceremonies are conducted at night.

Indeed, if we compare Japanese culture with Western in this perspective, the fundamental differences show up. In Europe, the images formed by centuries have prepared individuals' minds for bringing forward the bright side of things. In Western mentality light is idealized, correlated with insight and symbolically seen as a source of knowledge, by which a man reconstructs the world. Shadow took a more modest place. Seeing how the shadow doubles objects of real life, led to the attribution of autonomous existence of it. At this point the term assumes a sharply negative connotation. The "shadow" in this case is seen as an insignificant reflection of the original.

At the worldview level, these differences clearly appear. In the European way of thinking all extremes are separated by precise boundary. As the result, the basic semantic units are the extremes exactly. Between black and white there is a grey zone, but the semantic content of this concept shows a negative attitude towards it (for example, in the novel "Faust" Goethe uses the expression "the grey women" which has a symbolic meaning of boredom, solitude and emptiness; "the grey area" – a subject in law where there is lack of clarity). Perhaps because it carries a connotation of uncertainty and can not be attributed to one or to the other pole.

In Japanese culture this particular interval (the middle zone) dominates over the two poles. Perhaps the negative attitude to any contrasts in Japanese culture has led to the fact that the concept of "shadow" has taken a significant place among other cultural categories. Combining the light and the darkness, "shadow" occupies a central place and changes the dual scheme which was familiar to Europeans. That explains the complexity of understanding this category by Western culture representatives.

These three central categories of Japanese architecture complement each other, thus developing the Japanese architectural tradition. The best modern architects when creating their buildings or organizing space according to their views rely, however, on the above three categories, which underline the traditional understanding of space organization.

In the works of leading contemporary Japanese architects (K. Tange, T. Ando, T. Itō) vivid examples of the continuity of the cultural traditions can be found. These architects are considered as emblematic figures that influenced architects all over the world. Each of them has his own vision of what architecture is and what purpose it should serve.

In the buildings constructed by Kenzo Tange the main semantic core is an expression of “emptiness”. St. Mary’s Cathedral in Tokyo is one of his most famous buildings in which this category can be seen. As a Catholic church, it has all architectural elements inherited from Western architectural tradition. Those are the central nave, chancel, side-chapels, crossing and even the large organ crowning the west entrance. However, the space perception cannot be considered as Western by all means. The main objects of worship and shrines are located in the shadows, for example, a large wooden cross in the center of the altar area is recessed into the eastern facade and almost imperceptible, as well as the sculptures in the completion of the side-chapels.

The ceiling is made of glass and has a shape of a cross. It carries the meaning of the crucifixion, due to the light penetrating through it, and also the ascension and eternal life. Moreover, the movement of the sun and changing light inside the cathedral seen through the ceiling, leads to understanding the philosophical idea of universe variability and volatility. Curved arches reminiscent the ship, texture and color of the stone resembles a tree; owing to heating as well as the smell of incense, the visitor could have a feeling of being in the ark or some kind of a shelter. Thus, by influencing the most of human senses – touch, smell, sight and hearing – the architecture affects the individual in a way it was programmed by the architect.

In works of K. Tange the appearance of buildings have a great importance. The main attention is focused, firstly, on its inclusion into the environment, creating a harmonious unity with nature, and secondly, on the possibilities of visual communication. An example of such unity and implementing communications capabilities is Olympic Complex Yoyogi in Tokyo. It includes two arenas – the large Yoyogi National Gymnasium and smaller pavilion which is used for various smaller events. The roof

has a unique shape, similar to the shell of a snail. For the main stadium the architect built the largest overlap in the world. The subtle curves of the structural cables, the sweeping roof plane, and the curving concrete base seem to emerge from the site appearing as one integrated entity. The meaning of the spiral shape is in opposition to strong winds, dangerous for structures of this size. One of the main features of the gymnasium is its versatility. First of all, it is known as a swimming pool with nine 50-meter tracks. The water surface can be closed by a stove, forming a free space that is used for other events (judo skating etc). Thus, Tange works with emptiness transforming it the way he pleases. From the emptiness any form may appear, and be filled with an infinite number of meanings. Described method of “folding” space-filling but unnecessary things to get the empty space connects the Olympic Stadium with the understanding of the interior in a traditional house. Location of windows and artificial light sources along the spiral line allows to use daylight and to include internal space in *chiaroscuro*. All these architectural elements allow the viewer to perceive the whole building as a dynamic entity, resulting as a combination of form and function – through structure the building shows what it serves.

According to the words of K. Tange – he always thought about how to create a space for the exchange of ideas and information in general. He believed that real communication does not occur in classrooms and assembly halls, but in corridors and courtyards – in the so-called middle space, (grey area) (*14 Japanese architects Interviews and photos by Roland Hagenberg* 2004: 154–155). He paid careful attention to all that areas, which were elaborately organized. For example, the wide detour behind the seats on the small arena of Yoyogi Complex. It is based on a spiral foundation – half way you go up, another half – down, from each spot the view will change. It is also a space where spectators can discuss the results of current game, athletes may do warming-up exercises etc. Usually a large number of Japanese come to the matches or competitions in advance. There is a lot of free space around the stadium, where people can walk while waiting for the beginning of the performance.

The third building is the Museum of Contemporary Art located in Yokohama. It is a classic example of a museum with a horizontally stretched facade, surrounded by a gallery with a colonnade. The main hall is designed as bidirectional and symmetrical space. On the left side there are sculptures by surrealists Salvador Dali, Rene Magritte and others. Architect distributed sculptures on different levels, which out-

wardly resembles a museum arrangement of D'Orsay in Paris. From the second floor of the building, where the main exhibition is situated, the shape of the museum roof is clearly observed – it is made in a shape of a gable and recalls the ancient Roman *basilica*. Thus, through deliberate organization of space the architect links the art across time and distance and shows its homogeneity. The interior of the museum has a peculiarity, in areas with a permanent exhibition space divided by partitions, which can be easily moved and repositioned, thus changing the perception of art pieces. In the halls with an exhibition of Japanese art there is only a small bench for visitors; emptiness promotes the formation of a calm state of mind for the perception of art works.

Leading role in triangle of categories Tange assigns to “emptiness”, possessing the main artistic, semantic and functional load. “Interval” and “shadow” only emphasize the dominant, increasing its impact.

In architecture of another Pritzker Prize winner – Tadao Ando – volume and depth of things are created from the interaction of light and shadow. Light becomes a tool in the hands of the architect, like hammer is an instrument for a sculptor, or brush – for a painter. The architect finds new ways for the natural light to enter the building, allowing the structure to “live”, to change like a living creature.

One of the iconic buildings constructed by T. Ando gives an example of how strong the influence of light might be. It is Church of Light situated at a quiet residential area of Osaka. Its location was accurately determined in relation to buildings in the neighborhood to make maximum use of sunlight. Interior of a small cult building consists solely of space and light. Using untreated concrete as the construction material and only a few artificial light sources, Ando demonstrated spiritual and transformative power of natural light. Thus, the use of light allows the architect to reveal space as the volume and to show the emptiness.

However, in later buildings Ando shifts to other form to express his philosophical position. It might be seen in the structure of Museum of Contemporary Art in Kobe, established in 2002. Facade and a large part of the interior is made of untreated concrete, reminding of Le Corbusier buildings, whose works inspired the Japanese master. Both architects accentuate the ladder as a connecting link for two spaces. In the architectural complex of Museum of Contemporary Art the attention is focused on two staircases – one is inside the museum and connects the foyer exhibition space on the upper floors. Another one is made in a form of a spiral and leads down to the premises of auxiliary purpose, restaurants; etc.

In this case, the staircase allows to solve several problems – first of all, its role in organizing space is identifying to *engawa* – it simultaneously connects and separates the areas identify itself as a middle zone. Second of all, the staircase gives the building a rhythm and dynamics through the steps as repeating elements, or in this case by the spiral shape itself.

The interval category might be disclosed in Omotesando Hills building, located in central Tokyo. The innovative architectural structure represented by a spiral slope ramp, gives this building an image of the empty space, placing half the building below ground and another half above it – but no taller than the zelkova trees lining the Omotesando Boulevard. According to Ando, the idea was to incorporate the gentle slope of Omotesando with the building public spaces. Its façade prolongs for 250 metres along the avenue. Each floor features a slope contiguous with the avenue's gentle gradient, forming a unique new type of structure in an urban setting. Architect boldly embodied the idea of mediocrity by choosing seemingly functionally limited type of construction – a shopping mall.

An interesting detail – the main entrance is in the middle of the building and hard to notice it from inside. Thus, the visitor walking from floor to floor in a spiral, eventually finds difficult to determine where the entrance to the building was. Ando shows another meaning of the “grey area”. Such a trick was invented for to distance the shoppers from reality, make them forget about time and space and focus on purchases.

Ando said “wanted to come up with architecture where there is no clear border between the trees outside and the architecture. In essence it is just like *engawa*, the veranda in Japanese traditional architecture” (*Shaking the foundations: Japanese architects in dialogue* 1999: 126). And he managed to accomplish that through organising space in a particular way.

Toyo Itō's architecture attracts viewers' attention by a variety of forms and textures, as well as by interrelations between interior and exterior, and a peculiar approach to the interaction between natural and artificial light.

At a first glance the shopping pavilion of Mikimoto Ginza 2 looks bizarre because of chaotic location of windows across the facade surface. The building seems lightweight and transparent due to obscured constructions. In the evening hours owing to the artificial light the structure emits glow like jewels, which coincides with its purpose – a jewelry store.

The staircase has a corkscrew shape, it is located in the center of the construction and penetrating it from top to the bottom. Thus, the division into floors became less noticeable and scattered building is perceived as

a unified space both outside and inside. Fancy shape of windows creates a whimsical play of light and shadow in the interior, reminding the light reflected from the facets of gemstones.

In his next work – Za Koenji Public Theater in Tokyo – Itō demonstrated how light and shadow interactions become extremely intensive the interior space. The facade of the building is monochrome and the volume is exceptionally geometric. Architect has been working on all surfaces to make light and shadow interact as intensely as possible – artificial lighting placed in the ceiling, daylight penetrating through randomly scattered small windows, and finally – fancy patterned floor, created by the whimsical play of light and shadow. At first, it is difficult to understand where the light is natural, where artificially created; whether it is drawn on the floor or an illusion, a reflection system. This interior is corresponding with the essence of theater – where often the appearance, the visible façade is a mask, by removing which the viewer discovers the true essence of things. The spiral staircase is present in this project also. The staircase connects rather than divides the space.

A variety of ultraperforming materials used in Ito's constructions in order to translate the metaphorical architecture language into reality (*Shaking the foundations: Japanese architects in dialogue* 1999: p. 97). To concrete, most admired by Tange and Ando in their works, Ito adds tempered glass, perforated aluminium and innovative steel.

There is also a variety of forms in his works. Toyo Ito Museum of Architecture on the Omishima Island in Ehime Prefecture showed the idea of architectural form under another point of view. Four types of 3m-sided polyhedron modules, which can be freely assembled and closely packed, were used to create this building. Each unit has two kinds of wall slant angles. Consequently, there are no clear definite planes for ceilings, walls or floors. The space has a centripetal quality that creates an experience similar to being within a sphere. When visitors move from one room to another, the inclined walls unfold panoramically. This unique quality of the space enables unusual ways of exhibition completely different from the traditional exhibition space based on a standard grid. The design is not casually selected, it serves the purpose of expressing the idea of depth and variety of forms in architecture.

Ito creates multi-communicative space in the interior of the building. Firstly, he finds purely constructive solutions to isolate the viewer from the outside (lack of windows, spaces overflowing one into another), at the entrance the visitor must take off and leave the shoes, the action that



marks the border between “ordinary” and “sacred” space. In this particular case the museum space is considered to be the sacred one. Thus, he provides certain conditions where no communication act except between the museum piece and the visitor is possible. Secondly, by using quotes from architects scripted all over the wall surface, Ito makes them communicate with each other, collide, complement and argue their ideas.

The building is rather isolated, it is located almost on the edge of a cliff and surrounded by orange trees, the bay and the mountains. The traditional blending in nature would seem relevant here, but the architect decided otherwise. The shape and color of the building is in contrasts with the natural landscape, thereby the significance of the human essence becomes clear: how small one is against the overall grandeur of nature as a set of elements, at the same time how large one becomes, being able to create something that exert an overwhelming effect on people.

In conclusion, we should underline the fact that all three categories have a fundamental significance in theory of architecture and architects’ worldview. The categories of emptiness, interval and shadow which came from religious concepts, philosophical ideas or linguistic notions were widely used in order to organize the space in traditional Japanese architecture. The elements which compose the unique structure such as *engawa*, *shōji* and *tokonoma* represent those categories and reflect the singularity of Japanese architecture. The analysis of the works of Kenzo Tange, Tadao Ando and Toyo Ito allowed to reveal which category each of them relies on the most in order to express his point of view. In the buildings constructed by Kenzo Tange the main semantic core is an expression of “emptiness”, while the “interval” and the “shadow” are used to distinguish the leading one. Tadao Ando is focused on showing what is in the middle; he gives his preference to interval over others. Unlike Toyo Ito who shows through the shadow the strength of the light. However, each and every architect has a tendency to use all three categories and interpret them in their own way. They invent new codes in order to create new messages and a communicative act with their audience.

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# **The *Banal* Campaign in Japanese Media for the Reproduction of a Traditional National Identity Discourse**

## **Abstract**

Building on the notion of *banal* nationalism and through the interpretative textual analysis of Japanese media contents related to two study cases, it is offered a reading on the dominant discourses found in the representations of popular celebrities promoted as national representatives. Considering the economic, social and political Japanese context, it is argued the presence of a strong ideological campaign directed to reproduce a national identity based on features that have been defended as traditionally Japanese, supporting notions of ethnic and social homogeneity and the male as center of the society. This campaign, declared by the government to be related to the recovery of a positive spirit of the society in order to help Japan overcome natural disaster and economic related crisis, is suggested as particularly dangerous given its parallel development with the strengthening of a neo-nationalist trend in the political arena.

## **Introduction**

In contemporary nation-states, national identity needs to be sustained; this is done unceasingly, among others, through educational systems and processes of cultural and banal nationalism. While the cultural nationalism makes itself present when the national identity of people is perceived as weak or threatened (Yoshino 2005), banal nationalism is constantly active in the everyday social and cultural practices to “provide daily, unmindful reminders of nationhood” (Billig 1995: 174). According to Michael Billig

(1995), in established nation-states, people are exposed to a recurrent *flagging* of nationhood, which implants habits and beliefs in their minds – making them appear as part of the natural order – and shaping their world imaginaries, keeping the national sentiment latent, so it can be exploited as needed.

Nowadays, among the most important instruments for this flagging are the media and the cultural products of mass consumption that invade the daily life of people concealing their ideological implications behind the *banality* of their function as ‘plain entertainment’. In Japan, a country that “has one of the highest rates of media consumption in the world” (Galbraith & Karlin 2012: 10), the contents are dominated by a native type of celebrities known as *tarento*. These are essential for the dynamic of national economy because, as Lukács (2010: 45) says, they are “all-powerful currencies”. They appear in as many contents and perform as many roles as their popularity allows. Their relevance for Japanese media and corporations is such that, periodically, the recognition and influence that each and every of the more than two thousand celebrities is measured by the *tarento power index*<sup>1</sup>. Even though the index has the aim to serve the economic elites in their election of the *tarento* who most benefits can bring to their cause, it also implies the influence that such *tarento* can have to reproduce ideologies besides the one of consumption.

During the last years, there has been a tendency in Japanese media to give the title of “national representatives” to those *tarento* with a high index and then involve them in a discourse that highlights features of a *Japaneseness* that is considered traditional and reminiscent of the ideas of cultural.

## **The Politics of *Cool Japan*, from Economic to Ideological Aims**

The *nihonjinron* had its peak during the decades of the 1970s and 1980s defending a set of unique features to be found in Japanese society, under the basic premises of a universal homogeneity among Japanese and the “equivalency and mutual implications among land, people (that is race), culture and language” (Befu 2001: 71). Japan was said to be a traditional-

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<sup>1</sup> This index is produced every three months since the year 2008 by the Japanese marketing firm Architect Co. Ltd. See <http://www.talentsearch.jp>

ly vertical and paternalistic society in which the relations among people were always group-oriented and hierarchically defined, setting a frame or boundary for individuals to locate themselves and determine the type of behavior that had to be shown and that largely privileged the public virtues over personal desires (Nakane 1973). These features were promoted as the reason behind the successful Japanese recovery after the defeat in the Pacific War, having as key the figure of the *salaryman* – the man who worked at the office of some Japanese corporation and dedicated most of his time and energy to fill the needs of his company and, by extension, his nation<sup>2</sup>. In this patriarchal ideology, women's contribution to society depended on their achievements as mothers and wives.

The *nihonjinron* had been propagated through literature of mass consumption; it has been installed as a genre, taking the ideas of academics, *quasi*-academics and journalists to the general public. However, by the end of the 1980s, the popularity of these contents had diminished – though they did not disappear – and society was showing features deviating from that *Japaneseness* model. In the mid of a bubble economy, the figure of the *office lady* became the counterpart of the *salaryman* and symbolized the economic power won by young single women in those years. But, in 1990, the economic bubble exploded and the country entered a recession that would last for more than a decade; soon, the right-wing ideological leaders began to blame the situation in the change from a paternalist to a maternal society, which they identified by its “narcissistic and hedonistic consumer culture” (Yoda 2000: 866).

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Japan's economy was still suffering, there were growing social and political difficulties, the country did not have a powerful army, and its position as Asia leader was threatened by the accelerated industrialization of other nations in the region. In this context, the national pride of Japanese people was in danger. At that time, the admiration of Japanese popular culture abroad opened a new possibility of inspiration for Japanese elites; and, slowly, it was in this terrain where the flags of the national identity began to be waved.

In 2002, an article published in the North American magazine *Foreign Policy* was proclaiming that Japan was reinventing its superpower. The author argued that Japan's cultural presence in the foreign markets had been consistently growing, creating an important base of fans and

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<sup>2</sup> See Vogel (1971).

consumers abroad, something that had the potential of becoming the key for Japan to recover its powerful economy and international influence (McGray 2002). Then, Japanese government began to focus its attention in the possibility of exploiting everything related to the national popular culture, which was named *Cool Japan*.

In 2010, after a long period of planning and considerations, the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) established the Creative Industries Promotion Office under the name Cool Japan. It was to be in charge of planning and applying strategies to promote inside and outside the country a wide variety of products and industries related to Japanese culture: from fashion, music, video games, manga and television contents to architecture, antiques, crafts, computer software and services, furniture, jewelry, food products and tourism. All these were recognized as strategic sectors that should become motors for the growing of the national economy (Keizai Sangyōshō 2010). Although predominantly industrial with obvious economic aims, the government and business elites were relying on Japanese culture to appeal to international markets and increase the value of the *Japan brand* – that is, the image of the country that was associated with all the national products and services; thus, a cultural promotion campaign was inherent to the policy.

This campaign was intensified and redirected after March 11<sup>th</sup> of 2011, when the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake caused a tsunami that demolished villages, damaged the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, and killed thousands of people, causing other troubles that Japanese had to face amid the emotional shock of having part of their country destroyed. Fearing a major crisis, the government noticed the need to prioritize the involvement of Japanese people in the plans of revitalization of both the disaster zone and the economy – and, arguably, to keep them away from reacting against the government itself. On these aims, it became crucial to strengthen the national identity and make people recover their national pride.

The Cool Japan Advisory Council – formed by business people, scholars, journalists and representatives from the different ministries and established before the Cool Japan Office – announced a strategy meaningfully called *Creating a New Japan tying together 'culture and industry' and 'Japan and the world'* (Cool Japan Advisory Council 2011). This plan put the stress not on the economic, but on the ideological aspect of Japanese cultural production. The council members perceived the needs and opportunities that the circumstances were offering to transfer the core of

the Japan brand from the *cool* to the *traditional* qualities of Japanese; this is, to humanize it. It was also an implicit hope that, by relying on those features, Japan could recreate the economic miracle of the 1960s, as it has been celebrated for years by *nihonjinron*.

[T]he spiritual strength and depth of the Japanese people as they calmly deal with the disaster is being praised by people around the world. [...] Domestically, the earthquake has had the effect of reviving 'empathy and solidarity' and a 'spirit of cooperation', qualities that traditionally existed among the Japanese people. [...] At the same time, the Japanese people's strong sense of responsibility in meeting delivery schedules, teamwork, innovation, and on-the-spot capabilities have allowed quick restoration of the product supply chain. And managers and employees, who despite being affected by the disaster, continue to engage in business so as not to trouble their customers. Undoubtedly, it is such ordinary aspects of Japanese society that are the hearth of the 'Japan brand'. What is needed at this time are accurate supply of information that starts with the disaster itself and extends through to restoration, action to promote restoration of the affected regions and the revitalization of Japan, and steps to restore shine to the 'Japan brand'. [...] [A]ll concerned government ministries will need to stand together in implementing relevant measures toward these ends. [...] [T]hey should return the Japanese people to the essential spirit that they traditionally possessed, while also achieving new 'evolution' (*Cool Japan Advisory Council* 2011: 7)<sup>3</sup>.

In a short time, national media, cultural producers and corporations began numerous projects that proclaimed to be aimed at the revitalization of the affected zones and, as consequence, the image of the country in the exterior could be "restored and new fans of Japan created by broadcasting a new Japan story" (*Cool Japan Advisory Council* 2011: 14). Then, a discourse about the solidarity, sacrifice, resistance and strength of Japanese people and the love for their nation that should be expressed in actions aimed at the common interest began to be promoted in all the country and by all media. Thus, everything began to revolve around these policies and a campaign that could be called *patriotic*, this is, aimed at the recovery of Japanese pride in themselves and their country. However, as Billig (1995) argues, even when many academics and ideological leaders defend patriotism as a necessary, beneficial and defensive sentiment, while condemning nationalism as an aggressive and irrational force, in practice they get the same results.

<sup>3</sup> The original emphasis found in the source has been respected.

## Pop Idols Waving the Flags of the Nation

Between the years 2008 and 2009, in the context of the consolidation of industrial policies for the promotion of cultural national products related to the phenomenon Cool Japan<sup>4</sup>, Japanese media began to refer to Arashi – a five member male group – as national idol, arguably because it was becoming evident their dominance in the entertainment industry and their increasing acceptance among wider sectors of society, according to their increased *tarento power index*. Soon, such label began to acquire a more fundamental connotation as Arashi members began to be more and more related to national campaigns that involved not only the advertising of products or services, but also the endorsement of *Japaneseness*.

In 2010, Arashi's national representativeness became officially acknowledged when the Ministry of Land Infrastructure Transport and Tourism (MLIT) designated the group as Ambassador of Tourism Promotion for the worldwide campaign *Japan. Endless Discovery*. The official announcement and media reports stated the expectation that Arashi, acting as the 'face of Japan' inside and outside the country, could help increase the national and international tourism. By September of the same year, the MLIT published a book aimed at the promotion of the national culture and distributed it among all elementary, middle and high schools in Japan with the explicitly stated objective of inspiring in the young generations the love for their country and the desire to work for its constant improvement (Kankōchō 2010d). The book was called *Nippon no Arashi* (Arashi of Japan) and it presented the members of the idol group 'rediscovering' their country: through essays and conversations they had with local people in different regions and among themselves, they encouraged Japanese children and teenagers to value aspects that were presented as key of Japanese culture: crafts, art, architecture, fishery, culinary culture, agriculture, welfare services, Shintoist and Buddhist practices, and entertainment. The words written in the book are very eloquent:

We have contemplated true globalization, but the best way to get close to the world is to move forward while having at the very core of ourselves the thoughts of Japan, our town, our family, ourselves. Right now, what we have to do is to be truly proud of ourselves as Japanese. In Japan, where we live, there are many people who are kind and sincere. Living in the big cities it has become difficult to see

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<sup>4</sup> See Mandujano (2013).



that; this is why we went on a trip to reencounter those people [...] and produce in Japan a storm of kindness<sup>5</sup> (Arashi 2011: 9).

On the other hand, the international campaign *Japan. Endless Discovery* began broadcasting spots around East Asia, which showed the idols inviting people – speaking in Chinese, Korean and English – to visit Japan and enjoy both ‘typically Japanese’ tourism spots, food and products and the ‘new Japan’ related to the imagery of Cool Japan.

This strategy towards the revitalization of the national tourism was two-folded: outside the country, while promoting the already popular products and conventional imagery of Japan, Arashi was expected to attract international tourists and consumers who wanted to enjoy the infrastructure, products and services as they showed in the spots; in contrast, the national campaign was deeply ideological and, besides strengthening the conventional symbolism, it was aimed at regaining the domestic interest and pride in a set of features that were said to be essential to Japanese, that is, putting the emphasis on the people.

At this point, after being named national idols by media and sanctioned as such by the government and important corporations, Arashi consolidated its popularity and influence among Japanese society; in the *tarento* power index ranking, both the group and the members, individually, began to appear in the first places consistently. Since then, the representations of these idols can be seen as stimulated by the mix discourses of them as male idols and as Japanese ambassadors, implicitly suggesting that their representation of Japanese post-modern masculinity is part of a national ideal. For example, in a cover story of men-oriented magazine *GQ Japan*, the heading recites: “The day when the national idols become real good men. Today, the five-member group Arashi has become the representative of the era” (Tatsuta 2010: 37). In the same tone, this magazine designated three of the five members ‘Man of the year’ in the period 2008–2011.

The masculinity represented by the members of Arashi through the intertextuality of their multiple facets in Japanese media involves two levels. At first sight, they can be considered as an example of the trend of *feminization* of masculinity that has been identified by some since the 1990s (Darling-Wolf 2004, Iida 2004). Indeed, they have a post-modern aspect that seeks to attract Japanese women and act as role model for young men; by this, media proposes a life style that the average citizen should have,

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<sup>5</sup> All translations from Japanese to English were done by the author.

inviting to the consumption of countless products and services offered in the national market. Nevertheless, in a deeper analysis of the discourses around them, it becomes clear that even when their physical appearance is opposite to the image of the iconic *salaryman*, their media representations reinforce the traditional model of masculinity: they are presented as workaholic, stoic men, respectful of the social hierarchies built on seniority, oriented to their colleagues and to the objectives of their corporation and their nation over their personal ones, and having a conservative stance regarding the gender roles.

After the policies related to Cool Japan were reinforced in 2011, the involvement of Arashi in the media representations of the nation and the national reached a new level. The members assumed a main role in the media projects destined to help the victims of the disaster and focus society towards revitalization of the country. In this way, the image and names of Arashi and its members were easily found in media contents aimed at the exaltation of Japanese qualities. Accordingly, many marketing campaigns they endorse have been charged with those messages.

The case of Arashi allows to follow the subtle and well-coordinated cooperation among Japanese government, business, media and cultural producers to produce a wide-ranging flagging of certain elements related to the national identity, a trend particularly evident since 2010 and increasingly ideological after the earthquake crisis. Many other *tarento* have also been used in this campaign, but with a different discursive focus. For example, the female counterpart of Arashi – the group AKB48 formed by dozens of girls – has been enjoying a wide success in the Japanese entertainment industry – and done fairly good in some parts of East Asia – so it has also been called a ‘national’ group by media. After the disaster of 2011, the members of AKB48 were also very active in charity activities for the victims of the earthquake and media reported on all of them. On December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013, the group was presented as representative of the Japanese popular culture and performed in the banquet offered by Japanese Prime Minister Abe to the leaders of the Southeast Asian countries attending the ASEAN-Japan Summit (Sankei Digital 2013). However, the images of the group and its members have been related to the Cool Japan phenomena, representing the economic possibilities of promotion of Japanese popular culture, not the features of Japanese society. It can also be argued that inside Japan their media representations incites the idealization of a *sexualized* childish female image, whose public worth ends when she matures; this reinforces the traditional ideas of paternalist Japanese

society<sup>6</sup>. Nonetheless, there is another case – the national football team – that follows discourses on the national representation and the masculinity that are very close to those found in Arashi's contents.

### **The Samurai of Football: Representing the Nation, Standing for a Traditional Masculinity**

For many years, the main media sport in Japan was baseball; however, since the organization of the FIFA World Cup Korea-Japan 2002, in the context of political and economic pressures, the efforts to promote football and the need to reinforce a national identity, this sport and the national stars have become an important terrain for the negotiation of a nationalist discourse related to a dominant gender ideology.

These days, highly mediated sports play a substantial role in the production and reproduction of ideologies at local, national and international levels (Whannel 2005a). As Boyle & Haynes (2009: 107) argue, “[m]ediated sport is saturated with ideas, values, images and discourses which at times reflect, construct, naturalize, legitimize, challenge and even reconstitute attitudes which permeate wider society”. Horne & Manzenreiter (2006: 15) say that “[d]ifferent states use sport for different non-sport ends – economic development and social development, nation building and signaling (‘branding the nation’) and to assist in economic and political liberalization [...]” and that these objectives will depend on the particular context that a state is facing at one moment.

These ideological uses are the ones that can be perceived in the vast campaign to promote Japan's national football team. Two of the most representative symbols of a country's identity and sovereignty have been the national flag and the national anthem. As Hobsbawm (2000: 11) said: “they command instantaneous respect and loyalty [and] reflect the entire background, thought and culture of a nation”. However, in this sense, Japan stood in limbo for more than five decades – since the defeat in the Pacific War – without having an official national flag or anthem. The

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<sup>6</sup> The group has a constant rotation among its members, which is done according to a voting system among fans. The members' age range goes from teenagers to women in their twenties. However, as they get older, regardless of their popularity, they leave the group. In media, they announce this decisions as their own, but the fact is that, once they leave the group, they do not enjoy the same popularity that they had inside it.

Hinomaru and the Kimigayo have been cause of internal turbulence for their association with the military past of the country. Although used in different situations, they were only formally designated as national on August 9, 1999, when the Law Concerning the National Flag and National Anthem was enacted by the Diet. Nevertheless, many individuals and groups have resisted their use, particularly in schools where these symbols have begun to be specifically promoted as part of a campaign to nurture the respect and love for Japan that is considered as a neo-nationalist trend (Hongo 2007; Itoh 2001; Rosenbluth, Saito & Zinn 2007).

Amid this context where the use of the national symbols in civic events and public places is immersed in controversy, international football settings have been promoted as a less problematic ground for people, media and other elite groups to make an active, evident and prideful use of them, but disguising the *nationalist* insinuations. Football gives people a chance to go to the stadiums and proudly wave the Hinomaru and sing the Kimigayo along with the players because the situation *demand*s such demonstration of national support. At the same time, sponsors, media and government can beckon the expression of those sentiments under the assumption that they are not raising a *dangerous and violent* nationalistic passion, but only encouraging an enthusiastic manifestation of the sense of belonging and a *healthy* fighting spirit in the context of a sport battle, framed in and contended by the 'fair play' philosophy of football – although, in practice, it has been the detonator of nationalist and racist sentiments around the world.

Although Michael Billig (1995) agrees that sports actually provide symbolic models of war and Shimizu Satoshi (2002) argues that, in the case of the Japanese football team's participation in the FIFA World Cup of 1998, the media played an active role in reproducing nationalist attitudes, Manzenreiter & Horne (2002) warn about taking the other extreme and overestimating the nation-related hostility present behind football followers. Thus, it is relevant to examine the current football-related media contents in the contemporary context of Japan.

Since the World Cup of 2002, Japan's audience for the games of the national team reached historical numbers up to 66.1 percent of population, plus the people who went to the stadiums to support the team. This tendency continued during the next two World Cups of years 2006 and 2010<sup>7</sup>, which was linked to the inclusion of a particular sector of population in the promotion strategies of media and sponsors: women.

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<sup>7</sup> See Video Research (2010).

According to the research of Manzenreiter & Horne (2002: 22) in the context of the World Cup 2002, the national team players were intentionally turned “into a commodity for a young and wealthy female audience [that was] in the position to define dominant concepts of masculinity and to impose role models on their male contemporaries”. Through the analysis of the statistics of national audience for the total of games of World Cups 2002, 2006 and 2010 – not just those of the Japanese team – and the eliminatory and friendly games of the national team (Video Research 2010), it can be suggested that, more than a reflection of the popularity of football in itself implied the popularity of the national team and the players themselves. This situation has been sustained by the marketing and media coverage around the star players and the concept of the national team.

The five major commercial television corporations began broadcasting regular shows dedicated exclusively to football – or to the Japanese players – but having a hybrid format between sports and variety shows: they present Japanese players in a very personal and affable way, while giving some relevant information about their performance and their teams’ performance. The offer of pay per view non-Japanese football contents depends on the participation of a Japanese player, being Germany’s Bundesliga the one receiving more promotion given the fact that many Japanese are playing there. In printed media, more than a dozen of football magazines began to be published following the same trend of television contents. In this way, the media power of some players has grown so significantly that they have shifted from sporting contents to entertainment and general information: it has become a common practice to present them as guests in variety and news programs, as actors in dramas, or as models and idols in entertainment and fashion magazines. Beyond the sponsor related campaigns, there has also been a significant increase in the corporations that hire players instead of *tarento* to promote their products.

In this way, some players have become images continuously present in media, reaching sectors of society not interested in football. By 2011, when the national team won the Asia Cup against South Korea – a rivalry that, obviously, has more implications than football – the promotion of the national stars, among them many young players who had recently been signed by European teams, was increased and followed a very similar symbolic construction than the one of the idols previously analysed.

The dominant discourse found in the intertextuality of these contents follows two lines: one directed to strengthen the national pride, another to reproduce a model of masculinity represented by the players. In the first

case, there is a manifest reiteration of the qualities – and weaknesses – that *Japanese* players have in an international context; the reasons for their fail or success is generalized in terms of ethnicity, linking physical and cultural attributes to a notion of ‘race’, as if those were part of a genetic and emotional composition of all Japanese players, thus, assuming homogeneity among them. It is important to say that media present both foreigners and nationals using the same kind of discourse; however, the opinions of the foreigners – players, coaches, fans, commentators, etc. – are usually shown only when they imply the recognition to those attributes in a positive way, while the comments of locals use to be more critical. Nonetheless, this criticism reflected in media by nationals, which becomes a self-criticism through the homogeneity implications, is lessened by the ever-present concept of *ganbaru*, which implies to do an extreme effort in order to get as close as possible to fulfill an objective. This determination is supposed to be part of the *traditional* qualities of Japanese, symbolically represented by the samurai.

It is this kind of passion and commitment in the battle field of the Japanese warriors that is evoked, along with a traditional model of masculinity, through the name that media gives to the national football team: *Samurai Blue*. The use of English words – in this case *blue* refers to the colour of the main uniform – is common in media; here, it also reinforces the sense of representation that the team and players mean in an international level. On the other hand, *samurai* makes reference to the members of the warrior class that dominated the Japanese empire between the twelfth and nineteenth centuries; the male of this class were the leaders of society, while samurai women were restricted to the household. Tonomura (1990: 623) says that they were subjected to a “sexual asymmetry that implied progressive subordination to, and protection by, the powerful male, his ideology, and his institutions”; it was from this class and its male dominance structure that the patriarchal principles would become part of the *traditional* features of Japanese society. In contemporary Japan, *samurai* has survived not only as a symbol of the powerful Japanese warriors who kept away foreign powers for many centuries, but also as one of the male dominances in the public domain.

This symbolism is completed by a discourse on the masculinity of the players. In this sense, after the World Cup 2010 that meant a generational change in the starting member base of the team, two trends can be perceived in the media representation of the national players. Those married, with children and playing for Japanese clubs are represented as

family men, hardworking, willing to make sacrifices in order to 'fight' for the honor of their team and their country in the field; at the same time, they are presented as living in small, but comfortable houses, having all the last generation gadgets and a car of Japanese brand, in other words, they appear to have a life style that is not significantly different to that of the hypothetical average Japanese citizen; they keep a relatively low public profile in contents not related to football. These images are consistent with the set of values related to the *salaryman*.

Alternatively, the players whose media persona is built to attract a wider audience are fully incorporated in the *tarento* system. These are mostly those who are single, play for European clubs, and are praised in media not only for their abilities and achievements in their sport, but also for arguably being *attractive men*. To this symbolic construction that seems far from that of the samurai or the *salaryman*, a discourse related to *Japaneseness* is added. These players are continuously presented valuing and following a vertical structure in their teams and in their social interactions inside Japan, expressing their wish to have a traditional family, explicitly or implicitly declaring their preference for having a typical Japanese wife, expressing their pride for being Japanese and keeping their Japanese customs alive even in a foreign country, and supporting social projects in favour of their country.

In this way, the ideological elements about the national identity and pride along a traditional masculinity are inserted in the media representations of the players of the national football team, resulting in a mix discourse about *Japaneseness* and masculinity, which implies the centrality of men in the nation. However, the rigid set of paternalist and nationalist values is lessened by the insertion of features that appeal to the contemporary consumer society.

## Conclusion

Half a century ago, in the middle of a period of accelerated industrialization, *nihonjinron* spread the idea that the successful recovery Japan had after the devastation suffered in the Pacific War was directly related to the unique features of the paternalist Japanese society, having the stoic and hardworking *salaryman* as the key for the economic miracle. At the beginning of the twentieth first century, the situation was very different. There was a long economic recession and society seemed to lack the abilities



previously celebrated to recover. The power elites began to take measures to exploit the popularity of national pop culture in foreign lands in order to boost the economy through a higher value of Japan brand around the world and, locally, by the promotion of a renewed pride in the traditional culture and values. The disaster of 2011 was a turning point in the focus of the policies related to the Japanese cultural promotion; these became more intense, more ideological and more preoccupied with the campaign at the national level.

Considering Billig's (1995) notions, it is possible to argue that Japanese people have been exposed since then to constant *flags* about their national identity. Everywhere, national features central in the *nihonjinron* discourse began to be *represented* in a new and attractive wrapping that is no longer a genre of literature disputing 'theories' on the Japanese; quite the opposite, this time, the medium lacks the intellectual aura and its appeal derives from its mundane and shallow look. Just as meaningful is the tendency of presenting those flags along others that support the reproduction of a traditional masculinity model, based on the hard work and full commitment to the national aims. This representation of national identity in media through contents that are supposedly banal – as football and entertainment – developed parallel to a rise in a new nationalism wave in the political level, which has affected diplomatic relations with China and South and North Korea<sup>8</sup>.

The discourses are not the same. The 'new' nationalism does not pay attention to cultural aspects of the national identity; it has specific political, economic and military aims. Nonetheless, the arguably positive and pacifistic media campaign officially aimed at the reinforcement of Japanese identity for economic goals, should not be seen as disarticulated from the political and military objectives that have been diverting the minds of right-wing leaders for the last two decades. Even if the official position of Japan is that of a pacifist nation, the potential for the convergence, in a moment of crisis, of the elevation of the *patriotic* sentiment among people with the high appraisal on the men devoted to their social and national duties, may result in the popular support for an aggressive action led by the government towards other states, particularly if this is done in the name of protecting the unique and treasured qualities of Japanese. This is the reason why Billig (1995) identifies banal nationalism as the *most dangerous* form of nationalism.

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<sup>8</sup> See Blanchard (2013), Itoh (2001), Marquand (2006), Matthews (2003), Ozawa (2013), Suh (2005).



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# **Notions of Japan and Manga in France and Italy<sup>1</sup>**

## **The First Main Results of a Survey among Readers and Non-Readers of Manga**

### **Abstract**

Since 2007 the 'Manga Network', an international research group, is working on a project on the success of manga and the image of Japanese pop culture in several European countries. After the first phase of its work in 2007–2010 with an international survey, in 2011 a second survey has been launched, this time not only among readers but among non-readers of manga as well. As a first outcome of this second survey, the work upon which is still ongoing, the present chapter presents a starting outlook of the first statistic tests carried out and a set of theoretical and empirical considerations on the images of manga and Japan in the countries here considered.

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. The Manga Network**

The 'Manga Network' is an independent research team formed by professors, researchers and Ph.D. students originating from several European countries and Japan. It was created in 2006 by Jean-Marie Bouissou,

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<sup>1</sup> Previous, preliminary versions of the first half of this essay have appeared in English (Pellitteri 2010b in Bouissou, Pellitteri, Dolle-Weinkauff, Beldi 2010) and Italian (Pellitteri 2011). The present chapter also borrows some data analysis from Pellitteri 2010a. The essay has been published, in the present version, in Japanese as Pellitteri 2014a.

a French historian and political scientist of contemporary Japan (Sciences-Po, Paris); Bernd Dolle-Weinkauff, a German expert in children's literature and a comics specialist (J.W. Goethe Universität, Frankfurt); and myself, an Italian cultural sociologist and a scholar in visual narratives; with the financial support – in its first phase – of the Japan Foundation. Soon after the birth of the group, Japanese sociologist Kiyomitsu Yui (Kōbe University) joined it too. The Manga Network organized a workshop in 2006 and two international conferences on manga and J-culture<sup>2</sup> in 2007 and 2008, all in Paris, with such participants as Hiroki Azuma, Jaqueline Berndt, Gō Itō, Steffi Richter and other internationally renowned scholars. Its members have participated in several international conferences, invited lectures and workshops, propagating the results of the research group's work.

Since 2007 the Manga Network has been working on a multi-phase project, based on qualitative and quantitative methods and focused on the spread of manga and the notions of Japan and Japanese popular culture in several European countries. In 2007–2008 the group conducted a first survey based on a questionnaire which was circulated among over 1,200 respondents of four European countries (France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland), then undertaking an analysis of the data acquired and getting a revealing picture of the success of manga in those European countries and of the related fan practices and opinions. In 2010–2011 the group launched a second European survey, this time not only among readers but also, as a control group, among non-readers of manga; it also extended the methods' array to several face-to-face interviews. As a first outcome of this second survey – the work of data input and analysis on which is still ongoing – I here present the results based on the data input so far and a set of theoretical and empirical considerations<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> For the term 'J-culture' refer to Richter, Berndt et al. 2008, especially Richter 2008. In this essay, the J-cultural areas taken into account are manga and anime.

<sup>3</sup> At the time in which this chapter is published in the present book, I am currently working as a JSPS fellow with a research project precisely focused on the implementation and development of new phases of this surveys and data analyses.

## 1.2. Importance and Risks of Quantitative Research on Manga Readership

Japanese manga's popularity is a big phenomenon<sup>4</sup>. It was exactly in order to investigate its success in Europe that the Manga Network was formed; it is also worth noticing that it is the first research team of its kind<sup>5</sup>. This tells us much about the novelty of the topic and the fact that manga as a social and economic fact was passing unobserved by most European academics in disciplines such as sociology, economics, international relations. The Manga Network's surveys may have limits of their own, as our group had to face several difficulties in terms of methodology, due to limitations of economic and organizational kind. However, they are the first structured efforts in order to acquire wide-range and in-depth information on the issue of manga in Europe at large, and on manga's audiences: their socio-demographic composition, their opinions, their relations with manga as a form of reading and objects to spend money for, the social contexts in which readers live, and finally the inner, profound reasons why manga are loved, read, purchased and exchanged among peers. We have chosen to define this research framework 'a sociology of manga fans'.

One of the research group's central goals – along with that of understanding the role of manga in the lives of their actual readers – is that of discovering new information on the ways manga have been thought of among people who have never approached this medium, in order to see what the main differences about the image of manga between manga readers and manga non-readers are. This is one possible and effective analysis path in order to acquire more data and knowledge about the actual influence of manga on the different ways Japan may have been perceived in European countries<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> *Manga* is, in the Japanese context, the term designating comics of any type and format (be they Japanese or not); but for the non-Japanese, the word only designates comic strips, comic series and comic books made in Japan by Japanese creators. Here, when I speak of the arrival and success of manga in the Western world, the reference is to Japanese comics only.

<sup>5</sup> More recently (Summer 2013), another – indeed interesting and useful – survey has been launched by the website *Anime France*, focusing on a related topic: the impact and consumption of Japanese animation in France. Cf. [Animefrance.fr](http://Animefrance.fr).

<sup>6</sup> For detailed discussion see Bouissou 2012, which is complementary to the present essay.

Below, I present a general view on the success of manga in its European main national markets, in order to contextualize the aims and scope of our work; I then sum up the research conducted so far; and finally I introduce the main results of the second survey.

## **2. The Manga Markets in Europe<sup>7</sup>**

### **2.1. Starting Considerations**

In this section, general information on the most relevant national markets of manga in Europe is provided. This information concerns the mid- and late 2000s, which, for the Manga Network, formed the basis upon which the surveys were conducted.

The information is still relevant and should also be put in perspective, because in the most lucrative markets (i.e. Italy, France, Spain, Germany) the mid-2000s were the period of highest official expansion of manga: after 2007 the sells began to shrink, due to several factors, including the growing use of scanlations<sup>8</sup> and, very likely, the decrease of the euro's purchase power. This means that not only this information, but also all the data collected with our surveys, record the commercial climax of manga's popularity in Europe. That is also why the Manga Network's data, collected between 2007 and 2011, are still so useful for the understanding of the impact of manga on the success of J-culture in Europe and vice versa.

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<sup>7</sup> In this section, I neglect some areas of Europe where manga is actually successfully marketed: (1) because they are not included in the research design; (2) because of lack of space and/or data; or (3) because – as for Great Britain – an analysis of such nations would be more fitting in comparison to the United States. On the contrary, the countries taken into account are: (1) the ones at the centre of the first survey (France, Italy, Germany, Switzerland); (2) those at the centre of the work currently completed via the second survey (again, France and Italy); (3) those that constitute the worthiest nations to be ideally researched for the understanding of the success of manga, due to their developed comics cultures and manga sellings.

<sup>8</sup> Scanlation is a fan practice consisting in the digital acquisition of the pages of manga works, the amateur translation from Japanese into a local idiom and the illegal publication on the web, for free reading by other fans from all over the world.



## 2.2. General Figures

The manga market outside Japan has been, at least from the early 1990s until the second half of the 2000s, literally thriving: in 2005, Asia (except Japan) filled 42% of it, the United States 36%, and the rest of the world 22% (JETRO 2005). However, what is not clear in these percentages is the impact of manga according to variables such as the population's size, the volume of the actual manga's readership in the single countries or the level of incomes. With more circumstantial data it would have been possible to see better the impact of manga in each nation, especially in Europe, a market made of many countries, in each one of which manga have arrived and gained success according to different histories and dynamics. Let us furthermore notice that in the United States of America (population: more than 300 million), the best selling manga in 2006 was *Naruto* #9 with about 100,000 copies (Hibbs 2007), whereas in France (64 millions), each new volume of *Naruto* sold around 130,000 during its first year on the market (*Le Monde*, 25 January 2008); in Italy (59 millions), single issues of series such as *Dragon Ball* have regularly sold, since the late 1990s and until at least the early 2000s, more than 150,000 copies monthly<sup>9</sup>.

### Italy

Since 1990 Italy has been the largest manga market in Europe, but official figures on manga's sales are not divulged. One of the few verifiable information is that in 2005, 58% of the about 2,800 comics titles published were manga (1,624 in total) and, also, not few were Korean *manhwa*<sup>10</sup>. The all-times best-selling manga is the *Dragon Ball* deluxe edition, whose each issue, as said, used to sell about 150,000 copies since the second half of the 1990s; afterwards, the best sellers – *Inuyasha* and *One Piece* – reached no more than 75,000 copies per volume, partly because of a richer and more wide-ranging general supply. Ten houses publish/published manga: Dinyt, D/Visual, Shin Vision (only manga); Star Comics, Flashbook, Hazard (mainly manga); Coconino Press, Panini, Kappa, GP Publish-

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<sup>9</sup> This and the following figures concerning the sellings of manga in Italy are not official, but anyway strongly reliable. They have been provided to me by Mr Andrea Baricordi, former editor-in-chief of the manga line at Edizioni Star Comics, one of the main Italian publishers of manga including *Dragon Ball*, *Inuyasha*, *One Piece*.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Zaccagnino, Contrari 2007: 2; for each country, these statistics include all the new volumes of already running series.

ing and Play Press (manga among other kinds of comics). Occasionally also big mainstream publishers like Einaudi, Mondadori or Rizzoli, which normally do not deal with manga, publish some titles.

## France

France used to lag behind Italy: until 2000-2001, the new manga titles published each year in Italy were about the quintuple of those published in France. But between 2001 and 2005, manga increased their presence in France by 500%. In 2001, there were only 269 new manga and manhwa titles published. In 2006, new titles from Asia reached 1,418 – comprising 1,110 manga titles, about 250 manhwa, but also newcomers from China, Singapore (6), Taiwan (1) and India (1, in a slightly ‘manga-ish’ style) – accounting for 44.4% of the newly published comics<sup>11</sup>. This made France the second largest European manga market.

The structure of the French manga publishing business is unique: as for 2004, no less than 37 new publishing houses entered the field<sup>12</sup>, about 20% of whom failed soon. Most of them were bottom-up enterprises started by manga fans, often people with an academic background in business school and/or coming from the world of bookstores and fanzines, whereas the big publishers shunned manga. Glénat, Tonkam, Delcourt and Soleil are the most famous publishers of this ‘first generation’. But since manga have proved a profitable business, big publishing houses have also rushed into the field (Hachette, Dargaud, Casterman, Flammarion, Le Seuil), as well as minor companies<sup>13</sup>, while those of the first generation have merged<sup>14</sup> and new small publishers keep entering the market<sup>15</sup>.

## Germany

Germany is, since the mid-2000s, the third and arguably the most interesting European market for manga (Dolle-Weinkauff 2006). Due to the lack of a strong local production, Japanese comics account ever since for about 70% of all the comics sold. A peculiar feature is that manga’s audience is mostly

<sup>11</sup> About 2001: cf. Pasamonik 2005; about 2006: cf. Pasamonik 2006a and Zaccagnino, Contrari 2007: 2.

<sup>12</sup> For a complete list cf. Dunis, Krecina 2004.

<sup>13</sup> Éditions Philippe Picquier.

<sup>14</sup> Delcourt and Tonkam joined hands in 2006, and Soleil now heads a consortium of six publishers.

<sup>15</sup> IMHO, Cornelius.

female, whereas in other countries it is more evenly divided between genders. Also, the lack of polemics on manga's alleged futility has allowed an undisturbed increase of sales. In ten years (1997–2006) the revenue in manga sellings rose exponentially from 3 to 70 million euro. The best sellers were *Dragon Ball*, *Sailor Moon*, *Inuyasha* and *Meitantei Conan*. Each one of the latter two has reached by 2005 the million copies sold, but still pale in comparison to *Dragon Ball*, the absolute record holder with over 6 million copies sold between 1997 and 2006 and still doing well afterwards. The main publishers are either German (Carlsen, although initially Danish), European (Egmont from Denmark, Panini from Italy) or Japanese/American (TokyoPop; after the closing of the Los Angeles headquarters, TokyoPop's only offices are today in Europe, namely in Hamburg).

#### Switzerland<sup>16</sup>

Switzerland, 8 million people, distinguishes itself from other European markets by the fact that it is divided into three linguistic regions, matching the zones exchange with France, Germany and Austria, Italy. Switzerland has never developed a strong entertainment industry: most media contents made available to Swiss consumers are imported directly from the neighbouring countries. Manga is no exception. Thus, the Swiss market reflects those of its neighbours, just on a smaller scale. Accordingly, manga has remained a niche market in Switzerland, concerning mostly teenagers and young adults under 30.

In the French-speaking regions, manga constitute about 30% of the whole comics sector like in France, and the top-selling titles of the last five years include *Naruto*, *One Piece*, *Fairy Tales*, *Fullmetal Alchemist*, *Bleach*, *Death Note*, *Pandora Hearts*, *Eyeshield 21*, *Pokémon* and *Yu-Gi-Oh!* However, besides such titles, the Francophone market has experienced a noticeable diversification in terms of genres. Until 2005–2006, the vast majority of titles translated into French belonged to the *shōnen* (boys') category. However, *shōjo* (girls') manga have been taking more and more space on the shop shelves, with titles like *Nana*, *Fruits Basket*, *Vampire Knight*, *Maid Sama...* meeting a public of enthusiastic readers, mostly female.

The market of the Germanophone area also reflects that of its large neighbours. Like in Germany, *shōjo* series make up the large majority of

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<sup>16</sup> This section on Switzerland has been kindly provided by Dr Ariane Beldi, Swiss member of the Manga Network, who participated in the first survey, collecting the data on her country.

manga sold. However, the Manga Network study on Swiss manga readership in 2007–2008 showed a slightly different picture from a reader's standpoint, since shōnen manga emerged as making up three out of the five most cited favorite series. Those were *Death Note*, *Naruto* and *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, the other two being *Sailor Moon* and *Inuyasha*.

Concerning the Italian-speaking area, the data is really scarce and difficult to come by. It is also the smallest region of the country, counting for hardly 5% of the Swiss population, that is about 400,000 people. However, one can probably state that the types of manga sold there must be the same as in Italy, not only because the media content available there is edited by Italian publishers, but also because most citizens of this region live just within a few minutes drive from North-Italian cities, where they often go shopping. Moreover, manga books (as well as anime DVDs) are 15–20% cheaper in Italy than in Switzerland.

### Spain

In Spain, since the 1990s, the most important manga publishers are Norma Editorial, Glénat España, Planeta-DeAgostini, Mangaline, Ivrea and Selecta. At first, they made a marketing mistake – as happened also in Germany – by copying the American *modus operandi* and selling manga in comic book format<sup>17</sup>. The market stagnated at very low level, obliging the publishers to stop publication (Rodriguez de León 2005). Only since manga have been published as *tankōbon* (small format, b/w paperback)<sup>18</sup> have they gained a real success, in a second and more structured wave that, however, has recently turned into a new stagnation.

### Belgium

Belgium is a bilingual country divided between Flanders (Dutch idiom) and Wallonia (French idiom), with a strong local tradition of *bande dessinée* (or BD). Its manga market has been steadily growing since the late 1990s, but figures are unavailable. Manga by all major European publishers are distributed in Belgium. Naturally, the supply is much richer in French language than in Dutch. In a country with such a rich comics cul-

<sup>17</sup> 'Comic book format' here refers to the typical American comic book: 17x26 cm, between 22 and 32 pages, full-colour.

<sup>18</sup> And very often, also in Spain like in the other big European national markets (especially Italy, France, Germany), the *tankōbon* format maintains the Japanese reading direction from right to left, without the page mirroring.

ture as Belgium, the homeland of Hergé, most titles aim at general, and/or adult and well-educated audiences – like Osamu Tezuka's *Buddha*, Naoki Urasawa's *Monster* and the works of Jirō Taniguchi.

## Russia

Manga were unintentionally introduced in Russia in the 1980s by diplomats, who in their travels to Japan casually bought some manga magazines or volumes. The first Russian manga readers were the children of employees at Russian diplomatic offices (Alaniz 2005). The market has exploded since 2000, above all thanks to anime on TV and DVDs. Similarly to what happened in the USA (Leonard 2005), manga have grown from the fans: at first, thanks to underground imports and home-made copies, then with the professional publishers. The very first manga officially published was *Ranma ½*, by local venture Sakura Press in 2005.

## Poland

In this country comics have been struggling for years, between bad reputation and censorship. Nowadays, famous Polish artists like Grzegorz Rosiński, author of the *Thorgal* saga, sell in Poland very well. European BD takes 20% of the market but manga, which entered it in 2005, has conquered in a stroke a 70% share (Pasamonik 2005). This success owed much to two Japanese entrepreneurs, who started two Japanese-Polish publishing ventures – Japonica Polonica Fantastica (JPF) and Waneko. They have been joined by the Danish-German Egmont, which offers about one half of the Polish manga catalog. The situation has not changed that much in more recent years<sup>19</sup>.

## 2.3. Final Considerations on the European Manga Markets

This trend of 'Japanese' companies entering the market – a process begun in the United States in the 1980s – has also been at work elsewhere in Europe (Gō Nagai's production company and agency Dynamic Production established Dynamic Italia in Italy and Dynamic Vision in France as subsidiaries), but with little success because of the vigour of the domestic manga business; except in Germany, thanks to TokyoPop's Hamburg headquarters and entrepreneurial strength, which has allowed manga to reach about the same market share than in Poland.

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. Bolalek 2011: 34–37, available at <http://imrc.jp/lecture/2010/11/2.html>.

In all this turmoil, new trends emerged in the European market. Manga have gained acceptance, and even some praise, among well-educated readers and literary critics. In France, since 2003, manga works regularly get prizes at the famous Festival d'Angoulême (the biggest European comics art festival), including the Best Album Award in 2007 given to Shigeru Mizuki's *NonNonBâ*; in Italy, a similar situation is recorded at *Lucca Comics & Games*, the biggest European comics commercial convention, where in 2010 Jirō Taniguchi was awarded the prize as best writer and artist.

Crossbreeding is also taking place. Here and there – mostly in France, Italy and Germany<sup>20</sup> – authors publish ‘manga-ish’ comics that in Europe have been often called ‘euromanga’<sup>21</sup>. In 2006, Dargaud – traditional powerhouse of French comics – launched *Cosmo*, a line of comics mixing authors and styles from French-Belgian BD, American comics and Japanese manga (Pasamonik 2006b). Also, as the first generation of fans – those who had their first contact with Japanese manga in the wake of such anime series as *Alps no shōjo Heidi*, *UFO Robo Grendizer* (a.k.a. *Goldorak* in France and *Atlas Ufo Robot* in Italy) or *Candy Candy*, aired on television in Spain (since 1975), Italy (1977) and France (1978) – is now in their thirties or early forties, manga culture is deepening and refining (Pellitteri 2006 and 2010c). The manga fandom now extends beyond the teenage base, to well-educated adult readers.

### 3. Research Design and Methodology

In 2007–2008, the Manga Network circulated a 15-pages long questionnaire in France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland. It covered social, cultural, psychological and economical aspects of fan practices. Although the questionnaire used in each country was the same, the methods of collection and analysis did vary. In France, the questionnaires were first circulated as a Microsoft *Word* document in web forums gathering manga fans, then also distributed to people attending the *Japan Expo* convention<sup>22</sup> in July

<sup>20</sup> Cf. for Italy: Pellitteri 2006; for Germany: Egmont 2005 and Malone 2011, also at <http://imrc.jp/lecture/2010/11/2.html>.

<sup>21</sup> ‘Euromanga’ In Japan refers to BD: cf. the *Euromanga* anthology, Asuka Shinsha, 8 volumes so far. But in Europe it means ‘manga’ (in the sense of ‘Japanese-style comics’) made by European creators.

<sup>22</sup> With more than 80,000 people attending in three days, *Japan Expo* – started in 2000 with 3,200 – is by far the largest convention in Europe solely devoted to Japan and Japanese culture, there including manga.

2007; about 370 responses were recovered. In Italy (about 420 answers) and Germany (about 340 answers), the questionnaire was circulated via the web. In Switzerland, the questionnaire was circulated using the web-site SurveyMonkey.com; 76 people from the three Swiss linguistic regions answered it.

The apparent bias of these modes of dissemination is that the statistic samples were neither random nor generally representative, but 'self-selected' (the respondents chose to answer). However, we meant to address mostly the hard-core fans, those who spend time in web forums and/or go to conventions and who are passionate enough to have spent up to 30-40 minutes to complete our very detailed questionnaire. In contrast, the younger cohort of schoolboys and -girls may have been under-represented, because the questionnaire was not conceived for them (anyway, when queuing for a long time with nothing else to do, like the French fans did at *Japan Expo*'s entrance, the younger cohort did answer in large numbers). Despite these problematic features, the survey could be – as it has been – very well used for explorative and generally descriptive purposes related to the 'universe' of manga readers.

The data input and then general data analysis were conducted during 2008 and 2009; our first results were presented in conferences and published in journals. The main points of our investigations, as shown in previous publications of the Manga Network, concern the laying out of our 'sociology of manga fans' (Bouissou et al. 2010: 257), the origins of the first contact with manga by readers (*ibid.*: 258–259), the discovery and analysis of reading habits and practices (*ibid.*: 259), the social dimensions of fandom (*ibid.*: 260–261), the inner motivations for reading manga (*ibid.*: 261–263). For the first time in the history of studies on manga and their audiences, concrete figures were shown and commented, based on quantitative data. The scope and aim of this first survey were rather explorative/descriptive than explanatory, and – besides a variety of hints and information towards a more explicative direction – linked the scenarios of manga consumption in Europe to a broader theme: that is, the role of manga (and anime)<sup>23</sup> in the alleged spread of a Japanese cultural 'power' in Europe and America.

Below, I will sum up the observations made on the data of that first survey.

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<sup>23</sup> *Anime* is the term generally used for Japanese animated cartoons, especially those for television but also for cinema, using the animated cartoon technique.

## Socio-Demographics of Manga Fans

- A gender axis emerged: in France, Italy and Switzerland there is a substantial balance in the number of male and female readers, whereas in Germany a large majority (80%) of readers are female. Another gendered axis appeared in the form of participation: male fans tend more to a still 'traditional' form of reading, while female fans are more inclined to a variety of fandom activities, especially in Germany and France (in Switzerland and Italy there is a more pronounced balance).

- Italy/France/Switzerland on the one side, and Germany on the other, are in counter position also for what concerns the age of readers: in Germany they are substantially younger. The reasons are not that complicated to find. (1) The different history of anime on television in these countries: in Germany the anime boom occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s, whereas in the other three countries it happened between the late 1970s and the end of the 1980s, inspiring an older generation of TV-watchers than in Germany to read manga<sup>24</sup>; (2) the different role of comics in Germany by comparison to the other countries: Germany has no strong tradition in the production of comics.

- The majority of readers are mostly middle class, with a medium to high level of education.

## Why to Read Manga / 1

Three main socio-cultural reasons were found.

- The previously existing habit of reading comics: only 29.5% of the respondents declared that they began to read manga *without* having read other kinds of comics before. That is, most fans used to read other kinds of comics before approaching/discovering manga.

- Manga as an early-age discovery and then a cultural consumption habit: 12.5% of the respondents declared to have discovered manga before they were 10 years old, 44.5% between 10 and 14 years of age, 29% during high school.

- The existence of a pronounced 'generation gap' between younger and older readers regarding the role of TV anime (and of the new media): for most young readers, manga is part of a multimedia menu, reading them is not necessarily due to the impact of TV anime and the practice of reading

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<sup>24</sup> On the concept of 'anime boom' in Japan and in European countries, cf. Pellitteri 2010c and 2014b.



and exchanging manga is characterized by 'distinction' in the Bourdieuan sense (Bourdieu 1979). For the older readers, manga reading, in the adult age, has in most cases a direct 'nostalgia effect' due to a previous, massive exposition to 'old' TV anime during childhood.

### Reading Habits and Practices

- Manga is a daily or weekly commitment: overall, 77% of readers practice reading at these paces. This percentage includes the reading of both paper manga and digital manga.
- 75.5% of the respondents would love to read more manga than they currently do.
- Manga are read in the local native languages and in English (by 51% of the respondents), but 22% of those who participated in the survey also read them in Japanese.
- Reading manga is a commercial commitment, too: at the moment of the survey, manga were not simply read, they were regularly bought either in bookstores or in comics stores or (in France and Italy) also at newsstands<sup>25</sup>.
- Public libraries also play a role, especially in Germany and Switzerland (37% of the respondents in both of these two countries borrow manga at libraries) and France (28%).

### Social Dimensions of Fandom / 1

Manga reading is a social practice in most cases.

- 39% of the respondents were introduced to manga by friends.
- 66% of the respondents introduced at least some friends to manga.
- Conversation with other manga readers is highly sought and carried out (32%) and manga are often or at least sometimes discussed within the respondent's family (70%).
- Social participation is important in the exchange of manga volumes: 78% frequently exchange manga, in order to save money, make friends and discuss the titles read.
- Exchange is not only a matter of money; manga are, literally, 'a pleasure which must be shared': 56% of the respondents chose this definition in the related set of questions.

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<sup>25</sup> In recent years, however, the role of scanlations has increased. Cf. below, 'Social dimensions of fandom / 2'.

### Social Dimensions of Fandom / 2

The internet is a privileged channel of social-cultural exchange, reading and purchase.

- 95% of the respondents visit manga-related websites on a regular basis.
- 62.5% regularly chat in manga-related web forums.
- 73% usually upload/download anime and manga series.
- 50% regularly buy manga via the web.
- 65.5% access manga in other languages through scanlations.
- 64% took part in manga conventions.
- 13.5% participated in cosplaying events.

### Social Dimensions of Fandom / 3

The consumption of manga is not only a form of reading: it is a multifaceted practice.

- 81% share their practice with family: 72% with their spouse/companion, if in couple.
- 67% met other fans at school, university or workplace; and 86% of this subgroup actively interact with others who share their passion.

The strong amount of face-to-face relations suggests an interesting conclusion on the participatory aspect of manga culture. The intensity of the practice is in correlation with general behaviours and states of mind: 89% of the respondents declared that manga had a degree of influence upon their life (49% answered with the options 'extremely' or 'a lot').

Finally, manga have positive 'effects' on the life of the readers who answered the questionnaire: thanks to manga, 54% of them made new friends, 53.5% felt less stressed, 52% became or felt more dynamic, 32.5% learned new values.

### Why to Read Manga / 2

- Among the reasons why to read manga there is a major escapist factor: for 67% of the respondents, reading manga is a form of break-out from everyday life; and it is also a stress-relieving factor (for 42% of the participants to the survey).

Nevertheless, escapism is not the only reason why, according to our data and our interpretation of them, manga are so much read. In fact, 15% of the respondents appreciate manga because the narratives reflect their own problems and experiences; 44.5% feel that manga characters are 'easy to

identify with'; 36.5% think that manga can encourage reflection about life and society; and 34% state that manga heroes show qualities which readers wish to have. Besides, for 41.5% manga heroes are more emotionally attractive than characters of European/American comics. Thus, 'the common image of manga as a literature of escapism and manga readers as people looking primarily for (supposedly cheap) entertainment [...] [is] only half of the story' (Bouissou, Pellitteri, Dolle-Weinkauff, Beldi 2010: 261)<sup>26</sup>.

### **3.1. Some of Our Provisional Conclusions at the End of the First Survey**

Among the many provisional conclusions we drew from the data we analysed, I would like to stress here, very schematically, some points in particular.

First of all, the almost total inability of European and American comics to attract certain kinds of readers (above all, women and girls) and, as a historical intersection, the central role of manga for many people who had not been comics readers, especially women but not only. Manga are perceived by the respondents of this survey as more 'modern' and 'dynamic' than European and American comics; here we see a spurious correlation with Japan, which is perceived as more modern and dynamic as well, according to the answers in the sets of questions related to the opinions on Japan. The success of manga, besides, has part of its roots in editorial formats, price and marketing strategies. Reading habits are, for a considerable percentage of readers, a sort of 'addiction': 20% of the respondents admitted that this practice is costly; 33% wish an acceleration of the publication pace.

Finally, content is important. Whereas a common prejudice against manga is that they contain much sex and violence, actually just 15.5% of the respondents declared to buy manga for this kind of contents; most readers long for complex narratives that are able to resonate with their daily life and experiences, especially in the case of the younger ones.

### **3.2. General Methodology of the 2010–2012 Survey**

In the subsequent steps of our work we decided to extend the array of our research questions. After the first survey, the group launched a new survey addressed this time not only to readers of manga but also to non-readers.

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<sup>26</sup> The other sentences quoted in the rest of this section were written by respondents of the survey in the spaces left free for open comments.

The primary research goal was, now, to get information about the notions of Japan among manga readers and non-readers, and the ideas on manga, as a cultural element of Japan, among those who do not read manga.

One of the reasons to pursue this path in the second phase was the results I discovered after grouping by content the answers to the open questions positioned at the end of the first survey's questionnaire. A major theme emerged: Japan as the main set in manga stories and manga as a mirror of Japan. Below I present some representative answers, grouped according to the main themes I could identify. The answers are associated to some relevant data of the related respondent: gender, age, family situation, level of school/college education, job/study situation, profession of the father (occasionally also that of the mother is indicated, if considered relevant). All answers have been translated into English from Italian, or German, or French. A *Leitmotiv* of all these comments could be summed up in the concept of an '*imagined* ['imaginary'] Japan' (Rafoni 2004, Sabre 2006), a concentrate of stereotypes and prejudices mixed with more realistic and reality-based notions.

### **Relationships with Manga and a Imaginary Japan among Fans in the Open Questions of the First Survey**

#### **A. Relationships with Japan**

##### **a) Japan as a Life Destination**

• *Female, 30 y.o., in family, high school graduate, employed as graphic designer*

Japan is the only place where I would like to live and I can really say that, being 30 years old already. The Japanese are very much like me in their way of thinking, they respect very much their neighbours, are polite, are civilized. The perfect opposite of Italians and Italy overall.

• *Female, 18 y.o., in family, professional school graduate, unemployed, father: hotel manager*

I wish I were born in Japan. Downthere, social life is so much easier because when you are still at school there are so many chances to get a job, using school uniforms is one of the finest things because so ALL are like the same... it seems to me that relationships with others are easier...

## b) Japan as a Complex, Contradictory Place

- *Female, 19 y.o., in family, high school graduate, university student, father: bank employee*

Japan is a nation technologically more advanced than the West. Apparently, it hence appears more vital and very advanced for what concerns justice. But this is just a surface image: that is, everything in Japan is about appearance. Inside their daily life, every person struggles to be someone, and not to just live their lives. In Japan the greater good is more important than the individual, and this makes that society exist as we know it; and this brings to a 'killing' of the individual, which is both a psychological and a social death for those who are not able to keep up with machines.

- *Female, 17 y.o., in family, high school student, father: public servant*

Perhaps there is in Japan the highest number of maniacs, given all these idols and all these dirty magazines... I would say that in Japan there is this atmosphere... <\_< ' ... but I don't know if I'm wrong.

## c) Wrong about Japan: the Belief to Understand Japan through Manga

- *Female, 14 y.o., in family, high school student, father: chartered accountant*

Japan is a bizarre country, it is free, and there are not even those prejudices people have in daily life in our countries [in Europe], they accept others as they are, for example homosexuals [...].

- *Female, 16 y.o., in family, high school student, father: craftsman*

Japan, in my opinion, can be defined as one of the few countries capable to sustain a development without harming [...] wildlife.

## B. Relationships with Manga

## a) Manga as a Bridge to Japan

- *Female, 17 y.o., in family, high school student, father: factory worker*

Manga introduced me to a culture very far from our country, but a culture which, nevertheless, remains mysterious. However, I hope that Japan will be more and more taken into consideration in Italy, but, judging from manga sales, I guess this process is still ongoing... who knows if certain prejudices will ever vanish.

- *Female, 18 y.o., in family, high school student, father: policeman (and mother: school teacher)*

I see Japan as a fantastic, compelling world, like a twister which kidnapped and conquered me. All of this happened thanks to the passion for manga, which gave birth to my interest and curiosity for the Japanese universe, a curiosity which has soon become a passion. Now I have approached all the aspects of the language and the culture, and I have even changed my field of study. Today, after almost six years reading manga, I have a new dream... I want to reach my wonderland, the mythical country of the rising sun, where I hope I will spend a big part of my life.

#### b) Manga from Entertainment to Deep Passion

• *Female, 20 y.o., in family, high school graduate, university student, father: university professor*

Since I began to read manga and to know Japanese culture, I found a true passion to dip in (unlike previous hobbies). It is a fantastic, compelling world, and I find it is very educational: I am just sorry that many consider manga as childish comics.

• *Female, 22 y.o., in family, high school graduate, university student, father: businessman*

I believe art is a mirror of society. Manga is a typically oriental art, but in such a globalized world society as well is getting orientalized, so that we can read manga and get astonished about how Japan is different from Europe in its traditions and habits, but at the same time very similar for what concerns the problems of today's society.

• *Female, 16 y.o., in family, high school student, father: chartered accountant*

Manga is a world of its own, it cannot be understood by those who are full of prejudices, and above all, too mediocre. [Manga], besides being a true form of art, can trigger every kind of emotions, help creativity to develop and, this is really something, sometimes (but beware not to fall in a sickness/obsession) it can save you from situations which could drive anyone crazy.

#### c) Manga as a Help in One's Own Life

• *Female, 14 y.o., in family, high school student, father: hospital technician*

Manga is often seen as a thing for children, but it hosts very deep themes. [...] I'd have many things to say, but I don't know well how to express them. If I put them out, then, I feel like I am trivializing them. I began to love manga when I was 11 and was about to be 12. Manga helped me to overcome a bad period and, even though it seems a little stupid, it saved

me from sinking in a totally empty space, for it made me open my eyes and made me understand that what I used to see around me was not the only thing in this world.

- *Male, 14 y.o., in family, high school student, father: truck driver*

Thanks to manga I have understood many things about life.

- *Female, 18 y.o., high school graduate, university student, father: profession not declared*

Manga is a special thing to me. My life would have not been the same without it: after all, it is a part of me, a part of me which I hope I will never deny.

Data of this kind have been collected from France, Italy, Germany, Slovenia. The research is currently under further implementation. Let me also add that our work was, from 2009 to 2014, not funded by any institution. New results will be presented from 2016.

Here I present a starting comparative analysis between Italy and France, with a data set of 1,071 cases, collected between Autumn 2010 and Spring 2011 and digitally inputed in early 2012<sup>27</sup>. Italy and France are the two countries whose data input has been completed so far. In the months to come, thanks to my current assignment as a JSPS research fellow, I will manage to complete the data input from the other national samples I will include in the research<sup>28</sup>.

A few words on the methodological aspects of this second survey. We built two questionnaires: one for respondents who declared to be manga readers, and one for respondents who declared not to read manga. The questionnaire for readers – very similar in its structure and questions to the questionnaire used in the first survey – was significantly longer than the

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<sup>27</sup> I warmly thank the members of the Italian website Animeclick.it (specialized in news and criticism on manga and anime) and the NewType Media non-profit cultural association, for their digital inputing of the Italian questionnaires: Francesco Belloni, Alberto Centioli, Lara Dalla Valle, Renato Pappadà, Valeria Russo. For the data input of a part of the French questionnaires I heartfully thank Guillaume Makowski (France) and Carla Mossolin (Italy).

<sup>28</sup> On this occasion I would like to cite and thank in particular Prof. Bernd Dolle-Weinkauff (J. W. Goethe Universität, Frankfurt/Main), one of the three pillars of the Manga Network, for his work on the German sample, and Ms Katarina Kunstelij (BA in Japanology at the University of Ljubljana in 2013) for her effort with the Slovenian sample. Their national samples, and those from other countries, will be digitally processed in the close future.

questionnaire for non-readers, but the questions in the latter were also included in the former. Thus we were able to carry out a comparative analysis.

The composition of our current sample is as follows. Italian readers: 205; French readers: 553; Italian non-readers: 37; French non-readers: 276. Total number of readers: 758; total number of non-readers: 313. The aforementioned practical difficulties have produced at the present time a smaller sample in Italy. Male readers are in total 49.2% of the sample, female readers 50.8%; the age cohorts of the respondents are as follows: children (6–12 y.o.): 1.4%; adolescents (13–20): 50.0%; young adults (21–30): 38.7%; adults (31–45): 7.9%; old adults (more than 46 years of age): 1.7%<sup>29</sup>.

I will here display my initial statistical tests, driven by a set of basic research questions. These research questions will deserve a multivariate analysis, but in any ideal path of statistical investigation the first step is the presentation of the overall scenario.

#### 4. Basic Research Questions from the 2010–2012 Survey

The basic questions we wanted to be answered were the following:

- 1) *what are the notions of manga among manga non-readers?*
- 2) *what are the differences in the notions of Japan among manga readers and non-readers?*
- 3) and, as cumulative questions: *can we observe specific trends related to such notions?, and if so, in correlation to which main socio-demographical independent variables?*

The main independent variables we selected are gender and age cohort; and in this initial phase of the analysis, the first factor we wanted to look into was that of 'being vs. not being a manga reader'. It was observed that the reading of manga has an impact upon the perception of Japan among readers: manga readers think of Japan less in terms of stereotypes than non-readers. But we also had to check if this variable changes according to nationality.

To explore these issues, the questionnaire presented two sets of questions:

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<sup>29</sup> For what concerns the means of selection of the samples, please refer to our publications related to the first phase of the research project: the criteria are the same. Namely, cf. Bouissou et al. 2010.



1) a set of questions with lists of pre-formulated concepts and dimensions regarding manga and Japan among which the respondents had to choose – this set of questions is the same as in the questionnaire of the first survey;

2) open questions asking for free definitions on manga and on Japan.

The open questions were the most significant novelty in the questionnaires of the second phase; they required the classification and codification of each single word written by the respondents. The words on manga and on Japan emergent from the survey are very revealing not only in themselves, but also with respect to the choice of words and the frequency by which some of them surfaced. I have created a set of dimensions for both the categories 'Japan' and 'Manga'. The words have been put into each one of these dimensions, according to their meaning. The lists of words count about 170 items for the Japan list and 150 for the Manga list (synonyms have been assigned one single numeric code). The request of writing free words on manga was made only in the questionnaire for non-readers: we were interested the most in what non-readers think of manga and what concepts they associate manga with. Regarding manga readers, the same question seemed to us less interesting at this time.

I have operationalized seven dimensions related to the notions about manga.

- 1<sup>st</sup> dimension: *genres, characters and authors*;
- 2<sup>nd</sup> dimension: *links between manga and other media* (i.e. anime and video games);
- 3<sup>rd</sup> dimension: *public discourse on manga*;
- 4<sup>th</sup> dimension: *linguistic features of manga*;
- 5<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> dimensions: *notions and imagery coming from manga* (of positive/neutral/negative kind).

The dimensions for the images of Japan originally classified by us were 16 (as in Bouissou 2012), which for this article I have further re-grouped and operationalized into 6; but in this case the dimensions were created *ex ante*, that is, on the basis of our starting hypotheses:

- 1<sup>st</sup> dimension: *Japan's pop culture*;
- 2<sup>nd</sup> dimension: *traditional and exotic Japan*;
- 3<sup>rd</sup> dimension: *Japan in war and crisis*;
- 4<sup>th</sup> dimension: *modern and seducing Japan*;
- 5<sup>th</sup> dimension: *life and values in Japan*;
- 6<sup>th</sup> dimension: *Japanese language and other*.

## 5. The First Main Results from the 2010–2012 Survey

The most frequent words related to manga deal with one category: manga as a bridge to other worlds, seen under a descriptive light. Table 1 shows the definitions pertaining to manga as a cauldron of features related to visual storytelling, genres, characters and authors.

**Table 1. The six words manga non-readers think of when they read the word 'manga'. Recodification into thematic areas and incidence of the words written by respondents to each area. General frequencies (Column %; N=270; Missing=43)**

	%
Genres, characters and authors	14.3
Links to other media (anime and video games)	7.4
Public discourse on manga	7.2
Linguistic features of manga	18.4
Ideas and imagery coming from manga / neutral	29.6
Ideas and imagery coming from manga / negative	11.8
Ideas and imagery coming from manga / positive	11.3

The crossing of these indexes with gender does not show strong changes in the overall picture. We can observe that women tend more than men to include manga in the framework of imagery and languages, while men in that of genres, characters and authors (Table 2).

**Table 2. The six words manga non-readers think of when they read the word 'manga' according to gender. General frequencies (Column %; N=270; Missing=43)**

Thematic areas	Gender (%)	
	Male	Female
Genres, characters and authors	17.5	10.9
Links to other media (anime and video games)	9.4	5.3
Public discourse on manga	6.0	8.2
Linguistic features of manga	17.3	19.2

Thematic areas	Gender (%)	
	Male	Female
Ideas and imagery coming from manga / neutral	28.2	31.6
Ideas and imagery coming from manga / negative	9.8	13.9
Ideas and imagery coming from manga / positive	11.8	10.9

The situation does not vary at all when the independent variable tested is age (Table 3). With the increase of age, there is a decreasing tendency to consider manga in terms of genres, characters and authors; the same tendency is noticed in relation to themes concerning the public discourse on manga. Furthermore, let us note how adults and old adults respond to manga's language and imagery: these two subgroups more often recognize manga's nature as a visual language and tend to assign to it neutral or positive imaginative features.

**Table 3. The six words manga non-readers think of when they read the word 'manga' according to age. General frequencies (Column %; N=268; Missing=45)**

Thematic areas	Age cohort (%)			
	Teen-agers (13-20)	Young adults (21-30)	Adults (31-45)	Old adults (46>)
Genres, characters and authors	15.6	14.0	12.0	5.7
Links to other media (anime and video games)	5.3	10.2	11.8	5.4
Public discourse on manga	7.9	7.0	5.3	3.3
Linguistic features of manga	17.2	16.6	14.3	17.0
Ideas and imagery coming from manga / neutral	30.2	30.2	37.1	28.7
Ideas and imagery coming from manga / negative	13.7	11.2	4.8	13.7
Ideas and imagery coming from manga / positive	10.1	10.8	14.7	26.2

The core of this outlook is the respondents' image of Japan (Table 4). For what concerns this topic, the independent variables to be used in this earlier phase were gender and age cohort. Here the most interesting and relevant difference is among male and female respondents, in the non-readers sample, for what concerns Japan seen as a traditional and exotic place: 28.1% of men and 54.9% of women. It is a steady correlation, as also stated by a good value of the Pearson's  $X^2$  – that is, the coefficient of correlation, a value which measures the significance and 'strength' of the correlation between two variables.

There are some relevant differences between Italy and France for what concerns the notions of Japan, both in general and according to gender. First of all, in Italy the dominant idea of Japan is the traditional/exotic one (45.4%, vs. 19.0% of the pop-cultural framing), while in France the dominant notion is the pop-cultural one (47.3%, vs. 36.2% of the classic/exotic framing). Within the national samples, this is the situation: in Italy, the pop-cultural framing is selected by 21.7% of men and 11.9% of women, while in France by 37.1% of men and 35.0% of women; the traditional/exotic framing is selected in Italy by 44.2% of men and 45.0% of women, in France by 27.8% of men and 42.4% of women. This means that in France (and slightly in Italy) women frame Japan more as a traditional/exotic culture than men; and, while in France there is a balance between genders for what concerns the pop-cultural framing, in Italy almost the double of men over women see Japan in its pop-cultural features. The other relevant framing, Japan in war and crisis, shows that men are more inclined to see Japan this way (Italy: 8.5% males, 3.7% females; France: 10.6% and 6.0%).

**Table 4. The six words manga readers and non-readers think of when they read the word 'Japan'. Recodification into thematic areas and incidence of the words written by respondents to each area, according to gender (Column %; N=1066; Missing=5)**

Image of Japan: thematic areas	Gender			Pearson's $X^2$
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)	
<b>Japan's pop culture</b>				1.120
Readers	38.8	37.3	38.1	
Non-readers	16.4	16.8	16.7	

Image of Japan: thematic areas	Gender			Pearson's X <sup>2</sup>
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)	
Traditional and exotic Japan				
Readers	33.0	36.7	34.7	13.952
Non-readers	28.1	54.9	43.9	
Japan in war and crisis				
Readers	7.1	4.2	5.7	7.682
Non-readers	19.5	9.2	12.8	
Modern and seducing Japan				
Readers	9.8	9.5	9.7	0.0
Non-readers	15.6	14.7	15.1	
Life and values in Japan				
Readers	3.0	3.6	3.3	0.74
Non-readers	2.3	2.2	2.2	
Japanese language and other				
Readers	0.5	2.2	1.3	3.455
Non-readers	0.0	0.0	0.0	

Finally, let us see the thematic areas in which Japan is framed according to age (Table 5). The counterposition 'Japan framed as a pop culture vs. Japan framed as a traditional and exotic culture' is relevantly correlated to the age of manga readers from childhood to adult life: with the increase of the age, respondents see Japan's culture less as a pop culture and more as a traditional culture and an exotic place. Non-readers tend to see Japan mostly and always in a traditional and exotic fashion, irrespective of their age. In this case, it appears already from these simple statistical tests how the reading of manga may influence the framing of Japan between the two poles pop/traditional. The other dimensions appear marginal, nor show neat, linear correlations.



There are two last observations, which do not need any further cross-table here.

First: both in France and Italy, apart from some small exceptions, we could notice comparable trends in the three main framings of Japan (pop culture, traditional/exotic culture, war and crisis) according to age group: with the increase of age, the tendency to describe Japan in terms of pop culture and in terms of war events decreases; on the contrary, the traditional/exotic framing increases. Pop-cultural framing: children (Italy 100.0%, France 61.5%), teens (It 20.8%, Fr 37.1%), young adults (It 18.4%, Fr 34.2%), adults (It 8.0%, Fr 31.4%), old adults (It 10.0%, Fr 25.0%); traditional/exotic framing: children (It 0.0%, Fr 23.1%), teens (It 39.6%, Fr 33.5%), young adults (It 44.7%, Fr 36.0%), adults (It 48.8%, Fr 57.1%), old adults (It 5.0%, Fr 62.5%); war/crisis framing: children (It 0.0%, Fr 0.0%), teens (It 8.3%, Fr 8.6%), young adults (It 5.3%, Fr 7.5%), adults (It 8.0%, Fr 11.4%), old adults (It 10.0%, Fr 12.5%). Although the general pattern of the pop-cultural framing is higher in the French sample and that of the traditional/exotic one is higher in Italy (there are no relevant differences about the war/crisis framing in the two samples), the trends are similar.

The second observation applies to the education variable. While, in general, manga was regarded more or less neutrally as a cauldron of imageries and ideas, with the increase of the education level manga was considered rather a carrier of non-dangerous ideas and imagination. The strength of this correlation was supported by high values of the Pearson's coefficient. On the contrary, the framing of manga as a language does not depend on the education level.

## **6. Final Remarks**

First of all, concerning the notions of manga among non-readers: the ideas emerging are generally descriptive and positive. That is, 'positive' in their not being negative. This, combined with the qualitative data I had already collected (Pellitteri 2010: 497–513), shows the powerful permeation of manga, and of the notion of manga as a reading form among others, in the Italian and French social-cultural contexts. Both countries have seen in the past 30 years three generations of readers approaching manga: the third generation is today in its teen age and is growing up in a culture where many art festivals and conventions on Japan and manga are yearly organized. The domestication of manga as a cultural form has almost

reached its accomplishment, thanks to a co-presence of factors which include anime on television and in theatres: among the terms chosen to define manga, many non-readers wrote words like 'Miyazaki', 'Lupin the 3<sup>rd</sup>' and others which, in the perception of French and Italian fans and also in the public discourse, are much more related to anime than to manga.

Concerning the images of Japan, it appears that the very same stereotypes and cultural framings are at play both among non-readers and readers. This means, in a few words, that the history of manga in these two countries has given rise to correct notions of this medium among non-readers, while at the same time manga itself has not led manga readers to frame Japan in alternative ways with respect to old stereotypes and clichés.

On the one hand, we can infer that stereotypes and framings of Japan coming from outside the world of manga are still widespread: in mainstream media, in journalism, in the public discourse. But on the other hand, attention should be drawn to what kinds of 'Japans' are represented in the manga titles published in Europe, since assiduous manga readers reproduce in their perceptions the very same representations of Japan as manga non-readers do. We could provisionally say that the cultural power of manga is self-referential: manga sales are good, manga is 'cool' and a matter of discussion among fans and also in the mainstream media, but it appears that the cultural and commercial power of a typically Japanese product, such as manga, does not always coincide with 'soft power', at least not in the way Japan as a national culture and a people are perceived at large. Now, the concept of soft power, as introduced by Joseph E. Nye (1990), refers to the influence exerted – willingly or not – by the cultural system of a given nation onto the policies of foreign nations in regard of that very nation. It explains the impact of US culture on foreign policy of nations under the United States' area of influence. Its application to the popularity of Japanese popular culture abroad and to the 'cultural diplomacy' recently carried out by the Japanese government is more problematic. It is being discussed in the fields of Japanese studies, comparative media studies and international relations (Leheny 2006, Bouissou 2006, Lam 2007, Otmazgin 2008).

What of course emerges, in our investigation, among readers by comparison to non-readers, especially in the interviews, is a recognizable benevolence and indulgence to an abstract idea of Japan, simply because Japan is the land where manga come from. In this sense, some could infer that a slight and localized soft power is in action, but then we should introduce a new definition of soft power; at least, when speaking about Japanese pop culture.



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## ***Ijime*. Definition and Images in Contemporary Japanese Cinema and TV Production**

### Abstract

The article deals from few thematic fields: sociology, education and cultural studies with a topic that is *ijime* – bullying in Japanese schools. The definitions of the phenomenon, its types and possible causes will be followed by analysis of a few chosen works of Japanese film and television production. I will analyse the way *ijime* is depicted in these works. The following findings are an effect of research conducted during a 6-month scholarship funded by Japan Foundation in Kansai Institute in Japan in the academic year 2013–2014.

*Ijime* is a significant element of Japanese school reality and one of the main problems still corroding the education system. What I found especially interesting was the regularity with which this motif appeared in various works of Japanese popular culture. It might even seem that if there is a school-themed story or a story about youth/school-children, there is very big chance that there will appear *ijime*. It might be a main theme but usually it is a side topic, e.g. in the form of a retrospective.

### Definitions

There is no one definition of bullying. The most general definition states that

Bullying is the use of force, threat, or coercion to abuse, intimidate, or aggressively impose domination over others. The behavior is often repeated and habitual<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bullying> (accessed 21.07.2014).

An important prerequisite is the perception of an imbalance of social or physical power. Such behaviours can be justified and rationalized by differences of class, race, religion, gender, sexuality, appearance, behavior, body language, personality, etc. There are three main types of bullying – emotional (psychological), verbal and physical. A bullying culture can develop in any context in which human beings interact with each other. This includes school, family, the workplace, home and neighborhoods.

A Japanese sociologist Youji Morita had researched bullying in the 1980 and formulated the definition as:

A type of aggressive behaviour by (which) someone who holds a dominant position in a group-interaction process, by intentional or collective acts, causes mental and/or physical suffering to another inside a group (Morita 1985: 21).

Another researcher, however, claims that the Japanese meaning of *ijime* does not exactly correlate with the English term *bullying*. Maturu Taki claims that the most important element is not the position of physically stronger individual or power imbalance. According to Taki the power comes from the relations within the group, not particular traits of character. This results in the fact that the division of the one bullying and being bullied is not constant and might change within the group. Victims of bullying usually know their perpetrators and are being pulled into a situation of a power imbalance. Taki also stresses that in the Japanese context mental suffering inflicted on weaker individuals is to be more cruel and harder to bear than physical violence. And exactly for this reason this kind of bullying is supposed to be the main goal of Japanese bullies. This also constitutes the main difference between *ijime* and violence (Taki 2003).

Another element of *ijime* definition that according to Taki differs in the Western and Eastern approach is the power imbalance in a group. An often cited Norwegian researcher of bullying Dan Olweus wrote that bullying occurs when a person is “exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons” and when “a person initially inflicts injury or discomfort upon another person, through physical contact, through words or in other ways” (OLWEUS Bullying Prevention Program). But this “power imbalance” is not an enough factor to define certain behaviours as *ijime* because the division of power within a group is not always apparent or stable. It can vary depending on characteristics of persons in the group or a situation. The more the members of a group are unsure of their power, the easier a slight shift in the power division may cause bullying.

Thus, Maki defines *ijime* as following:

*Ijime* is a mean behaviour or a negative attitude that has clear intention to embarrass or humiliate others who occupy weaker positions in a same group. It is assumed to be a dynamic used to keep or recover one's dignity by aggrieving others. Consequently, its main purpose is to inflict mental suffering on others, regardless of the form such as physical, verbal, psychological and social (Taki 2003: 4).

Moreover, Taki mentions three necessary factors for *ijime* to occur, or more precisely, to categorize certain actions as *ijime*. They are: a relatively small group of members that perceive themselves as equal; imbalance of power and the fluidity of bully – bullied roles; frequency of victimization (Taki 2003: 6).

The above cited definition is the closest to the Japanese bullying and thus will be of most use during following analysis. However, we should bear in mind that this sociological definition will not cover all possible aspects of *ijime* and the necessary factors will not always be fulfilled in various fictional pop-cultural works.

## Reasons and Structure

The possible reasons of *ijime* is a wide and complex topic. That is why I will present only one of the theories in this article. The findings I would like to cite here belong to an Australian sociologist of Japanese descent, Tamaki Mino (2006: 1).

Mino claims that the indirect reason of bullying in Japan is its social structure based on collectivism and homogeneity. The group is the superior and most important structure. Social homogeneity lies in the heart of Japanese education, as it provides necessary rules and principles needed to shape certain attitudes and behaviours among children. The training in group life necessitates two essential principles, 'participation' and 'co-operation', which arise in order to enforce and maintain order of group conformity. As Edward Ben-Acri states, "to develop 'normally' a Japanese child *must* be part of a group. She or he *must* participate in group activities [group life] (*shudan seikatsu*)" (Ben-Ari 1997: 45). Attempts are made to ensure that children develop a desire to participate in group activities with others and find enjoyment in that participation. The need for cooperation is also enhanced, and children are trained to become cooperative with others within the group. As tactics to teach children the two princi-

ples, teachers indicate that ‘to behave like everyone else’ is an ideal behaviour, and demonstrate explicit consequences that those who disobey participation or co-operation will be left out of the group.

Trained in group competencies from an early age Japanese learn that a group member who builds and maintains group harmony is a good and respectable person, while someone who is not able to cooperate with others will not be respected and as a result, left alone. This simple dichotomy progresses later when the children enter school. A Japanese junior high or a high-school student can independently take care of group harmony and, if situation demands it, to execute order and balance. However, according to Mino, this is where the dark side of group conformity lies:

What systematically emerges in such a school environment is a certain degree of peer control and peer group pressure involved in social interactions among children, who compete between one another to demonstrate their competence for uniformity. *Ijime* is the manifestation of the excessive zeal for uniformity, reflected as a dark side of group attitudes and behaviour in peer socialisation which requires the elimination of those who are different (Mino 2006: 2).

In a situation when an individual who is not willing or not able to conform to group’s rules, or in any other way “different” from the majority, he or she might be treated as a threat. The students might punish such an individual without teachers’ participation. Such punishment may include ignoring and leaving such a person out of a group which may lead to other forms of bullying.

The structure of *ijime* remains fairly constant. As Mino stresses, it is usually a “group against one” dynamics. *Ijime* occurs when there are more than three people interacting. Usually four groups might be distinguished: the bully, acting as the main perpetrator (*ijimekko*), the victim (*ijimerarekko*) who the target of victimization, the audience encouraging or participating in bullying (*kanshuu*) and the passive bystanders (*boukansha*) who observe or pretend not to see anything.

## Analysis

While conducting research in Japan Foundation Kansai Institute it drew my attention that school stories are very common in Japanese popular culture, both in terms of various media and genres and styles. This fact stroke me as especially interesting and this is why I focused on analyzing



three very different works. In the following paragraphs I will briefly introduce them and present findings of my research.

When it comes to methodology, I will use the tools of film analysis. I will focus on a very narrow area presented in the films – acts of bullying. However, the rules of film analysis will come useful as research tools. I will analyse mainly the circumstances and social background of *ijime* phenomenon, that is – the school environment (public or private, elite or common, junior high or high school, etc). Then I will analyse reasons of *ijime* shown and its effects. The information about main characters that will be very important are: sex, age, background, economic and social family status, character, reasons and reactions. As *ijime* is a group phenomenon, group relations will be also interesting to me. Finally, I will look at reactions of teachers and parents.

One should note that the style of the works (cinematography, sound, music, light, etc.) will be of less concern in this analysis. Even more so, as two of the three analysed works are television productions so their aesthetics have a slightly different functions and follow different rules than feature films (Helman 1978: 34–35). The stylistic layer will be a result of the genre and type of the work and sometimes will affect the way that *ijime* is perceived.

### **“LIFE” TV series (“Raifu, 2007)**

The story based on manga by Keiko Suenobu is set in a well-known high school. The main character Ayumu initially is friends with the most popular girl in school, Manami. After a while due to a misunderstanding with Manami’s boyfriend, Katsumi, Ayumu is left out of the circle and ignored. The bullying starts to get more and more serious. The harder Ayumu tries to clear the situation, the worse her position becomes.

The real reason of *ijime* is dominating Manami’s will to maintain absolute power within the school. She is ready to use the most cruel and immoral means to succeed. Manami’s usual tools of maintaining power is manipulation and coercion of weaker students. She rarely, however, gets her hands dirty – she uses loyal members of her circle. She is callous and depraved in her actions and feels she can get away with anything.

*LIFE* is the most realistic of the three analysed works. Bullying is the main topic of the series and its image is very drastic. Forms of bullying used by schoolgirls include manipulation, coercion, slander and gossip,

threats, denunciation. Physical types include pouring water on somebody, throwing objects, throwing books or desk through the window. The intensity of *ijime* gradually increases from “subtle” things like taking one’s mascot to definitely serious ones, e.g. making someone swallow pins. Manami’s boyfriend Katsumi, who turns out to suffer from sexual deviations, finds pleasure in abusing restrained and abused girls. He threatens Ayumu and uses physical violence – he stabs her with a pair of compasses. We should stress here that almost all of these acts take place at school.

*LIFE* in a very clear way showcases the mechanism of *ijime* and the delicate structure of power in a class. The leader – popular, pretty, with good grades and from a wealthy family – Manami enjoys total power at school. Manami is a spoiled and corrupt rich girl who uses her charms combined with a ruthless character to reign in school and do what she pleases. Maintaining this power, however, and a stable circle of loyal minions consumes a lot of energy and often reprehensible behaviour. She treats Ayumu’s perseverance to bullying as a challenge and a game. As long as she has her followers, she is strong and self-confident. Her terror lasts long because no one in class is willing to oppose her in fear of being bullied, too. The “differing” individual Ayumu (who is thought to have broken the rule of friendship and date Manami’s boyfriend) is thus excluded from the class and punished.

Creators of the series suggest that the reason of bullying and violence in school lies in pathological family relations and lack of positive role models for students. All the characters are lonely. Manami’s father is a chairman of a company and rarely home, trying to make it up to her with money and presents. Katsumi’s father is Manami’s father’s employee. When Katsumi treats his girlfriend badly, he sets in motion a complicated circle of violence that eventually comes back to him – humiliated and threatened by the chairman, Katsumi’s father regularly beats and abuses his son. Katsumi is blackmailed and cannot end his relationship with Manami. He wears a mask of an arrogant, cool student from a wealthy family but in fact is stressed and scared as everybody else. His bullying Ayumu is just a continuation of the chain of violence. Ayumu’s father is not visible in the series, however the viewer never learns the reason. Ayumu is constantly being compared by her mother to her bright, hard-working younger brother. Her mother is completely unaware of Ayumu’s problems. Her change of behaviour and lower grades are interpreted as lack of engagement and laziness. Teachers tend not to see bullying or choose not to intervene – following the rule that it’s best if students solve their problems among themselves.

This hypocrisy stretches out to the school principal who, to avoid ruining school's reputation, orders to ignore the issue of *ijime*.

There are also other problems depicted in the series, such as domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, alienation and self-mutilation.

### **“Boys over Flowers” TV series (“Hana Yori Dango”, 2005)**

*Boys over Flowers* is a comedy romance TV series based on a popular manga under the same title. Even though *ijime* is not the main theme and can be seen only in the first few episodes, it plays an important role in the narrative and has been presented in an interesting way.

The protagonist is poor Makino attending an elite private school for students from wealthy and respected families. The informal leaders of the school are “F4”, or “Flower Four” – a group of young heirs to Japanese fortunes. Their leader is the conceited Tsukasa who acts as tyrant in the school. To kill boredom they randomly choose a victim from within the students and bully him/her. As a result of a misunderstanding, Makino becomes their next target. She is proud to be as strong and persistent as a weed<sup>2</sup>, so she takes *ijime* as a challenge and does not succumb to Tsukasa's bullying. This only makes matters worse. Astonished and furious with her bravado and arrogance, Tsukasa intensifies the bullying. However, with time he comes to appreciate the strange, stubborn girl and even... fall in love with her.

Bullying presented in *Boys over Flowers* emphasizes humiliating the victim in front of a group. Gatherings resemble public lynchings, where the ruler incites the crowd to violence. Rich, trendy and above school rules “F4” treat it as specific “games” to entertain themselves and the masses – the rest of the school community. The students are afraid of the emperor-like Tsukasa and ready to fulfill his wishes or orders.

The comedy form of the series makes the otherwise violent scenes of bullying seem less serious. They encompass the “usual” throwing things, making fun of or placing rubbish in victim's locker. However, when it comes to Makino, the bullying gets much more serious, as in the scene where angry Tsukasa nearly makes her lick his shoes in front of the whole school or when he sends some students to rape her.

There is no doubt that the most interesting and compelling element of the story is the contrast between Makino's and Tsukasa's characters. Her

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<sup>2</sup> Makino's last name, Tsukushi, means „weed” in Japanese.

stubbornness and pride in spite of poverty and his spoiled, over-the-top self-confidence and arrogance make them an unconventional couple and thus, their romance all the more entertaining. Bullying is used as a rather uncommon narrative tool to set off characters' love affair.

Keeping in mind the reasons of bullying mentioned in the previous chapter, we need to admit that they find little proof in the case of *Boys over Flowers*. F4 group does not need to worry about losing power or even any sort of imbalance, because they reign the school autonomously. *Ijime* is not a tool to maintain power or to defense mechanism, but a mere game to entertain themselves. When Makino becomes the target, the situation shifts. She is the first one to actively oppose Tsukasa and fight the bullying. The F4 leader punishes her for insolence and to save his face in front of the school community.

### “Confessions” (“Kokuhaku”, 2010)

Tatsuya Nakashima's *Confessions* is the most unique work analysed here. It is an awarded feature film based on a best-selling novel by Kanae Minato. It is by far a very ambitious and challenging work. *Ijime* is one of the themes in the film.

A starting pointing for the story is a monologue of Moriguchi in front of her class on the last day of school – and last day of her work. Her daughter has died in an accident that happened at the school. But Moriguchi has another opinion – she claims that she was murdered by two students from her class, and she knows who did it. Instead of revealing boys' identity straight away, she dubs them “Boy A” and “Boy B” and slowly reveals the horrible and chilling story of her daughter's death.

Pupils have little trouble with identifying the culprits and after an initial shock start to punish the boys in their own, specific way. They ignore and alienate them from the class, gossip and slander them. They retreat to new technologies, badmouthing and encouraging one another to further bullying via mobile messages and Internet forums. They use physical violence, too – they brutally force Boy A and a sympathizing girl to kiss. In result of *ijime* Boy B stops coming to school and suffers from a nervous breakdown. He becomes a *hikikomori*<sup>3</sup> and refuses to leave his room. Classmates bully

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<sup>3</sup> Full term *shakaiteki hikikomori* (jap.) – lit. social withdrawal; a situation of a social withdrawal of a young person when he/she stays in one's room, avoids any human contact and maintains contact with the outside world by means of Internet.

him treacherously even there by camouflaging the sentence “Die, killer!” on a “get well soon” card. Boy B kills his mother in a fury. Mentally stronger and exceptionally smart Boy A does not react to bullying and plans a bitter revenge on the whole school. But he will learn that Moriguchi had perversely caused him the most suffering.

The image of bullying shown in *Confessions* is unique firstly because of its extraordinary structure. The teacher, even though ruthless and wanting revenge, does not harm anyone directly. She instigates the rest of the class with her confessions though and makes them start bullying Boy A and Boy B. *Ijime* is thus a pre-planned side effect natural to the school environment. Many decisions and actions in the film are morally ambivalent. Moriguchi’s actions, despite being driven by pain and loss, are cruel and perverse. She exercises no leniency towards the murderers because of their young age; she manipulates them to achieve what she had planned. The students, terrified that two murderers are amongst them, take teachers words for granted without doubt or second thought. Bullying appears as a natural defense mechanism of majority against a fearful minority as well as a punishment for a serious crime. In this situation the power division seems natural, because it depends on the widely accepted school hierarchy student – teacher. What is shocking though, is the way Moriguchi abuses this power in order to fulfil her revenge – calm, perverse, emotionless.

We never learn the opinion of the majority of the class, shown in *Confessions* as a faceless crowd. The privilege of voicing the titular confessions is reserved to only few characters. Each version of the story, not unlike in Kurosawa’s *Rashomon*, influences the way in we perceive and interpret the whole story. It’s no longer obvious whose version is true; can anything be true anyway? Truth is a fleeting and ambiguous notion.

Nakashima’s distinctive, rich style makes for a very intriguing element of the film. Highly aestheticized, deep-blue visuals, attention to detail, theatre-inspired use of light paired with slow motion photography and suggestive, melancholic score by Radiohead create a truly unique viewing experience. Scenes of *ijime* shot in a dark video-clip stylistics are beautiful, but all the more unreal. The whole film seems unreal and too cool. Main characters seem eerily serious and mature. *Confessions* is stylistically satisfying and narratively compelling but these very elements make it difficult for the viewer to fully engage in the story. Moriguchi’s revenge, even though sophisticated and cruel, cannot resonate completely.

## Conclusions

The above analysis of three works and viewing of several others has resulted in first conclusions regarding the topic of depiction of *ijime* in contemporary Japanese film and TV production.

It is beyond doubt that it's a very common theme in stories about school and students. There is a wide variety of media and genres – comic, novel, feature film, TV series. It is commonly one of the plots of the narrative and is referred to in dialogues between school students. Thus, it is a constant element of the social landscape of a Japanese school.

The structure of bullying described by Mino is clearly visible in the analysed examples. The dominant leader encourages a certain behaviour in a group. He/she is usually surrounded by faithful followers (*LIFE*, *Boys over Flowers*) rather than acts alone (*Confessions*). The leader incites to bully but rarely escapes to violence himself. The followers blindly trust the leader and fulfill his every wish and order (*LIFE*); they are usually the most active ones. The third group in this structure is the co-called “rest of the class” – encouraging or sometimes participating in bullying. Ignoring the victim is usually paired with jokes and gossip whispered or passed around on a piece of paper. Some of the students in this group act this way out of desire to belong and be accepted. On the other hand, they might fear social ostracism and, in turn, being bullied themselves. The last group comprises of few people passively observing the bullying but not participating. They are usually sensitive and shy individuals who see the evil but choose not to react, just like Makino (*Boys over Flowers*) or Sonoda (*LIFE*) in the beginning. In both cases they become the target of *ijime*. In such a power division in a class the victim is left completely alone and has nowhere to seek help from.

Certain character types emerge, too. The victim is usually good, sincere and with a strong system of values. They are intellectually average and not very wealthy, but always represent traits desired by Japanese: diligence, truthfulness, perseverance. Both Makino and Ayumu cannot reconcile themselves to brutal school reality and oppose it. In spite of intensifying acts of *ijime*, they both repeat obstinately “*Makenai!*” (Jap. “I won’t be defeated!”). The class leader and at the same time the one motivating others, is often – contrary to what American researchers claim – a straight-A student from good or wealthy families, liked and respected by peers and teachers. In comedic “*Boys over Flowers*” this high social status is exaggerated and described in a grotesque manner – towards the

F4 leader Tsukasa students show the respect and fear, while girls – fear mixed with admiration. However, both Tsukasa and Manami from “LIFE” are with pampered and arrogant children of rich parents convinced about their power and special position at school.

There are a few effects of bullying in the aforementioned examples – from isolating from a peer group and loss of self-esteem, to depression and psychological problems, to violence and extreme forms of social withdrawal (*hikikomori*). Seemingly harmless stress influences students’ studies and destroys family relations. A more thorough analysis of closer and more distant effects of school abuse requires more extensive sociological-cultural examinations of a greater amount of source materials. Yet, it is possible to formulate some preliminary observations based on the work analysed here.

It can be said without doubt that *ijime* influences negatively the relations between students, as well as between students and adults. One of the most common direct effects is an increased level of stress, mood disorders or depression, as well as withdrawal from the group or class. A good example here can be the taciturn Sonoda from “LIFE” who after traumatic experiences at his previous school prefers to limit contacts with peers to a minimum. In radical cases fear or shame prevent student from having any contacts with peers and they retreat from social life. They become a *hikikomori*, as Boy B (“Confessions”). A frequent effect of *ijime* is violence – both directed towards the weaker children in the form of bullying, as well as towards oneself. Suicide is an extreme case of auto-violence, still collecting a big toll amongst young people in Japan.

When it comes to reactions to the phenomenon of *ijime*, adults very often do not notice or react to signals of students. Teachers do not want to admit that in their class there is such a problem, because it would show lack of pedagogic abilities and respect of pupils. That is why they pretend not see it or choose not to interfere in matters between pupils, like the teacher in “LIFE” series. When the director learns about the bullying, he firmly denies the existence of such a problem and forbids any action. Problem of *ijime* would harm the prestige of the school. On the other side, there are parents of bullying and bullied children. Parents rarely believe that their beloved kids could bully (Manami’s father) or even kill someone, even if there is evidence to it (blinded by maternal love Boy B’s mother). It is not easy for the victims either. Neither Makino, nor Ayumu want to openly admit the fact that they became victims of abuse. Mother of the latter doesn’t notice that something worrying is happening to her daughter;



she sees the cause of her worse school grades in Ayumu's laziness. The lack of the communication and trust on the side of adults make *ijime* victims feel left alone and retreat even more out of social contacts.

The results of this preliminary research clearly show that *ijime* is a common problem in Japanese schools and is often depicted in pop cultural works devoted to the school. There are various genres among them: love stories, social dramas, comedies and horror. Regardless of the genre or kind, however, *ijime* has a significant place in school reality. Even though according to statistics the amount of reported cases of *ijime* is lower than in the nineties (Yoneyama 1999: 158), it still remains a serious social issue and film and television productions reflect this situation – fictionally, but certainly realistically.

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# **Tourism in Japan Reconsidered: Exploring the Link Between Everyday Life and Domestic Tourism**

## **Abstract**

In the anthropological studies regarding the tourist practices in Japan it has been insistently argued that the main motivation channeling the tourism industry is based on a feeling of dissolution of the cultural identity. This anxiety culminating with the profit incentive manifest itself through tourism campaigns, pamphlets, brochures which in turn give shape to the tourist experience. However this kind of arguments do not offer an insight into why Japanese show an interest in or emotionally react to certain things. In addition to that, contrary to the studies positioning tourist activities as an opposite of everyday life practices, this study aims to go beyond this dichotomy in order to give a better understanding of the Japanese travel culture.

## **Introduction**

The studies depicting tourist activities as a consumption pattern usually interpret them as an alternative to everyday life practices (Berger 2010, Graburn 1977: 17–31, Smith 1977: 21–36, MacCannell 1976, Nash & Smith 1991: 12–25, Urry 1990: 2). At the same time, within the tourist activities and tourism literature, the word “routine” is somehow considered as an unfavourable condition and treated as something that should be avoided at least during travel and tourism. While studies with a theoretical tendency argue that the aim of the tourist activity is abstaining from the redundancies of everyday life, it should be noted that there might always

be some other cultures which does not necessarily interpret each ritual and the patterns continuing in everyday life as 'boring', 'stagnant' and 'estranged'. It can be argued that the everyday experiences in the Japanese context can be rendered as a common perception of a historically constructed social memory which values the ability to be aware of subtle changes in the surrounding, to be able to catch the slightest details and to be able to live without taking for granted the necessities of everyday life.

It might be argued that just like in their everyday life, the awareness of the environmental changes is a meaningful and worthy experience within the travel and sightseeing experiences of the Japanese. In another words, some feelings grounded in the everyday lives are carried to travel and sightseeing activities, too. Both in the everyday life and during travel, seasonal changes arousing the emotions are sought after. When the right time comes, the seasonal changes are being noticed, caught, observed, photographed and even copied. Even beforehand, it is a common practice to anticipate these changes. This anticipation also inspires the imagination in a certain way. The practices which can be felt both while travelling and in everyday practices nowadays, can also found in texts from hundreds years ago. In his famous book *Tsurezuregusa* (1998: 137), Kenkō, the monk living in Kamakura Era (1185–1333 A.D.), mentioned several times these kind of aesthetic perception towards nature. At this point, it makes sense asserting the fact that a theoretical position which draws a line between tourism and everyday life is far from reflecting the experience of Japanese. In this paper I will try to put forward the notion that everyday life practices and tourism practices of the Japanese coincide with each other. Certain examples will be given both from everyday life and tourism practices to support this argument.

A great deal of literature regarding Japan (Creighton 2009: 37–75, Guichard-Angius 2009: 76–102, Oedewald 2009: 105–128) has taken into consideration major trends in the domestic tourism and also the significant qualities of domestic travel culture. In a great many of these studies topics like how the reinvention of culture is repeated by way of tourist practices or how the discourses of nostalgia are constantly repeated so as to redefine a unique Japanese identity are mainly discussed. Usually the tourist campaigns, travel itineraries, sightseeing packages are elaborated on in these kind of studies. In her book *Ivy* while referring to the tourist campaigns of "Discover Japan" and "Exotic Japan" questions "why the trope of travel arises when Japanese national-cultural identity is at stake" (Ivy 1995: 34). While the author presupposes an explicit threat perception on the Japanese side, neither explain the reason of or the motivation be-

hind this threat perception nor reveal the actors who are supposed to feel a certain threat. Furthermore, most of the time it remains unclear whether a motivation to reinvent tradition or an agenda trying to emphasise a certain type of Japanese identity ever reaches its goal. After all it is rather ridiculous to assume that the whole population will respond uniformly to the same stimulus – discourses of such type – each time they are exposed to them, even though we presume the whole population exposed to it at some point. For this reason, it might bring a new dimension to an understanding of travel and tourism culture if one gives a priority to the experience of Japanese tourists at every age and income group respectively.

In addition to this, studies scrutinizing the essences of domestic tourism in Japan, reproduce the main theoretical argument of *The Invention of Tradition* by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983). The articles reproducing Hobsbawm's theory somehow treat "the emphasis on continuity" within Japanese history as a modern invention. On the contrary, it can be argued that this "invention of tradition" is actually a "tradition of invention" within the Japanese context. Japan has always been a loyal follower of Chinese civilization and China has been one of the most experienced civilizations especially in case of "recording history". This tradition made it possible for the rulers of Japan to maintain a feeling of continuity and a kind of security on the land. The Japanese imperial court quickly realised that the power and benefits of such practices like writing and recording is very high. The consciousness formed to record and to preserve was also utilized to transform and maintain the imported practices of the Chinese high court. Throughout the history aesthetic values of the Japanese aristocracy were defined by certain concepts<sup>1</sup>. During Heian Period (794–1185), the tastes reserved to nobility were adopted by the military ruling class, later on they were also adopted by the peasants and after the Meiji restoration expanded to the rest of the society. During the flow of the history, although the content of these concepts have changed, they still seem to have a certain interaction with the contemporary everyday and tourism practices. To the aesthetic values of the ruling classes, the distinctive aesthetic tastes of urban commoners<sup>2</sup> living in Tokyo and Osaka area during

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<sup>1</sup> *Okashi, miyabi, aware, wabi, sabi*. For a more detailed explanation of *okashi, miyabi* and *aware* (Bary 1995: 43–76). For a detailed explanation of *wabi* and *sabi* (Suzuki 2010: 19–36, 329–397; Okakuro 1989: 33–45).

<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed explanation of the tastes acquired by commoners such as *iki* (Shūzō 2006).

Edo Period (1603–1867) can also be added. These concepts which can still be observed within the contemporary popular continues to be influential with certain nuances. Bary (1995: 34) considering the aesthetic values in Japan, highlights the expansion of these values from the nobility to the commoners and finds it quite surprising. By reconsidering all of these evaluations it becomes more likely to understand the travel culture in the Japanese archipelago.

## A Bit of History

During the Sakoku Era<sup>3</sup>, traveling from one domain to another was restricted and was subject to permissions and certain procedures. Within this period, as a part of the Sankin-kōtai<sup>4</sup> system all Daimyōs<sup>5</sup> – with the exception of Satsuma Daimyō<sup>6</sup> – were bound to go from their own domains to Edo with a certain number of samurais under their patronage every other year (Totman 1981: 138–139, 183, 190). By means of this system, certain travel routes have come into prominence. The inns and onsens on the major posts became significant resting and entertainment places for the samurai also increasing the commercial activities of the post town. Furthermore, apart from those bureaucratic trips, by means of travelling monks and poets such as Bashō and pilgrimages to famous shrine and temples the travel culture started acquiring its distinct characteristics. The studies reveal that sole motive of pilgrimages was not purely religious. In another words, what was sought during a pilgrimage was not only a spiritual quest. Therefore, in several studies it has already been highlighted that it is quite impossible to make a distinction between what is sacred and what is profane when travel is the issue (Watkins 2008: 93–110). Even before the Edo Period the places referred in classical literature

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<sup>3</sup> The name of the policy enforced to protect the domestic commercial interests from the West between the years 1633–1853.

<sup>4</sup> The precautions taken by the Shogun living in Edo for keeping the control of the feudal domains ruled by the most influential family of the region called *daimyō*. Based on this policy the *daimyō* and his family were to spend each alternate year in Edo.

<sup>5</sup> From the Muromachi Period until the end of the Edo Period (14th–19th centuries) the name given to the ruling military class of the feudal domains (*han*).

<sup>6</sup> Satsuma Han (present Kagoshima Prefecture), contrary to the other Hans had the privilege of applying the *sankin kōtai* duty every two years since it was the most remote area from Edo.

such as Heike, Ise and Genji Monogatari became sightseeing attractions. Those kind of famous sight seeing spots named *meisho* (famous places) were visited by monks, travelers, poets and during Edo Period gained a wide popularity among people. In the *ukiyo-e* (Guichard-Anguis 2009: 8–9; Rodriguez del Alisal, Ackermann & Martinez 2007) of the Edo Period famous waterfalls or bridges were painted.

The rest of the article will take into account travel and tourism practices grounded on such a historical background. The places and activities considered and evaluated throughout the paper are the most popular tourism activities and the most visited places according to the statistics. While onsen is the first place Japanese tourists would go to, scenery viewing and seeing famous places come next. On the other hand, all of these activities have a side related to cuisine, too. Therefore in the upcoming chapters eating patterns of the Japanese tourists during travel and tourism is also mentioned. Not only castles and gardens are considered as historic spots or *meisho*. Famous architectural structures like bridges will be mentioned, too. Bridges were also thought to be scenic spots since they often appeared in Edo Period *ukiyo-e*<sup>7</sup>, too. Throughout the article, I will not only highlight historical continuities, but also the activities practiced in everyday life which share a same essence with the tourist activities.

## Hotspring Versus Bathtub

Urry argues that “The tourist gaze is directed to features of landscape and townscape which separate them off from everyday experience. Such aspects are viewed because they are taken to be in some sense out of the ordinary” (Urry 1990: 2). If the meaning of the everyday life is restricted to the work/office life, this assumption can be defensible. In the Japanese context, taking a warm bath after an exhaustive day can also be considered as ‘daily’ and can be compared to a relaxing onsen trip on the weekend. In this case Urry’s assertion must be reconsidered.

Onsen travel is significant in both ways: it is an important part of the Japanese culture and one of the most preferred travel choices when Japanese domestic tourism is considered. However, neither in studies regarding Japanese culture, nor in studies regarding tourism and travel, onsen is

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<sup>7</sup> *Ukiyo-e* meaning “the pictures of the floating world” started to be printed in the 17th century with woodblock painting.

a frequently researched subject. Onsen culture is not about or limited to staying in the hot spring waters for a certain period of time. Although the experience of bathing is the primary component of an onsen travel, if it includes staying in a ryokan<sup>8</sup> it is impossible to understand the whole ritual without paying attention to the space and the food. In the subsequent paragraphs, the history of onsen and the onsen travel as it is experienced today will be briefly mentioned.

First of all, an onsen is a place where one goes naked, taking off all the clothes before entering in. The place is composed of two parts. In the section closer to the entrance the showers are located. The showers generally are not secluded by a curtain or anything as such. The people sit on a tabure and clean their bodies properly before entering into the pools filled with hot spring water. The procedures regarding onsen are not written down but still there is a consensus on the manners. The onsens located closer to international tourism destinations usually have a signboard at the entrance of the facility illustrating the onsen manners for foreign tourists. Depending on the size of the onsen, the number of hot spring pools change. The temperature and the specialty of the hot spring water can vary. Also each hot spring location has its unique mixture of elements in its water. Onsen can both be a place for relaxation and a place for communication with others. The communication taking place in onsen is regarded as *hadaka no tsukiai* – it is considered as a naked communion. While some people like to communicate with others as a way of relaxation, others might prefer watching the seasonal scenery or the garden outside or simply closing their eyes in a somewhat meditative state for a brief period of time before switching to another pool. In the Japanese archipelago onsens can be found in a wide range of areas from mountain areas located inland to coastal areas by the sea. Based on this geographical circumstances, onsen is situated in the core of several different territories of experiences. This is why in order to understand onsen experience in its totality it is necessary to study and examine its relation to nature, body, religion and hygiene practices. The reasons as to why onsen has not been treated as a significant subject might be various. It is highly possible that the researcher might have found it awkward trying to communicate with the informants when everyone is nude. In such a case embarrassment seems understandable on the part of the researcher.

In Japan onsen has a long history like most travel practices. Based on the archeological evidence, hot spring resources had started to be utilized

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<sup>8</sup> Japanese style inn.

6000 years ago. In the two of the oldest eser of the Japanese Literature, *Nihonshoki* and *Kojiki*, visits of emperor Jomei and Kōtoku to Arima Onsen in Hyogo Prefecture are mentioned (Talmadge 2006: 25–30). In Japan, onsens have always been in close contact with buddhist circles. Many onsens were opened and managed by buddhist monks. Throughout the centuries, services provided by hotsprings gradually expanded to the warrior classes and then to the commoners. Particularly during Edo Period onsens were utilized for treatment of illnesses and started to be visited by patients. It can be argued that the purpose and the priorities of onsen travel have changed through time. Although onsen travel is still a prevalent form of tourism in Japan, due to high cost of ryokans and relatively shorter travel period within Japan compared to e.g. Europe, onsen trips have become shorter as a travel practice than before.

There are several motivations while choosing among various onsens. The mineral composition of the water is an important factor. Whether the onsen has a *rotenburo*<sup>9</sup> or not, the view of the *rotenburo*, the view from the window of an indoor onsen, the distance of the particular onsen to one's hometown and the distance from the onsen to other historical sightseeing spots can all contribute to the choice. An onsen trip can be planned solitary, with a bestfriend, with someone from the family and as a couple. It can be arranged by a company for its workers and sometimes groups of friends can arrange an onsen trip, too. In case there is a larger group, amusement performances can take place during and after dinner which are considered as a form of *enkaigei* (banquet performance). While this kind of entertainment is not a requisite of onsen culture, it reveals much about entertainment patterns of the Japanese. In these kind of entertainment, drinking is usually involved and most of the time male members are expected to showcase their "abilities". Attempting to put a toothpick into one's nose, wearing women's clothing and singing half-naked are common forms of entertainment. Contrary to this kind of entertainment, an onsen trip can much more serene. In either case bodily relaxation starting with the onsen pools continues into other directions. Based on the interviews conducted in places such as Arima Onsen in Hyogo Prefecture or Gero Onsen in Gifu Prefecture reveals that feelings and experience associated with onsen and bathtub at home are similar to some extent. In Japan, where the central heating system is not a common option, informants occasionally stated that during winter soaking into a hot bath or a hotspring is a good

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<sup>9</sup> Open-air part of an onsen.

way keeping warm. On the other hand, entering a warm bath in summer means soothing the body and chilling out. Some informants emphasized both experiences as most relaxing practices and called the experience 're-setting one's mind'.

The advancement in technology made it much easier to extract hot springwater from underground and this paved the way for the increase in the number of onsens around Japan. New onsen destinations brought a mobility to otherwise unknown countryside locations. Although older people claim that younger generations do not show an interest in onsen, young people have their own way of onsen travel patterns. Based on my field observations young couples actually enjoy taking a day off and going to an onsen resort. However, the same trend cannot be observed regarding *sentō* (Japanese public bath) culture, which can be considered having close ties with onsen culture and more generally speaking – with the unique bathing culture of Japan. Before mentioning changes in *sentō* practices, it seems necessary to make a brief explanation. The most obvious difference between *onsen* and *sentō* is probably the source of water used in these places. The water used in *sentō* is tap water instead of hot springwater. *Sentō* as a space should be considered as a part of the city life. The lack of bathing space in houses directed the townsmen to public baths in their neighbourhood. During Edo Period *sentō* became places suitable both for cleaning and socialization. It can be argued that *sentō* was much more like today's *onsen*. Nowadays, *sentō*'s popularity is constantly decreasing. Each year public bath houses around Japan are steadily shutting their doors down. The government fundings are not enough to keep them operating anymore. This is due to the fact that each house now offers a hot tub, no matter how small that hot tub is. One other reason might be a possible trend of merging both *sentō* and *onsen* of the past under the same roof. Today's onsens – especially the city ones – show a characteristic of both *sentō* and *onsen* with a hint of spa.

The reflection of this bathing culture in the everyday life of the Japanese could easily be observed in the bathing practices at home. The department stores offer and market shelves display a large variety of salts and minerals to bring a particular onsen water from anywhere around Japan right into one's bathtub. During summer bathtubs are filled half for chilling out; in winter it is filled fully with hot water in order to warm the body. In Japan – except Hokkaidō – where central heating system is absent, the time spent in the hot tub provides a sophisticated way of relaxation. Going into a hot tub each day and spending there between twenty



minutes to one hour is a common practice among Japanese. And onsen travel as a tourism practice has much in common with the everyday bathing practice.

### **Local Foods... Reflecting Local Histories?**

Another attraction in Japanese domestic tourism is local specialty food. The literature on food concentrates on it as a medium or symbol of identity and how the “national” cuisine is reinvented in order to be able to imagine the nation (Cwiertka 2005: 415–428). From a different perspective, it can be argued that the discourse on local specialties is in fact an extension of local allegiances of the people, reflecting the feudal past. The rivalry within the prefectures such as “which ramen/rice is the most delicious” is in fact a significant and contrary argument to the nationalist discourses which are generally presumed to suppress all other. Just like onsen, local tastes are usually ignored as a topic of study since both of them require close contact with unfamiliar tastes and spaces that can be restrictive on the part of the researcher.

Each culture has its distinct obsession with food. In Japan, the emphasis on food can be conspicuously observed in the television programs from day till night. Food can be a main theme or side theme of any kind of television program including quiz shows. Guests and hosts speak about the seasonal foods and the proper places to eat them. Each meal is zoomed on and tasted by the presenter of the television program. Funny sounds are made during tasting and onomatopoeic words appear on the screen. The audience can even have an idea about the form and consistence of the food. Apart from television programs, various type of foods and food sets are always illustrated in the tourism brochures for domestic tourists, too. In this brochures most of the time the food pictures are displayed next to onsen pictures. The promised pleasures are presented side by side. The food is also an indispensable part of festival atmosphere. Throughout the year the local festivals get even livelier with food and rituals. As a part of the travel culture, the traveler is supposed to bring local specialties to his home town on the way back. The sweets bought as souvenirs in their fancy boxes are easily found in the airports, train and bus stations so as to make it easy to remember to buy one on the way back. Even the food brought back as *omiyage* (souvenir) is shared with the dead and with the *kami*. After all, the food is not only for the living in Japan.

## Interaction with Environment Throughout the Year

The meaning attributed to nature by the Japanese has divided the academics into two different camps. While some writers argue that the Japanese perceive themselves and nature as a whole (Kasulis 1990: 433–449, Suzuki 2010: 329–397), other oppose such a view and claim it to be a fictive assertion (Martinez 2005: 185–200). In fact, neither nature nor technology can be separated from the being. As a matter of fact, the Western discourse assertion of a human versus nature dichotomy can be valid for neither Japanese nor any other culture. Nevertheless, in social sciences – perhaps due to lack of connection between theory and actuality – “nature”, “technology” and “human” are taken as independent concepts excluding one another. At least for Japan it can be said that the understanding brought by a unique fusion of shintoism and buddhism gave an awareness about the destructiveness, versatility and temporariness of nature and surroundings of the inhabitants of the archipelago. The seasonal calendar of the Japanese also manifests this lively interaction and communication with nature in the daily life. The cyclical and repetitive rituals taking place all year long inspire a continuous recollection and reminding both on an individual and collective level. The seasons give a special meaning to these inspirations and multiply them. It feels like the seasonal rituals ceaselessly continue one after another, making each of them redundant to a foreign eye. The gardens are organised in a manner that makes the mobility and temporality apparent. One kind of flower blooms after another so as to keep track of time and season. The patterns and the colours of the kimono, the flower arrangement in the tea room, the patterns of the dinnerware are all expected to be in harmony with the season. Nowadays kimono is worn only on special occasions but in everyday life a similar tendency regarding colours and occasion/season harmony is of importance. It can be further argued that this tradition underlies the idea of cosplay and the love of costume wearing during Christmas and Halloween – both relatively new occasions in Japan.

The unique characteristics of each season and an awareness and love of change reveals itself in the domestic tourism, too. The rhythm of tourist activities is closely related to seasonal and monthly events throughout the year. Generally speaking, from the end of October until the beginning of December the leaves of *momiji*<sup>10</sup> trees turn red. At the same time, in the

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<sup>10</sup> A species of tree native to China, Korean peninsula and Japanese Archipelago, Eastern Mongolia and the South East Russia. It is famous of its leaves turning red in Autumn.

mountains different kind of trees start to change their colours forming an autumn foliage with shades of yellow, orange and red, attracting a large number of domestic tourists to temples and hiking trails. Changes in the colour start from northern prefectures gradually going down to the south of the archipelago. For the tourists it is a stroke of luck to be able to make it on time to see the leaves bright red which is referred to as *migoro* (viewing time). Whether they are just turning red, have fallen on the ground or start to decay turning into a bitter shade of red, each scenery seems to arouse different feelings. Just to experience those feelings Japanese tourists moves from North to South like a Mexican wave.

While hiking is a good way to enjoy *kōyō* (red leaves); gardens of temples and castles are preferred. Pictures of gardens and castles taken during each season are usually displayed in the tourist brochures, detailed maps indicate location of different species of trees and flowers within the garden. The gardens reveal its seasonal beauty when the flowers are in full bloom. The rest of the scene belonging to other seasons are left to the imagination of the tourist. Japanese tourists can always “fill” a naked tree with sakuras or plums in their imagination as long as they can differentiate the species. Once owned by the ruling classes to enjoy or entertain their guests, gardens still host various guests from different age groups and genders. Regardless of various modern discourses or myths, one sure thing is the fact that although the pattern of sightseeing carries an essence of the past, what viewers feel today and what they enjoy looking at indeed constantly changes. The only remaining thing is the existence of people still visiting the garden. Although the direction of looking is marked on the map, imposition of a certain idea or feeling and when to feel it seems hardly possible.

During *momiji* season, tourists check the colour of the leaves online daily and plan their trips according to the information found there. Some of them prefer to see the red leaves in their *migoro* state, while others prefer seeing fallen leaves covering roads and trekking routes. Especially temple gardens are crowded with Japanese tourists in every age group. Some tourists carry professional cameras and try to catch a dramatic moving scene, recalling a sense of joy, solitude or despair. During the *momiji* season several places in Shiga Prefecture and Kyoto were selected to make on site observations and interviews. In Shiga prefecture, Genkyuen Garden located at the foot of Hikone Castle is a popular scenic spot of domestic tourism almost all year round. Being one of only four castles which are national treasures, Hikone castle has one of the *daimyō* gardens kept in

its original form. The castle and its premises attract especially many tourists during maple viewing and cherry blossom viewing season. During the maple viewing season Genkyuen Garden offers after dark illumination attracting couples to enjoy the garden. Around the Biwa Lake there are other scenic spots popular among Japanese tourists such as Keisokuji in Nagahama. During *momiji* season free buses take tourists from Kinomoto Station to Keisokuji and other popular viewing spots in the area. Based on the interviews conducted with domestic tourists in popular spots such as Keisokuji in Shiga Prefecture and numerous temples of Kyoto such as Daigoji, Kiyomizudera and Nison-in, the output of travel always seems to be about the emotions aroused by the scene. The way the tourists express their emotions can vary from solitude to joy and everything in between.

Just as it is not quite possible to fully comprehend the onsen travel without understanding the meaning of bathing and water to the Japanese, the sightseeing itself should not be interpreted as merely a tourist activity. On the way back home from work or while wandering the streets, one notices the leaves turning red, seasonal flowers are just starting to bloom; a seasonal bug or bird can also be spotted. All those changes are read as a sign of time passing and perceived as a harbinger of a new beginning. This way they arouse various emotions. When the red leaves covering the roads like a red carpet perish and the end of the year comes, the cities become cheerful with the Christmas lights. The houses are decorated with the lights, too. Contrary to the rest of the world, the end of the year and the first three days of the new year pass quietly. The temples become crowded with people coming to pray during *oshōgatsu* (New Year). The winter brings its own beauties. The gardens covered with snow once again call domestic tourists. Some mountain villages like Shirakawa-gō in Gifu Prefecture attract many tourists during winter. The feelings evoked in the mountain village by view of snow covered thatched roofs of farm houses resemble the ones expressed during maple tree viewing. The visitors described their feelings using words such as “terrific”, “unbelievable” and “calming”. Both for the visitors in these villages and skiers coming to the ski resorts in the region, nothing can be as relaxing and warming as an onsen in the middle of the winter. It is rather easy to stop by an onsen resort since there are many famous onsens close to these places.

The earliest signals of spring are the blooming plums. With their colours changing from white to shades of pink, plum is the subject of many *ukiyo*es painted in Edo Period. But their guests are not as much as the cherry blossoms which bloom about a month later. Sakuras start to bloom

when the weather gets warmer in early April starting from the South of the archipelago. Sakura petals fall like snow flakes in the middle of Spring and cover the roads in white. During these periods people have picnics and drink alcohol under the blossoming trees. Most of the onsen places receive more visitors during *kōyō* and cherry blossom seasons. Wisterias follow the cherry blossoms in late April and early May. Tourists feel like under a purple waterfall inside the wisteria tunnels. Once again, image of the wisteria falling from the sky evokes feelings and excites the tourists. In certain parks besides plums and cherry blossoms wisteria was also pictured in various ukiyo-e. Hiroshige's *Inside the Kameido Tenjin Shrine* pictures the wisterias in Kameido Tenjin Shrine. This shrine located in Tokyo still hosts the wisteria festival taking place in early May, attracting Tokyoites and tourists alike. Other famous domestic tourist destinations regarding wisteria viewing are located in Kawachi Fuji Garden in Kitakyushu, Fukuoka Prefecture and Ashikaga Flower Park in Tochigi Prefecture. All of them are crowded with tourists during the wisteria viewing season.

In July once the rainy season comes to a halt the firework festivals called *hanabi taikai* starts in nearly all of the cities throughout Japan. These shows attract large number of people from the suburbs to city centers. The cities compete with each other in terms of the quantity and quality of the fireworks. The theme of one of Hiroshige's *ukiyoe* is fireworks at Ryōgoku Bridge. This festival still continues in Tokyo at the end of July under the name of Sumidagawa Fireworks Festival. One of the biggest firework festivals of Western Japan is the one taking place simultaneously on both sides of Kanmon Strait. The fireworks thrown from the cities of Moji and Shimonoseki both facing the strait attract millions of visitors mostly from Fukuoka and Yamaguchi Prefectures. The firework festivals, just as gardens and bridges, have several viewing points. Attending the festival and knowing these points is an important conversation topic during the festival season. During this season leading to Obon Festival<sup>11</sup>, partypacks of colorfully wrapped firecrackers are sold concurrently in the grocery stores. Although trivial for parents, they are great entertainment and summer highlight for kids. The word *hanabi* which is written with fire and flower kanji can be argued to reveal the love of Japanese to remember things by way of some-

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<sup>11</sup> Period of time usually between fifteenth of July and fifteenth of August when graves are visited and cleaned by families of the deceased. Even though it usually lasts three days, Japanese take couple of days off from work and go back to their home towns during Obon.

thing else. It is highly probable that the Japanese imagine something else behind the blooming and suddenly vanishing fireworks. Just like the *sakura* leaves floating in the wind and fireflies with their very short span of life, fireworks might bring melancholia in the middle of entertainment. However idealistic it may seem, living life to the fullest, exploding and fading away into oblivion within seconds is still a way of life to be praised in Japan. Although people do not live like that, the idea of such a life can make a Japanese weep inside. Overall, the viewing practice itself – whether it is flower viewing, leaf viewing or bug viewing – is an activity that continues in parallel with the rhythm of nature. The cyclical continuation of the events enchants the viewer addressing all five senses. One can catch these phenomenon not necessarily during travel but also in the course of daily life.

However, not only nature viewing with its annual cycle has a repetitive side in Japan. Also recollection and repetition regarding the souvenirs collected from several touristic spots is a constant theme. Usually each famous spot has various mobile phone gadgets, e.g. straps with popular anime and manga characters appearing alongside the symbol of the place. In Ise this can be a Hello Kitty character holding a big pearl<sup>12</sup> in its hand, while in Fukuoka it can be a chopper man carrying *hakata ramen*. One other significant practice is collecting stamps at entrances of sightseeing places such as castles, gardens, museums and even train stations. The stamps are usually stamped in special booklets or specifically designed spaces on tourist pamphlets. The origins of this collecting can be found in booklets sold in temples. In exchange for a certain amount of money, calligrapher signs one page of the booklet for the visitor. While in the past it had religious connotations such as proving one's faith by showing the number of visited temples, modern versions of this practice triggers a recollective tendency.

## Conclusion

In the anthropological studies regarding the tourist practices in Japan it has been insistently argued that the main motivation channeling the tourism industry is based on a feeling of dissolution of the cultural identity. This anxie-

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<sup>12</sup> As Ise is famous with its pearl islands, local noodle of Fukuoka region is known as 'Hakata Ramen'. In souvenir shops only versions of gadgets related to the particular place can be found. That makes it a memorable collection item bought provided one had visited that particular place.

ty culminating with the profit incentive manifest itself through tourism campaigns, pamphlets, brochures which in turn give shape to the the tourist experience. However this kind of arguments do not offer an insight into why Japanese show an interest in or emotionally react to certain things. In addition to that, an absolute and dichotomic distinction made between everyday life and tourism activities might lead us to overlooking some areas of life. Examples such as couples and elderly people going for a walk alone to see fallen red leaves, people spending a great amount of the time in a bathtub or their interest in holidays in an onsen would not fit in these respective categories.

Within the discourse, it is practically inevitable to make a distinction between tourism and daily life. But the continuation of seasonal themes found in daily life practices of Japanese which can also be found in their domestic tourism practices makes it impossible to treat these concepts as separate things – at least from a methodological point of view. Therefore it can be argued that daily life practices of Japanese and their domestic tourism activities are not necessarily opposing activities. On the other hand it can be argued that the relation of Japanese to the concept of routine is somehow peculiar. For the Japanese an awareness of continuity, perishability and dual potential of imagination and remembering directed both towards the past and future evokes various feelings. The surroundings ready at hand are the medium through which this arousal occurs. In the Japanese context, the nuance between daily life and tourism depends not necessarily on the type of activity but lies in the intensity of feeling evoked by the environment. While in daily life the level of such awareness is relatively low, during touristic activities it rises.

Overall, it can be suggested that from a historical perspective and considering the connections between travel and domestic tourism and daily life one can also gain a deeper understanding regarding many other practices taking place in Japan.

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## **The Last Samurai. Transcultural Motifs in Jim Jarmusch's *Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai***

### Abstract

*Ghost Dog: Way of the Samurai* by Jim Jarmusch is a film combining cinematic traditions of USA, Europe and Japan. Jarmusch's work can be example of contemporary culture trend named by Wolfgang Welscha transculturality. According to his theory the identity of the man is dependent on foreign elements absorbed by the culture in which he lives. Two main inspirations for the director are samurai tradition and *bushido* code on one hand, and tradition of gangster film on the other. Despite the culturally distant origins of these elements, Jarmush is able to construct a coherent, multi-level narrative, at the same time maintaining distance towards American traditions. Referencing works by transgressive directors (J. P. Melville, Seijun Suzuki) Jarmusch becomes the spokesperson for the genre evolution and its often far-fetched influences.

*Ghost Dog* (1999) is a collage of various film motifs and traditions. Jarmusch combines the tradition of American gangster cinema and Japanese samurai films. The shape of the plot refers to the Blaxploitation cinema, and direct inspiration, expressed by specific quotations, are the gloomy crime novels by Jean-Pierre Melville, as well as brutal and black humour-filled *yakuza* movies by Seijun Suzuki. All this is spiced up with references to Japanese literature and *zen* philosophy. In an interview with Janusz Wróblewski director commented on his actions:

I mix styles up in order to get distance. Not in order to ridicule the hero. And why does the gangster style dominate? I will answer indirectly... I like music a lot. Especially bebop and hip hop. There is space for a quotation in it, for a jump, which for the uninitiated sounds like grinding. Music similarly like my films resembles a code, which a sensitive recipient is able to put together ("Don Kichot z Nowego Jorku" 2000: 51).

At a first glance Jarmusch's work is a postmodern play with conventions of cinema. Director of *Ghost Dog*, not unlike a few years later Quentin Tarantino in *Kill Bill* (2003), takes inspiration liberally from Japanese cinema. However, in contrast to his fellow filmmaker, he is not satisfied with only brutal and exotic entourage. Jarmusch discreetly hides certain cultural tracks which point the spectator to a whole range of concealed meanings and associations.

It is possible to make this reconstruction in many dimensions, both in the appeal to the old cinema, and to aspects of American culture or multiculturalism. Thanks to such a game with the spectator/reader, the text-film requires complementing [...], and encourages co-forming the identity of the protagonist (Hańderek 2013: 69).

Jarmusch's work fits into the course of contemporary culture named by Wolfgang Welsch transculturality. According to his theory the identity of man is dependent on foreign elements absorbed by the culture which he lives in.

Cultures today are extremely interconnected and entangled with each other. Life-styles no longer end at the borders of national cultures, but go beyond these, are found in the same way in other cultures (Welsch 1999).

This way elements until recently regarded as exotic become an integral part of lives of a contemporary man.

According to Welsch the concept of transculturality is spreading not only on the level of macro-culture, but also on an individual level. People become cultural hybrids formed not only by their own homeland, but also other countries. "It belongs among the mustiest assumptions that an individual's cultural formation must be determined by his nationality or national status" (Welsch 1999). In the light of these views *Ghost Dog* appears as an audio-visual illustration of Welsch's concepts.

The protagonist of Jarmusch's film is an Afro-American hitman living according to principles of *bushido* and considering himself as a contemporary *samurai*. The ethos of Japanese knights turned out to be unusually

attractive for the Western culture, becoming a symbol of the Land of the Rising Sun quickly. A sudden increase in the popularity of the Japanese cinema in the 1950s made film stories about masters of sword (*jidaigeki*) widely known and appreciated. In the USA resemblance of this genre to western was quickly noticed which resulted in a few Hollywood remakes of popular Japanese films: *The Magnificent Seven* (1960) by John Sturges (based on *Seven Samurai – Shichinin no Samurai* by Akira Kurosawa, 1954) or *The Outrage* (1964) by Martin Ritta (based on *Rashomon* by A. Kurosawa, 1950). In later years Americans started exploiting samurai attributes as a way to enhance “B” class action films. One can quote such titles like *The Hunted* (1995) by J. F. Lawton and *Blind Fury* (1989) by Philip Noyce. Using samurai or *yakuza* in the plot served as a pretext for introducing the striking and brutal exoticism making clichéd story plots more attractive. More seriously the subject was treated by the creators of *The Last Samurai* (2003, dir. Edward Zwick). They attempted to introduce the Japanese warrior ethos to the Western spectator, but in spite of this the film remained mainly an epic show.

In Japan samurai films (*ken-geki* – drama with swords) were being produced from the very beginning of existence of film industry in this country. They were produced in companies based in Kyoto. These films were modeled on numerous *kabuki* theatre plays devoted to samurai. The action took place in feudal days, most often in the Tokugawa era (1601–1868). The protagonist was usually a hurt and declassed samurai who avenged his injustice, but has always been faithful to the code of honour – *bushido* (literally translated as “road of the warrior”). The first great director of samurai films was Sadao Yamanaka, author of *Sazen Tange and the Pot Worth a Million Ryo* (*Hyakuman ryo no tsube*, 1935) and *Humanity and Paper Balloons* (*Ninjo kami fusen*, 1937). The films became models for later samurai cinema, both for adventure, as well as drama genre (Kletowski 2005: 133).

After the World War II production of historical films was banned by occupation authorities since they could be associated with feudal-militaristic spirit. After occupation ended in 1950s, historical cinema enjoyed a period of great popularity. It was characterised by confronting the beautifying image of bygone eras, undermining social and moral norms, displaying a variety of psychological traits of protagonists. Among others, directors like Akira Kurosawa (*Seven Samurai*), Kenji Mizoguchi (*Legend of the Taira Clan – Shin heike monogatari*, 1955) or Masaki Kobayashi (*Rebellion – Jôichi: Hairyô tsuma shimatsu*, 1967) won the worldwide fame of masters of samurai cinema.

In 1960s and 1970s the genre plunged into a gradual process of commercialisation. Samurai became heroes of brutal B-class films. On the threshold of 1990s it seemed that artistic samurai cinema had died once and for all. Two great historical frescoes by Akira Kurosawa were supposed to be epigones of the genre: *The Double* (*Kagemusha*, 1980) and *Ran* (1985).

Unexpectedly, at the turning point of the 21st century a few films confirmed the return of the samurai genre. Such films like Takeshi Kitano's *Zatoichi* (2003), Yoji Yamada's *Twilight Samurai* (*Tasogare Seibei*, 2002) or Yoriyo Takita's *When the Last Sword is Drawn* (*Mibu gishi den*, 2003) constituted a contemporary version of *ken-geki* which allowed more space for a wide social panorama of late feudalism Japan (Bobrowski 2012: 140).

It might seem that mixing a samurai genre with a story about a black killer fighting against Italian mob would result in a rather peculiar B-class work. However, the use of Japanese warrior tradition in *Ghost Dog* is a carefully thought over process. The sequences in the film start with quotations from *Hagakure. Book of samurai*. The book, written in 1710 by Tashiro Tsuramoto, is a set of reflections of a hermit called Yamamoto Joho (1659–1719). He used to be a clan member of Nabeshima Mitsu-shige. After his master's death he lived in a remote place and spent the rest of his life codifying the rules of conduct of warriors.

*Ghost Dog* treats this book as a source of principles, according to which he lives. Quotations are present in the body of the film from the very first to the last scene, commenting and complementing the scenes. Criminals following a specific moral code are not something new to cinema. Jarmusch merely replaced the vendetta law or "honour of the thief" with *bushido* code. Living in global world the protagonist of the film simply chooses one of the available models of behaviour.

The story about an Afro-American who lives according to the code of samurai, faithfully reconstructing the model described in the book and accepting mentality of the "East" more and more firmly, becomes an excellent illustration of mutual influences and tangle of cultures. The character introduced by Jarmusch, based on a book *Road of the Samurai*, chooses his cultural patterns by himself, drawing from the possibilities given by the contemporary open form of multiculturalism (Hańderek 2013: 59).

But the samurai code is not only an exotic plot element and the thorough psychological construction of the protagonist only proves it. *Ghost Dog* turns out to be a perfect samurai. This not only includes his ability

to use the sword or loyalty to his master, but above all – his attitude towards the world surrounding him and the concern about spiritual development.

Ghost Dog spends his free time on meditations, fencing practice and reading. He takes human relations very seriously, too. His friendship with the French speaking Haitian Raymond belongs to most beautiful in the entire film. Men are able to communicate in spite of the language barrier. There is a strong bond between them and they consider themselves good friends. They don't know too much about each other, but this doesn't stop them from feeling mutual respect.

Another close person for Ghost Dog is Pearline, a smart ten-year-old girl carrying books in her lunch box. The girl is a keen devotee of literature. They hold philosophical conversations about life and Ghost Dog teaches her his way of seeing the reality. Just before dying he hands Pearline his copy of Hagakure, making her the heiress to the samurai code.

These motifs prevent the main character from being perceived as a cold-blooded murderer and a loner. A new image emerges in these few scenes – one can see how great an importance he attaches to the spiritual and emotional development.

In the Tokugawa period (1603–1868), when after several dozen years of ceaseless wars came peace in Japan, the samurai were required to do much more than just triumphantly return from victorious battles. The real warrior was a practicing Buddhist and required self-control and constant improvement from himself. Thus, taking part in various sophisticated forms of art was a frequent activity, like writing poetry, arranging flowers or painting. The samurai frequently visited performances of No theatre and regularly held tea ceremonies (Hall 1979: 187).

To Ghost Dog physical existence is not of paramount importance. This attitude helps him feel every moment deeper and appreciate even small and fleeting things. He rejects the past and does not care about future. Buddhism Zen, religion adapted by the society of Japan, rejected the concept of afterlife. The follower of Zen Buddhism didn't go to heaven, hell or purgatory, but turned into e.g. four elements (Tubielewicz 1980: 70). The perfect samurai was not afraid of death. Dying for somebody or something he recognised as worth sacrificing his life for, appeared as divine behaviour. Beautiful death (e.g. defending one's honour), constituting the content of a traditional Japanese religious system, was indeed a victory, because it freed from absurdities of earthly existence. Paradoxically, life fully manifested itself in death.

There appeared a specific celebrating of suicide in Japanese tradition – *seppuku*. At first it was only a way of avoiding captivity, but with time its status changed. It proved bravery and faithfulness of the samurai, even in the situation of a lost fight. When the samurai class gained more independence, seppuku became its privilege. Dozens of schools taught how most effectively to hold this ceremony (Szymankiewicz 1997: 21). Seppuku consisted in splitting one's intestines open. However, it was such a cruel death, that the ritual was later modified in order to spare suffering. It was allowed to decapitate the samurai, when he had already cut his stomach open. Lack of attachment to life and fear of death made the samurai an extremely tenacious and dangerous opponent. Adhering to principles of *bushido*, Ghost Dog became the most effective soldier of the mafia. Following orders of Louigo, a second-rate gangster that once saved his life, became his purpose of life.

In medieval Japan the overlord – vassal system started to develop after the collapse of the imperial authority at the beginning of the Kamakura age (1185–1333). In this period local magnates started growing in strength and gathered private armies and a big new social group appeared in the process – *bushi* (a warrior; samurai were the most senior *bushi*) (Hall 1979: 69). At first they came from different social layers, but in the Tokugawa period, a 250 years long time of peace, new laws divided the society making social mobility impossible. In this period the class of samurai was fully formed and the rules of *bushido* became something of a national ideology. They turned out to be essential to keep the people of war calm when a long-term peace period ensued. They found their most unabridged summary exactly in *Hakagure*. The Tokugawa shoguns saw great significance in spreading the code amongst samurai, since some of its aspects helped maintain the power. It is worthwhile remembering that Joho and Tsuramoto wrote down the principles of *bushido* almost one hundred years after the last major battles (Szymankiewicz 1997: 13–16).

*Ken-geki* films contributed to keeping the samurai ethos in contemporary popular culture. Their influence quickly spread to other film genres especially to *yakuza eiga*, Japanese variety of gangster cinema. *Yakuza* films originated from traditional stories about travelling masters of the sword, *ronin* and small crooks. On the other side, they drew strong inspiration from American noir film, both in visual as well as outlook sphere. The Japanese gangster cinema developed after the World War II and was a consequence of pessimistic moods amongst the society. Alienated, unable to find themselves in a post-war reality men became heroes of films.

Their maladjustment results partly from their obsessive adhering to former codes which in the new democratic society cease to have any value (Loska 2013: 171).

Although gangster cinema is a genre created in the USA, Jarmusch is more interested in Japanese-French traditions. Main influences are Seijun Suzuki's *Branded to Kill* (*Koroshi no rakuin*, 1967) and Jean-Pierre Melville's *Le Samourai* (*Le Samourai*, 1967). Jarmusch stressed his worship for the works of both directors on many occasions. "My all-time favourite film killers are the ones from *Le Samourai* and *Branded to Kill*. I quoted these films in a few different ways" (*Jim Jarmusch interviewed by Geoff Andrew* 2014). Director's attachment to these authors is proved by the fact that he included them in a list of his favourite films prepared for a booklet published for a retrospective of his films held in February 1994 in Minneapolis (*On the Road with Jim Jarmusch: Recommended viewing*).

Jarmusch directly quotes *Branded to Kill* in scenes where the hero leaves to fight the gang. They are almost an identical copy of scenes from Suzuki's film. In the first one, hidden in the forest Dog Ghost observes his enemies, waiting for Mr Vargo to arrive. When he finally appears, the protagonist cannot fire a shot since the bird sat on the barrel of his rifle and covered the target. In the second scene taken from the same film is the killing of Sonny Valeria. Ghost Dog shoots his victim through a drainpipe.

Born in 1923 in Tokyo, Seijun Suzuki in years 1956–1967 directed for Nikkatsu (a production company specializing in production of cheap, serial gangster films, modeled on American Western and adventure series) as many as forty-two films. The production company had only started at the time and could not afford production of the very popular samurai films. They decided to focus on contemporary topics, with a special emphasis put on gangster cinema (Desjardins 2005: 145). Members of the *yakuza* – the Japanese equivalent of the mob became main characters. Films produced at that time portrayed gangsters as heirs to the samurai and the *bushido* code. A typical protagonist of *yakuza eiga* of the 1960s was a brave and honourable man. Scenes of them committing crimes were generally omitted.

Lonely and brave members of the *yakuza* were heroes of these gangster series, who betrayed by everyone fought against gangs of criminals, threatening innocent people. Very often the main topic of the film was intertwined with a tragic love story – the hero was usually in love with the daughter of his biggest enemy. This type of films ended with a compulsory bloodbath, in which everyone died – including the brave gangster, who mortally wounded finished his life in the arms of his beloved (Kletowski 2001: 77).



It was demanded of Suzuki that he conformed to the rules, too. However, during ten years he created a few unusually original gangsters films. Heroes of his detective films were rebels opposing standard rules and simultaneously not bearing responsibility for going against their superiors. Two films are regarded as his biggest achievements about a gangster – ronin: *Tokyo Drifter* (*Tôkyô nagaremono*, 1966) and *Branded to Kill*. The first one is a story of a betrayed *yakuza* who takes revenge on his perpetrators while travelling across Japan.

At a first glance Suzuki's film is a cluster of film rolls from American genre cinema. There is a western, a melodrama, and even a musical here – the film is peppered with wistful ballades sung by the main character or constituting background score (Kletowski 2001: 78).

*Branded to Kill* is a story about a contract killer who after an abortive assault must face an entire elite of mafia hired assassins. Suzuki's protagonist by no means is trapped in a conflict between being faithful to himself and loyal to his master. He is absorbed by completely different things. Firstly, he wants to save his own life by all cost, and secondly his greatest ambition is to become "Murderer No. 1". Moreover, he cannot refuse himself two biggest pleasures – the perverted sex and inhaling the smell of cooking rice. A *yakuza* driven by his own, very down-to-earth desires and enjoying quite bizarre activities was a real novelty.

The aforementioned Suzuki's films were characterized by specific poetics. The director clashed *yakuza eiga* with satire, elements of *kabuki* theatre and pop – art aesthetics. Musical references and ostentatiously artificial decorations in *Tokyo Drifter* or atonal soundtrack, animated interludes and new wave aesthetics in *Branded to Kill* make the films grotesque and surrealistic. The viewer senses a total conventionality of the presented plot and as a result is unable to emotionally commit to the story. Ironic and self-conscious approach not only towards the plot, but also to film form places Suzuki's works close the *Nuberu-bagu* – the Japanese new wave (Richie 2001: 181).

Similarly to his previous films, the plot seems secondary to the way the story of a killer for hire is told. The logic of events and the consequence of conducted plots are unimportant to the director who focuses on a small, seemingly insignificant details, shocking the spectators with violence-filled images (Loska 2013: 177).

The vision presented in Suzuki's films was a world full of violence, chaos and erotic perversion. The director didn't hide his fascination with



the American popular culture, mainly with *noir* films of the gangster genre. Reality of the *noir* film portrayed the disintegration of former values and their total inapplicability to the real life. Suzuki strenuously tracked and stigmatized remains of the feudal tradition functioning in the Japanese society seeing it as a threat to the contemporary man. In the process he criticised films which presented *yakuza* members as honourable heirs the samurai tradition.

After the premiere of *Branded to Kill* Nikkatsu management deemed the film as completely incomprehensible what in consequence led to Suzuki being dismissed. He had not shot another film for nine years. The film was appreciated only a few years after the premiere. Redistribution in cinemas in the West and later video editions caused that the world audience had discovered his production. Suzuki's near blasphemous approach towards many sanctities of the Japanese cinema and an often recurring theme of rebellion against social conventions had a large impact on the generation of film-makers (Takashi Kitano, Shinya Tsukamoto, and Takashi Miike) who in the 1990s shaped Japanese cinematography.

The second inspiration for Suzuki, *Le Samouraï* (1967) by Jean-Pierre Melville, is often compared with the work discussed earlier (Antoniou 2004: 94). A similar vision of the world and a figure of a perfectionist contract killer forced to fight for his life link both films. Protagonist of *Le Samouraï* – Jef Costello (Alain Delon) – has the task of killing the owner of a night club. He fails to stay unnoticed – leaving the room of the victim he faces a club pianist. After a police hunt Costello gets arrested. Mobsters who hired him in fear of being exposed decide to get rid of the killer. Costello doesn't remain passive – he tracks and then kills the man who issued a death sentence on him. Wounded and chased both by the gang as well as the police, he goes to the club where he carried out the previous execution. In the club he points an empty gun towards the pianist and lets police officers shoot him.

Film's action is preceded by a quotation from *bushido* code: *There is no greater solitude than the solitude of a samurai, apart from the solitude of a tiger in the jungle* (in fact the author of this line is the director himself). In *Ghost Dog* there is a similar commentary made to the film plot by use of quotations from the samurai code.

Jef Costello, just as the protagonist of Jarmusch's film, is very much economical with words and secretive. From the very few sentences said by him it is possible to prove little about his motives and emotions provoked by the dramatic events. Interpretation of the ambiguous behav-

iours of the character is left to the spectator. A ceremony of moves with which Costello puts on his hat before leaving and pulls on white gloves before committing murder are examples of such idiosyncrasies. In Ghost Dog's life there is place for similar rituals – e.g. prayer or fencing practice. For both murderers a car theft is essential to complementing murder – Jarmusch's character only exchanges huge bunch of keys for an electronic gadget.

Relation to nature is also similar in both films. They both live in a big city, far from the nature and still, while describing them other people use animal metaphors. "Costello is compared to a wolf, not only lonely, but also wounded – that is even more dangerous, because already sentenced to death" (Helman 1990: 187). The hero of Jarmusch's film also has his animal patron – ice-cream vendor Raymond, telling small Pearline about Ghost Dog compares him to a bear. This motive is later repeated when Ghost Dog encounters two poachers who have just shot a bear.

A bird kept by Jef is an only companion of his solitary lifestyle. It is the only creature towards which he has any warm feelings. Ghost Dog breeds pigeons and thanks to their help he can contact his principals. But the birds are much more to him than only a means of communication. A proof is given when the slaughter of the pigeons by gangsters is an impulse to rise against the mob.

Heroes of both films not only similarly live, but also similarly die. Admittedly, bullets that reach them are shot from their opponents' weapons, but their deaths are in fact suicides – they both leave for the final battle carrying guns with empty magazines.

When comparing Ghost Dog with protagonists of *Le Samourai* and *Branded to Kill* social alienation of the three is another strong common trait. They all live according to codes, principles of which nobody respects. Even though the rules of conduct they are faithful to are inappropriate to reality, they appeal to them and try to find their own moral path thanks to them.

Behaviour of a man is a continuous proving of some idea. Taking action we are expressing, consciously or not, our attitude to certain values. I mean the world that we choose as adult people, rather than the one imposed by parents or upbringing and tradition. Gangs and mafia structures, based on very specific system of rituals, are an extreme example. Strict codes of honour of samurai or the order of brave Shaolin monks are the opposite side of the same phenomenon. Nowadays hardly anyone decides on such radical choices. People lack codes they would hold on to („Don Kichot z Nowego Jorku” 2000: 53).

The most important values for a samurai were supposed to be loyalty to his overlord and his honour, which the warrior was expected to sacrifice his life for. In later years a frequent subject of Japanese art – literature, theatre, and later film – was the conflict between these two values.

A classic confrontation between duties, constituting a common subject of Japanese novels and films, is conflict between *gimu* – loyalty and obedience to the ones standing higher in the social hierarchy by age or position, and *giri* – loyalty to one's name (Kletowski 2001: 59).

In such a situation Ghost Dog finds himself. He was betrayed, so a revenge is his duty, but it will mean a disobedience to his master. For a samurai the only solution after such a revenge was *seppuku*, protecting warrior's honour in spite of breaking the duty of loyalty. Along with the hero die his principles, methods and customs. Director presents this thought with a quotation from *Hagakure* which appears at the end of the film:

It is said that what is called "the spirit of an age" is something to which one cannot return. That this spirit gradually dissipates is due to the world's coming to an end. For this reason, although one would like to change today's world back to the spirit of one hundred years or more ago, it cannot be done. Thus it is important to make the best out of every generation (cited directly from the film plate).

Ghost Dog's world is a world of passing values. Not only the main character is a believer of old, dying rituals. His opponents make an impression of people being in an uncomfortable time. This is how Jarmusch himself describes the hero: "Prototype of the hero of my latest film is Don Kichot – a dreamer – poet living according to the rules of a different century" („Don Kichot z Nowego Jorku" 2000: 54). Transformations that occur in the postmodern world seem to outgrow the adaptability of the characters.

Quotations and borrowings from non-American traditions break the archaic form of the gangster film building a distance to American myths and letting Jarmusch look at it from an outside perspective.

I would like to integrate differing elements that in some way were important to me – genre films, books, melodies [...]. Ghost Dog is indeed spiked with references; direct – Melville, Suzuki – and less visible [...]. In the film frame the reference creates the context, opens to the huge laboratory from which I draw my cinema. It is not a collage, it is rather a re-creation of the genre [...]. For me the expression "original idea" should not exist. I never believe great lonely concepts that strengthen the idea of the uniqueness of *creation* (quote from J. Jarmusch after Wiącek 2001: 121).

Similarly as in the case of his earlier films when as a starting point he picked traditional genres like western, prison film or road film, Jarmusch combines American tradition with motifs from cinematography of other parts of the world. "The ability to transculturally cross over barriers will guarantee us identity and competence in the long run" (Welsch 1999) Crossing borders of traditional gangster cinema the director becomes a spokesman of the evolution of the genre and its development influenced by elements from different and often distant sources.

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## **A Manual for Femininity? Evolving Models of Gender in Japanese Beer Advertising**

### **Abstract**

Beer in Japan is both essential to socialising and a normative practice. It is also highly gendered and people are informed about how to perform their gender via beer advertising, which disseminates these practices across Japan. This paper explores four models of gender which have appeared in Japanese television advertisements during the post-war period. It charts how these four models – the Loner Male, the Vanished Geisha, the Couple, and the Androgyne – have evolved and their relation to masculinity and femininity in Japan.

In 1992, concerned about the effect that alcohol advertising had on drink driving and children, Lance Strate examined American beer advertisements, noting a range of themes and locations which served to provide American men with a guide on how to be men. These advertisements were, he contended, a “manual of masculinity” (Strate 1992: 79). Japanese beer advertisements could equally be said to provide a manual of masculinity for Japanese men. However, there is no singular model of masculinity which appears in these advertisements and these advertisements often feature women in roles where they are neither objectified nor performing a supportive function. This paper will examine how four different models of gender have been constructed within Japanese beer advertisements during the period 1957–2007 and will reveal how masculinity and femininity is performed, presented and disseminated to the country at large. These models are not static, however, and by showing how they evolved

during the post-war period, we can understand how differences in location and the type of beer advertised can affect representations.

Integral to socialisation in Japan, the importance of beer within Japanese society cannot be understated: it is not only a cultural object, but also a cultural performance, indicator and tool with its consumption especially a highly gendered activity. This activity is presented to a wide audience through television advertising, which, open as it is to decoding, requiring less prior knowledge, and featuring typical people and situations is easily understood and can have a powerful impact on values, beliefs and behaviour (Josephson 1996: 158, Kang 1997: 980, Romaine 1999: 252–254). It can be said to contain the latent and unconscious ideas that a society holds about itself and it disseminates not only methods of how to drink, but also particular models of masculinity and femininity back to its own population. A number of scholars have noted the hugely influential, and symbiotic, role that advertising plays in constructing gender (Barthel 1988: 6–7, Gilly 1988: 75, Gamson et al. 1992: 374, Romaine 1999: 282) with the roles and depictions of men and women in advertising sometimes reinforcing and others undermining “traditional” gender roles and behaviour. These four models – The Loner Male, The Vanished Geisha, the Couple, and The Androgyne – became prominent in beer advertising during the latter half of the twentieth century and could, with varying degrees of accuracy, be said to be particularly Japanese models of masculinity and femininity. Further locating these evolutions within wider socioeconomic events also provides an opportunity to utilise advertisements as a historical source in order to question and contextualise idealised representations of masculinity and femininity.

In order to show how the type of beer advertised was integral to these representations and their evolution, some background on the Japanese Beer Industry during this period as well as the methodology chosen to analyse these advertisements is necessary. Until recently, the Japanese beer industry was composed on the whole of five main breweries – Suntory, Kirin, Sapporo, Asahi, and Orion – which were national in scope and operated throughout this period so their adverts would have been seen throughout Japan (Suntory was a late comer into the market, however, arriving in 1964 – for more details of the evolution of the Japanese Beer Industry in English see Alexander). Beer surpassed sake as an embedded drinking practice by the 1960s (Gauntner 2002) and was starting to level off and decline (see figure A). In the 1980s, beer changed to match dietary habits with Asahi’s development of *Super Dry* which consequently led to

a number of “dry” beers whilst Japan’s peculiar tax system of taxing beer based on malt content hastened the development of *happō-shu* (low-malt beer) and third- or new-genre – a beer with no malt. The performers who appear in these advertisements have different, and significant, meanings compared to those who appear in the “real” beer advertisements. Whilst it would appear that “real” beer sales have been declining, their place has been taken by *Happō-shu* (graph A) and for all intents and purposes, whilst the beer market has suffered some decline, when one considers *happō-shu* to be beer, then it has remained steady for the last few years of the period of this study.

This study examines television beer advertisements from 1957 through to 2007. These advertisements, archived at the Dentsu Advertising Museum Library ([www.admt.co.jp](http://www.admt.co.jp)) or then extant on the beer company websites, were all broadcast during the period with sporting or special events-associated advertisements excluded according to the framework used by Caillat and Muller in their study (Caillat et al. 1996). The adverts were analysed using a combination of the methods of John Fiske and Judith Williamson, both of whom have been influenced by Barthes’ work on semiotics (Barthes 1972). Williamson, in her work *Decoding Advertisements* provides a number of methods which break down how advertisements create meaning, but the most important concept is that of referent systems whereby meanings of one object are used and transferred, and the product comes to mean the same (Williamson 2005: 25). Advertising has been called “an apparatus for reframing meanings” because of its ability to do this (Goldman 1992: 5). Fiske, in his work on analysing television, utilises concepts of connotation and denotation to provide a three-level approach which facilitates our understanding of how certain ideologies and ideas are presented via the use of, for example, camera angles, colour, framing and focus, amongst others (Fiske 1987: 4–5). Taken together, these two methods allow for an understanding of how these beer advertisements have constructed Japanese femininity and masculinity during the post-war period.

## The Loner Male

Using Connell’s model of hegemonic masculinity, Dasgupta amongst others has defined the *salaryman* as being the dominant model of masculinity in Japan, idealised, desired and presented as such within the media (though alternative readings do exist, serving to both consolidate and

destabilise this hegemonic discourse) (Dasgupta 2003: 127–128). However, within these adverts the ideal and idealised is not the *Salaryman*, but the Loner Male – alone, independent and exclusive, he stands both apart and distinct from society, lacking ties or social bonds. Whilst the *Salaryman* fulfils the normative discourse of heterosexuality, the Loner Male remains asexual, lacking desire and sexual urges. A series of adverts by Sapporo featuring the same performer from the 1970s were extremely useful in analysing this “Loner Male” as a model for masculinity. One, set upon a ship at sea, features a man dressed in a white top and red jeans, who walks down the length of a boat with a bottle and glass to the bow with various shots of seagulls and the sea. He clinks the bottle as if toasting, pours for himself and then drinks. Accompanying this is a shot of vertical script (connoting traditionalism/classicism) with the words *Otoko ha damatte... Sapporo Biiru* (Men are silent and... Sapporo Beer) scrolling down in Japanese.

According to Williamson, having the clothes of the performer match the product's colours results in the transferral of the meaning and qualities of the performer to the product (Williamson 2005: 20–22). Unlikely to resonate with the experience of most Japanese, the location of the ship makes no real sense, but signifies danger and isolation: the man is not connected to society in any way but is alone at sea, lacking relations with anyone. Were anyone else present he would not have committed the cultural faux-pas of pouring his own drink (see Befu for etiquette concerning social drinking). He is also travelling, escaping from society, independent with no family ties and no sexuality. It has been noted that Masculinity is often constructed and performed by disempowering the other, in this case, the feminine, via exclusion and rejection and this is so here for there is no other – this is the man alone. Opportunities to be masculine through being alone and independent are normally denied by society with men placed in situations where opportunities to express individuality or to exert control are repressed (Fiske 1987: 201). This ship should be a place of work where his individuality, independence and power are all repressed, but he, and only he (for no-one else appears to be on the ship) is able to drink when he wants.

We can therefore see that the qualities of masculinity, that which makes a man masculine, without access to his referent system, are solitariness, isolation, independence, and rejection of society. Not only is it a rejection of society, however, it is also a rejection of the other, of what is not present: family, stability, stasis and the feminine. These themes, of



independence and escape, emerge continuously in various adverts featuring men during this time period.

Accessing the referent system of the actor, however, reveals more about this Loner Male and allows for a deeper reading of his masculinity. The performer in this case is Mifune Toshirō who represents a very clear ideal of masculinity in Japan, with his film roles embodying independence, authority and dynamism. Mifune was also the genesis and expression of a certain masculinity in Euro-American discourse via various remakes of his films – *Shichinin no Samurai* (Kurosawa 1954) as the Magnificent Seven (Sturges 1960), *Yōjimbō* (Kurosawa 1961) as A Fistful of Dollars (Leone 1964) – and whilst his roles were typically that of the loner, he still operated within society unlike these advertisements where he is supremely independent. Noting the importance of non-verbosity to Japanese masculinity, the *Otoko wa damatte... Sapporo Biiru* catchphrase serves as an example of laconic Japanese masculinity (Lebra 1976: 78), but the most important factor is his independence and isolation from society. The lack of relationships with the opposite sex (or the same sex) could well be to signify masculine purity (Standish 2000: 49), but it also allows a subverted reading by marginalised sexualities. This Loner, then, is a stereotypical representation of masculinity. It is based on independence, isolation, age, the ability to shave (he utilises a straight blade razor at one point), individualism, and freedom from the constraints and obligations of society which are (illogically) represented by the lack of appearance of family, home or work.

These representations did evolve over the time period, however, with the Loner Male taking on a different form in more contemporary adverts, best exemplified by stars such as Yazawa Eikichi, a rock artist in his fifties, and Satō Kōichi, an actor in his forties. They both do various activities alone: Satō visits a *Yakitoriya* (*grilled chicken skewers bar*), a *Ryōkan* (*Japanese Inn*), a *Hamaguri* (Shellfish) barbecue Restaurant, and an *Oden* (*simmered foods often seen as masculine*) restaurant; whilst Yazawa visits an expensive *Sushi* Restaurant and partakes in *Hanami* (Cherry blossom viewing) thus positioning his masculinity as particularly Japanese. Whilst slightly reminiscent in looks and age, Yazawa differs greatly from the model exemplified by Mifune. The New Loner Male does not reject society in these adverts, but operates within it and whilst solitary, they interact with other people with women no longer ex-scripted: they feature in background roles, are shown to drink, to be present and in Satō's case, to have direct contact with him. These Loner Males do not challenge

the hegemonic masculinity (i.e., the *Salaryman*) as Mifune did but accept it: Satō, in fact, actually appears to be one as shown when he goes out for *Fugu* (blowfish). Now more patient, there is no rush to escape society to drink: Satō calmly considers his choice in the *Yakitoriya*, hesitating even; Yazawa saunters beneath the Cherry Blossoms; and they wait for food before drinking and do not slurp their beer. Less independent than before, they are now reliant upon others for providing their food and beverages.

This model of a Loner Male does evolve from Mifune's for whilst still nominally alone, their individualism is performed in conjunction with society. There is less independence and more interaction with women who are now visible and able to challenge masculinity as in the *Yakitoriya* when Satō's non-normative actions of hesitancy and lack of decisiveness can be contested. Masculinity is still positioned as having an age-status, but it is more accepting of the feminine and of society.

## The Vanished Geisha

A corollary to the Loner Male is the Vanished Geisha. Unlike the Loner Male, the woman on her own, away from society, does not exist. She is vanished – excised from the narrative. In fact, during the early half of this period, the woman on her own even *within* society does not exist as such, though women do appear with other performers. Considered unworthy of representation, femininity is denied, negated, and marginalised with beer consumption positioned as a masculine privilege, a practice done either in order to *be* a man or because one *is* a man. This can be explained by the concept of the masculine republic, whereby spaces for alcohol consumption are reserved for men whilst a woman drinking alone is seen as sexually available (Collins et al. 2002: 75). Furthermore, because femininity needs to be constructed as different from masculinity, women cannot be represented using the same themes. Femininity, deeply linked with society and civilization, cannot seek refuge from itself, but is instead the other, the society from which masculinity flees but within which it also seeks refuge. One Orion advertisement does feature a woman on her own, standing draped in a white cloak, billowing in the wind whilst deep, masculine voices chant, but unlike the Loner Male, she neither possesses beer nor drinks but waits passively and is thereby significantly different from the Loner Male. The question of whether women did drink or whether showing them drinking would have alienated men to the point where they

ceased to consume beer does warrant further inquiry. The explanation for why women could not be shown drinking might lie in the fact that beer is seen as a reward for working and as women were not represented as working they therefore could not be rewarded (Mifune's Loner Male does not work in all his advertisements, but he is active – either riding horses or venturing into the wilderness). This of course fits in with certain idealised and mythologised ideas of women not having to work within the Professional Housewife ideal, one of the pillars of the Salaryman system and one which reflected certain class-based ideals (Ezawa 2010: 197–202).

This vanished Geisha, excised from the narrative and existing only by her non-appearance does evolve over time, however, and a lone woman performer does start to appear in the second half of this period. Exemplified by performers such as Wada Akiko, Araki Kurenai, and Asao Miwa, this representation attests to changing definitions of femininity, feminine behaviour and also the accepted presence of women in society. Similar to the Loner Male, femininity is now constructed on its own terms away from society, without reference to anyone else: newly liberated, the woman is free to drink. However, it must be noted that two of these performers (Wada and Araki) were not advertising “beer” as such but *Happōshu* – a lesser beer – and so an attempt to capture a market without alienating the core male market. It could equally be argued that since these beers are not proper or real beer (at least, according to Governmental definitions), then it is much easier to utilise themes of independence to market them to women, but the fact that Asao advertises the same beer as Yazawa (The Premium Malt's) would negate this argument to some degree. There is one significant difference between Mifune and Yazawa's Loner Male and the Loner Female – these women who do drink on their own are positioned as performing. Goldman contends that women are often defined by the image that they present to the world and the gaze that validates, defines, and objectifies them is often absent, situated instead in front of the performer, in the place of the viewer, and is often a man (Goldman 1992: 117–128). So whilst nominally alone, Wada and Araki are in fact validated through performing and through the gaze of the spectator; however, whilst Wada and Araki both drink and are performing, they do offer differing models of this Loner Female: Wada glugs, Araki sips; Wada is older, Araki younger; Wada's hair is shorter, more masculine, Araki's is longer, more feminine – drinking is now an acceptable practice for all women with a range of behaviours and performances, both masculine and feminine, now permissible. We can therefore see that the Loner Fe-

male represents a variety of femininities and whilst nominally constructed on the notion of the male gaze, they are performing somewhat independently, subverting a feminine-marked activity such as shopping by buying beer for themselves rather than an ideologically-mandated male partner. Furthermore, the Loner Female shows not only an integration of different femininities into Japanese society but also the integration of minorities: Wada Akiko (Horipro Inc 2005) 'came out' around this time as *Zainichi* Korean (Japan-born 'ethnic' minorities). Not only does she represent a Japanese femininity which can drink, but also a minority which can represent Japanese femininity. Changing performances of femininity and masculinity as represented through the model of the Loner are now visible: solitary drinking away from society is no longer a necessary factor in the performance of masculinity for whilst still individual and solitary, it is performed within social settings, integrating and interacting with other individuals. With the greater representation of the Loner Woman in adverts, solitary drinking has become degendered: it is an acceptable practice for anyone and an acceptable practice anywhere; although it must be noted that women are still restricted from performing this activity within the "masculine republics" of restaurants or *Izakaya* (recent advertisements (2010 onwards such as for *The Premium Malt's*) have evolved with women appearing in restaurants alone, but these were not viewed as part of this data set).

## The Couple

Whilst the Loner Male and the Vanished Geisha/Loner Female represent solitary drinking and a femininity and masculinity constructed absent the presence of a sexuality which can only be assumed (and the logical assumption would be that these models of femininity and masculinity are asexual in that there is no presence of a preference in any way), another model does position different-sex relationships as normative (Mostow has noted how labels such as homosexual and heterosexual are inadequate to describe sexual preferences in different periods (Mostow 2003)). The Couple in this case is exemplified by two performers who embark upon various activities together, which naturally involve beer at some point. During these activities, which include a steam-train journey, stilt-walking, and a tandem-bicycle ride, the woman is present and does hold a beer. On the surface, it appears an equal relationship. The couple in this series of

advert was married in real life and both were actors: Kishida Kyōko and Nakaya Noboru, with Kishida featuring in the films *Sanma no Aji* (1964) [An Autumn Afternoon] by Ozu Yasujiro, and *Otoko Girai* (1964) [I Hate Men] where she preferred to stay single rather than marry and thus became a signifier for feminism and independence.

When we analyse the advertisements more closely, it is clear that femininity is performed by being subordinated to masculinity with this practice of subordination then an integral component in the performance of gender: casual-dominance marks a male as a man, and subordination to the man marks a female as a woman. During all the activities that they do it is Nakaya who leads, points, and controls with Kishida following. The man is positioned as the leader, as in charge; she accompanies him and lacks her own volition. She is subordinated through a system of casual-dominance, that is, dominance that is natural and uncoerced. Femininity is shown (not performed) through appearance with a woman's value in how she looks (Barthel 1988: 9, Goldman 1992: 100) and this is reflected in the tandem scene. Whilst Nakaya wears a helmet and sunglasses, thus protecting his head – the source of authority and knowledge – Kishida wears only a hat to protect her face from the sun. In fact, this hat is ever present and fits in with Ashikari's theory of the "White Face" – a form of make-up which signifies gender and class and which positions the ideal Japanese woman as middle-class whose face is untouched by the sun (Ashikari 2003: 75).

Kishida's version of femininity is also associated with children to some degree – in one advert out of this series, Kishida plays hopscotch with a child whilst Nakaya smokes thereby reinforcing the convention where women are likened to children (Kang 1997, Romaine 1999: 78) and it could be further argued that this activity is so trivial that no male gaze is necessary to validate it. Given the polysemous nature of advertisements (Fiske 1987: 12, Fairclough 2003: 124–125) however, Kishida could equally be independent to such a degree that no male gaze is necessary, that she is free to play whilst it is Nakaya who guards the luggage, here replacing the home. One issue with concepts and theories used for analysing advertising and media products is that the various readings can always be contested with, for example, this same advertisement positioning protection as a masculine duty which liberates the feminine to deal with nurturing activities. The fact that Kishida does follow Nakaya, however, does indicate the subordinate position of femininity to the masculine with only Nakaya consuming beer within these advertisements whilst maintaining control of the resources (the beer bottle). Equally, the act of non-pouring

could be read as either a sign of lack of subordination or equally as a sign that they are not equals; though given the way in which pouring can be a means to access superiors within Japan, it is mostly just a sign of familiarity.

In this model, femininity and masculinity are performed by interacting with the other gender with no division into separate feminine or masculine spheres. Whilst it could be read that the man has the power to invade what was once a feminine sphere, the home, the very fact that they travel together and interact outside would indicate that the division has been discarded. Masculinity is performed by casually-dominating women, but this model of masculinity does not reject or ex-script them and so can be said to be a slight improvement over the Loner Man as exemplified by Mifune Toshirō. These adverts are to be commended for featuring a couple together and showing relations between the genders however femininity is performed through the presence of men: women lack knowledge, self-will and independence and the presence of a man validates her existence for she is only able to perform any activities when there is a man present, under his direction. This model does evolve, however, with more contemporary couples who are younger and engaging in activities equally, and unlike Kishida and Nakaya, both drinking (Kishida often held the beer but did not actually drink) thus providing an example of beer and its consumption being ungendered.

A series of adverts for Kirin's *Happōshu*, *Enjuku*, appear to have similar themes of subordination to the Kishida-Nakaya Kirin models. They also demonstrate how texts can be subverted or mis-read. It features an older man and a younger woman performing various activities in a rural, tropical, and needless to say, "exotic" location – one which has little relation to the urbanised living of most Japanese. They cycle, visit stores and relax by having a beer before their corporeal bodies fade and become beer cans – a technique which Williamson has noted is used to connect the product and performer with the same qualities (Williamson 2005: 140). Again, the woman wears a hat, the man leads and is copied by the woman and is also appellated "Ken-Chan" by various people – an old woman in a small store, a man in a port (an examination of these roles would consider in the reinforcement of certain employment roles as a factor in gender construction). Before turning into cans, the woman toasts (and teases) the man with this appellation. Whilst this could be read as mocking patriarchal power, he is named whilst she lacks any identity of her own and thus exists only in a supporting role. We see here then a heterosexist dis-

course of gender and the subordination of women with free will and the authority to lead the preserve of men within opposite sex relationships. This reading is not, however, the reading that is intended by the advertisers – within that reading, which was available on the website, they are father and daughter and she has come to visit him in his retirement. This shows how the reading of advertisements can be different to that which is intended. The advert still positions masculinity and femininity in stereotypical roles, however, and were we to follow Stern's advocacy of adopting sex reversal as a technique of analysis for advertisements (Stern 1993) we could see the incongruity of a son visiting a mother and doing the same activities in the same way and same locations and how naturalised and taken for granted this relationship and situation seems. It is the man's ability to retire because he had an occupation and was able to sever ties to move location whereas the woman would presumably still be shown in her original home in Tokyo. From a certain viewpoint, then, this man also serves as a model for the older, Loner Male: rejecting mainstream society and living alone, but also able to operate within society.

The Couple, it must be noted, is heterosexist, denying and marginalising the existence of same sex relationships, which like the Loner Female are conspicuous by their absence. Whilst some advertisements can be read as featuring same-sex relationships in that men outnumber women in group scenes (Orion, for example), it is possible, though unlikely, to be the preferred reading. Some of the men could also be asexual. Same sex couples do not seem to appear or to exist in any way that could be considered significant. A number of scholars have documented the existence of same-sex practices and relationships in different points in Japan's history (Pflugfelder 1992, McLelland 2003, Curran et al. 2005), but their representation is non-existent within these beer advertisements: sexuality is hetero-normative.

Both femininity and masculinity in this model has evolved. Initially performed via casual-subordination to men and requiring protecting one's appearance to operate in the same sphere, the relationship between the Couple became more equal with technical knowledge and ability no longer the preserve solely of masculinity. Masculinity is often constructed, and sustained, via a negation of same-sex relations (Connell 1992: 736, Donaldson 1993: 648) and in this model, both it and femininity is performed through opposite-sex relations: whilst evolving in some aspects, then, this model ignores the various lived experiences of numerous people in Japan whose sexualities do not match the normative discourse of heterosexuality.



## The Androgyne

Whilst the other models have evolved in some way and been notable by their absence, it is the final model of gender which provides the greatest evidence of change and evolving attitudes – or at least, evidence of an attempt to capture market share. Acknowledging the existence of different identities, The Androgyne is a more dynamic model of gender, featuring actors whose gender performance cannot be categorised as overtly masculine or feminine. The shifting boundaries of gender can be seen in a variety of adverts from the pre-contemporary period where gender-marked clothing and activities came to be used predominantly by both sexes. This can be seen in the advertisements by Kirin featuring Kishida and Nakaya, which, although only a small example, are illuminating. In many of these adverts, Kishida wears trousers, an item of clothing which has typically been used to mark the male-sexed body as masculine (at least in “Western” discourse). The adoption of marked clothing by women can be said to be an indicator of greater equality and an assault on the privileges that have been assigned to men. Femininity is now free to change its markers and so there is some blurring of gender distinctions: trousers no longer maketh the man. However, Kishida is still marked as a woman in other ways: her hat, as noted, indicates her need for her appearance to be protected and as Romaine notes, uni-sex clothing is generally an acceptance of females adopting masculine coded dress: this would only truly be a shifting of boundaries were a man able to wear a skirt or carry a hand-bag and not be coded as effeminate (Romaine 1999: 309). The gender differences then are not blurring really, but instead women having to adopt the markers of masculinity in order to gain parity.

Kishida does not truly count as the Androgyne and it is only recently that this model has appeared and it is best represented by a performer mentioned previously, Wada Akiko, and by Katori Shingo of SMAP fame. Wada is a representation of femininity not just as the Loner Woman, but also of the shifting boundaries of gender. Wada’s gender performance is very masculine: she has a deep voice, broad shoulders, is tall and as McLelland notes, “does not use the hyper-feminine speech used by other female personalities... [she] is somewhat forward and aggressive in her interaction with men” (McLelland 2000: 44–45). Wada, however, has changed her gender performance *recently*: on the cover of her 1960s albums she appears with more feminine hair and it is only in recent years that she has come to have shorter, more “mannish” hair, further reinforcing the notion



of shifting gender boundaries which allows Wada to change her appearance and to still be used to represent a model of femininity.

Katori is a member of SMAP, a ubiquitous Japanese boy band founded by Johnny Kitagawa whose talent agency was called the "Pretty-Man Factory" (Schilling 1997: 232). The use of Katori in Asahi adverts shows an attempt to appeal to alternative consumers and also represents an acceptance of a more ambiguously-constructed masculinity. As well as singing, SMAP also "act" in television dramas and the SMAP stars (there are five) are highly androgynous: they cross gender boundaries, have long hair, are sometimes seen wearing dresses, and are also positioned as sex objects, revealing their bodies for audience enjoyment and this androgynous image, though constructed for heterosexual female enjoyment (Darling-Wolf 2004: 359–362) has "won them an enthusiastic following among gay men" (Schilling 1997: 237). Darling-Wolf notes that the construction of masculinity through SMAP's blatant portrayal as sex objects which appeal to both gay men and to women as sexual fantasies may be disruptive and can offer "potentially liberating ways for women and gay males to explore their sexual identity" (Darling-Wolf 2004: 367). Given that many of Shingo's roles involve assuming feminine-associated performances and qualities including a nursery school teacher (Schilling 1997: 232) it can be said that these roles subordinate women by adopting the qualities associated with them whilst women gain neither equality nor comparative status, but by adopting these roles, Shingo also serves to challenge normative models of masculinity by showing caring and nurturing as being masculine qualities which men are able to incorporate into their conceptions of masculinity.

The use of these two performers, Wada and Katori, is indicative of the changes that gender is undergoing as a set of practices in Japan and may be indicative of a shift in the conception of ideal masculinity and femininity in Japan. By crossing various boundaries, both performers allow for a range of practices deemed masculine or feminine to be performed by either men and women without their sexual orientation being brought into question. Katori is the antithesis of the Salaryman and Wada the antithesis of the passive female: she diverges from the ideal femininity of the past – neither demure, quiet, slight, nor subordinated and yet still a woman. Yet it is perhaps of the fact that they are "the Androgyne" that both are not used for 'real' beer: Wada is both too powerful and too ambiguous to be featured in the advertisements interacting with 'real' men, whose masculinity would be infringed by her presence (though she does do so on

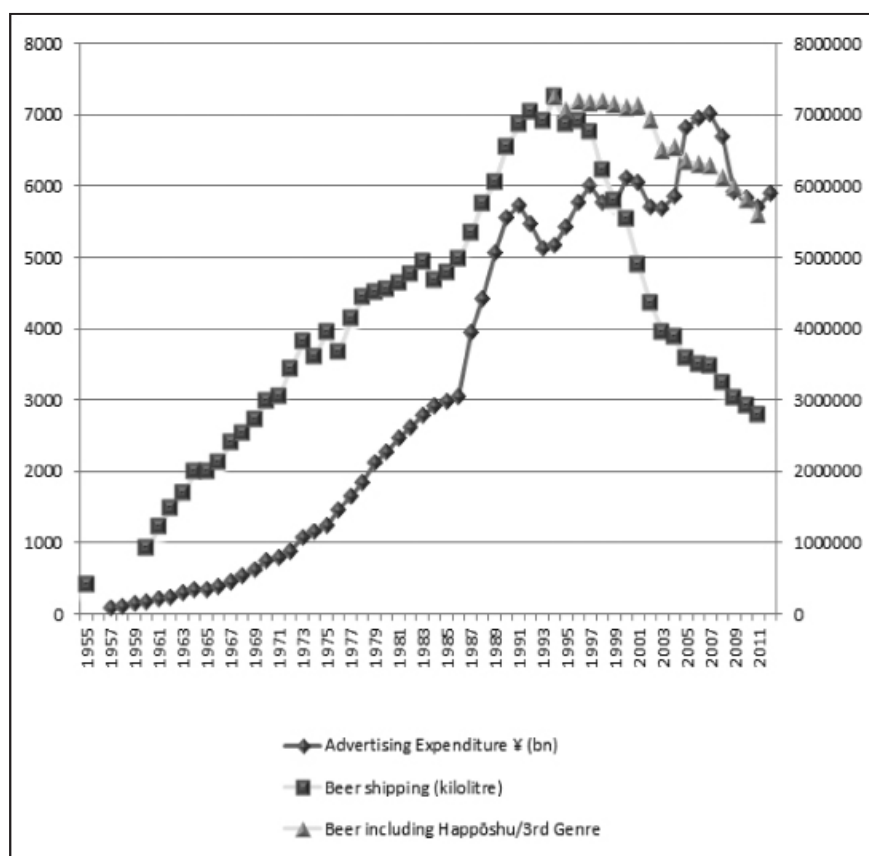
various variety shows); Katori's sexuality and performance is too fluid for adverts for the real beer which the older generation drinks, and since his appeal is to a female audience, to whom Happōshu would seem attractive, it makes sense that he advertises this beer.

With television beer advertisements, gender is blurring and practices and performances are becoming more fluid and free with individuals who do not fit into traditional practices and performances appearing to sell beer (though it must be noted here that many traditional performances, theatre-wise, in Japan are ambiguous and fluid, with male and female roles in Kabuki a case in point. Mark McLelland has pointed out how cross-dressing within certain spaces is not associated with same-sex desire and is indeed tolerated as part of a celebrity's performance (McLelland 2000: 48). There is still a degree of restraint within these advertisements, however, for whilst Katori can alter his appearance with his hair dyed white, the hair of the women who appear remains dark and the ability to change one's appearance, adopting markers of femininity or masculinity, appears to be restricted to men. Wada's performance is not overtly androgynous in that she performs with some markers of femininity (a dress, earrings) and so whilst we can see that gender is changing with previously marginalised models becoming more accepted, the androgyny only goes so far.

## Conclusion

These four models attest to the wide diversity of masculinities and femininities that have been performed in Japan during the post-war period. We can see how each model has evolved over time, never remaining static but changing and adapting. Unlike Strate's work which featured types according to brand and which was synchronic, the models of gender in Japanese beer advertisements cross beer brands and feature women and a range of masculinities and femininities that evolve over time. Essential to these understandings is the location where they take place with, as Copeland pointing out, the meaning of gender changing significantly when that same Loner Male is transferred from the open sea to his bedroom with the beer consumed not at the front of a ship, but in front of a computer (Copeland 2013). This remains true for all the models within these advertisements as the location of the gender performance remains an essential element alongside the markers and the non/appearance of other performers.

Figure A: Beer Shipping (including Happōshu) and Advertising Expenditure (1955–2012)



Source: Dentsu Inc 1987 (revised figures for 1985/6), 2000, 2013;  
Kirin Holdings Company Ltd 2012.

These four models are not exclusive, however, with various other iterations and their accompanying referent systems present and used, including notions of *wen-wu/bun-bu* (*Martial/Literary*) (Louie et al. 2003), the intersection of both paid and domestic labour, and the use of non-Japanese (appearance) all creating a plethora of models. Furthermore, the polysemous nature of advertisements, alluded to earlier, means that the analysis differs depending on the person, or even the circumstances of that person so were this analysis to be performed a few years hence, it would be markedly different. This paper, then, is only a snapshot of this period and this area remains ripe for further study. One issue with

the analysis here is that it only examines the content of these advertisements and not what influenced these choices nor the conditions that the industry was undergoing at the time. Furthermore, as Moeran points out, various analyses of advertising, including semiotic-based ones, often neglect the position of advertisements within campaigns or the conventions of the industry all whilst relying upon the brilliance of the individual analyst (Moeran 1996: 32). By analysing one product, beer, the complaint concerning the conventions can be addressed, whilst the use of Williamson's techniques does help understand the various techniques used to construct an advertisement. The background and commentary on these advertisements therefore deserves to be studied and if done so, would go so way to putting Moeran's concerns to rest.

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