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Inside the Media Mix:

Collective Creation in Contemporary Manga and Anime

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Film and Television

by

Bryan Hikari Hartzheim

2015

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Inside the Media Mix:
Collective Creation in Contemporary Manga and Anime

by

Bryan Hikari Hartzheim

Doctor of Philosophy in Film and Television

University of California, Los Angeles, 2015

Professor John T. Caldwell, Chair

Japanese creative media – particularly, its comics, animation, and video games – has found success globally, but it is primarily a product made for and by a domestic audience. What characterizes the success of its various creative industries on the domestic level, before they reach out to global spheres? This dissertation attempts to provide an answer to this question by examining the logics of franchise media production in Japan. I conduct ethnographic fieldwork into Japan's manga and anime industries, as well as close analyses of concomitant transmedia texts, in order to demonstrate the collective authorship that surrounds the production of contemporary media in these industries today. By focusing on the production of texts in commercial outlets such as Shueisha's *Weekly Shōnen Jump* and Toei Animation Studios, I show how large-scale, franchise media in Japanese production is organized, managed, and distributed through small networks of mangaka,

assistants, editors, and readers, as well as large networks of professionals including animators, directors, scriptwriters, voice actors, and producers. These networks produce texts that are then open to “multiple use,” dispersed into the hands of other producers through “element databases,” or converge in a “media mix,” spun through committees and centralized through “product-portals.” The resulting transmedia reflects the similar creative preoccupations within manga and anime: an ability to construct worlds through “character management”: the multi-authored process of constructing compelling characters with a variety of industrial functions.

The dissertation of Bryan Hikari Hartzheim is approved.

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2015

To my parents

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Japanese *anime* (animation), *manga* (comics), and video games have spread over the globe increasingly since the 1990s. This wave of “Japanophilia,” incidentally, has not gone unnoticed by those in prominent positions of influence. “Japanamerica” and “Japanification” are but two of the neologisms that have been coined by critics and scholars to describe this current iteration of Japanese cultural influence.¹ As far back as 2002, in fact, Douglas McGray came up with the idea of Japan’s “gross national cool,” or GNC, to describe the nation’s newfound soft power (the ability to influence through attraction and co-option, rather than coercion and force) in the form of highly attractive cultural commodities in the global sphere.² Japanese policymakers have been swift to capitalize on the trend, pumping millions of yen into a branding strategy known as “Cool Japan,” a catchphrase referring to the planned economic and political influence of the nation’s content industries.³

When the global “success” of anime and manga is discussed in “Cool Japan” terms, issues relating to national identity and Japanese diplomacy are inevitably brought up. In his policy speech to the Diet in 2007, former Prime Minister and self-described *otaku* (obsessive anime fan) Aso Taro said, “What is important is to be able to induce other countries to listen to Japan. If the use of pop culture or various sub-cultures can be useful in this process, we certainly should make the most of them.”⁴ Two years later, Aso talked

¹ See Roland Kelts *Japanimerica: How Japanese Pop Culture Has Invaded the West* (New York: Palgrave, 2006) and Mark I. West ed. *The Japanification of Children’s Popular Culture* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2008).

² Douglas McGray, “Japan’s Gross National Cool,” *Foreign Policy* 130 (May/June 2002).

³ Japan Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry, *Cool Japan Initiative*, 2014.
<http://www.meti.go.jp/policy/mono_info_service/mono/creative/file/1406CoolJapanInitiative.pdf> (12 February 2015).

⁴ See the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Policy Speech by Minister of Foreign Affairs Taro Aso to the 166th Session of the Diet,” 26 January 2007.

about his love for the medium and his desire to build a national manga museum in the center of Akihabara – a district of Tokyo that is already practically a museum for manga and anime.⁵ Other officials of the Cool Japan initiative have said that one of the goals of the project is to emphasize Japanese cultural exports in trade in order to “foster the brand power of Japan.”⁶ This importance placed on “brand power” cannot be underestimated; in the post-Cold War era, the role of cultural capital has grown in global politics as the use of military or economic power has decreased. Companies in Japan can create popular characters, using their images for a variety of purposes and sustaining businesses over decades.

But the government, apparently, can also reuse that character’s popularity to “heal” international relations with foreign peoples and territories. Japanese creative capital can be used to win over the hearts and minds of formerly colonized Asian neighbors.⁷ As early as the 1950s, Japanese animators directed their skills toward making animated films of Chinese folk tales with the purpose of “healing” post-war trauma in the region, as well as the nationalistic desire to be forgiven for past war crimes.⁸ Anime such as *Slam Dunk* and *One Piece* have enjoyed incredible popularity in Taiwan and South Korea following import bans on Japanese intellectual property. Such creative capital has most recently been mobilized for *national* healing (see figure 1). Son Goku and Arare-chan, recognizable characters from Toriyama Akira’s famous mangas *Dragon Ball* and *Dr. Slump*, have implored people all over the world to send their “energy” and goodwill to the victims and

⁵ Edan Corkill, “Is a National Manga Museum At Last Set to Get Off the Ground?” *Japan Times*, 14 June 2009.

⁶ “New Entity in Works to Promote Cool Japan Themes for Export,” *Japan Times*, 5 March 2013.

⁷ See chapter six, “Japan’s Asian Dreamworld” in Koichi Iwabuchi’s *Recentering Globalization: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).

⁸ See Tzu-Yue Hu, *Frames of Anime: Culture and Image-Building* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 89-95.

communities in northern Japan devastated by the March 11 earthquake and subsequent tsunamis⁹.



Figure 1: Character healing

And yet, while “Cool Japan” might turn out to be a powerful – even positive – ideological construct, it tends to focus attention on Japanese specificities and characteristics, consequently viewing all work through a national lens. By focusing so intently on national terms, the ways in which practitioners create anime and manga become increasingly blurry. In this dissertation, I propose an alternative model of analysis for Japanese popular culture. Rather than asking what “Japanese qualities” make both anime and manga globally successful, I ask: what is the creative logic that guides Japanese anime/manga franchise production? I propose a study on the authorial perspectives of the many creators who make these products. By focusing on the producers of anime/manga franchise construction, I organize the collaborative creativity of the Japanese anime/manga world *not* according to its national character or influence, but rather through the *processes* of its various industries.

Through extensive field research on Japan’s collaborative manga and anime industries conducted from 2012-2014, this dissertation demonstrates how media today is

⁹ For an interesting discussion of this use of commercial philanthropy, see Ian Peters, “Genki Dama Save the World”: Japanese Popular Culture, Globalization, and Relief Efforts, *In Media Res*, 25 April 2011, <<http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/imr/2011/04/25/genki-dama-saves-world-japanese-popular-culture-globalization-and-relief-efforts>> (25 April 2011).

increasingly organized according to a database of diverse elements. I do this by investigating the simultaneous production of anime, manga, films, video games and related ancillary merchandise known in Japan as the *media mix*. In the West, this media collaboration has been framed as “convergence,” with recent scholarship focusing on the idea of collaborative multi-media storytelling called “transmedia.” By foregrounding specific transmedia production cultures, this study provides theories of media convergence that are more industrially grounded and attentive to the media specificities of each medium and the contexts from which they emerge. This involves not just the dialogue between media texts that take place between different mediums, but also the dialogue between scholars and practitioners on media construction and convergence from both Japan and the West. By doing so, this study contributes to both the scholarly discourse on transmedia – notably lacking in studies of media outside of Hollywood – and the discourse on Japanese cultural production.

This dissertation argues for the anime/manga character’s centrality for production processes in some of the most popular and ubiquitous forms of commercial transmedia franchises to be found in contemporary Japan. There are a number of reasons why I limit this study to those franchises that emerge from the manga and anime. As the first text from which the biggest entertainment franchises are spawned, the manga – the Japanese form of the graphic novel – has a sheer economic significance to Japanese media. Despite worldwide declines in print across the world, sales of manga volumes in Japan still account for some 27% of book sales, while manga magazines account for 20% of all magazine

sales.¹⁰ A typical manga series is first inked into 20-page installments in a bound anthology that is printed on large, monochrome sheets of flimsy newsprint. Some of the most popular manga magazines house between ten and twenty other serialized stories and are roughly the size of a phonebook. Magazines can follow a monthly publication timetable, but the most popular ones are distributed weekly. As there are several dozen such magazines constantly in circulation, manga magazines are one of the most regularly distributed and consumed media in not only Japan but throughout the world. Most importantly, these magazines typically retail for less than five dollars and are generally unprofitable. These manga magazines function as Trojan Horses, making their profits through royalties garnished from the sales of collected paperback volumes of manga series called *tankōbon*. Manga also fuels much of the transmedia in Japan today, with manga adaptations accounting for roughly 40% of all television animation and 50% of the top-grossing films at the box office.¹¹ Manga's stories and characters act as media blueprints for transmedia expansion.



Figure 2: Manga magazines

¹⁰ “2008 Publication Index Annual Report,” All Japan Magazine and Book Publishers’ and Editors’ Association at the Research Institute for Publications, <http://www.jetro.org/trends/market_info_manga.pdf> (6 March 2011)

¹¹ See Ema Tanaka, “Industry Structure of Media Mix,” in *Kontentsu sangyōron* (Theory of Contents Industry), eds. Deguchi Hiroshi, et al. (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 2009), 162-63 and Eiren (Motion Picture Producers Association of Japan) <<http://www.eiren.org/>> (8 January 2015).

Anime, on the other hand, is more variegated in its production. When presented with the word “anime,” some people familiar with the term think of quality feature length animation such as Studio Ghibli’s family-gearred, Oscar-winning *Spirited Away*, or Katsuhiro Otomo’s art-house dystopia *Akira*. Others, on the other hand, will think of popular children’s television entertainment such as *Pokémon*, *Beyblade*, or *Yu-Gi-Oh!* Anime is, rather, both and more: animation produced in Japan for film, television, video, and now the internet, but using specific production techniques and processes. Anime is probably most commonly distributed through television programs, and the industry that has formed around it relies overwhelmingly on television production. Indeed, some official estimates state that television anime makes up over 60 percent of the world’s broadcasts of cartoons.¹² As such, television anime production lubricates most of the content industries in Japan today. If manga production is the building block for most transmedia franchises in Japan, then anime is not just the glue, but holds a much more complex function that involves production, promotion, licensing, merchandising, and making the initial concrete foundation into a skyscraper. When the television live-action and anime series of *Nodame Cantabile* were broadcast in 2006 and 2007, respectively, the manga series sold an additional 600,000 *tankōbon* reprint copies.¹³ For manga, anime functions as a loudspeaker blasting a regular announcement into Japanese households every week, without fail or interruption. Countless examples of anime’s global reach in Japanese transmedia abound even without a manga source, from the video game-inspired *Pokémon* to the original media mix *Sailor Moon*.

¹² Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), “Japan Animation Industry Trends.” *JETRO Japan Economic Monthly* (June 2005), http://www.jetro.go.jp/en/reports/market/pdf/2005_35_r.pdf (4 January 2015).

¹³ Matsutani Soichiro, “Manga no media mix to seisaku iinkai hōshiki no genjō” (Manga’s Media Mix and the Present State of the Production Committee System), *Tsukuru* (May 2007): 41.

The central objects of my study are the two biggest forums where multiple transmedia franchises are located: the manga magazine and the anime studio, both of which are responsible for developing and controlling commercial intellectual property based on hand-drawn images. I focus on these two fields as they involve what David Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker call the “creative labor” of mediated communication in industrial, commercial media.¹⁴ While scholars have written critically on individual manga titles, authors, and genres, very little attention has been given to the role of the manga magazine – as a publishing firm, a promotional outlet, a center of aggregated talent – in the construction of the media franchise.¹⁵ The production of anime has received slightly more attention in critical analysis, particularly in the Japanese language, though the role and function of the animation studio in producing transmedia franchises is under-theorized in scholarly discourse.¹⁶ This study will seek to correct this imbalance by looking at the logic that undergirds mass-distributed production in the manga and animation industries.

Within these two industrial zones, this dissertation focuses on gendered subsets: *shōnen*, or “boys,” battle manga, and *shōjo*, or “girls,” magical girl anime. I focus on these two sectors as they are the best examples of what the media industry analyst Masuda

¹⁴ David Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker, *Creative Labour: Media Work in Three Cultural Industries* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 7.

¹⁵ Some notable exceptions are the industrial studies of the comics scholar and historian Frederik Schodt, who devotes an entire chapter to manga magazines in his book, *Dreamland Japan* (1996). Schodt alludes to the transmedia behind manga magazines oriented towards young audiences, but his chapter is more of a survey of the various types of manga magazines in existence, rather than a systematic analysis of a single manga magazine and its operations.

¹⁶ Ian Condry’s recent ethnographic study on anime production, *The Soul of Anime: Collaborative Creativity and Japan’s Media Success Story* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), is the most significant English-language examination of the work of an anime studio. It is a valuable work for the variety of its fieldwork, though Condry’s analysis is largely limited to sites of production and not the animation texts themselves. In Japanese, several studios have commissioned their own histories, including Toei, Tatsunoko, and Sunrise. These studio histories are breezier and contain little critical information, choosing to focus on the most notable achievements of the studio’s brand.

Hiromichi has called *teiban* (classic) media for “kids and families” (KF).¹⁷ Masuda argues KF media are more stable than other forms anime and manga since they have established audiences and stable production schedules. Once a KF anime reaches *teiban* status, such as *Chibi Maruko-chan*, *Doraemon*, and *Detective Conan*, they no longer run the risk of newer series and have become long-running lucrative business models. *Shōnen* manga is the most widely distributed type of manga in Japan. With its tendency to focus on action-oriented narratives, *shōnen* manga has been privileged in franchise production for its emphasis on fantasy worlds and heroic characters. Despite its label as a “boys” comic, its audience also tends to be broad, attracting readers from various demographics. The genre’s most popular series – such as *Dragon Ball*, *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, *Inuyasha*, and *Case Closed* – expand into other media formats more than any other manga genre. Indeed, many works from manga magazines are adapted into everything from television animated series to universal theme park rides based. *Shōjo* anime, on the other hand, while less commercially ubiquitous than *shōnen* manga, creates media franchises from romantic comedies and fantasies populated by magical witches, with a variety of titles both based on manga such as *Rose of Versailles*, *Hana Yori Dango*, and *Sailor Moon* that have been adapted into television anime, live-action dramas, and even stage musicals. Though primarily marketed to young girls, its audience has become similarly broad, comprised of both pre-teen female viewers and older male fans.

Both the manga magazine and the anime studio have created some of the most financially reliable, stylistically specific, and thematically coherent formula for children’s entertainment in the world. To best illustrate how the manga and anime from these subsets

¹⁷ Masuda Hiromichi, *Anime business ga wakaru* (Understand the Anime Business) (Tokyo: NTT Shuppan, 2007), 3.

create media franchises, this dissertation examines the production cultures of two of its most successful: the manga magazine *Weekly Shōnen Jump* (*Shūkan Shōnen Jump*) and the Toei Animation Studio. *Weekly Shōnen Jump* was not the first manga magazine to expand the manga published inside its pages into other media forms, but, in contrast to its competitors, it utilized key strategies that made its magazine competitive within the manga industry. These strategies, such as emphasizing transmedia adaptations, allowing new talent to publish based on short-term contracts, and training readers to become creators are fundamental in understanding the relationship between the contemporary manga magazine and its dispersed transmedia. Popular *shōnen* narratives of battle, training, and victory are rewritten, recycled, and repurposed through different settings, characters, and actions by a diverse group of authors. These tropes of the magazine have remained remarkably consistent since its establishment.

Significantly, *Weekly Shōnen Jump* developed a partnership with Toei Animation beginning in the 1980s, with the animation studio adapting over a dozen of its properties into television animated series. Japan's oldest and largest animation production company, Toei Animation has a long lineage of animating television series adapted from *Shōnen Jump* such as *Dragon Ball Z*, *Slam Dunk*, and *One Piece*. Toei has also created countless animation features and original anime series, mostly independent productions without source material spawned from the imaginations of producers, directors, writers, and animators. At any one time, the studio has over half a dozen animation projects being worked on simultaneously, more than any other studio in Japan. These titles need not be *shōnen* in concept, and Toei original anime is targeted towards young children, girls, and even adults. The variety of productions at Toei Animation is thus more diverse than that at

a typical boys' manga magazine: at any one time, Toei Animation could be creating television anime adaptations of *shōnen* or *shōjo* manga; animated feature films based on original screenplays or best-selling novels; cross-over anime with American comics producers; and television anime designed to sell children's merchandise such as playing cards and toys.

This study will look at the transmedia in *Weekly Shōnen Jump* and Toei Animation, as well as the collaborative work that goes on within each respective media production culture. Though the former is a magazine format and the latter is a studio institution, the two share strong parallels. They are both the largest producers of *teiban* KF media in Japan, often because of the collaboration between the two organizations. But more importantly, the two organizations have a similar devotion towards collective transmedia production through character-based narratives. Significantly, the strategy that both the magazine and the studio best cultivate is an ability for their works to accommodate a variety of authorial perspectives. This includes staffs of editors, assistants to the authors, fan illustrators, television producers, animation writers and directors, and key artists and animators. A work from *Shōnen Jump* or Toei Animation is exposed to and reflective of the eyes and hands of multiple creative producers. Each of these manga and anime creators realize the structure of the franchises in each arena by shaping larger media “worlds:” media franchises that tap into fragments of the original property and expand their exposure through new perspectives achieved in alternative media formats and ancillary merchandise. By analyzing the relationship between *Shonen Jump*, Toei Animation, and the processes of production that develop their works into other media properties, I argue that these franchises extend and succeed through the tiered levels of authorship and management between producers at

various levels that function to collectively amplify the resonance of compelling characters and worlds.

This multi-media approach to narrative, “media mix,” is Japan’s most commonly used expression to describe the serial interconnection of media in Japanese print and visual culture. Despite affinities with the ways in which contemporary scholars discuss the Western corollary of transmedia or convergence media, the term media mix has culturally specific twin meanings. The first meaning derives from marketing discourse in the 1970s – itself derived from American methods of marketing research and analysis – and describes the relationship between a single media property and the ways in which consumers are compelled to buy or view that property. This definition of the media mix can best be described as an advertising strategy that uses multiple media forms to advertise to its consumers.¹⁸ The concept is akin to what Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin describe as “repurposing,” which is when one work is stretched across different media forms.¹⁹ The second meaning of the media mix emerges from popular and critical discourse and describes two related concepts. One concept is when multiple media works sell other such works within the same family or group. This transpires as a form of media synergy, where the film sells the video game, which spurs DVD sales for the film, thereby producing a cascade effect. This inundation of media provides numerous points of entry into a franchise

¹⁸ The Sanseido Dictionary defines the media mix as “an advertising strategy used by publishers, broadcasters, and other media to achieve better results. In contemporary parlance, the media mix can also refer to the abundance of media.” According to the Japanese-language Dictionary of Advertising Terminology, the media mix follows Herbert Krugman’s theory of “three exposures” in the advertising theory of effective frequency. See *Kōkoku yōga jiten* (A Dictionary of Advertising Terminology), ed. Nikkei Kōkoku Kenkyūjo (Tokyo: Nikkei Keizai Shinbunsha, 1978, 2005), 175. See Michael Naples, *Effective Frequency* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), Edward P. Krugman, *Consumer Behavior and Advertising Involvement* (New York: Routledge, 2007), and John Philip Jones, “What Does Effective Frequency Mean in 1997?”, *Journal of Advertising Research* 37, no.4 (July 1997): 14-17.

¹⁹ Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 45.

so that spin-off comic books are capable of selling more merchandise, DVDs, and video games than the original animated series. This second concept of the media mix excels through a penchant for expanded narratives in contemporary media where a single work is not only spread across numerous media, but in specific media formats that expand the spectator's understanding of that work. Such narrative mirrors what Henry Jenkins calls "transmedia storytelling," where different media mutually profit from the unique narrational strategies of the media involved.²⁰ For example, a sequence that is merely alluded to in the film may be featured prominently in the video game, where the player must take up a character from the game and play the avatar in a timed "chase" level.

A number of scholars have demonstrated how Jenkins' "convergence culture" has a long lineage in both American cinema and television. One can argue that the "birth of entertainment" was itself an example of convergence. Ross Melnick has laid forth the claim that the entire mode of reception during the silent era was one of convergence. Melnick argues how the silent film theatre, pioneered by revolutionary media exhibitioners such as Samuel Roxy, relied on a host of ancillary experiences – from vaudeville performances to cartoon shorts – in order to create a fulfilling evening's entertainment.²¹ More recent examples of convergence culture include studies of Hollywood's development of the blockbuster and media "synergy." Justin Wyatt, for instance, has chronicled the relationship between film and publishing industries in the development of "high concept" media since the late 1970s.²²

²⁰ See Henry Jenkins, "Searching for the Origami Unicorn: *The Matrix* and Transmedia Storytelling" in *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 95-134.

²¹ See Ross Melnick, *American Showman: Samuel "Roxy" Rothafel and the Birth of the Entertainment Industry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

²² Justin Wyatt, *High Concept: Movies and Marketing in Hollywood* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994)

One may also look to the history of Japanese television and film for similar media convergence during this time period. The media mix as a concept, for example, predates Jenkins' conceptualization of transmedia in Japan. Kadokawa Haruki is recognized as the first in Japan to actively exploit this convergence model as a business strategy when he took over his father's paperback publishing company in the mid-1970s. Kadokawa pursued a "trinity" (*sanmi ittai*) of cross-media marketing where the novels of popular authors published by his company would be made into films with musical soundtracks also published by his company.²³ Indeed, "Kadokawa marketing" (*Kadokawa shōho*) became a catchphrase for film/paperback cross promotion, where the sales of a paperback would eventually become an ad for the film, while the film would be an ad for the paperback. Similarly, a film's pop musical score would play on the radio, which would advertise for the soundtracks, films, and more paperbacks. The paperback, then, was no longer a work unto itself, but a medium (*baitai*) for information, sold as a package. The manga industry analyst Nakano Haruyuki has argued that books in this system are simultaneously forms of "software" and "hardware" for their ability to sell content (software) in a bound package (hardware).²⁴ The strength of the system was further indicated by the idea that the interest generated in any single work by an author would echo onto the other works by the same author, creating the potential for a managed media juggernaut of interrelated and interconnected media works.²⁵

What this popular narrative occludes, though, is the synergistic system between

²³ Ueno Koshi has argued that Kadokawa was not the inventor of such marketing strategies, but rather someone who made them widespread in Japan through his use. See Ueno Koshi, "Shōhin no bunka-ka arui wa kōkoku to shite no eiga" (The Cultural Transformation of the Commodity, or the Film as Advertisement) in *Scenario* 36 (November 1980): 11.

²⁴ Nakano Haruyuki, *Manga sangyōron* (Theory of Manga Industry) (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 2004), 55-57.

²⁵ For an account of the development of the Kadokawa marketing style, see Kadokawa Haruki's autobiography, *Wa ga tōso: Furyō seinen wa sekai wo mezasu* (My Struggle: A Juvenile Delinquent Aims for the World) (Tokyo: East Press, 2005).

manga and anime that preceded Kadokawa's marketing media mix. As Marc Steinberg notes in his excellent critical history of the birth of the media mix, the production of television anime from manga stories had introduced this process many years before Kadokawa popularized and claimed ownership over the strategy.²⁶ The adaptation of Tezuka Osamu's manga *Tetsuwan Atomu* (known in the West as *Astro Boy*) into a television anime was important in not merely being the first serial television animated series in Japan, and what was essentially the first adaptation of the serial text into the serial television series. Tezuka sold each episode of *Atomu* to the advertisers at a price much lower than the cost of production.²⁷ In order to recuperate costs and profit from their creation, Tezuka and his studio, Mushi Productions, partnered with the confectionary company Meiji Seika, which loaded its Marble Chocolates with stickers featuring images of Atomu/Astro Boy. Mushi Pro understood that they had to rely on royalties generated from merchandise associated with the manga/anime to make up for the anime series' losses. This system for television anime continues in much the same fashion to this day; anime series must recuperate costs of production based on a dispersed chain of merchandise including optical media discs, video game and novel adaptations, live-action or theatrical spin-offs, musical soundtracks, plastic toys, and, of course, branded snack foods such as chocolates and potato chips.

Judging by this example, the production of television anime was, from its inception, a form of transmedia, though one that tied the media to the commodity in the form of the

²⁶ For a detailed analysis of Tezuka Osamu's *Tetsuwan Atomu* and the origination of the strategies behind the media mix, see chapter two, "Candies, Premiums, and Character Merchandising: The Meiji-Atomu Marketing Campaign," in Marc Steinberg, *Anime's Media Mix: Franchising Toys and Characters in Japan* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 37-86.

²⁷ Helen McCarthy says that Tezuka "offered to produce *Astro Boy* at 500,000 yen per episode, making it a loss leader for an entire new industry." See McCarthy, *The Art of Osamu Tezuka: God of Manga* (New York: Abrams Comicarts, 2009), 152.

character. Steinberg argues that understanding this transformation is crucial to understanding how media functions in Japan today. Character images from manga and anime are both material and immaterial, able to attach themselves to all types of environments and always holding the potential for “anymovement, anywhere, anytime.”²⁸ In this way, “the character’s material expansion intensifies its attractive force, multiplying the number of media and commodities offering the Atomu image. The intensity of the character’s attraction as a kind of immaterial force is thus indexed to, and amplified by, the degree of material circulation of the character image.”²⁹ In this formulation, the immobile image of the character linked the manga, the anime, and its various ancillary media into a single commodity that was represented in multiple media formats and consumable products. The character, in other words, was the central organizing force behind manga and anime transmedia.

The character is also the central object of my analysis of transmedia production at *Weekly Shōnen Jump* and Toei Animation. This study picks up where Steinberg’s critical history of the Kadokawa media mix leaves off. Where Steinberg’s study concludes in the 1980s at the formation and industrial adoption of the Kadokawa business model, this dissertation examines contemporary production practices in anime and manga that crystalized in the mid-to-late 1980s and remain in place to this day. Where Steinberg’s study also focused on a critical historical approach to examining the development of the media mix, this dissertation adopts what can be called a “critical media industry studies” (CMIS) approach that “emphasizes the complex interplay of economic and cultural

²⁸ Steinberg, 79.

²⁹ Ibid, 82.

forces.”³⁰ My analysis focuses heavily on processes of collaboration between different creators as they formulate and add to the construction of characters through institutional networks within the manga magazine and animation studio. Such consideration of the Japanese industry and its audience demands a closer investigation of Japan’s domestic consumption patterns and the ways in which anime and manga work as industrial creations catering to these local demands.

Another significant reason for this micro-industrial focus is that discourses of Japanese national promotion explicitly outlined in programs such as “Cool Japan” discount cultural difference within the nation itself. Koichi Iwabuchi has shown how Japanese media has attempted to sell itself to a global market by advertising its “culturally odorless” qualities that betray no signs of Japanese-ness.³¹ Much of this transnational spread is due to Japanese companies historical reliance on Western companies such as FUNimation, 4Kids, Manga Entertainment, and Viz Media for the licensing of manga and anime in global markets. Yet, to simply declare Japanese manga and anime as *inherently* transnational because of such business partnerships would be reductive and dismissive of the intense labor that goes into its creation.³² By detailing the collective authorship that goes into constructing manga and anime transmedia, my project instead asks us to instead locate and appreciate a particular fragrance – the sweat of the creative labor that goes ignored by such global transmedia frameworks.

Methodology

My study analyzes the factors that enable manga and anime to create a multi-media

³⁰ Timothy Havens, Amanda Lotz, and Serra Tinic, “Critical Media Industry Studies: A Research Approach,” *Communication, Culture, and Critique* 2 (2009): 235.

³¹ Iwabuchi, 27, 38.

³² See Iwabuchi, “Taking ‘Japanization’ Seriously: Cultural Globalization Reconsidered,” for a summary of what constitute Japan’s “culturally odorless commodities,” 24-50.

world of entertainment through fieldwork on the cultures of production which sustain such creation, combined with close textual analysis of manga and animation texts. I have narrowed my focus in both textual and industrial analysis to what Marc Steinberg and Ian Condry have identified in their books as the core elements of Japanese transmedia: the characters and their settings. By engaging with the construction of characters in the transmedia of the manga magazine and the anime studio, I draw attention to the creative logic that enables anime/manga franchises to grow and expand in Japanese society. This dissertation engages with Japanese transmedia not as a marketing strategy or a substitute for media in today's environment, but as a multi-authorial tool where various creators of professional and fan backgrounds can contribute to the construction of compelling characters. Some of this authorship has similarities to "crowd-sourcing," where companies solicit content from large groups of (frequently online) contributors. Japanese transmedia, however, still primarily functions through large amounts of professional creation. Thus, when crowds of fans participate, it is through their own organizations, volitions, and desires. In this study, characters become the putty for tiers of creative sculptors, spreading through various channels and attached with different meanings based on who handles them, how delicately, and with what intentions. By offering examples of character-based production sites and texts in Japanese transmedia, my dissertation adds a detailed and grounded analysis of contemporary transmedia production to the current discourse on Japanese creative industries, particularly as it relates to an interrelated pair of Japanese media at the core of "Cool Japan" promotional media.

To approach this understanding of transmedia entertainment, I have placed an emphasis on the processes of production that undergird this media expansion. One way I

have privileged production voices is through collecting and assembling the opinions and examinations of creators in and around production sites that undergird *shonen* manga and *shōjo* anime properties. Using my past connections as a foreign correspondent in Japan covering the U.S. anime industry, as well as connections I was able to develop through my affiliation with the University of California, Los Angeles, I was able to interview media professionals directly involved in creative decisions in anime and manga, including editors, character designers, directors, scriptwriters, producers, and even professional fan-fiction authors and illustrators. Where interviews were impossible to obtain, I combed through memoirs, magazine interviews, television documentaries, and “fan books” that detail creator production processes. Through this collection of creative beliefs, I was able to see how these various creative energies were organized around interpreting characters and worlds.

Of course, interviews have their own limitations. As Joshua Gamson has documented, professionals clothe themselves in various layers of spin and performance when speaking to industry outsiders for the sake of competitive advantage.³³ They can reveal certain individual prejudices, industry rituals, or social belief systems, but are hardly sufficient for observing how production in anime/manga industries works as a *collective* negotiation between its participants. As such, my interviews were designed to supplement extensive fieldwork I undertook at manga and anime production sites in and around the Tokyo area from 2012 to 2014, including an intensive ten-month period where I conducted

³³ See Joshua Gamson, “Stopping the Spin and Becoming a Prop: Fieldwork on Hollywood Elites,” in *Studying Elites Using Qualitative Methods*, eds. Rosanna Hertz and Joshua B. Imber (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1995), 83-93.

participant observation of *gemba*, or sites, of the production of television anime.³⁴

Particularly with regards to the making of television animation, it is in these spaces where the production of stories becomes a collaborative process involving writers, producers, and directors akin to the television program's writer's room.³⁵ Some of these *gemba* include: mangaka-editor meetings, where budding artists and editors comb through rough drafts in order to refine manga stories; the anime script construction room, clandestine pow-wows between scriptwriters, producers, and directors for the purpose of constructing individual episodes; "after-recording" booths where voice actors give life and interpretation to static drawings; and the comic market and "comic circle," where hundreds of amateur artists gather, discuss, produce, and hock fan-produced work using original characters, as well as characters pulled from popular manga.

I analyze this collective fieldwork through the emerging scope of cultural studies micro-analysis in the vein of what Timothy Havens, Amanda Lotz, and Serra Tinic have called a "critical media industry studies" (CMIS) approach. CMIS is an approach to analyzing media industries from a micro level, focusing on human interactions and negotiations, in distinction to industry analysis from a macro level political-economic perspective, since the latter generally discounts the role of human agents and everyday practices that go into shaping media for mass consumption. As Nicholas Garnham argues, while political economy can provide general patterns of production and distribution, it "can

³⁴ I borrow this methodological model from Ian Condry, who has conducted field work in *gemba* of rap concerts and performances in order to analyze the creation of hip hop music and culture in Japan. See his *Hip Hop Japan: Rap and the Paths of Globalization* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

³⁵ Felicia Henderson's studies of collective work in these writer's rooms is useful in helping unpack how the "situational authorship" of these improvised meetings reflect cultural and social rules, roles and rituals in the creative process. See Henderson, "The Culture Behind Closed Doors: Issues of Gender and Race in the Writer's Room," *Cinema Journal* 50:2 (Winter 2011): 145-152. For further reading on collaborative authorship, especially in a transmedia context, see Jonathan Gray and Derek Johnson eds., *A Companion to Media Authorship* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

tell us very little about content.”³⁶ CMIS loosely describes the various approaches to “middle-level” theory that have developed in response to macro-level industrial analysis. These approaches share a consideration of culture first in an anthropological sense, examining “the business culture of the media industries; how knowledge about texts, audiences, and the industry form, circulate, and change; and how they influence textual and industrial practices,” but also in an aesthetic sense, seeking to understand how “particular media texts arise from and reshape midlevel industrial practices.”³⁷

As characters and settings are viewed as the central aspects in the creation of Japanese transmedia, this dissertation takes a similar, mid-level approach to analyzing the construction of these elements through the “agency” that various participants are able to enact through their contributions in the character-construction process, or what I term “character management.” The approach is qualitative, in that this study seeks to capture the experiences and agency of various creators as they participate in the creative process. In the vein of David Hesmondhalgh’s study of “creative labor” in three distinct media areas, moreover, this study utilizes an “intensive,” rather than an “extensive” research design. Rather than seeking to describe all the common properties and patterns of a general population, intensive research “aims to investigate how processes work in a small number of cases, seeking explanation of the production of certain objects, events, and experiences.”³⁸ By utilizing “intensive” analyses of specific production environments, this study thus seeks explanations and experiences of creative agency as they relate to character management within various positions in and around the manga and anime industries. In this regard, this dissertation employs an “emic,” rather than an “etic,” approach to field research,

³⁶ Nicholas Garnam, “A Personal Intellectual Memoir,” *Media, Culture, and Society* 27, no.4 (2005): 486.

³⁷ Havens, Lotz, Tinic, 237.

³⁸ Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 13.

(particularly with regards to interviews) focusing on a specific culture and the culture-making perspectives of its participants.³⁹

Through case studies of manga and anime transmedia that exemplify industrial practices within *Weekly Shōnen Jump* and Toei Animation, anime and manga texts are analyzed in terms of both production and how they manifest themselves in the franchise's transmedia. Critical theory related to new media scholarship has been especially helpful in this regard. Specifically, scholarship of digital media that has proliferated in the last two decades has been fruitful in seeing how the production of Japanese transmedia is organized through collaborative networks, while its experience is often managed through aesthetic databases. I use social network theory to examine the organizations of producers and to theorize professional relationships in manga and anime production environments. Don Tapscott and Anthony Williams, for example, have theorized how “wikinomics” elevates collaborative peer-to-peer networks as the central hub of communication.⁴⁰ Axel Bruns argues that “produsage,” or production by networked consumers, has replaced traditional models of corporate-owned and operated intellectual property.⁴¹ I see value, however, in applying such theories of networks to existing institutions in the Japanese creative industries. Christopher Kelty, for example, has argued how networks of like-minded producers can create value for all participants involved.⁴² I apply these theories of networked production in manga and anime to theorize how the “cogs” in the system each are afforded opportunities for creative agency through character management.

³⁹ See Marvin Harris, “History and Significance of the Emic/Etic Distinction,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 5 (1976): 329-350.

⁴⁰ Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams, *Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything* (New York: Portfolio, 2006).

⁴¹ Axel Bruns, *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life, and Beyond: From Production and Produsage* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008).

⁴² Christopher Kelty, *Two Bits: The Cultural Significance of Free Software* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008),

On the other hand, I analyze the formal aspects of manga and anime transmedia through media theories of convergence and, particularly with regards to manga transmedia, theories of database media. Writers such as Lev Manovich, Marsha Kinder, and Azuma Hiroki have usefully theorized how databases organize media creation and experience, arguing how aesthetics and narratives are formed from the recombination of constituent elements. Azuma, in particular, has theorized how the mediums of manga, anime, and video games inspired from them act as potential sources of narrative expansion.⁴³ Azuma's idea of "database consumption" argues that characters provoke and sustain consumer attraction through the remix of their elements in multiple works.⁴⁴ Similarly, I argue for a model of using the database for transmedia production, by which characters sustain new narratives produced for alternative media and audiences. More specifically, my study demonstrates how characters and world settings comprise a "database" for experiences in different media formats. To clarify, I am not setting up a binary opposition between worlds and stories, or reducing the importance of narratives. Rather, an analysis of character elements and how they fit into alternative media formats demonstrates how characters become a currency, passed through multiple hands and used as cultural capital for the sake of constructing multi-authored, multi-media entertainment.

Database and network theories can be applied to *Weekly Shōnen Jump* and Toei Animation precisely for how they organize labor and other participants according to shared interests in franchised creative property. Examining how *shōnen* manga is created at the

⁴³ In contrast to Otsuka Eiji, who places emphasis on ancillary products to deliver bite-sized stories in order to better understand a single work's world, Azuma argues that affection for a work builds from the consumption of multiple manifestations of characters. See Azuma Hiroki, *Otaku: Japan's Database Animals* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2001) and *Geemuteki riarizumu no tanjo: Dobutsukasuru posutomodan 2* (The Birth of Game-like Realism: The Animalizing Postmodern 2) (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2007)

⁴⁴ Azuma, 54.

manga magazine and how *shōjo* anime is created at the animation studio allows for us to see how different networks can influence one another, and how these influences end up being circumstantially displayed in the texts themselves. I focus on *Shōnen Jump* and Toei in large part due to their special relationship when it comes to their transmedia franchises, with the animation studio adapting at least one *Shōnen Jump* manga continuously since 1981. While scholars often focus on the aesthetics, politics, and identities of *shōjo* manga, much less attention is paid to *shōnen* manga/anime series.⁴⁵ Part of this bias is due to the fact that *shōjo* manga began being distributed and consumed in Western territories during roughly the same period as the development and adoption of feminist literary and film theory, much of which was valuable in reading and discerning deeper meanings from the texts. Another reason for the lack of attention to *shōnen* manga is that many of the texts are designed for a wide audience, especially children, and that its somewhat frivolous, surface nature seemingly discredits it from closer analysis. This study seeks to remedy this by placing the production cultures of both *shōnen* and *shōjo* manga/anime and specific case studies of their transmedia side by side and in dialogue with one another.

Comparing the transmedia of manga and anime can help us see not only the differences in franchise production according to the ways in which producers are organized, but also the similarities in different franchise media according to how characters circulate

⁴⁵ Deborah Shamoan has chronicled Japanese girls' print culture from its origins in the 1920s until the development of girls' manga magazines in the 1970s. See Shamoan, *Passionate Friendship: The Aesthetics of Girls' Culture in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2012). Sharlyn Orbaugh examines how *shōjo*, or "girls," manga depictions of romance, sex, and femininity drastically changed in the 1990s with the advent of more sexualized females who doubled as highly-skilled martial arts experts. See Orbaugh, "Busty Battlin' Babes: The Evolution of the Shōjo in 1990s Visual Culture," in *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field*, eds. Norman Bryson, Maribeth Graybill, and Joshua Mostow (Honolulu: Hawai'i University Press, 2003), 200-228. Keith Vincent's and Dawn Lawson's recent translation of Tamaki Saito's book, *Beautiful Fighting Girl* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011) provides a psychoanalytic examination of female protagonists in a wide range of anime. Such wide-ranging and comprehensive studies do not exist for *shōnen* manga, anime, or its characters.

and how audiences receive them. Seeing how long-running franchises are constructed through elements that are familiar to their respective audiences can show us how each brand of transmedia reflects “house styles” comprised of a community of various creative producers. In essence, institutional and social networks at *Shonen Jump* and Toei Animation create databases of desirable character and setting elements from which each media format can simultaneously emphasize and expand upon the original text. By including in my analysis a dialogue between theories of convergence culture, Japanese media mix, and new media theory, I will argue for a basis in transmedia that moves away from narrative cohesion towards a model of world-building in which recombining elements can be experienced and employed.⁴⁶

An integrated industrial and textual model of understanding transmedia is especially important when considering Japanese media, as the discursive strategies of “Cool Japan” campaigns tend to make simplified connections between the cultural and the economic. The most common symptom of this involves various assertions of how “culturally resonant” Japanese qualities of anime serve as leading determinants of success. At the same time, scholars assume that the narratives or stories of particular anime are the source of this resonance.⁴⁷ To combat this, critics of “Cool Japan” discourse have noted that government officials and business leaders who highlight desirable Japanese values in selected animated works engage in a kind of “brand nationalism.” As Iwabuchi notes, such strategies not only disguise features of anime borrowed from the West, but also tend to mash diverse groups of

⁴⁶ This idea shares some affinities with Brian Ruh’s notion of the “database fantasyscape.” Ruh applies Arjun Appadurai’s concept of “global ethnoscape” to Azuma Hiroki’s theory of “database consumption,” though Ruh does so in order to describe the process of global reception through transnational flows in popular anime series. See Ruh, “Conceptualizing Anime and the Database Fantasyscape,” *Mechademia* 9 (2014): 164-175.

⁴⁷ See, for instance, Antonia Levi’s *Samurai from Outer Space: Understanding Japanese Animation* (New York: Open Court, 1998).

fans together into an indistinguishable Pollyanna pie.⁴⁸ I extend Iwabuchi's argument to argue that without extensive field research and an understanding of creative activities, we ignore the activities and challenges faced by all stripes of creators, but also the sense-making and problem-solving that accompanies and responds to these challenges.

This imprecise view of the cultural production of anime/manga is problematic for understanding important features of capitalist cultural economies. As an alternative, I show how the creators of manga and its attendant properties design new projects not in terms of the stories they tell, but rather in terms of the distinctiveness of the characters and world-settings that are then used to spin off into new or deeper experiences. It is possible to understand how this character-centered model encourages these extensions by not limiting anime/manga franchises to one particular story. Part of the value of widely popular series arises precisely from the flexibility in adapting characters and premises across a wide range of media platforms. What adds a more specific understanding of the success of Japanese franchise production is a detailed picture of how creators view their projects, how these projects are assembled through the activities of large groups of people, and how this activity is then represented in the texts. By approaching Japanese transmedia through its production cultures, I provide a means for exploring these contemporary intersections of culture and economy.

Literature Review –Anime/Manga Transmedia in the Context of Industry Studies

My primary intervention in media studies is into the small but growing field of work that studies media's ancillary products: what in English is called transmedia and in Japanese is known as the media mix. By ancillary, I mean the branded objects, characters,

⁴⁸ See Koichi Iwabuchi, "Undoing Inter-National Fandom in the Age of Brand Nationalism," *Mechademia* 5 (2010): 87-96.

and artifacts that are inspired by their original source. These material forms have a centrality to media production in culture for they tend to eclipse their original properties in terms of economic importance. Scholars and critics who write on the associations between media and their ancillary texts tend to analyze these textual associations in terms of the economic incentives involved. Justin Wyatt, for example, has argued that the increased corporate control and saturation of feature film releases necessitated the rise of ancillary products as essential sources of revenue.⁴⁹ Chris Anderson's famous essay on the "long tail" describes the phenomenon in which the ancillary products of a "first run" source continue to attract attention to the original property long after it recedes from the public eye.⁵⁰ The producer Fukashi Azuma has described how program ratings have become less important than the sales of various goods associated with the program.⁵¹

What is missing from this economic approach is an analytical attention to these other media forms as instances of textual construction. While ancillary media is treated exclusively as a negative, but perhaps necessary, symptom of the production of media in late capitalism, less attention is paid to how these products can be read as textual experiences that contribute to a heightened understanding of the original media property. Other scholars have attempted to remedy this imbalance by placing ancillary texts under scrutiny, viewing them as essential components of a media-viewing or consuming experience, rather than as mere extraneous trinkets. What a fuller definition of media convergence and, specifically, transmedia means is to view media and its ancillary properties as *both* economic necessities and textual potentialities. Television scholars have been at the forefront of this movement, writing how the "flow" of the program has begun to

⁴⁹ See Wyatt, 148-154.

⁵⁰ Chris Anderson, "The Long Tail," *Wired* (October: 2004).

⁵¹ See Hiroko Furukawa, "Interview: Fukashi Azuma (TV Tokyo)," personal interview September 5, 2011.

bleed off the screen and into other consumption spaces for a continuous experience even when the program has finished its broadcast, creating both dedicated audiences and ever more complex and elaborate stories and worlds.⁵²

I argue that the greater value of transmedia is in its capacity to provide an *experience* of a text that continues across media platforms. Henry Jenkins has provided a valuable contribution to this view of ancillary media, particularly in his book *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006). Jenkins argues that while the economic imperative of cross-media promotion is important, the contemporary media environment has led to expanded storytelling opportunities through new media forms, collaborative authorship, and the use of multiple media formats to tell a single narrative.⁵³ Jenkins analyzes the multiple media manifestations of the Wachowski siblings' *The Matrix*, focusing particularly on the use of the "origami unicorn" – referencing *Blade Runner* – in which an element in an ancillary text can make a consumer re-evaluate the meaning of all other associated texts.⁵⁴ In this case, ancillary products expand meaning, rather than generate sales or marketing opportunities. This definition itself, however, can be expanded in several ways that highlight the textual possibilities of ancillary products that are arguably more fundamental to how transmedia circulates.

⁵² For example, Jonathan Gray's book on how film and television "paratexts" – the trailers, posters, ads, reviews, DVD bonus materials, and other after-the-fact materials – work to prepare audiences for new media releases and often shape their experiences of them has many case studies of how media extratextual material is not "extra," but essentially intertwined with the experience of contemporary media consumption. See Gray, *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and other Media Paratexts* (New York: NYU Press, 2010). For another example of how broadcasters handle the transition to convergence media and multiple, fragmented audiences, see also James Bennett and Niki Strange, "Linear Legacies: Managing the Multiplatform Process," in *Making Media Work: Cultures of Management in the Entertainment Industries*, ed. Derek Johnson et. al (New York: NYU Press, 2014), 63-89.

⁵³ Jenkins defines media convergence as "the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and migratory behavior of audiences" who will chart these complex media channels for the entertainment they want. See Jenkins, 2.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 127-134.

First, Jenkins' emphasis on "transmedia storytelling," while relevant to how the Wachowskis' approached their construction of *The Matrix*, is an atypical method of transmedia production. The construction of multiple media rarely follows a single, coherent narrative controlled by singular (or dual) auteurs. Rather, each media platform typically works to establish alternative media stories that emphasize elements other than the narrative.⁵⁵ Even when the narrative is prioritized, it is hardly ever additive in the linear, puzzle-like fashion that the Wachowskis' were able to construct through their multi-media storytelling model. Media scholar Ōtsuka Eiji has argued that when a single media property is dispersed into multiple media forms, for example, derivative properties – from fan-produced fiction to spin-off animated serials – create an experience that relies less on a single narrative and more on a modifiable world that allows for non-linear and alternative manifestations of the original.⁵⁶ In this conception, narratives are not consumed linearly, but are assembled at random junctures and overlap.

Second, in his consideration of professional transmedia production, Jenkins and other scholars largely focus on how transmedia objects seamlessly manage divergent media and textual cohesion, all while glossing over the issues attendant to creative labor. By contrast, I am interested in how the organizational and industrial circumstances among manga, anime, and its affiliated producers complicates formulations of smoothly operating transmedia. Related to the previous paragraph, I am interested in just what transfers across media, and how creative professionals are able to manage this movement without a central

⁵⁵ Jenkins has, however, begun to modify his original definition of transmedia storytelling, and his new formulations are more closely aligned to what I am attempting to define as the essential elements of transmedia in this dissertation. See "Revenge of the Origami Unicorn" on his website, *Confessions of an AcaFan*.

⁵⁶ See Ōtsuka Eiji, "Sekai to shuko: Monogatari no fukusei to shōhi" (World and Variation: The Reproduction and Consumption of Narrative), in *Teihon monogatari shōhiron* (A Theory of Narrative Consumption: Standard Edition) (Tokyo: Kadokawa, 2001 [1989]).

auteur figure necessarily guiding their creative efforts.

Third and importantly, Jenkins and other writers discuss transmedia primarily as a symptom of both contemporary media and, increasingly, Hollywood's attempt to monetize works and create ever-larger franchises.⁵⁷ While such a focus is understandable considering the global hegemony of Hollywood franchises, this emphasis ignores the development of transmedia processes in other parts of the world and during other periods. As Derek Johnson notes, "We have become too enamored with the sexiness of the transmedia in transmedia franchising to think much about what other cultural trajectories and industrial formations have been entangled in franchising."⁵⁸ Specifically, the transmedia Japan, which was birthed with the advent of television anime in the 1960s, provides numerous entry points into how transmedia is conceived and popularized, and is necessary in studying how franchises operate globally. Considering the many similarities that Japan's media industries share with the United States, several forms of Western scholarship also apply to Japanese media industries without the necessity for significant theoretical modifications or concessions.⁵⁹ And yet, there are still major differences between the historical and cultural development of media industries in Japan and the US, specifically in comics and animation. Indeed, a sustained analysis of Japanese transmedia illuminates the ways in which multi-authored franchises are conceived in contexts beyond Hollywood. While I argue that transmedia related to anime and manga are culturally-specific forms that have not been

⁵⁷ See, for example, Andrea Philips, *A Creator's Guide to Transmedia Storytelling: How to Captivate and Engage Audiences Across Multiple Platforms* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012) or Nuno Bernardo, *Transmedia 2.0: How to Create an Entertainment Brand Using a Transmedial Approach to Storytelling* (Dublin: beActive Books, 2014) for producer-oriented books on transmedia franchising.

⁵⁸ Derek Johnson, *Media Franchising: Creative License and Collaboration in the Culture Industries* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 32.

⁵⁹ Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto makes note of this in the introduction to the first English-language anthology on Japanese television, *Television, Japan, and Globalization*, eds. Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, et al. (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, 2010).

successfully reproduced in other industries, I also contend that they offer a clear portrait of how media franchises have been constructed, popularized, and sustained that resembles the way social networks create and spread media today. Thus, one of the major questions my dissertation will answer is: what are those properties of Japanese transmedia that are fundamental to the cultural forms that media convergence often takes?

As Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano has noted, because Western scholarship has tended to focus on Japanese anime films and auteurs rather than on studios, franchises, or television series in the context of their broadcasts, Japanese transmedia as a critical object of study is only in its incipient stages.⁶⁰ Auteur studies of anime directors by Brian Ruh, Andrew Osmond, and Helen McCarthy and others have been crucial in establishing anime and manga as legitimate objects of academic and theoretical inquiry.⁶¹ Other studies examine manga and anime more broadly in relation to specialized academic fields.⁶² The majority of this literature has analyzed these works as singular units of discrete media, less products of an industry than brainchildren of particularly talented individuals, symptoms of a unique socio-cultural milieu, or areas to tease out broader issues in cultural studies.⁶³ While helpful in appreciating the singular artistry and affect achieved in specialized fields, such studies

⁶⁰ Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano, "Global and Local Materialities of Anime," in *Television, Japan, and Globalization*, eds. Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, et al. (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2010), 241-258.

⁶¹ See Brian Ruh, *Stray Dog: The Films of Mamoru Oshii* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Andrew Osmond, *Satoshi Kon: The Illusionist* (Berkeley, CA: Stone Bridge Press, 2009); Helen McCarthy, *Hayao Miyazaki: Master of Animation* (Berkeley, CA: Stone Bridge Press, 1999). See also Susan Napier, *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle: Experiencing Japanese Animation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) for auteur-centered analyses of individual films and series.

⁶² See *Cinema Anime: Critical Engagements with Anime*, ed. Steven T. Brown (New York: Palgrave, 2006) for a useful collection of some of the major theoretical and methodological approaches: feminist theory, cultural studies, psychoanalytic theory, semiotic theory, and various engagements with modernity and postmodernity.

⁶³ One useful exception in this regard is Aaron Gerow's excellent study of the director-performer Kitano Takeshi/Beat Takeshi. Gerow examines Kitano's films in the context of Kitano the television comedian. In the process, Gerow also illuminates processes of television variety programming, *manzai* comedy routines, and the unsteady relationship Kitano has to both Japanese television programming and the international film festival circuit. See Aaron Gerow, *Kitano Takeshi* (London: British Film Institute, 2008).

are less useful in understanding the modus operandi of the manga and anime industry's patterns of production and consumption. What is rarely considered is how such works extend to other mediums.

Despite its importance in contemporary Japanese industry and thinking through the present/past of Japanese media, Japanese transmedia, and particularly the media mix, has been under theorized and critically neglected. There are, however signs of a growing body of scholarship that examine Japanese transmedia and the media mix from several perspectives. There are three broad directions that scholars have undertaken that have contributed to analyses of Japanese cultural production in recent years. The first is the concentrated study of the business and economic directions of individual Japanese transmedia, exemplified in the research project of Yokohama Yuji. Yokohama centers his study around the limitations the critic encounters when analyzing a work that spreads itself over a range of media.⁶⁴ Yokohama uses, as an example, the media franchise *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (1995-96) and how its characters' backgrounds and personalities have developed over a period of years, media formats, and fan activities. Yokohama's work tends to fall into description, where the differences between media instances are listed rather than critically examined, but his intervention is a useful and helpful diagram in understanding the ways in which anime can evolve through the activities of both fans and creators.

A second direction is the theoretical study of Japanese transmedia and media mix in light of transformations in cultural and economic tropes of postmodernity. This is best exemplified in Anne Allison and Azuma Hiroki's scholarship of 1990s Japanese creative

⁶⁴ See Yokohama Yuji, "'Shinseiki Evangelion' in okeru monogatari seikai no kosei: Media Mikkusu sakuhinron no kansei" (The Narrative World and Composition of *Evangelion*: The Possibilities of a Media Mix Theory of the Work), *Nihon Bungaku*, January (2006): 51-86.

industries. Both Allison and Azuma link their discussion of anime and its surrounding media to questions of capitalism and the global circulation of Japanese products. By focusing on products that exemplify “mutation” in the text – such as the transforming battles of *Mighty Morphin’ Power Rangers*, the fighting school girls in *Sailor Moon*, or the growing digital animals of “tamagotchi” pocket monsters – Allison views the variability and flexibility of post-Bubble-Era Japanese children’s media as emblematic of Japanese cultural identity. She argues that these products are evidence of increasing identities of flux and transience that also characterize cultural transformations in the rest of the world.⁶⁵ Azuma links the media mix of the 1990s to transformations in capitalism as well, using *otaku* culture to argue for a shift in Japanese society from the modern to the postmodern. He coins the idea of “database consumption” to emphasize how the character is the foundational element of the media environment rather than its narrative. According to such a model, Azuma avers that the proliferation of digital media entertainments saw an important break in how fans consume objects, with greater emphasis placed on affective elements than on a narrative’s depth.⁶⁶ Altogether, Azuma’s theory frames anime/manga consumption as local instances of global late capitalism, where immaterial cultural forms take on as much or more value to people as material possessions.

Both Allison and Azuma, however, share some of the same conceptual shortcomings that I attempt to address in my examination of the Japanese transmedia. Much like Jenkins, these authors’ exclusive focus on consumption fails to explain how Japanese transmedia functions through distributed processes of labor. While Allison’s

⁶⁵ See Allison’s *Millennium Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

⁶⁶ See particularly Azuma’s two-volume work *Dobutsuka suru posutomodan* (“The Animalizing Postmodern”) (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2001, 2007).

analysis picks a range of properties in Japanese media culture, her analysis tends to read anime metaphorically, with metamorphosis used to analogically describe capitalistic changes in Japanese society. As such, her periodization examines Japanese culture in the 1990s without attending to the specificities of when certain media formats emerged or how they were sustained.⁶⁷ This is especially notable in Azuma's analysis, as the break between the modern and the postmodern for Azuma does not take into account how industrial changes are rarely, if ever, so clean and swift. Moreover, Azuma's analysis privileges the production and consumption of video games and animation over the manga form, where serial narratives continue to be of upmost importance. While both scholars acknowledge the centrality of manga to Japanese transmedia, neither pay much attention to the medium in their analyses. Thus, my study begins with an analysis of manga magazines before animation studios in order to provide a more concrete understanding of how Japanese transmedia grew as a prevalent business strategy prior to the widespread adoption of digital media technologies. I consider how these texts and their production contexts serve as evidence of perpetual media forms that continue to co-exist alongside digital media, a concept that Bolter and Grusin refer to as "hypermediacy."

The third direction of Japanese transmedia scholarship is the historical and socio-cultural analysis of Japanese franchise production in relation to political economy of culture. This is best exemplified by the work of Marc Steinberg, whose study of *Tetsuwan Atomu* and Kadokawa provides the most descriptive and complete theoretical account of how the media mix has developed and functioned in Japanese society according to its

⁶⁷ Allison's discussion of *Pokémon*, however, is more literal, analyzing the ways in which the franchise, from its inception, was designed with increased consumption implicated within the text itself.

commodification of the image.⁶⁸ While focusing on consumption-based capitalism, Steinberg reads anime and manga through the prism of transformations in the media environment. His study, by concentrating on the development of the postwar Japanese media mix, grounds the widely varying periodization for the emergence of character-based consumption that both Allison and Azuma describe. Steinberg offers a genealogy of the anime media environment, presenting the opportunity to look more concretely at what historical transformations in the media environment accompanied the emergence of television anime, what were and are its aesthetic and commercial characteristics, and what tensions and convergences of forces produced the “system” of anime. While his inclusion of industrial detail is limited, Steinberg combines a theoretical account of marketing practices that revolve around the media mix alongside textual analysis of how the manga aesthetic rather seamlessly translates into the anime form.

Steinberg’s study is also another important demonstration of how transmedia can be investigated through an integrated textual and industrial – or production cultures – system of analysis. The production of cultures approach is neatly defined in Richard Peterson and N. Anand’s essay, “The Production of Culture Perspective,” where the authors articulate their approach as one that “focuses on how the symbolic elements of culture are shaped by the systems within which they are created, distributed, evaluated, taught, and preserved.”⁶⁹ The production of cultures perspective views texts lying in an intersecting matrix of economics, technology, socio-cultural organizations, individual careers, and/or government regulation. This focus on production systems is especially germane to this dissertation’s

⁶⁸ Marc Steinberg, *Anime’s Media Mix: Franchising Toys and Characters in Japan* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

⁶⁹ Richard Peterson and N. Anand, “The Production of Culture Perspective,” *The Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 30 (2004): 311.

focus on looking at anime and manga as industrial modes of media production. Studies of media industry have a long lineage, from Hollywood ethnographies by Hortense Powdermaker to Todd Gitlin's television industry exposes.⁷⁰ Powdermaker's insider's look at Hollywood production was one of the first of its kind to use participant observation to "get into" the lives of entertainment professionals. Over three decades later, Gitlin used a combination of interviews and participant observation to diagram not just the organization of a television network, but the ideological messages its workers produced, or what he calls the "decision-making process governing prime-time network television."⁷¹ Both Powdermaker and Gitlin's books are examples of studying micro-level processes at the level of cultural actors within media industries. They are early examples of what Havens, Lotz, and Tinic call "creative media industry studies," or CMIS, to refer to the various strains of media industry scholarship that focus on the work of media producers.

Issues of power are often at the center of media industry scholarship, largely due to the influence of political economist scholars such as Herbert Schiller and Dallas Smythe, whose writings have been applied by scholars who adhere principally to Marxist theoretical perspectives.⁷² Such perspectives analyze film and media industries from a macro-level view and maintain that media industries are capitalistic entities that socialize citizens for the purposes of larger economic functions.⁷³ These studies do much to reveal how media industries operate, but also do little to describe the day-to-day production of media or how

⁷⁰ See Hortense Powdermaker, *Hollywood, the Dream Factory: An Anthropologist Looks at Movie-Makers* (Boston: Little Brown, 1950) and Todd Gitlin, *Inside Prime Time* (New York: Pantheon, 1983).

⁷¹ Gitlin, 11.

⁷² See Herbert Schiller, *Mass Communications and American Empire* (New York: Westview Press, 1992) and Dallas Smythe, *Dependency Road: Communications, Capitalism, Consciousness, and Canada* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing, 1981).

⁷³ See, for example, Douglas Gomery and Benjamin M. Compaine, *Who Owns the Media?: Competition and Concentration in the Mass Media Industry* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2000), Ben Bagdikian, *The New Media Monopoly* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), or Toby Miller and Nitin Govil, *Global Hollywood* (London: British Film Institute, 2001).

workers produce meaning. One reason for this is that a large body of media industry scholarship is focused on news media and its ties to various ideological imperatives.

CMIS describes a field that has its origins in Powdermaker and Gitlin's studies, but has developed especially within the last two decades through the application of cultural studies scholarship into media industry studies. CMIS examines the ways in which cultural and economic factors affect production at the level of human agents, and include approaches such as John Caldwell's "critical production studies," John Hartley's "creative industry studies," and Paul du Gay's "production of culture/cultures of production."⁷⁴ What most of these studies share is an interest into knowing "how media producers make culture, and, in the process, make themselves into particular kinds of workers in modern, mediated societies."⁷⁵ Such studies often employ the use of fieldwork and participant observation to examine how workers produce culture and, in the words of Nicholas Garnham, examine "the cultural producers, the organizational sites and practices they inhabit and through which they exercise their power."⁷⁶

While CMIS scholarship considers issues of power in media production, many studies actively seek to delimit the influence of political economy for the sake of emphasizing human agency. David Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker, for example, draw on aspects of Marxism, post-structuralism, and liberal political thought in order to delineate what is "good" and "bad" work" (and the range in-between). Hesmondhalgh and Baker conduct intensive fieldwork into the television, recording, and magazine industries with the

⁷⁴ See John Caldwell, *Production Culture: Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice in Film and Television* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); John Hartley ed., *The Creative Industries* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004); and Paul du Gay ed., *Production of Culture/Cultures of Production* (London: Sage/Open University Press, 1997).

⁷⁵ Vicki Mayer, Miranda J. Banks, John T. Caldwell eds., *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 2.

⁷⁶ Nicholas Garnham, "Political Economy and Cultural Studies: Reconciliation or Divorce?" *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 12, no.2 (1995): 65.

express purpose of cataloguing the range of experiences that the cultural industries offer to its workers. Their approach uses fieldwork and observation for the sake of understanding the quality of life for media professionals who work in the creative industries today. Mark Deuze takes a similarly broad approach towards analyzing the “content, connectivity, creativity, and commerce” of various creative media industries.⁷⁷ Deuze argues that new forms of creative management and convergence media has led to a more precarious working environment for media workers today. Studies such as Deuze, Hesmondhalgh, and Baker’s can be considered one broad strain of CMIS that is actively engaged in understanding worker experiences and quality of life/work.

A second strain of CMIS is the field of “production studies,” epitomized in the work of John Caldwell and Vicki Mayer, that tends to focus on sense-making practices in production cultures. Such studies often examine “below-the-line” labor in order to reinstitute and reevaluate where meaning comes from in media production. Caldwell’s study employs ethnographic methods to examine the “rituals,” “cultural beliefs,” and “practices” of Los Angeles-based film and video production workers. Caldwell does this less to document the Taylorist industrial logic of media production than to study the “industry’s own self-representation, self-critique, and self-reflection.”⁷⁸ Through interviews and participant observation, as well as close textual analysis of “deep texts” such as trade manuals, making-ofs, promo tapes, and video press kits, Caldwell shows how the industry’s various workers “self-theorize” their own work environments. Mayer, on the other hand, attempts to re-conceptualize the use of the word “television producer” by essentially using it to refer to anyone “whose labor, however small, contributes to its

⁷⁷ Mark Deuze, *Media Work* (Polity, 2007), 57.

⁷⁸ Caldwell, 5.

production.”⁷⁹ Through a series of case studies, Mayer examines a variety of “producers” whose lives are constructed through media work but are invisible to the general public such as electronics assembly workers in Brazil or soft-core videographers at the annual New Orleans Mardi Gras. Mayer’s approach is especially useful to this dissertation’s examination of various levels of creative personnel since it can be used to “deconstruct the assumed symbiosis between identity with the talent and skills that have defined television’s creative professionals.”⁸⁰ Such a focus, like the approach of Joseph Turow, explores the individual agency of everyone involved in the production process, from the producers and financiers to the interns and caterers.⁸¹

Approaches from CMIS have been somewhat insufficiently applied to the anime and manga industries, largely due to the secrecy inherent in creative production in Japan today. Frederik Schodt first revealed the industrial processes of the manga magazine and the attendant mediatization that follows successful manga in the 1980s.⁸² Since then, there have been less than a handful of accounts in the English language that attempt to document the production cultures of the manga or anime industries. These studies examine the industry in relation to control or affect. Sharon Kinsella’s study on manga artists and editors, conducted in the early 1990s, negotiates relationships of power in the construction of manga magazines.⁸³ Kinsella found that editors, in particular, were able to influence the content of the magazine to reflect their own backgrounds and experiences as elite salarymen. In the years since, only Jennifer Prough has re-examined the role of creative

⁷⁹ Vicki Mayer, *Below the Line: Producers and Production Studies in the New Television Economy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 179.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁸¹ See Joseph Turow, *Media Systems in Society: Understanding Industries, Strategies, and Power* (New York: A.B. Longman, 1992).

⁸² Frederik Schodt, *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics* (New York: Kodansha, 1983).

⁸³ See Sharon Kinsella’s chapter on the production of 1990s manga, “The Manga Production Cycle,” in her book, *Adult Manga: Culture and Power in Contemporary Japanese Society* (London: Routledge, 2000).

personnel through analyzing how affect is inscribed into production in the *shōjo* manga industry.⁸⁴ Both scholars take considerable time to detail worker relations and professional discourse within their ethnographic studies of the manga industry, particularly with regards to the manga magazines of large publishers like Kodansha and Shogakukan. Jonathan Clements analysis of the history of anime examines both issues of control and affect. Though his study is not based on ethnographic fieldwork, it meticulously takes into account industrial, technological, and performative factors in the shaping of the animation industry in Japan.⁸⁵ His is one of the very few historical industrial analyses of anime in either language, tracing technological changes, studio formations, and audience maturation largely through the memoirs and autobiographical accounts of creative practitioners. All authors draw upon numerous Japanese language sources to detail their respective industry studies, many of which are authored by former workers in the various trades documenting their experiences in autobiographical accounts.

Studies of anime and manga workers and working environments are more readily available in the Japanese language. Some of these stories are studio histories from major players in the anime business.⁸⁶ While bearing titles such as “complete works,” these studio histories lack a critical distance since they were nearly entirely made with permission of the studios that sanctioned them. More honest accounts can be found in the hundreds of memoirs by participants in the anime and manga industries. Such accounts come saddled with the baggage of most first-person testimonials such as errors in memory or hagiography,

⁸⁴ Jennifer Prough, *Straight from the Heart: Gender, Intimacy, and the Cultural Production of Shōjo Manga* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011).

⁸⁵ Jonathan Clements, *Anime: A History* (London: British Film Institute, 2013).

⁸⁶ See, for example, Nippon Animation, *25 Shūnen Kinen Nippon Animation Zensakuhinshū* (25th Anniversary Memorial: Nippon Animation Complete Works Collection) (Tokyo: Planet Publishing, 2001). Sunrise, *Sunrise Anime Super Data File* (Tokyo: Tatsumi Shuppan, 1997), and Tokyo Movie Shinsha, *TMS Anime Super Data File* (Tokyo: Tatsumi Shuppan, 1999).

as well as the plain fact that they are recollections, and not ethnographies, of production. Still, the range of accounts provides opportunities to cross-check and corroborate what one finds in the field. Memoirs by mangaka and editors are most common for the manga industry.⁸⁷ Meanwhile, memoirs by producers, directors, animators, scriptwriters, and voice actors claim various degrees of authorship over the creative process in anime-making.⁸⁸ Such accounts often make up for the lack of critical rigor with ample amounts of case studies of various projects.⁸⁹ Books of interviews and oral histories also are frequently self-glorifying and focused solely on the key players, though the *Gainax Interviews* refreshingly documents not only the stars of the studio, but its business managers and production coordinators as well.⁹⁰

For a more academic approach to anime or manga industry scholarship, one must look towards the English-language *Mechademia* series, a multi-volume series which devotes several essays to ethnographic inquiries, though usually into spaces of fan-production and reception. The sole exception to this lack of academic writing on anime and manga in Japan is Tsugata Nobuyuki and Takahashi Mitsuteru's *Animegaku* (Anime

⁸⁷ See Motomiya Hiroshi, *Tennen mangaka* (A Natural Cartoonist) (Tokyo: Shueisha, 2003) and Nishimura Shigeo, *Saraba, waga seishun no Shōnen Jump* (Farewell, the *Shōnen Jump* of my Youth) (Tokyo: Gentosha, 1997) for examples of both, respectively.

⁸⁸ See Kinema Junpo Eiga Sōkō Kenkyū-sho (Kinema Junpo Film Integration Research Office), *Anime producer no shigotoron* (On the Profession of an Anime Producer) (Tokyo: Kinema Junpo-sha, 2011) and Suzuki Shinichi, *Anime ga sekai wo tsunagu* (Anime Connects the World) (Tokyo: Iwanami Junior Shinsho, 2008) for producer-penned memoirs. See Miyazaki Hayao, *Starting Point: 1979-1996* (San Francisco: VIZ Media, 2009) and Otsuka Yasuo, *Sakuga asemamire* (Sweat-drenched Animation) expanded edition (Tokyo: Bunshun Ghibli Bunko, 2013), for director-animator perspectives of the anime industry. See Tsuji Masaki, *TV Anime no seishunki* (The Early Days of TV Anime) (Tokyo: Jitsugyo no Nipponsha, 1996) and Hoshiyama Hiroyuki, *Hoshiyama Hiroyuki no Anime Scenario Kyōshitsu* (Hoshiyama Hiroyuki's Anime Scenario Classroom) (Tokyo: Raichosha, 2007) for examples of scriptwriter-scribes. Finally, see Furuya Toru, *Hero no koe: Hyūma to Amuro to Boku no seiyū jinsei* (Hero's Voice: Hyūma, Amuro, and My Life as a Voice Actor) (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 2009) for the view of a voice-actor.

⁸⁹ One exemption might be Otsuka Yasuo's wonderful *Sakuga asemamire* (Sweat-drenched Animation), which provides a history of the development of animation in Japan in the 1960s and 70s through various studios in Tokyo. Many of the details in its pages fill in the gaps for missing historical record, as well as studio practices and processes which remain in place to this day.

⁹⁰ Hotta Junji, *Gainax Interviews* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2005).

Studies), the only anthology of its kind which houses a series of academic essays on anime production processes such as anime directing methods or production committee case studies. Within this tome, Takahashi Mitsuteru's "Training Human Resources in Animation" is especially noteworthy.⁹¹ Takahashi maps not only different job functions for animators within the anime industry, but also important statistical data such as their average salaries, educational levels, demographics, and working conditions. Ultimately, Takahashi offers a prognosis for future animators that is less than rosy.

Ian Condry's book, *The Soul of Anime: Collaborative Creativity and Japan's Media Success Story*, is the most recent contribution to ethnographic analysis in the Japanese creative industries and influences much of the direction of this dissertation. Condry analyzes the anime industries in an attempt to define contemporary value production. Applying anthropologist David Graeber's "meaning-making" theory of value, Condry argues for a different conception of value beyond its utility or exchange function. He sees the anime industry as an area that allows us to see how individual agency can assert itself within static structures. Echoing Graeber, his study encourages us "to look at social systems as structures of creative action and value, as how people measure the importance of their own actions within such structures."⁹² This position attempts to create a theory of power from the value and feeling (a la Prough) that participants attribute to their own work rather than power and control (a la Gitin and Kinsella). As Condry puts it, "Few people within the process feel that they have a tremendous amount of 'power,' but they would generally agree that as a group they work towards common, or at least somewhat

⁹¹ Takahashi Mitsuteru, "Animation ni okeru jinzai ikusei (Training Human Resources in Animation) in *Anime-gaku* (Anime Studies) eds. Takahashi Mitsuteru and Tsugata Nobuyuki (Tokyo: NTT Shuppan, 2011), 253-284.

⁹² David Graeber, *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams*. (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 230.

shared, notions of value.”⁹³ Condry’s important echoes what I found in my own fieldwork of anime workers: a value and attachment, largely through characters and their premises. Characters and settings can point to new direction in theorizing control in media production, where binaries of audience/creators are complicated in favor of industries that merge these distinctions intentionally or circumstantially.

Condry, however, sticks to examining production sites and fan forums, and does not critically examine how this collaboration manifests in the texts themselves. In other words, while he admirably looks at the creative processes behind anime, the “success” of Japan’s media is ultimately determined by its popularity. This study seeks to add to this base by analyzing how this creative collaboration results in meaningful textual experiences for both fans and creators, specifically looking at how this is shaped around characters who operate as conduits for individual agency. Fieldwork in this dissertation, then, is used to help us understand how texts are energized by characters, and how both fans *and* creators put their collective energy into “managing” character-based worlds. Through specific case studies of transmedia texts in both manga and anime, this study will show, in detail, how characters and settings become a database for networks of creators, “a kind of ‘operating system’ in which dispersed participants work in their particular areas of expertise.”⁹⁴

Many industry studies are limited in the types of connections they establish between texts and producers, as they generally pay less attention to aesthetic features within the texts (and ancillary texts) themselves. As a remedy, I combine the CMIS approach with close textual analysis on products of Japanese transmedia. I draw from new media and animation scholarship in particular to investigate aesthetic and stylistic

⁹³ Ian Condry, “Anime Creativity: Characters and Premises in the Quest for Cool Japan,” *Theory, Culture and Society* 26 (2009): 144.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

connections between the manga, anime, and other derivative media forms. Outside of anime/manga scholarship, several Los Angeles-based scholars have created models for aesthetic/stylistic analysis and industrial analysis in convergence media. John Caldwell, in his essay “Convergence Television: Aggregating Form and Repurposing Content in the Culture of Conglomeration,” describes how a combination of aesthetic, industrial, and discursive changes constitute television’s response to and participation in convergence entertainment.⁹⁵ Specifically, Caldwell discusses how discursive buzzwords, industrial partnerships, and textual expansions of television programs together constitute a practice of “conglomerating textuality.” Here, Caldwell reads industrial texts alongside the text of the program in order to provide a detailed consideration of how transmedia aesthetics are formed through production and technological changes. Michael Clarke’s analysis of “Tentpole TV” is another instructive model of both the production culture and textual analysis approach, combining analyses of interviews, trade magazines, and industry trends with close formal analysis of how these industrial factors shape the radical stylistic experimentation in contemporary television transmedia franchises such as *Heroes* and *LOST*.⁹⁶ Caldwell and Clarke pay attention to both industry and text and, most importantly, how these two fields can be combined in the consideration of convergence media.

The work of Marc Steinberg, Otsuka Eiji, and Thomas Lamarre are especially helpful models here, as all three connect aesthetic features of the manga image to extra-textual concerns. Lamarre, for instance, has based his theoretical examination of animation in apparatus theory and close formal analysis derived from film scholars such as David

⁹⁵ John Caldwell, “Convergence Television: Aggregating Form and Repurposing Content in the Culture of Conglomeration,” in *Television After TV: Essays on a Medium in Transition*, eds. Lynn Spigel and Jan Olsen (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 41-74.

⁹⁶ M.J. Clarke, *Transmedia Television: New Trends in Network Serial Production* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2012).

Bordwell. However, he abets these formal analyses with other theoretical considerations derived from the ideas of Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze in order to explain how the aesthetics of animation are determined by both technological and social processes.⁹⁷ As Lamarre has noted in his remarks on Oshii Mamoru's anime, novel, video games, and fanzines of *Blood: The Last Vampire*, examining the attendant media forms by different authors enables us to see how "each media constitutes a different level that adds something to the overall history."⁹⁸ In such transmedia formations, each media is less hierarchized or motivated in accordance with some outcome or resolution. Rather, what we have instead is a collection of different dimensions of a puzzle, loosely connected by producers in various media formats who utilize key referents based on their skills and abilities.⁹⁹ Both an attention to this textual conglomeration, as well as the contexts of their production, are necessary in understanding how properties are expanded through ancillary products that are often under the control of these multiple authors.

Chapter Breakdown

This dissertation is split roughly in half between manga and anime production cultures. Two chapters detail manga and anime production cultures and their breakdown of labor through self-organized participant networks. Another two chapters look at case studies of the construction and expansion of Japanese transmedia franchises. However, much like the characters of Japanese franchises, these media forms bleed into other

⁹⁷ See Thomas Lamarre, *The Anime Machine: A Media Theory of Animation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

⁹⁸ Lamarre, "The First Time as Farce: Digital Animation and the Repetition of Cinema" in *Cinema Anime: Critical Engagements with Anime* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 178-79.

⁹⁹ This network of constant making and remaking is not dissimilar to Bruno Latour's conception of "actor-network theory," where the continuous performance of functions by agents enables social relations (and complex industries) to persist. See Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

sections, particularly in the analyses of multi-authored transmedia texts. Each chapter details character management through processes particular to each site of production.

Chapter 2 – Manga Production and Shueisha’s *Weekly Shōnen Jump*

This chapter diagrams the production of manga through the social network and product of the manga magazine. The object of focus is on the construction of publisher Shueisha’s manga magazine *Weekly Shōnen Jump*. This chapter is comprised of two parts. First, I provide a historical genealogy of *Weekly Shōnen Jump*’s place in the post-war development of manga magazines, explaining how it used strategies that appealed to the creative agencies of both artist-producers and reader-consumers in order to differentiate it from other publishing houses. I investigate how the *Shōnen Jump* “house style” is an ideological construction, reflecting what Mitsuya Makoto has dubbed “*Jump* capitalism,” that makes it ideal for training readers into creators.¹⁰⁰ Second, I examine several *Shōnen Jump* manga and how they are created through the collaborative efforts of three key creators: editors, assistants, and, of course, the mangaka themselves. I show how the relationships between these three creative agencies echo the winner-take-all mantra of *Shōnen Jump*, where the process of creation becomes reflective of the magazine’s brand. Both parts are grounded by interviews with editors, field research of meetings between editor and mangaka, and close readings of industrial texts such as magazine interviews, autobiographical memoirs, and blogs of mangaka and assistants.

Chapter 3 – Case Study: *Toriko*’s Database World

This chapter provides a case study for a transmedia franchise birthed in the pages of *Weekly Shōnen Jump*. Building off of the collaborative social network of the manga

¹⁰⁰ See Mitsuya Makoto, *Shōnen Jump Shihon shugi* (Shōnen Jump: Capitalism) (Tokyo: NTT Shuppan, 2009).

magazine in chapter one, this case study looks at “multi-use” media as a center that organizes dispersed creators, each of whom bring something of value to the creation of a transmedia franchise. The manga itself is viewed as a database, comprised of characters and settings, that are the tools for various creative interfaces. Each interface provides access to the database, though all are creative works in their own respect. The manga at the center of this “dispersed text” is Shimabukuro Mitsutoshi’s *Toriko* (2008-ongoing), a fusion *shōnen* manga that combines the genres of comedy, battle, and “gourmet,” or food manga. *Toriko* is a fitting example for this case study for several qualities. As a genre construction, *Toriko* is a manga that mixes and matches different themes, stories, and comedic/dramatic registers to attract as large an audience as possible. On the level of metaphor, *Toriko* is also a manga obsessed with choice ingredients, multiple chefs, and slow cooking in a crowded kitchen. *Toriko*, at its essence, is a manga that asks us to “appreciate ingredients.” As a chapter dedicated to appreciating the contributions of multiple media chefs working with the ingredients of the manga, the analysis of *Toriko* compliments and clarifies how manga is created by a mangaka, but only expanded and fully realized through the creative potential of other talented interfaces.

Chapter 4 – Anime Production and Toei Animation Studio

This chapter examines the institutional network of the animation studio, focusing specifically on the inner workings and roles in Japan’s oldest animation studio, Toei Animation. This chapter will first provide a brief history of animation in Japan in the prewar and postwar eras before contextualizing Toei Animation’s contribution to the formation and training of an anime professional class. The chapter will then look at the roles of individual sections in creating a “media mix” television anime series, describing

the activities of the planner, producer, director, writer, designer, animator, and voice actor. All of these different roles are ostensibly tied to making anime, but I argue that they are really supplying life to original characters harnessed by *seisaku iinkai*, or “production committees.” Unlike the dispersed creativity of the manga’s transmedia, character franchises at the anime studio are centralized around production committee, and developed by a core team of trained and skilled staff. This section is organized around fieldwork I conducted at Toei Animation, particularly during a five-month period where I was a participant-observer of the production of the *shōjo*-inflected *shōnen* manga, *Saint Seiya Omega* (2012-14). The section incorporates interviews with key animation staff at various levels of production, focusing on how all jobs are related to bringing characters to the center of the franchise’s visibility.

Chapter 5 – Case Study: *Pretty Cure*’s Convergence Text

This chapter provides a case study for a media mix franchise created wholly by Toei Animation without relying on any pre-existing media. Toei has spent years achieving this feat through their “magical girl” anime tailored to young girls. Most of these shows revolve around princesses awakening to their magical abilities to help their communities, overcome issues related to identity anxiety, and combat villains who threaten to take over the world. These shows also function as thirty-minute advertisements, incorporating “magic” toys into the program through sponsor tie-ins. By looking at the construction of *Smile Precure!* (2012-13), the latest version of the long-running television anime series based on the magical girl anime franchise *Pretty Cure* (2004-ongoing), this chapter will show how transmedia controlled by the anime studio ties in the potential for ancillary media directly into the broadcast of the anime program itself. The anime program becomes

a convergence text: a gateway comprised of various portals that can transport audiences to possibilities of extending the franchise into their own private environments, or environments in public spaces. Through observational fieldwork, I chronicle the various collective negotiations that take place during the production of *Smile Precure!*, such as the needs and desires of the various producers on hand such as advertising agency representatives, television network producers, creative directors, and scriptwriters. I eventually become more participant than observer of this construction, with my own identity supplying the impetus for a character in a single episode. In this respect, a character is charged with both my own actual human identity, as well as the anime creators' own imagined conceptions of foreignness and bi-cultural identity.

Chapter 6: Conclusion – Anime/Manga Media Mix Futures

This chapter, in addition to summarizing my research on the main media forms and producers of Japanese transmedia, investigates the ways in which *Weekly Shōnen Jump* and Toei Animation are seeking to adapt their decades-old models to digital media and merging fandoms. As its audiences have aged and splintered, both *Shōnen Jump* and Toei Animation must now manage the expectations for multiple audiences and generations more than ever. I will also point to the diverse media that has emerged in the last several years that recognizes the models of *Shōnen Jump* multi-use, dispersed transmedia, and Toei Animation centralized, convergence media mix. I conclude by showing how *shōnen* manga and *shōjo* anime are less reflective of gendered politics than the organizing principles of Japanese transmedia: its characters, settings, and potential for alternative creations based on collective contribution and negotiation.

Chapter 1 – Manga Production and Shueisha’s *Weekly Shōnen Jump*

The purpose of our work is not to manage big manga. The most important principle for any editor is to find young mangaka and raise them and their manga into popular manga.

– Manga editor Takeuchi Hiroki

“Friendship. Effort. Victory.”

– Mantra of manga magazine *Weekly Shōnen Jump*

The examination of the collaborative production of the manga industry, and a case study of one of its successes, comprises the first half of this dissertation’s focus on Japanese transmedia. There are several reasons for beginning with manga and, in particular, manga magazines. For one, manga are the oldest form of visual media within contemporary Japanese transmedia, having arguably existed in related forms and formats for over a hundred years, and in various related formats even longer. The first Japanese examples of “sequential art,” Will Eisner’s term to describe the visual storytelling in panels of comics, existed as far back as the medieval period of Japan at the turn of the 12th century.¹⁰¹ Some histories trace manga from *emaki* picture scrolls to *kibyōshi* (“yellow cover”) illustrated stories to *ukiyoé* wood block prints.¹⁰² The word “manga” was first used by the *kibyōshi* (“yellow covers”) creator Santō Kyōden in 1798 to describe his storybooks illustrated with ink-brush pictures, and the *ukiyoé* artist Hokusai used the word “manga” to describe the sketches and caricatures that formed a series of art manuals.¹⁰³

Manga as an industry solidly developed in Japan following the end of World War II in 1945 and the subsequent American occupation until 1952, largely through several

¹⁰¹ Will Eisner, *Comics and Sequential Art* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1985).

¹⁰² Both Frederick Schodt and Brigitte Koyama Richard argue for a manga history of over a thousand years, tracing the earliest manga to *chōjūgiga* animal picture scrolls from the 12th century. For an in-depth account of pre-20th century manga history, see Schodt, *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics*, 28-48, and Richard, *One Thousand Years of Manga* (Paris: Flammarion, 2007), 6-98.

¹⁰³ See Adam Kern, *Manga from the Floating World: Comicbook Culture and the Kibyōshi of Edo Japan*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006) for a history of *kibyōshi* which, while hardly sequential, covered a wide range of topics similar to manga today.

weekly circulating magazines marketed and oriented towards children.¹⁰⁴ These magazines developed at the same time as the first television programs were broadcast in 1953. By the end of the 1950s, television ownership would explode from a few thousand to several million.¹⁰⁵ Manga magazines grew alongside television broadcasting to provide a new constant flow of media content into consumers' lives. Stories that originated in manga were also the first to be animated in weekly television serials, thus establishing a foothold in a creative and industrial formula of weekly episodic material that relied on manga for supplies of popular stories with a pre-selected audience. Today, the manga industry alone generates billions of dollars in Japan.¹⁰⁶ Their distribution and consumption is often the first leg in a great number of the most lucrative series that are adapted into animated feature films and, especially, television series, often garnering the highest ratings, attracting the biggest sponsors, and broadcasting to the largest number of eyeballs every week. Manga will begin this dissertation as the first step that many productions and production committees take in creating franchise material.

Not all manga is made with franchise aspirations in mind, and I don't intend to conflate all manga as inherently serving the same purpose. Manga, like comics, are a medium for storytelling that involves guiding readers through a series of events by the employment of sequential paneled illustrations. They are used for a variety of purposes where eye-catching visuals better capture certain forms of expression than that of words. In Japan, they are ubiquitous in publications and can be seen in fragments in everyday life.

¹⁰⁴ Oono Shigeru, *Sundei to Magajin: Sōkan to shitō no jūgonen* (Sunday and Magazine: The 15 Years from Launch to Mortal Combat) (Tokyo: Kobunsha, 2009), 9-10.

¹⁰⁵ Horace Newcomb ed., *Encyclopedia of Television* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1211.

¹⁰⁶ Manga sales accounted for roughly ¥270 billion in sales in Japan for the years 2010-2013, according to market tracking service Oricon: http://biz.oricon.co.jp/info/half_report_2014_book.pdf. Meanwhile, manga sales accounted for about \$70 million in North American sales, according to comics market research analyst Milton Griepp: <http://www.icv2.com/articles/news/30062.html>.

Artistic manga by avant-garde artists can appear in newspapers and journals dedicated to aesthetically challenging work. At the same time, colorful or humorous manga taped to buildings around city centers in Japan from Tokyo to Hakata instruct young Japanese or foreign tourists on native urban manners and cultural decorum. Manga are also a medium that can be made very quickly and at little cost to the producer, unlike more expensive and labor-intensive legs of the transmedia such as live-action film, animation, and video games; they can be created by anyone and anywhere, and distributed for a small cost or even for free. In Japan, manga are the simplest, cheapest, and least restrictive way that ideas – big or small – can be conceived.

Manga are prized for their stories, and they can be levied to ties with sponsors, merchandise, and alternative media texts to create transmedia franchises that benefit magazine publishers, merchandising companies, animation and video game studios, and the original authors themselves. The branching out of these stories into a transmedia franchise can also benefit the fans who consume them, or attract new fans to the original property. Since the focus of this dissertation is collective production – how people organize and participate in the construction of Japanese character-based visual media, and how this collaboration manifests in the text itself – this chapter and the next will examine manga that are created for a wide Japanese audience, what David Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker call “mediated communication” or “industrial, commercial media work.”¹⁰⁷ This study will be conducted through the work of both official creators and so-called consumers, and the murky line that blurs the relationship between the two. This type of creation has affinities with Axel Bruns’ concept of “produsage,” defined as “the collaborative and continuous

¹⁰⁷ Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 7.

building and extending of existing content in pursuit of further development.”¹⁰⁸ Henry Jenkins has written about the current “convergence culture” which blurs the line between producers and consumers, though his previous work has tended to view companies and consumers as diametrically opposed, with producers trying to corral or control collaborative activity in the consumer field.¹⁰⁹ My goal in looking at the construction of manga, anime, and the transmedia behind them is to see an alternative method of media production, similar to Michael Clarke’s study on “transmedia television,” where an environment is present that either allows for consumer intervention or incorporates it for various reasons that prove beneficial to both consumer expression and corporate financial gain.¹¹⁰

While manga in Japan is a rich artistic medium – arguably richer in its variety of subjects, genres, and readerships than the comics of any other country – the focus of this chapter will be on a particular type of manga called *shōnen manga*, or manga made primarily for young males in grade school from the ages of four to eighteen. Quite simply, *shōnen* manga are manga published in *shōnen* manga magazines.¹¹¹ The content of *shōnen* manga varies widely, though the stories tend to focus on themes that are “popular with boys” such as action, adventure, sports, science fiction, fantasy, and gag comedy. In other words, *shōnen* manga focuses more on genre entertainment, as opposed to *shōjo manga*, or manga for girls, which tend to focus on romances. Due to the escapist nature of the material

¹⁰⁸ This definition of the term comes from Bruns’ website, “Produsage: A Working Definition,” *Produsage: From Production to Produsage: Research into User-led Creation Content*, 21 March 2007, <<http://produsage.org/produsage>> (22 March 2015).

¹⁰⁹ See Jenkins, 18-19.

¹¹⁰ Clarke argues that television producers and networks responded to changes in audience expectations by creating “tentpole TV,” shows that could anchor a variety of transmedia produced by both creators and fans. For an in-depth analysis, see Clarke, *Transmedia Television: New Trends in Network Serial Production*.

¹¹¹ One of the side goals of this dissertation is to analyze the salient characteristics of this platform, and to identify definitions of *shōnen* manga not solely around style or content, but through and around its *mode of production*

and the younger target demographic, *shōnen* manga tend to have a wider range of stories and the biggest possible audience of any other manga in the country. This pre-selected readership also makes them the safest bet when it comes time to translating them to alternative media or merchandise. Like many forms of widely popular media today, fans of the genre are not limited to a single gender. *Shōnen* manga itself is far from static as a genre construct, subject to transformations in visual style, thematic content, and audience expectations. Because of this ability to be many things for many people, the transmedia of *shōnen* manga tends to be larger and more successful than that of any other manga.

This chapter will detail the collaborative production that goes into the hub of *shōnen* manga's production and dissemination, the weekly manga magazine. Audiences consume manga every week, and *shōnen* manga have been produced on a weekly basis through an anthology magazine format, the *shūkan zasshi*, for over fifty years. Every week, the publishing company Shueisha produces the most popular of these magazines, *Weekly Shōnen Jump* (*Shūkan Shōnen Jump*). The first half of this chapter briefly details how *manga* were first formulated in the post-war era through black markets, and how *shōnen manga* stories began to proliferate among these haphazardly produced books. This section chronicles the development of the *shōnen manga* magazine, showing how these magazines came to exert their influence on both the magazine publishing industry and the media at large. I focus particularly on the efforts of Shueisha's *Weekly Shōnen Jump* in wrestling market share and readership away from stalwarts such as *Weekly Shōnen Sunday* and *Weekly Shōnen Magazine* through a series of industrial innovations that helped to purge talent from rivals and shape the conditions of production that remain today. I then turn to the pages of the text itself, analyzing the format and construction of *Weekly Shōnen Jump*

to argue how it was able to organize a training ground around its product that both entertained readers and involved them in the construction process. Similar to the “community” that surrounds *shōjo manga*, manga magazines for boys fostered a “social network” that encouraged dialogue between readers around the country. At the same time, these magazines actively recruited talent through several different methods that pitted these readers against each other to serialize their manga in the magazine. The manga magazine fomented reader interest, instituted a system where consumers became invested behind the growth and improvement of their favorite characters and stories, and then opened up a process where readers could begin to produce for the magazine themselves.

The second half of this chapter describes how this recruitment process happens through a collaborative authorship, where the original text produced by *mangaka*, or “comics artists,” are crafted into a final product through the guidance of staffed editors and the labor of both part and full-time assistants. The intention here is that by understanding how *Shōnen Jump*’s manga stories are developed through the roles of their creative labor, the work begins to also reflect their own human relationships. In the case of *Shōnen Jump*’s manga, through careful corporate policies, labor is shaped into “parent-child” and “father-son” dynamics that appeals to the very masculine features of the *shōnen* manga magazine itself. In this way, relationships between editors and mangaka echo the very ideals of *Weekly Shōnen Jump*.¹¹² Through fieldwork conducted in the spaces of mangaka, assistants, and editors, this section will show how the magazine’s production processes effectively become that of a creative but competitive social network, where ideas are exchanged, evaluated, shared, and shaped.

¹¹² Many of the quotes from editors appearing in this chapter have been obtained through direct interviews with editors of *shōnen* manga publications, as well as observations of editing sessions between mangaka and editors. The names have been altered at the request of the participants’ anonymity.

Though this dissertation on Japanese transmedia emphasizes ethnographic methods such as the collection of first-hand accounts, interviews, and observational fieldwork to examine the processes of production in the Japanese creative industries, this last type of ethnography was particularly difficult with regards to the manga industry, an industry which has become notably more secretive in how it conducts with members of the press and academia. I had intended to locate and observe the “ateliers,” or studios, of mangaka in order to ascertain their working conditions and gauge their relationships with both editors and assistants, but this proved to be impossible at a publishing house the size of Shueisha, the publisher and gatekeeper of *Weekly Shōnen Jump* and its “brother” publications, which has enforced a no-interview policy with scholars or academics. I instead collected information on production conditions and working relationships from an assortment of interviews with former or current staff of manga magazines whose anonymity was requested, as well as published testimonies and memoirs from mangaka, editors, and assistants on their own experiences working at Shueisha.

This industrial secrecy was a large reason for my focus on *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, as many memoirs and interviews from former mangaka of the well-known manga magazine have been published detailing production conditions and working relationships. Even these interviews had to be approached as “embedded texts” that needed considerable deconstruction. These interviews often have a performative aspect to them that requires parsing, with mangaka and editors conveying a particular aspect of their work and themselves through these carefully organized and edited interviews. It is the goal of this chapter, however, through a combination of these memoirs, interviews, and a close reading of the spaces of the magazine itself, to parse these industrial statements and highlight the

performance of the manga magazine and its ability to simultaneously entertain and train an army of potential like-minded creators.

A Brief Postwar History of *Shōnen Manga*

There are several published histories on the development of manga as a visual art form in the Japanese and English languages. Since this dissertation is an analysis of Japanese transmedia and its relationship to the manga *industry* and its creators, this section will focus on the development of serial distributed manga as a business, separate from the mass production and dissemination of more traditional forms of sequential art. In particular, this section will draw attention to publications for a young male audience and the role that *shōnen* manga publishers had in creating that business, explaining how manga mass distribution formed in the 20th century and developed as an industry during the post-war period. Publishing exploded in Japan towards the end of the Taisho era (1912-1926), when the number of magazine titles grew from 3,123 to 11,118 in response to increased literacy and a greater demand for news.¹¹³ During this period, a number of publishers expanded their circulation tremendously with a variety of monthly magazines, including those targeted at young boys and girls. Kodansha, formed in 1909, and Shogakukan, formed in 1922, were publishers that had the most widely-circulated monthly magazines marketed as educational material to young boys. Kodansha's best-selling children's magazine *Shōnen Club*, for example, sold 720,000 copies a month from the late 1920s to the early 1930s.¹¹⁴

Shueisha was formed at the tail-end of the Taisho era in 1925 as a *kogaisha*, or subsidiary of Shogakukan. The small publisher found its first success with all-

¹¹³ Gregory Kasza, *The State and the Mass Media in Japan 1918-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 28.

¹¹⁴ Takahashi Yoji and Akiyama Masami eds. *Kodomo no shōwashi, Shōwa 10-20* (Shōwa Children's History, Shōwa 10-20), *Bessatsu taiyō* (Taiyō supplemental volumes) (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1986), 78.

entertainment magazines marketed primarily to boys of various grade-school ages. These prewar magazines – consisting of stories, games, articles, and short comics whose purpose was to instruct boys in vocabulary, grammar, and even morality – are the precursors of the modern manga magazine. These publications mass-produced regularly-scheduled reading material for a youth audience, and they also introduced a novel system that stratified readers according to grade school year (see figure 3). An assemblage of magazines escalating by year, such as Shueisha's *Danshi yōchien* (Boys' kindergarten), *Shōgaku ninen dansei* (Second-grade elementary boys), and *Shōnendan* (Boys' club) ensured that content remained relevant to each age and reading group.¹¹⁵ Girls' magazines were also birthed in this period, with content focused on acquiring cultural knowledge through fashion and domestic self-improvement. This content stratification system of catering content to gender and reading age remains to this day, and in subsequent years, manga magazines geared towards teens and adults would eventually emerge in the post-war economy.



Figure 3: Examples of prewar children's magazines

¹¹⁵ *Shueisha Shōshi* (Shueisha Short History), <http://www.shueisha.co.jp/history/history1.html> (12 December 2014).

During and following World War II, raw materials became scarce. Most publishers had to severely cut back on the amount of publications produced, and many publishers closed completely. Many of the magazines that had been stratified by grade were merged into single publications focusing on a wide swath of readers grouped according to gender and a general age group. These newly converged boys' magazines were a more expansive continuation of the pre-war magazines, and the majority of their content was centered on informative essays and articles, with very few pictures in order to conserve print materials. Conditions for publishers were similar during the immediate occupation years following the end of the war. As John Dower has documented, publishing was one of the first commercial industries to recover in the post-war years since labor and materials could be procured cheaply; during the first two years of the occupation, over four hundred magazines were produced, including ones that carried over from during the war.¹¹⁶ New magazines were also produced for children by the big publishing houses, albeit with glossy colored cover illustrations and more appealing titles. In 1947, Shueisha released their first post-war magazine, *Omoshirobukku – Shōnen Ōja* (Fun Book: Shōnen King), a children's magazine that was the precursor to *Weekly Shōnen Jump*.¹¹⁷ It was similar to other boys' magazines at the time in its focus on entertaining adventure stories and short manga. Mass-consumed serial manga in Japan would not first emerge in magazines, but rather from alternative media formats and locations in Japan.

While most manga magazines (and the defacto manga industry) today are located in Tokyo, the first market that emerged for manga was located in the black markets of Osaka.

¹¹⁶ John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 181-182.

¹¹⁷ *Shueisha Shōshi* (Shueisha Short History), <http://www.shueisha.co.jp/history/history2.html> (12 December 2014)

Known as *akahon*, or “red books,” these first manga arrived in the form of cheaply-made booklets that originated in Tokyo during the Edo era, stapled together with a red cardboard cover, anywhere from ten to thirty-six pages in length, and ten to ninety yen in price (see figure 4).¹¹⁸ The production of these books shifted to Osaka during the occupation period, where the lax regulation on black markets fed a ravenous appetite for reading material when shortages of paper led to government regulation. *Akahon* novels were distinguished for their pulp stories oriented toward young readers, with everything from adventure tales to detective fiction as subjects. The majority of *akahon* was cheaply made and produced to flood a market that had insatiable demand. While some *akahon* were made by established publishers, most were produced and distributed by candy and toy stores, as well as printers and paper brokers. The number of distributors ensured that quality frequently did not meet demand; there were apparently over 3000 publishers of *akahon* books and manga following the war, though most of these publishers were back in Tokyo by 1949.¹¹⁹



Figure 4: Akahon subjects included adventure tales and even Betty Boop

¹¹⁸ Shimizu Isao, *Zusetsu manga no rekishi* (An Illustrated History of Manga) (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō, 1999), 85.

¹¹⁹ Unknown author, “Kodomo no akahon – Soku aku manga wo tsuku” (Children’s Red Books – An Attack on Vulgar Manga), *Shūkan Asahi*, 4 April 1949. In the same article, top Tokyo artists and cartoonists are asked about their thoughts on the *akahon* boom. Written shortly after a famous temple in Nara was partially torched, artist Kondō Hidezō famously offered up the quote, “Akahon sell, Horyuji burns. Such is the state of Japanese culture today.”

After the war and the flood of American cultural products, *akahon* became a medium for telling illustrated stories, with scenarios and characters freely pirated from American GI comics. While manga had theretofore been relegated to gags and instructional material, *akahon* permitted longer stories and a variety of subjects to take form. It was here that the first of “story manga” artists emerged, including the pioneering “god of manga” Tezuka Osamu. Osamu’s *Shintakarajima* (“New Treasure Island”), co-written by Sakai Shichima, was among the most notable early story manga for its novel incorporation of cinematic visual techniques into the form. The manga displayed multiple panels to indicate a single action, invented sound effects through the use of textually distorted and twisting onomatopoeia, and ignored basic layouts to showcase a wide variety of angles and perspectives. Story manga such as Tezuka’s work freely borrowed from cinema for their visual form, creating manga’s visual grammar from these sources in order to tell stories that were unexplored in manga to this point. Heavily influenced by the animation of Disney, Tezuka also introduced what would become the trademark look of his manga, and consequently future generations of manga: the big eyes with glossy irises (see figure 5).¹²⁰



Figure 5: Tezuka Osamu’s Disney-inspired character designs

¹²⁰ Tezuka was raised in Takarazuka, a town just outside of Osaka, and he was also heavily shaped by the eponymous all-female theatre revue. The sweeping epic scope of their lavish Western-style musicals had a profound impact on his own conception of manga stories. For a detailed analysis on the influences of Tezuka’s style, see Susanne Phillips, “Characters, Themes, and Narrative Patterns in the Manga of Osamu Tezuka,” in *Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime*, ed. M.W. MacWilliams (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2014), 68-90.

The content of story manga was no less altered than the form. Where pre-war manga were usually no more than seven to twenty pages in length, with each story concluding as a single episode, story manga were serialized narratives that could be told in several episodes spanning weeks, months, or even years. Tezuka also instituted a “star system,” where characters introduced in one work would reappear in other works; such a system helped readers stay attached to certain characters even when their manga series had concluded serialization.¹²¹ The scope that story manga allowed their artists created a variety of styles and subjects that greatly expanded the medium and its audience. The works of Tezuka and other mangaka, such as Tanaka Masao and Kuroda Masami, formed the fountainhead of postwar “story manga.” Though there are other types of manga still extant, story manga comprises the bulk of manga consumed in Japan and around the world today.

By the early 1950s, however, the *akahon* market had experienced severe decline even in demand. Market saturation, a new *akahon* book tax, and increased public criticism of *akahon* from newspapers and PTA groups as a negative influence on children all contributed to the gradual erasure of *akahon* from the public sphere.¹²² The biggest change, however, came from the emergence of a new market in the form of the *kashihon*, or “rental book,” system. *Kashihon* rental shops cropped up in cities and urban centers across the country renting out magazines and illustrated books that served up largely the same sorts of pulp material that were popular with *akahon* readers, with manga increasingly stocking the shelves of stores. *Kashihon* books took the form of 150-page books and magazines, and could be rented for as cheap as five yen.¹²³ With more consumers preferring to rent books than buy them in the deflationary economy, mangaka such as Saito Takao, Yamate Kiichiro,

¹²¹ McCarthy, 37.

¹²² Nakano Hideyuki, 55.

¹²³ Schodt, 66.

and Shirato Sampei began producing manga for the *kashihon* market for small wages. It was also at this point that several mangaka started preferring the larger format of *tankōbon*, or “independent books,” that collected several episodes of a mangaka’s manga into a single volume. While the revenues from books sold were less than the weekly commissions provided by magazines, *tankōbon* ensured mangaka their creative freedom apart from the prejudices of magazine editors. By the end of the decade, both *kashihon* and *akahon* would lose the most talented mangaka (and their customers) to the burgeoning weekly magazine format, but both markets should be looked upon as incubators for the first generation of manga professionals.

Mainstream publishers watched the growth of manga in the alternative markets and slowly incorporated more and more manga into their children’s monthly magazines. When the first televisions were sold in Japan in 1953, publishers introduced weekly magazines to keep up with the demand for more regular and immediate entertainment. In 1958, Kodansha launched *Weekly Shōnen Magazine*, a 300-page behemoth and the first weekly manga magazine for boys. Shogakukan followed this just one week later with their launch of *Weekly Shōnen Sunday*.¹²⁴ Both magazines were an extension of monthly boys magazines that featured articles about sports and education, but the weeklies were packed with several series of story manga. Featuring episodes written by multiple mangaka every week such as former *akahon* and *kashihon* mangaka Mizuki Shigeru, Ishinomori Shotaro, and Umezu Kazuo, both *Magazine* and *Sunday* proved to be immensely popular. What is important to note is that though these magazines featured brightly colored covers, the stories inside were produced on cheap newsprint. The ephemeral nature of the magazine

¹²⁴ For a breakdown of the race between Kodansha and Shogakukan to publish the first weekly boys’ magazine, see Oono, 26-70.

thus gave it a lack of permanence, implicitly encouraging readers to embrace the constantly updating and exclusive content, rather than the material form of the reading commodity itself. Readers were goaded in this way to devour content on a regulated basis. With issues selling for only thirty or forty yen, initial sales figures were immediately high: *Magazine* and *Sunday's* first issues sold over 200,000 and 300,000 issues, respectively.¹²⁵

What is important to note about these magazines is that a large part of their success was predicated on the growing Japanese economy and the increased buying power of Japanese families and particularly children. These magazines were the first media in post-war Japan to transform young readers into the consumers of their own interests. Monthly boys' and girls' magazines were often over 100 yen and purchased by the children's father on his way home from work. However, by the early 1960s, incomes for most families had increased, and children began receiving their first weekly allowances.¹²⁶ This meant that parents could no longer be able to regulate their children's reading habits as strictly. Importantly, it also meant that children could begin reading and purchasing manga from as early as grade school age. As the economy improved through the 1960s, the magazines' sales continued to grow, with *Weekly Shōnen Magazine* topping one million copies sold per week in 1966.¹²⁷ This newfound purchasing power among Japanese youth would have several reverberations that would greatly expand the growth and content of the manga industry. For one, it created consumers out of readers, putting control of content into the hands of the target audience from a very young age. Manga became a central part of the lives of many Japanese, and the consumption of manga became habitual. Reading manga as an adult would no longer be taboo when these children graduated university and began

¹²⁵ Ibid, 66.

¹²⁶ Nakano, 32-33.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 22-23.

careers decades later. As these children aged, some would continue to read the magazines they read as a child, but others would desire stories that featured more mature content or characters that related to their experiences of the world, leading to new types of story manga and visual styles to emerge in line with these sensibilities. Children who grew up on manga would grow up to emulate their favorite stories and create manga of their own that either drew upon or opposed their predecessors for inspiration. Through the manga magazine, story manga became a central fixture and natural outgrowth of the everyday environment of Japanese life.

The Innovations of *Weekly Shōnen Jump*

In 1968, the publishing industry was selling over 2 million copies of weekly manga magazines every week. The marketplace began to get crowded with more weekly magazines, but the demand for manga had not yet peaked. It was in this market that Shueisha launched *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, a weekly manga magazine whose circulation would eclipse even that of *Weekly Shōnen Magazine* in just five years. *Shōnen Jump* was created from the ashes and leftover editorial staff of *Shōnen Book*, a monthly boys' magazine anthology that itself was organized from the staff of *Fun Book: Shōnen King*, but the magazine established a set of criteria that aimed to recruit and foster new talent for its magazine that helped it control a large part of the market in a short amount of time, criteria which continue to guide the magazine's editorial philosophy and influence its readership to this day.

First, *Weekly Shōnen Jump* was the first truly all-manga weekly magazine. While other *shōnen* magazines had put an emphasis on manga series in their weekly issues, other issues such as articles and essays on school, sports, and personal fitness also buffeted

manga episodes. *Shōnen Jump* packed their inaugural issues with a plethora of manga episodes and a dearth of advertisements. The strategy was to get readers acquainted with the new mangaka brought in to the magazine, but primarily to orient readers into prioritizing manga content over other cultural content. What few ads that were inside consisted of the *tankōbon* of popular collected manga series. Like other magazines, *Shōnen Jump* was sold at just slightly above production cost, meaning that large volumes of sales were needed to turn even a modest profit, but much larger profits could be made with the sales of individual volumes of popular series. In this way, *Shōnen Jump* became one of the first mass media in Japan to offer what today could be viewed as “freemium” content. Chris Anderson has described the “cross subsidy” business model as one where the company initially loses money or just breaks even on giving away free or low-priced content with the long-term goal that consumers will invest money somewhere down the line to experience more content.¹²⁸ With *Shōnen Jump*, readers/users are introduced to series in weekly, bite-size installments, but will have to invest in the manga directly through the collection of *tankōbon* if they want to own their favorite manga, read their favorite chapters repeatedly, or flip back and forth between chapters spaced far apart. In addition to this direct investment from fans, the magazine would produce revenues through multi-media adaptations and licensing agreements in exchange for foregoing direct reimbursement from advertising subsidies. *Shōnen Jump* became subsidized by fans, who gave their opinion regarding the magazine’s quality directly with their wallets.

Second, with the prioritization of manga came a necessity for more mangaka talent and the guarantee that they would only be read in *Weekly Shōnen Jump*. Mangaka were brought in through a contract system, whereby they were obligated to write their material

¹²⁸ Chris Anderson, “Free! Why \$0.00 is the Future of Business,” *Wired Magazine* (25 February 2008).

only for Shueisha and *Shōnen Jump*.¹²⁹ The hiring of mangaka on contracts in some ways mirrors the placing of a stable of talent on long-term contracts in Hollywood during the classic studio era. Well-known mangaka could comprise a “house style” for the magazine, providing a recognizable look or theme for the magazine’s content through long-running series. New writers who had yet to find an audience or chance in other magazines were promised a yearly annuity, in addition to whatever salary they received per page, with the hopes that they will produce a work that becomes serialized. If the mangakas’ series were cancelled, they still received a salary while they continued to work on the submission of a new series. Successful mangaka that managed to build a large volume of individual episodes could find additional financial windfalls in sales of *tankōbon*, since the yearly annuity and page stipends did not amount to a large amount. The contract system also mirrors the increased use of contractual labor following the breakup of the old studio production model, as mangaka who failed to produce were unceremoniously cut and left to find another magazine or project. However, unlike film directors or screenwriters who work on a film that becomes the property of the studio, mangaka would still own the rights to their series in perpetuity. While the publication of series could only be in *Shōnen Jump*, lest a rival magazine attempted to poach successful artists and series, they were free to end the series and write a sequel or spin-off in another magazine. Owning the rights means that mangaka could profit from a long stream of royalties should the manga become a hit and its ancillary merchandise continue to provide revenue for them. In this respect, mangaka, like most film workers in the post-studio era, are not “employees” of the magazine, but are rather “independent contractors” who manage their brand and creative business with the assistance of the publisher.

¹²⁹ Kinsella, 50-55.

Shueisha received an influx of new talent through this system, artists who were eager to prove themselves and had few bargaining chips to negotiate better conditions since they were very rarely established names. *Shōnen Jump* could claim bragging rights over rival magazines, birthing the catch copy, “You can only read xxx-sensei’s manga in the pages of *Weekly Shōnen Jump*.”¹³⁰ Through the contract system, *Shōnen Jump* was able to attract new manga talents such as Nagai Go and his violent erotic works, and Motomiya Hiroshi and his stories of the fighting downtrodden.¹³¹ Such a system gave mangaka insurance policies in case their series lost popularity, but this security came with a cost, as limits were placed on the mobility of mangaka who were unable to renegotiate their contracts by comparing conditions with other publishers. They were beholden not only to the readers of *Shōnen Jump*, but also their editorial staff, who decided what manga would debut in future issues.

Once a series debuted, however, all mangaka were in the hands of the readers, as *Weekly Shōnen Jump* placed an increased emphasis on immediate reader feedback. This was first accomplished through the *ankēto* or “survey” system. First introduced by Kodansha and Shogakukan in their own weekly magazines in the early 1960s, Shueisha incorporated surveys towards the end of *Shōnen Book*’s life in 1964.¹³² Small cards addressed to the editorial offices of Shueisha were attached to every issue, and readers who sent in cards with their responses would be eligible for a small prize. The cards asked readers to respond to a series of questions, such as, “What word most warms your heart?”

¹³⁰ Okada Toshio, *Otakugaku nyūmon* (Introduction to Otaku Studies) (Tokyo: Shincho Bunko, 1996), 290.

¹³¹ Nagai started his own company, Dynamic Productions, just a year after publishing his first series, *Harenchi Gakuen* (Shameless School) in the inaugural issue of *Shōnen Jump*. He eventually left Shueisha after *Harenchi Gakuen* was concluded and his contract was finished, publishing in a variety of magazines thereafter. Motomiya was nearly lured away by *Shōnen Magazine* when his contract was about to expire in 1970, but was coaxed by *Shōnen Jump* editors to remain at Shueisha, where he publishes actively to this day. See Motomiya, 135-165.

¹³² Oono, 81; Nishimura, 30.

and “What word is most important to you?” and “What makes you happiest?” The most frequent answers to these questions were the words “*yūjō*,” “*doryoku*,” and “*shōri*,” which translate respectively to “friendship, hard work, and victory.” These three words that readers mailed in became the guiding editorial philosophy of *Shōnen Book*, and was adapted to *Shōnen Jump* soon after *Book*’s demise.¹³³ The editors planned on aiming for a younger audience than the established *Magazine* and *Sunday*, which had targeted an audience of primarily middle and high school aged students. *Jump* sent their survey to grade school children as an effort to gauge their feelings and what they valued as important. With the *ankēto* system, the very mantra of *Shōnen Jump* reflected the desire from editors and staff to directly respond to readers’ voices.

The editorial staff of *Shōnen Jump* from this point forward placed an extraordinary amount of importance on the *ankēto*. Where other magazines would use the survey to gauge reader interest in topics and series, *Shōnen Jump* would use it as a de facto ratings barometer, asking readers to rank their favorite episodes from each magazine issue. From the early 1970s, editors placed a strict policy on all series running in the magazine: regardless of reputation or multimedia tie-ins, series that were unpopular with readers would be cut from the magazine immediately, to be replaced with series from new mangaka. This rigid stance to deciding what series would stay or go was dubbed the *ankēto shijō shugi*, or “doctrine of the survey’s supremacy” where series that did not receive votes would eventually be cancelled.¹³⁴ Such a radical adoption of the survey had the effect of galvanizing mangaka into constantly improving their work, as well as providing struggling mangaka with ideas and directions from readers who liked their manga. The *ankēto* also

¹³³ Nishimura, 31-32.

¹³⁴ Okada, 291-292.

had some predictable consequences, such as the prioritization of trendy art styles or topics, the difficulty in raising unseasoned mangaka who could learn from mistakes, and the obvious inability to gauge the reaction of readers who never bothered to mail in the surveys. An unintended consequence was that mangaka of popular series were pressured by editorial staff to continue their manga in perpetuity. Finally, the emphasis on immediate positive reaction fostered content and visuals with high impact and less subtlety, making *Shōnen Jump* series known for their rapid pacing, constant cliffhangers and plot twists, and a format that prioritized consistent “action” in order to draw votes from young readers. Such a marriage of action and persistence could result in serial narratives where much happened, but little actually changed.

Finally, *Weekly Shōnen Jump* found great success in bi-directional textual synergy, spinning off their series into various animations, video games, and merchandise, or what was just becoming popularized in Japan as the “media mix.” It was not the first magazine to adapt its series into animation or live-action, as *Sunday* and *Magazine* had adapted several of its popular manga into television anime in the 1960s and 70s. But from the late 1970s, and particularly due to the introduction of Toriyama Akira’s gag manga *Dr. Slump* (1980), *Shōnen Jump* placed increased importance on creating transmedia around any series that proved viable. *Dr. Slump*, about an android girl named Arare and her oddball friends and neighbors in Penguin Town, proved to be immensely popular with children upon its initial release, but its diverse and colorful cast of characters won over fans of various ages and demographics.¹³⁵ Fuji Television approached Shueisha on a number of occasions requesting to sponsor an animated broadcast of the show, until an initial run of *Dr. Slump – Arare-chan* was approved in 1981, just five months after the manga’s

¹³⁵ Nishimura, 293.

serialization. The show's popularity carried into its highly-rated broadcast, but what Shueisha was not prepared for was the effect the anime had on sales of the manga. While adapting a show into an anime as a means of expanding the potential audience was a well-known business strategy since the early 1960s and television adaptations of Osamu Tezuka's *Tetsuwan Atomu* ("Astro Boy, 1963-66), *tankōbon* sales of *Dr. Slump* exploded, as did circulation of weekly copies of *Shōnen Jump*, which sold more magazines than in any other period in Shueisha's history. The animation of *Dr. Slump* was so effective and popular in helping expand the manga's popularity that editors began to encourage mangaka to make manga that would quickly become anime based on their genres or characters. In some cases, producers would approach Shueisha for the anime licensing rights after reading just a single chapter, banking on the brand, track record, and appealing characters of *Shōnen Jump*.¹³⁶ For the remainder of the 1980s, editors placed increased emphasis on stories with genres and characters that would sell animated television shows and merchandise to casual fans and families.

Through the example of *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, we can see how manga developed from the black market as an alternative form of entertainment into a commodified product that was consumed regularly by a mass market. It was then delivered as a cheap package into children's homes every week through manga magazines, which incubated popular series until enough popularity was evident to launch a successful television series. In other words, readers and creators reinforce the responses of one another in the manga magazine to create popular content for a mass audience.

The remainder of this chapter will explicitly map this perpetual creation engine, showing how the manga magazine is constructed by a *mélange* of manga-ka, editors,

¹³⁶ Ibid, 296.

assistants, and even the readers themselves in a feedback loop that constantly asks readers to both judge and make the content that they desire. Through this all, the manga magazine blurs the lines between creator and consumer to construct a training ground of participants: the creators of the manga magazine both *supply* readers with content while *training* them to create such content on their own. Through a combination of interviews, memoirs, and close readings of the pages of Shueisha's *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, the remainder of this chapter will show how this collaborative creativity constructs a "social network" around creative works, fostering creativity through cooperative structures. The next section turns to the layout of the *shōnen* manga magazine itself to demonstrate how *Shōnen Jump*'s careful construction of this network connects readers to the magazine's brand, to other readers of the magazine, and also to the magazine's mangaka and editors themselves. In this way, the magazine trains mangaka and connects readers to the process of creation.

The Manga Network: *Kyara* Avatars and Communication

Walking into a convenience store, the first things that greet the eye are the bookshelf and magazine racks at the front of the store. Magazines for fashion, travel, food, and men and women's lifestyle all have separate sections of their own. Manga magazines are no different, though the space they occupy is substantial in large part because the magazines themselves are so big and delivered so frequently. Everyday, thousands upon thousands of manga magazines are sent to bookstores, hair salons, ramen shops, and convenience stores as casual reading material, each copy stuffing countless series into 500-plus pages of cheap newsprint. Unlike animation, whose broadcasts frequently do not reach every part of the nation due to limitations in smaller media markets, manga magazines are delivered to all parts of the country every week. This reach means that readers in Hokkaido

are reading the same material and are as up to date on their favorite series as readers in Okinawa. It is one significant reason for their television adaptability, the flashy, eye-catching visuals and constant stream of content casting them as blueprints for proto-TV. Manga magazines like *Weekly Shonen Jump* construct their issues with the knowledge that readers all over Japan are buying and reading the same series, editorials, and advertisements every week.

One could argue that the community of manga readers is a sort of “imagined community,” Benedict Anderson’s term for communities that are formed despite geographical or national boundaries. Unlike communities that maintain close interaction on a regular basis, imagined communities are formed from people who might not have face-to-face contact, but believe they are part of a certain group due to their shared values. The main example Anderson uses is that of the nation, which is comprised of disparate groups of people from differing socio-economic classes, ethnic backgrounds, or value systems who nevertheless believe themselves to be part of a single national entity. According to Anderson, a nation “is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”¹³⁷ Anderson argues that though all individual members of these communities will never meet one another, what ties them together are their mutual interests in national pastimes and rituals. Media and newspapers, in particular, are instrumental in shaping imagined communities through generalizing and addressing its audience as shared citizens who consume the same information everyday.¹³⁸ While Anderson’s description applied to nations and imagined national boundaries,

¹³⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Spread and Origins of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1986), 6.

¹³⁸ Anderson, 57-58.

Jennifer Prough argues a similar effect goes on in the construction of manga magazines, constructed by editors to unite readers across Japan into a community that shares in and forms the manga's brand. Prough, in her analysis of *shōjo* manga, terms this particular form of community building "fabricating communities," where *shōjo* manga magazines use elaborate layouts and incorporate reader feedback in order to instill a sense of harmony and conversation among readers and editors.¹³⁹ These devices incorporated by the magazine's editors provide a sense of connection and affinity to disparately located female readers.

Shōnen manga magazines such as *Weekly Shōnen Jump* similarly work to build a "social network" of readers through strategic layouts, character designs, and incorporated feedback that encourage dialogue between readers and mangaka. To call these magazines social networks in the sense of new digital media social networking services such as Flickr or YouTube would not be completely accurate. Manga magazines are not the sort of open, peer-based collaborative networks that characterize formations of SNS technology such as Don Tapscott and Anthony Williams' "wkinomics." A chosen group of selected creators primarily produce content for the magazine, whose design is carefully constructed by an elite arm of marketing and editing managers. However, readers of the manga magazine both shape its content through votes, as well as produce for it through becoming mangaka themselves. Not all readers might be potential "prosumers," but the manga magazine fosters their efforts in a manner similar to what Philip Gochenour defines as a networked community. Readers are part of "a distributed communications system, in which individuals function as nodes in the overall system."¹⁴⁰ Readers are encouraged in various ways to connect to mangaka, and vice versa, through the mangazine's interface. Thus,

¹³⁹ Prough, 59.

¹⁴⁰ Philip Gochenour, "Distributed Communities and Nodal Subjects," *New Media & Society* 8.1 (2006): 46.

rather than direct interaction, readers are connected to one another and the creators within the magazine through what Derek Johnson describes as “communicative exchange and use of shared cultural resources.”¹⁴¹

Similar to what Jean Burgess describes as the ongoing improvement of SNS platforms and services, the editors and designers of the magazine “work with the understanding that emergent communities of practice will significantly shape the culture of the network.”¹⁴² One major way the magazine solicits feedback for shaping its culture is through an interface that employs mangaka avatars for the sake of communication. The mangaka’s character avatars can be sketches and caricatures of the mangaka, such as those used to represent the authorial likenesses of the manga *Soul Catchers* (2013-14), or they can be cutely deformed monsters or animals, such as those used for the manga *Haikyu!!* (2012-ongoing). Each mangaka must create a character avatar with one or two notable quirks that convey their appearance, but also their personality. Mangaka must negotiate a balance between revealing themselves to gain the trust of readers, and catering to audience expectations of performing an identity that would match their series’ tone and content. Such avatars reflect Michel Foucault’s “author-function” in managing expectations of readers by communicating as the “regulator of the fictive.” In particular, avatars are aggressive markers of “signs that refer to the author,” but where Foucault’s analysis puts this focus on textual signs such as personal pronouns, avatars function as visual signs that suggest humor, openness, or cool.¹⁴³ Examples abound in every magazine issue. The character avatar of Sorachi Hideaki, mangaka of gag manga *Gintama* (2003-ongoing), has

¹⁴¹ Johnson, 16.

¹⁴² Jean Burgess, “User-Created Content and Everyday Cultural Practice,” in *Television as Digital Media*, eds. James Bennett and Niki Strange (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 316.

¹⁴³ Michel Foucault, “What is an Author?” in *Critical Theory Since 1965*, ed. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee: University Press of Florida, 1986), 144.

deep bags under his eyes and a finger attached to his nostril, a character avatar befitting the comedic nature of the manga and revealing the silly personality of the mangaka himself. The character avatar of Kubo Tite, mangaka of the battle manga *BLEACH* (2001-ongoing), on the other hand, has earrings, shiny hair, and a deep brow. This sort of cool character would fit in seamlessly in Kubo's battle manga of stylish fighters living in-between contemporary Tokyo and the underworld, and also projects Kubo as a mangaka with the style to naturally pull off such a manga.

In their ability to convey personality through the simplest of designs, mangaka avatars are some of the strongest displays of *kyara* in Japanese visual media. Ito Go has written about the difference between characters, which are fully formed and contained within a particular story, and *kyara* (a Japanese shorthand for character), which exist on their own outside of the story and are unbounded by the text in which they might originally appear. Unlike characters, which Go argues are products of a narrative, *kyara* can exist and be consumed on their own apart from any narrative context based on designs which audiences, and particularly fans, are already familiar with. As Go puts it, "As the character moves between these different narrative contexts and media forms, fans share the sense that this character exists. What's more, fans are contributing to the development of characters through their interactions with them."¹⁴⁴ *Kyara* are a symptom and reflection of a society that is familiar and comfortable with character tropes, symbols, and signifiers that encapsulate certain human traits, emotions, and personalities. Characters from some manga, anime, or video games can become popular and attract fan affection through virtue of their attractive design. But characters can also be created without stories, relying on fans to identify their personalities through the design of their faces, clothing, or other elements.

¹⁴⁴ "Interview: Ito Go," in *The Moe Manifesto*, ed. Patrick Galbraith (Singapore: Tuttle, 2014), 168.

In this light, character avatars for mangaka become *kyara* stand-ins for the mangaka themselves, crafting simple but communicative elements in the avatar's face or body to signify personality traits. Elements such as eye shape, hairstyles, spectacles, sweat beads, moles, wrinkles, and other ornaments all contribute to the avatar's personality, and an emotional or spiritual sense of the mangaka by proxy. Go emphasizes that as *kyara*-like avatars move through different media contexts, their interaction with fans is what remains constant. With social media, these *kyara* interactions take the form of webpages, blogs, Twitter, or Facebook, but *shōnen* manga magazines instituted a form of this long before, where mangaka avatars spoke to readers through comments attributed to them in the magazine and its advertisements.

 <p>黒子のバスケ 藤巻忠彦</p> <p>59</p> <p>「黒子のバスケ」の主人公・黒子哲也。身長が160cmと小柄なため、試合中ではよく目立たない。しかし、その小柄な体躯に隠された驚異的な才能が、チームを導く。</p>	 <p>ILLEGAL RARE 緒方 寛</p> <p>299</p> <p>「ILLEGAL RARE」の主人公・緒方 寛。身長が180cmと小柄なため、試合中ではよく目立たない。しかし、その小柄な体躯に隠された驚異的な才能が、チームを導く。</p>
 <p>ONE PIECE 尾田栄一郎</p> <p>79</p> <p>「ONE PIECE」の主人公・ルフィ。身長が170cmと小柄なため、試合中ではよく目立たない。しかし、その小柄な体躯に隠された驚異的な才能が、チームを導く。</p>	 <p>トショウジョ 高山としのり</p> <p>319</p> <p>「トショウジョ」の主人公・高山としのり。身長が160cmと小柄なため、試合中ではよく目立たない。しかし、その小柄な体躯に隠された驚異的な才能が、チームを導く。</p>
 <p>暗殺教室 松井優征</p> <p>99</p> <p>「暗殺教室」の主人公・烏丸 黒江。身長が160cmと小柄なため、試合中ではよく目立たない。しかし、その小柄な体躯に隠された驚異的な才能が、チームを導く。</p>	 <p>TOKYO WONDER BOYS 下川 貴人 伊達 健大</p> <p>359</p> <p>「TOKYO WONDER BOYS」の主人公・下川 貴人。身長が160cmと小柄なため、試合中ではよく目立たない。しかし、その小柄な体躯に隠された驚異的な才能が、チームを導く。</p>
 <p>黒子のバスケ 藤巻忠彦</p> <p>119</p> <p>「黒子のバスケ」の主人公・黒子哲也。身長が160cmと小柄なため、試合中ではよく目立たない。しかし、その小柄な体躯に隠された驚異的な才能が、チームを導く。</p>	 <p>ILLEGAL RARE 緒方 寛</p> <p>379</p> <p>「ILLEGAL RARE」の主人公・緒方 寛。身長が180cmと小柄なため、試合中ではよく目立たない。しかし、その小柄な体躯に隠された驚異的な才能が、チームを導く。</p>
 <p>黒子のバスケ 藤巻忠彦</p> <p>137</p> <p>「黒子のバスケ」の主人公・黒子哲也。身長が160cmと小柄なため、試合中ではよく目立たない。しかし、その小柄な体躯に隠された驚異的な才能が、チームを導く。</p>	 <p>ILLEGAL RARE 緒方 寛</p> <p>423</p> <p>「ILLEGAL RARE」の主人公・緒方 寛。身長が180cmと小柄なため、試合中ではよく目立たない。しかし、その小柄な体躯に隠された驚異的な才能が、チームを導く。</p>
 <p>トリコ 島根 光年</p> <p>195</p> <p>「トリコ」の主人公・トリコ。身長が160cmと小柄なため、試合中ではよく目立たない。しかし、その小柄な体躯に隠された驚異的な才能が、チームを導く。</p>	 <p>ILLEGAL RARE 緒方 寛</p> <p>445</p> <p>「ILLEGAL RARE」の主人公・緒方 寛。身長が180cmと小柄なため、試合中ではよく目立たない。しかし、その小柄な体躯に隠された驚異的な才能が、チームを導く。</p>
 <p>ニセコイ 古味 直志</p> <p>215</p> <p>「ニセコイ」の主人公・古味 直志。身長が160cmと小柄なため、試合中ではよく目立たない。しかし、その小柄な体躯に隠された驚異的な才能が、チームを導く。</p>	 <p>BLEACH 久保 保人</p> <p>465</p> <p>「BLEACH」の主人公・久保 保人。身長が160cmと小柄なため、試合中ではよく目立たない。しかし、その小柄な体躯に隠された驚異的な才能が、チームを導く。</p>

Figure 6: Mangaka avatars

A detailed look at the layout and organization of typical contents page in *Weekly Shōnen Jump* reveals how a dialogue is attempted between mangaka, editors, and readers.¹⁴⁶ Most of the page is occupied by a section that lists paginations for all the series in the issue. Each series is given its own block of space to display the series' main character, some brief author comments, and a loosely drawn character that functions as a representative for – though not necessarily a representation of – the mangaka himself. Avatars on the contents page, for example, are typically accompanied by comments from the mangaka of each manga. The comments often express some event that the mangaka personally experienced, such as those often shared by Kubo Tite: “I just saw *Frozen* at the movie theatre. I liked the songs so much that I saw both the dubbed and subbed versions.” Other comments act as self-promotion, such as this one from Ashihara Daisuke: “Volume Five of [my manga] *World Trigger* is now out! Osamu [the protagonist] is working hard. Thank you for your support!”

While most comments display such banalities, many mangaka use the contents page as a sounding board to voice deeper feelings or more personal thoughts. Some mangaka, such as Oda Eiichiro, mangaka of the pirate manga *One Piece* (1997-ongoing), often choose the comments section to sound out about professional relationships: “After I finish this draft, I have a talk with Momo-chan [Sakura Momoko, mangaka of *Chibi Maruko-chan*). Even though it's supposed to just be a talk, they've prepared a feast.”¹⁴⁷ Fujimaki Tadatoshi, mangaka of *Kuroko no Basket* (*Kuroko's Basketball*, 2008-14), writes, “I'm barely able to get in my work by deadlines right now, to be honest. It's the worst definition

¹⁴⁶ “Contents,” in *Weekly Shōnen Jump* No. 19 (21 April 2014), 518.

¹⁴⁷ Oda has also used the Comments section to voice his displeasure at management. In one issue, he wrote, “My editor is being changed again. That's the third time. I wish I they'd at least let me stick with one for a few years.”

of ‘thrilling’ work.” These comments reveal mangaka attempting to be honest with readers, expressing both their achievements (a new movie adaptation has been announced!) as well as their frustrations with the day-to-day slog of constant manga production. However, one should also not expect a completely free forum of mangaka angst. While both of the above comments imply that the contents page can function as a public forum where mangaka are able to be critical of their employers, editors screen all mangaka comments beforehand to insure that they are not too inflammatory.¹⁴⁸

The range of comments in the magazine is designed to humanize mangaka, starting conversations that extend to several different formats. When mangaka sound off on their personal experiences, readers are encouraged to write to their favorite mangaka with their own detailed experiences in fan letters and postcards. Many mangaka hold special one-page Q&A sessions, answering popular queries for details on character backgrounds or story arcs.¹⁴⁹ Mangaka avatars, moreover, are designed to move out of the magazine and into other media spaces. One of the most popular forums for a dialogue is in the back pages of the *tankōbon* for the specific manga series, where mangaka character avatars respond to readers’ fan letters with detailed answers. Readers from all over Japan mail in their questions; some attach photos of themselves and fan art they’ve drawn of their favorite character poses or scenes. Their names and hometowns are posted alongside their pictures and questions, displaying their different lifestyles through the small profile. Mangaka, in kind, attempt to respond to a broad section of Japanese readers by picking representative

¹⁴⁸ In the case of Oda and Fujimaki, moreover, both mangaka are given more leeway in their expression due to the huge popularity of their respective series. This is a running trend in the magazine, where the more popular a series becomes, the more influence and control over their work a mangaka will have.

¹⁴⁹ This has now been extended to the online webpage of *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, where readers can email their questions to Shueisha directly, rather than post letters every week or month to see if their comments are picked up by the mangaka.

fans from across different prefectures of the country. In this way, despite readers coming from a range of backgrounds and locations, they are connected to one another through their fandom of particular manga and their ability to connect remotely with their favorite mangaka. This interactive analog media, whereby responding to reader comments and questions on a weekly basis, mangaka are able to establish personalities, create relationships, and bridge gaps in social or professional distance through their avatars.

While mangaka avatars are birthed in the comments section, where both new and veteran mangaka share a common space to voice their thoughts and opinions, the avatars take on a life of their own within the other pages of the manga magazine. Mangaka avatars can be used for “author-product” integration, peppering the rest of the magazine’s structure, popping up in advertisements for other magazines from the same publisher, weighing in on contests, and sharing jokes with the avatars of other mangaka. They will comment on the lives of one another, expressing condolences for family loss or congratulations for weddings. If a popular series concludes its serialization, then most of the avatars will tell the retiring mangaka “*otsukaresama*,” or “job well done.” Some will take this a step further, decorating the cover illustrations of their own chapters with iconography from the concluding manga, as Oda Eiichiro did upon the conclusion of Kishimoto Masashi’s *Naruto* (1997-2014).¹⁵⁰ Mangaka avatars are also featured prominently on the cover flap of every *tankōbon* of their own manga series, weighing in on personal and professional matters. Toriyama Akira, mangaka of *Dragon Ball* (1984-95), chronicled not just the journey of his characters in his manga, but provided his own “author-arc” through the

¹⁵⁰ Oda Eiichiro, “Smile,” in *Weekly Shōnen Jump* No. 50 (24 November 2014), 47.

chronicling of his own progression from single manga artist to married man and father through the flaps with both photos and characters.¹⁵¹

Fictional characters of popular series and non-fiction characters of popular characters engage with readers on different levels. Characters such as Luffy from *One Piece* or Ichigo Kurosaki from *BLEACH* pop up throughout the issue of the magazine and beyond, in particular signaling to readers their participation in related media tie-ins. Animated characters provide commentary on everything from anime to games that readers would be interested in purchasing if they are readers of the manga, but that commentary is primarily limited to the world of the texts themselves. Mangaka avatars, on the other hand, work to provide credibility and authenticity to such productions. Whether they have provided their own comments or not, mangaka avatar plugs can accompany adverts for movie adaptations, television anime productions, toy merchandise, and video game series that they had little to do with. Oftentimes, editors will simply tack on a mangaka avatar to an existing spread, in effect supplying the mangaka's stamp of approval for any such productions that extend the world of the manga from that of the magazine. As "celebrities," they function in some ways like free agents in sports, pumping up their "brand" while their labor is "showcased" for fans every week. In essence, their voice and character encourage readers to become fans of the property, guiding them from the manga into new media and additional commodities.

In recent years, these avatar dialogues have extended from the mangaka to other staff of the manga magazine, where characters are used to express the thoughts of

¹⁵¹ It should be known that not all mangaka view this opportunity to reveal their lives to readers in the same light. Togashi Yoshihiro, mangaka of *Yu-yu Hakusho* (1990-94) and *Hunter Hunter* (1998-ongoing), often would just include a single word on his flap, coupled with a crude drawing, to signal his disinterest in engaging with fans.

beleaguered workers. Editors for *Weekly Shōnen Jump* can now participate in the character network through a small comments section titled “Ok! Jump Guy.” The brief segment collects the random musings of two to three editors every issue. Editors have typically remained in the background of the manga, acting as facilitators for the dialogue between mangaka and readers. But as manga as an industry has grown more popular, and readers have expressed interest in pursuing careers in manga editorial departments, there has been increased interest into the lives of editors and other staff who work behind the scenes. Dedicated space is now reserved in the manga magazine for editors to communicate with readers via a gag section in the back pages called “Jump Tama G!” Here, several editors are picked every month, supplied with a character avatar, and operate a page with a theme of their choice. One editor, Ichimichi Mao, answers fan mail in a section titled “Mao’s Exchange Diary.” Readers send in mail to Shueisha, complete with drawings and questions about becoming a mangaka, ideas for gag manga, or caricatures of their favorite mangaka. The editors (with the help of assistants) animate this dialogue through panels that feature their character avatars. Unlike the stoic or carefully crafted avatars of the mangaka, the features of editor avatars are grossly exaggerated and abstracted, emphasizing one or two prominent features in comical ways. These caricatures are used to primarily mock editors and put them into ridiculous situations for comedic effect. The result humanizes editors, but in a way that turns work into play, and workers into fellow children.

Most of these editor-based creations are inconsequential and located towards the end of the manga, but their function is to draw out involvement from especially rabid fans. One editorial comic was notable for its attempts at directly linking dialogue between editors and readers within a text. *Hagaki Senshi Jump-dan* (The Jump Fan-mail Warriors,

1997-2001) was another mini manga about the inner trials of editors, conceived by Izawa Hiroshi and illustrated by Ishizuka U-ko, but supplied with content from readers of *Weekly Shōnen Jump*. Every issue has a “corner” at the end of the magazine, a page with a random theme (“Crude Jokes” or “Wish Upon a Star”) for readers to send in their responses in the *ankēto*. The most interesting responses get published and, at the end of the year, the readers who have tallied the most publications within the magazine are interviewed by the editors and featured in a two-page manga. The winners are, moreover, illustrated with their own character avatar for their considerable labor. Unlike the mangaka, who use avatars for their own brands and for pushing their own character-based products, editors use their avatars to tempt hundreds of ideas out of readers each year with the promise of “character fame.” These editor-based manga are good examples of labor in what John Caldwell has called the “spec-world,” where a great deal of free work is drawn out from the non-employed on a “spec” basis, in this case according to the theme of the month and the prize of the year.

The Survey System: Training Creators

The editorial searching and training of future mangaka, in fact, is reliant on communication lines established through the magazine. Readers write more than just questions and fanmail to their favorite mangaka. Many readers send in creative contributions of their own, often mailing in interpretations of characters and settings of their favorite series. How this feedback is then absorbed into the shape and construction of the magazine itself is a complex training process that directly involves readers into the production of manga. The social network of *Weekly Shōnen Jump* is formed from readers, who are encouraged to join the ranks of the creators to whom they write. The magazine employs two prize systems – *ankēto kenshō*, or reader surveys, *shinjinshō*, or newcomer

contests – to attract reader responses and opinions. These two systems are used in a number of other popular *shōnen* magazines through a manga education system. As Jennifer Prough notes, *shōjo* manga magazines incorporated a similar method to recruit talented artists and storytellers through the “manga school” system.¹⁵² However, there are some important differences in the way readers are recruited than in *shōnen* manga compared to *shōjo* manga regarding the incorporation of readers into the magazine’s aesthetic. *Shōnen Jump*, in particular, has more conspicuous and active recruitment due to an editorial policy and interface that heavily favors dialogue between editors and readers.

As previously noted, *Weekly Shōnen Jump* has long favored reader opinion polls known as *ankēto* to gauge reader interest in serialized manga. From the late 1970s, however, this reliance upon reader opinion intensified with a change in editorial direction. Under the stewardship of editor-in-chief Nishimura Shigeo, in particular, the magazine began to hold reader opinion supreme. While editors would continue to choose the new series and mangakas that would debut in the magazine every year, *ankēto* were the primary method in determining which series would continue to run in the magazine. Nishimura established a radical precedent, where “any series that failed to reach the top two in popularity over a period of ten weeks would be put on the track for discontinuation.”¹⁵³ There were exceptions to this rule, such as gag manga that did not attract a large fan base but were considered important for the magazine’s balance of content, or series that were popular in other media formats despite ranking low in the weekly *ankēto*. The rule did apply to many new series, however, and a ruthless atmosphere prevailed in the magazine

¹⁵² Prough, 81-87.

¹⁵³ Serashina Shuichiro, “Interview with Horie Nobuhiko,” *Studio Voice* 2 (2008): 22-24.

where new series were expected to provide an immediate impact.¹⁵⁴ Readers voluntarily functioned as a Nielsen Ratings system, essentially voting out titles if they did not immediately provide the entertainment of the “top three” best chapters of any given issue.

This had a large impact on the direction of content for the magazine. From the late 1970s to the early 1980s, rival magazines siphoned off a large portion of *Weekly Shōnen Jump*’s readership. Series such as Yanagisawa Kimio’s *Tonda Couple* (1978-81) running in *Weekly Shōnen Magazine*, or Takahashi Rumiko’s *Urusei Yatsura* (1978-87) and Adachi Mitsuru’s *Touch* (1981-86), running in *Weekly Shōnen Sunday* and *Weekly Shōnen Magazine* respectively, attracted readers through stories that combined the romantic comedy genre with fantasy, sports, or science fiction elements.¹⁵⁵ *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, however, largely refused to alter their editorial policy that was established by their own readers. Through the rest of the 1980s, the types of series that remained in the magazine were catered towards a readership that pushed and voted for their favored series. The series that tallied the most votes favored violent or comedic content geared towards young boys such as Yudetamago’s *Kinnikuman* (1979-87), Buronson and Hara Tetsuo’s *Fist of the Northstar* (1983-88), Kurumada Masami’s *Saint Seiya* (1986-91), and Toriyama Akira’s *Dragon Ball*, manga that focused on superhero wrestlers, apocalyptic renegades, Zodiac knights, and comedic adventures and battles inspired from Chinese mythology, respectively. Even the gag manga that remained, such as Tokuhiko Masaya’s *Jungle King Tar-chan* (1988-90), went out of its way to titillate with sexual jokes and imagery. These series

¹⁵⁴ Okada, 291.

¹⁵⁵ Some critics, such as Patrick Galbraith and Okada Toshio, argue that it was through this genre that the term *moé* developed, a fan word for strong affection for cute female characters.

proved popular with readers and went on to dominate the manga and television anime market for the remainder of the 1980s and early 1990s.¹⁵⁶

The emphasis on *ankēto* also had large ramifications on the structure of the magazine itself, which can be viewed by flipping through the first pages of any issue. Editors place the most popular series towards the front of the magazine as a symbol of its status within the magazine's hierarchy. Younger mangaka are encouraged to “dethrone” established manga from the top of the hierarchy and earn their way to the front of the magazine. Popular titles are not only provided with premier issue space – readers do not have to spend time flipping through the magazine to find their favorite series – but are also frequently given a *kanban*, or “cover” feature. Popular manga are selected to grace the front of a given issue in a dynamic spread with a “color” chapter, where a portion of the manga (usually the first three to five pages) is illustrated with a full color palette. Chapters that are provided with the *kanban* are often timed to coincide with a pivotal point in any given manga series, and mangaka attempt to provide the episode with additional drama through more dynamic events and illustrations to justify their *kanban* and attract more reader votes. This inevitably results in a circular effect, where popular manga are given the space to increase their popularity, while newer manga must attract new votes without the glossy production values of their established competition.

Ankēto also strongly affects the turnover of mangaka as well. With readers voting out manga once plotlines stagnate, new talent in the form of fresh ideas and young mangaka is in constant demand. As previously noted, *Weekly Shōnen Jump* editors aggressively courted young mangaka who had yet to debut and signed them to exclusive

¹⁵⁶ The cultural theorist and self-proclaimed *otaku*, or “king of otaku,” Okada Toshio has termed this period of *Weekly Shōnen Jump*'s market dominance as “*Shōnen Jump*'s Winner-Take-All Era.” Okada, 292.

contracts in order to differentiate itself from its competition. But the recruitment was enacted within the pages of the magazine itself through *shinjinshō*, or “new artist awards.” Similar to the “manga school” system in *shōjo* manga magazines, these are contests that turn readers into artists themselves. First introduced by *Weekly Shōnen Magazine*, the contests recruited new mangaka to the magazine by encouraging readers to submit manga of their own for potential publication. Editors would read and evaluate the manga sent in by readers, and if any given manga was deemed to have potential, the editors would write back to the authors and ask them to submit a follow-up. If the manga had legs, it would then run in the magazine and become subject to readers’ approval in the *ankēto* just like any other manga.

Weekly Shōnen Jump took these reader submissions seriously and instituted award contests that treated readers professionally. In just its second year of circulation, the manga magazine introduced the “Tezuka Prize.” Readers were asked to mail in submissions for a “story manga” contest that would be judged not by editors, but by the “god of manga” himself, Tezuka Osamu. Readers were evaluated on a total score based on the strength of their art, characters, story, framing, and originality; winners were provided with a substantial cash prize, with the grand prize winner promised serialization of their manga.¹⁵⁷ In 1975, *Shōnen Jump* introduced the “Akatsuka Prize,” a manga prize for “gag manga,” in honor of its most popular comedy mangaka, Akatsuka Fujio. These two prizes anchored a steady supply of submissions to the magazine throughout the 1970s and 1980s, and continue to be two of the most desirable prizes in the magazine industry today, with manga luminaries such as Toriyama Akira, Watsuki Nobuhiro, and Inoue Takehiko acting as

¹⁵⁷ Tezuka’s exacting standards often meant that no grand prize winners were selected, though winners were divided into first, second, and third prize categories based on the strength of their submissions.

judges in the stead of the late Tezuka and Akatsuka. These prizes remain the most prominent and desired prizes in *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, with the winners going on to publication with the greatest degree of frequency.

New contests and prizes, however, have become institutionalized within the pages of the magazine. Some contests, such as the “Golden Future Cup,” pit potential mangaka against one another over a series of issues, with readers asked to vote on the best manga among the new talent. Certain specialized contests, such as the “G Cup,” invite readers to submit short comedy works from five to fifteen pages to be judged by both gag manga mangaka and even celebrity comedians. Cash prizes, as well as a chance to be published and pursue a career as a mangaka, motivate readers to submit their works. Other contests, such as the Treasure Newcomers’ Manga Prize, are held every month. Readers are asked to send in “one-shots,” or manga that will conclude within a single episode. Every month, one or more manga are selected as Grand Treasure Winners, and their one-shot is run in the magazine for that week, competing with other series in the magazine for votes. If a particular one-shot has significant fan response, the manga will have a chance at continued circulation in either *Weekly Shōnen Jump* or one of the “brother” publications.¹⁵⁸ With the expansion of *Shōnen Jump*’s online website, moreover, even works that receive honorable mentions have a space to attract reader attention without having to compete with the rarefied and limited page counts of the magazine. While rare, a handful of manga have found an audience and eventual publication through internet response.¹⁵⁹ For *Weekly*

¹⁵⁸ *Aniki* or *otōto* manga magazines refer to *shōnen* manga magazines under the same publisher but are targeted at a different age demographic. Examples of brother manga magazines to *Weekly Shōnen Jump* are the teen and young adult *Young Jump*, or the edgier, alternative manga magazine *Ultra Jump*.

¹⁵⁹ See, for example, One and Murata Yusuke’s *One Punch Man* (Tokyo: Shueisha, 2009).

Shōnen Jump, however, the litmus test for serialization remains the *ankēto* that readers must write and mail in by hand, a decision that Shueisha's editors continue to keep in place.

What the abundance of the contests all share is their desire to ease readers into the role of creators. The purpose of the contests is less about finding particular hits, and more about training readers in a process of being judged for their work. The Treasure Newcomers' Prize rewards particular manga not strictly for the combined effect of story, art, and characters, but also manga that excel in particular characteristics, recognizing strengths while offering constructive criticism for development. Readers might not win a prize on their first or second submissions, but all are provided feedback from mangaka and editors in order to improve upon their weaknesses.¹⁶⁰ Mangaka themselves evaluate submissions, and provide suggestions in the magazine for future mangaka to follow.

This transparent dialogue is often displayed in the magazine for readers to see and learn from. For the 82nd Treasure Newcomers' Prize, mangaka Matsui Yusei tells readers to put considerable care into how characters are introduced. "A character should communicate his or her personality within the first page," he says through his avatar (a talking eyeball). "The first two to four pages are also extremely important. Most readers will become bored if the immediate action isn't interesting, so think of how you will draw readers into your world before they lose interest."¹⁶¹ By way of example, Matsui includes a page from his manga, *Assassin's Classroom* (2012-ongoing), to literally illustrate his advice on "kyara dashi," or character intros when teacher Irina Jelevic is introduced to her classroom. In the first panel, she kisses her junior high student on the lips. Matsui says that this scene immediately gives the reader a strong impression of Jelevic's perverted nature. It is

¹⁶⁰ Some editors will often become a *tanto*, or "manager," in charge of young mangaka who will continue to submit their work to the same editor in the future.

¹⁶¹ "Jump Treasure shinjin mangashō daiboshū," in *Weekly Shōnen Jump* No. 19 (21 April 2014), 118.

something the readers can identify her with and, more importantly, leaves them thinking, “What kind of manga is this?” Matsui’s comments illustrate how mangaka function not only as authorities and judges, but also as teachers and mentors for reader/creators within the pages of the magazine.

Pages of every issue are dedicated to explaining contests, showing prize awards, and offering professional advice from editors and mangaka. The advice can be specific, ranging from critiques of page layouts or drawing techniques, to suggestions on improving story development or character designs. One of the subtle differences between the “manga school” of *shōjo* manga and the “contests” of *shōnen* manga is the emphasis on nurturing creation versus creative competition. Prough points out that the editors frequently use the word “raise” (*sodateru*) to describe the process of recruiting mangaka in *shōjo* manga.¹⁶² The system of recruiting artists through the magazine is the same, though the discursive strategies that underpin the contests are couched in language that reflects the contemporary subjects of the manga series. Readers are “students,” who submit their “assignments” to their “teachers;” when the winners are determined, the “grading results” (*seiseki happyō*) are announced.

With *shōnen* manga, on the other hand, characters from various series of the magazine voice encouragement to potential submitters through the contest pages. Readers, moreover, are prodded to take up the “challenge” (*chōsen*) and respond to mangaka or editor criticisms like one of their heroes would in their favorite manga series by being told to “improve their skills,” “realize their dreams,” and “become the best” (*saikyō ni nare*). Readers are imagined as part of a large *shōnen* manga story, with any of Japan’s mangaka as its potential characters. These recruitment campaigns play on the popular themes of the

¹⁶² Prough, 85.

manga magazines – dramatic school life romances for *shōjo* manga, competitive physical and mental battles for *shōnen* manga – suggesting to readers that they can become the protagonists of their own story by telling someone else’s. These recruitment tropes feed on audience familiarity with the manga magazine’s well-worn themes and subjects. No longer relegated to artist manuals or even the paratexts of the magazine, such direct instruction is intertextually woven into the figurative fabric of the magazine’s architecture.

Readers of *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, accustomed to the content of the magazine, are conditioned most to what entertains other readers, and in turn are best suited to know the orientation of their audience. One editor I spoke to lamented that this also has the detrimental effect of fewer and fewer original works from younger and younger mangaka whose sole life experience has been gleaned from the pages of other mangaka. Because of this self-selection, *Weekly Shōnen Jump* has gravitated more and more towards the type of action and comedy that befits its young readership, while funneling mangaka with more life experience or original stories towards its older “brother” magazines. Mangaka are thus harvested at a relatively young age and work their way through the “brother” magazines as their content changes or matures. While their first manga are rarely selected for publication upon winning a prize or collecting a favorable proportion of votes from readers, this process of submission, feedback, and resubmission provides budding mangaka with a free training program to become professional creators.

Mangaka: Idea Factories

Thirty years ago, when asked what they wanted to be when they got older, children responded with the stock answers: doctor, teacher, businessman. Today, more and more children respond that they would like to pursue careers in the creative arts: comedian, game

designer, and mangaka now rank in the top 10 on lists of career aspirations.¹⁶³ Unlike those most-desired careers from a previous generation, most parents would not likely encourage their children to pursue manga as a vocation. If a mangaka is serialized, he or she can make a living as lucrative as the manga sells. But without serialization, mangaka are part of the “precariat,” with no union, few welfare benefits, and little future certainty or stability. Anne Allison has written on the new “precarious Japan,” where post-war structures of lifetime employment eroded in the post-Fordian economy.¹⁶⁴ Perhaps this is one reason for the popularity of a pursuit in the creative fields; if more careers now have the job security of mangaka, might as well try and become one. One frequently cited reason in polls for wanting to become a mangaka is the notoriety of the profession; characters that become popular within the culture often originate in manga series, and the financial rewards for mangaka solely owning the intellectual property rights to these series can be enormous. But another oft-cited reason is the perceived creative control that mangaka have over their own work. Like fiction-writing, manga is one of the few creative fields where single authors have complete control over the creative direction of their work. But unlike poetry or novels, mangaka also control the images of their work, and the visual aesthetic of each manga is more or less kept intact when the property is expanded into a transmedia franchise involving anime and other merchandise.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ See “Shōgakusei hakusho” (Elementary School White Paper), *Gakken*, March 2013, <<http://www.gakken.co.jp/kyouikusuouken/whitepaper/201303/index.html>> (4 December 2014) and “Yume wo kanaeru konkūru” (Dreams Come True Contest), *Japan Association for Financial Planners*, 24 March 2010, <<https://www.jafp.or.jp/about/news/files/newsrelease20100324.pdf>> (4 December 2014)

¹⁶⁴ See Anne Allison, *Precarious Japan* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).

¹⁶⁵ This fidelity to the original visual aesthetic applies even to live-action television or film adaptations, where actors and actresses are cast for their resemblance to certain characters in the manga. Some examples of this are the live-action television adaptations of *Great Teacher Onizuka* (1998) and *City Hunter* (2011), as well as the live-action feature film adaptations of *Death Note* (2006) and *Rurōni Kenshin* (2012).

The early financial and working demands on young mangaka can be grueling, especially those just starting out with little income or stability. In the early stages of a mangaka's career, he or she is paid per published page, typically 9000 yen a page for new mangaka at *Weekly Shōnen Jump*.¹⁶⁶ With series averaging around 19-20 pages per issue, this amounts to roughly eight million yen per annum, more than enough to support a mangaka working on his or her own, but a bit more challenging when mangaka work as a pair. In addition, upon getting their manga accepted for serialization, mangaka must rent out a studio, an *atelier*, to work from.¹⁶⁷ The cost of their atelier comes out of the mangaka's own paycheck, though publishers have often lent out money to mangaka starting out in order to pay for the high cost of move-in fees Japanese rental agencies and landlords charge. Mangaka must also employ a team of assistants to help them with the detailed minutiae of creating the manga. Virtually all mangaka, with rare exceptions, employ assistants to help them construct the required 20 pages a week, and this also comes out of their own paycheck. With assistants working around the clock three to five days a week, and meals also expected to be paid by the mangaka while the assistants are on the clock, even at low wages this means that mangaka struggle to earn a living in their first years of serialization. The real dividends come with sales of individual *tankōbon*, which can earn royalties in the hundreds of thousands, as well as the expansion of the manga

¹⁶⁶ This was first revealed in the manga *Bakuman* (2008-12) and confirmed through discussions with editors at the magazine. This figure fluctuates depending on the mangaka's stature within the magazine. For example, Raiku Makoto, mangaka of *Zatch Bell!* (2001-07) serialized in *Weekly Shōnen Sunday*, revealed in a civil case brought against Shogakukan that he was paid 10,000 yen per page and 14,000 per color page at the start of his serialization, but this was respectively raised to 13,000 and 17,000 once he received an annual prize for best manga from Shogakukan. See "*Shogakukan wo teiso*" (Suing Shogakukan), *Raiku Makoto no kyō konogoro* (Raiku Makoto's Today, These Days) 6 June 2008, <http://88552772.at.webry.info/200806/article_2.html> (4 December 2014).

¹⁶⁷ The Japanese adopt the French word *atelier* for the private "workshop" of artists. While used primarily to describe private studios for individual creative artists such as painters, architects, sculptors, mangaka and publishers adopted the word to give manga an air of European sophistication, even if the word at first referred to manga dwellings that were little more than shabby apartments with a desk.

series into a transmedia franchise – and the additional merchandising royalties from animations, video games, events, and other products –if the manga is popular enough with a large audience. There is no guarantee any of these lucrative windfalls will occur for any given series, though the attractiveness of serializing a manga in *Weekly Shōnen Jump* is their editorial dedication in finding series that are easily adaptable to franchise expansion, as well as their substantial relationships with media, toy, and television companies.

The arrangement and organization of mangaka ateliers vary depending on the personality of the owners. Typically, every atelier will house the mangaka in one room, and have a dedicated workspace with several easels for assistants. Every atelier reflects the personality of its owner. Kubo Tite, mangaka of the stylish action manga *BLEACH*, has a fashionable atelier with a balcony overlooking the city. Akimoto Osamu, mangaka of the longest-running manga of all time, *Kochira Katsushika-ku Kameari Kōen-mae Hashutsujo* (literally, “This is the Police Station in Front of Kameari Park in the Katsushika Ward,” whose title is usually shorted to *Kochikame*, 1976-ongoing) keeps a clean and orderly space, with bookshelves of manga and rows of filing drawers for old manuscripts. Hoshino Katsura, mangaka of the dark and ethereal *D.Gray Man* (2004-09), plasters his walls with concept art, fan letters, drawing instructions, and posters, with a little table in the middle of the room for snacks. Oda Eiichiro, mangaka of the best-selling manga of all time, *One Piece*, has but a single desk in a small room. “My editor, assistants, or parents have never seen the inside of this room,” Oda says. “The desk might seem cluttered, but it has a particular logic for me that no one else can understand.”¹⁶⁸ Most ateliers function as hybrid living/work spaces which are organized around the mangaka’s comfort. Mangaka rarely

¹⁶⁸ “Oda Eiichiro: *Karā Genko* (Color Drafts),” in *Manga nō no kitaékata* (How to Train the Manga Mind) ed. Kadokura Shima (Tokyo: Shueisha, 2010), 249.

leave these rooms from Saturday through Thursday for a serialized weekly manga. While the typical week of a mangaka differs according to the release date of the magazine issue, most mangaka for weekly magazines follow a timetable that conforms more or less to all weekly manga magazines (see figure 7).

Mangaka meets with editor, decides plot	F
Mangaka works on <i>nēmu</i> , coloring chapters/books	S a
Mangaka works on <i>nēmu</i>	S u
Mangaka completes <i>nēmu</i> , works on <i>genkō</i>	M
Mangaka continues <i>genkō</i> ; assistants arrive.	T u
Mangaka and assistants work on <i>genkō</i> .	W
<i>Genkō</i> completed, sent to editing & printing depts.	T h

Figure 7: Example of weekly manga workflow

Monthly magazines allow for more flexibility and greater unpredictability in the mangaka's schedule, with some mangaka taking off for vacations that prolong for days at a time. But with only six days to script, outline, sketch, ink, color, and finalize each week's

episode, weekly deadlines do not allow for such leeway or variation. A careful management of time and resources is necessary in order for this weekly flow of manga.¹⁶⁹

The working week for mangaka of *Weekly Shōnen Jump* officially begins on Friday, immediately after the previous chapter's final draft has been turned in. The first step of the manga is deciding on the particular episode's plot. A mangaka working alone must decide on the direction of the manga for the following week, summarize these plot points, and then organize them into a script that is then submitted to the editor for approval or for working out questions. This process takes about a day and is often done through heavy discussion and input by the manga's editor, but the process can take longer depending on the nature of the manga and the personality of the mangaka. Morita Masanori, mangaka of the high-school delinquent manga *Rokudenashi Blues* (Good for Nothing Blues, 1988-97), takes as long as two and a half days to jot down each chapter's plot on his notepad. A large part of this is because his manga relies on comedy, and he takes considerable care in the dialogue, interspersing his characters brawls with well-timed jokes. "Some people ask me why I need to take so long," he jokes. "But I only need a half-day to complete the rough sketch of panels and illustrations."¹⁷⁰ Because Morita also takes the time to break up his dialogue and narration into panels so that he knows exactly where and how each piece of dialogue will fit into the chapter, he is able to marshal all of his visual ideas upon reading his plot.

¹⁶⁹ Sharon Kinsella has documented the manga production system in her book *Adult Manga*. For a detailed account of the manga production process, see Kinsella, 162-201. This chapter does not aim to be as comprehensive as Kinsella with its step-by-step diagram of how the manga magazine is manufactured. Instead, in line with this dissertation's focus on collective creation, this chapter will focus on the individual contributions and cooperative efforts behind the creation of individual chapters of manga, with special emphasis paid to the three roles (mangaka, assistants, and editors) responsible for crafting original narratives, characters, and artwork on a weekly basis.

¹⁷⁰ "Morita Masanori," in *Manga nō no kitaékata* (How to Train the Manga Mind) ed. Kadokura Shima (Tokyo: Shueisha, 2010), 85.

Inagaki Riichiro, author of the unique American football manga *Eyeshield 21* (2002-2009), takes a more structured approach. He writes his plot on a computer from a memo pad of ideas hashed over with his editor, but also divides and numbers each page as it would appear in the manga so that there isn't any challenge in fitting in all the ideas into the chapter when it comes time to illustrate the story. Inagaki's chapters often focus on single plays drawn out for dramatic effect. He starts with a playbook: a diagram of a football field and the routes the characters in his manga will run. Inagaki describes this process as writing "battle concepts," where "depending on the battle, I can decide what characters I want to feature. In the first chapter, I just show how to score. But in the second chapter, I'll feature a play where the [main protagonist] Sena scores on a run. In the next chapter, I'll have [supporting character] Monta demonstrate the pass. And then I'll explain the line or defensive strategies. I can draw out reader interest in the story this way."¹⁷¹ By having plays and concepts in mind before the chapter begins, Inagaki knows how the action of the chapter will unfold; the plays are then dramatized through characters so that the action matters to the readers. By working from such diagrams, Inagaki is able to understand how characters will move, react, and develop on the field and in the story.

Once the plot is decided and approved by the editor, the mangaka begins constructing the manga's *nēmu*, or rough draft of the manga's visual layout drawn in pencil.¹⁷² The *nēmu* includes the number and size of the panels, sketches of the characters and their poses, speech balloons, and visual onomatopoeia. Each of these elements work as a signature for the mangaka's style. Depending on the control of the mangaka, the *nēmu*

¹⁷¹ "Inagaki Riichiro: *Gensaku* (Original Work)," in *Manganō no kitaékata* (How to Train the Manga Mind) ed. Kadokura Shima (Tokyo: Shueisha, 2010), 132.

¹⁷² The equivalent of a movie storyboard, the word *nēmu* comes from the publishing industry's use of "name" as a page layout.

will vary in its completion, and some exceptional mangaka eschew the need for a *nēmu* at all. The detail and construction of the *nēmu* can also vary greatly by the type of manga chapter being constructed, but most mangaka work with certain elements that are integral to every chapter of their work. Nishi Yoshiyuki, mangaka of the macabre *Muhyo and Roji's Supernatural Bureau of Investigation* (2004-08), works from notes from the previous evening's meeting with his editor. "I'll look at the note and remember hearing my editor say, 'This is the climax of the chapter.' [...] I'll take out my scissors and cut out that line and remember to definitely include that in the chapter. By doing this, I'm able to realize just what needs to be in the chapter, what important dialogue must be included."¹⁷³ By repeating this process of additive notation, Yoshiyuki comes to find out what elements should be emphasized in the final layout. Some mangaka who have been drawing their manga for a long time know what elements they need based on certain reference points. Araki Hirohiko, mangaka of the wildly creative *Jojo's Bizarre Adventures* (1986-ongoing), uses a very sparse *nēmu* with only rough approximations of his characters' blocking within the panels and the positioning of the speech balloons. However, he always includes the size and shape of his visual onomatopoeia in his panels, as the manga's trademark bizarre sounds lend each scene a distinct atmosphere.

Some mangaka work in a pair to reduce the workload of constructing both a plot and a *nēmu*. Yudetamago, for example, is a mangaka pair: the nom-de-plume of artist Nakai Yoshinori and writer Shimada Takashi.¹⁷⁴ Nakai leaves all the plot particulars to

¹⁷³ "Nishi Yoshiyuki: *Sozai* (Materials)," in *Manganō no kitaékata* (How to Train the Manga Mind) ed. Kadokura Shima (Tokyo: Shueisha, 2010), 108.

¹⁷⁴ Nakai and Shimada were high school students in Osaka who feverishly read *Weekly Shōnen Jump* before entering their own manga, *Kinnikuman*, into the Akatsuka Prize contest. Their entry was a gag manga that parodied *tokusatsu*, or "special effects," television shows. *Kinnikuman* was about a bulky superhero with mediocre superhero abilities that amounted to a pastiche of pro wrestling moves. Powered by a steady supply of beef bowls, he could propel himself into the air through successive flatulent blasts of built up gas

Shimada while waiting patiently for the plot to be completed and approved by the editor. In the meantime, he occupies himself by working on additional illustrations for marketing campaigns, events, and concept designs requested by merchandising companies. This kind of work can be left to freelance artists, but, as Nakai says, “I leave all the story construction to my partner. Since I’m not required to write, I feel like it’s my obligation to keep myself busy while my partner is working hard.”¹⁷⁵ While the editor inspects the plot and confers with Shimada to discuss the plot’s structure, characters, and potential issues, Nakai begins working on a *nēmu*. Shimada and Nakai cleanly split their duties to avoid potential arguments, which means that Nakai is solely in charge of coming up with the visual direction of the week’s chapter. After meeting with Shimada, the editor will meet with Nakai to go over the week’s visual direction as well. Nakai will prepare a simple *nēmu* to communicate his vision for the week’s chapter, and he and the editor will hash out any questions the editor might have during another meeting at Nakai’s atelier.¹⁷⁶

Most mangaka will decide on the panel size, number of panels, and their placement on the page. They personally draw all the characters, with the most time spent on their faces and poses. Some mangaka will even only draw character expressions and leave the poses to their assistants. This is rare in *shōnen* manga, however, since characters are the single most important elements for a manga’s success and popularity with readers.

in his kidneys. Nishumura Shigeo – editor-in-chief at the time of *Weekly Shōnen Jump* – was so impressed by the manga that he and an assistant personally made a trip to Osaka and convince the mangakas’ parents to allow their children to move to Tokyo and sign a contract at *Shōnen Jump* to continue working on the manga as professionals. See Nishimura, 285-286.

¹⁷⁵ Nakai Yoshinori, *Shōgaigeneki, kajibano mangashigotojutsu* (Lifelong Service, Manga Work Skills in the Fire), (Tokyo: Wani Books, 2012), 72.

¹⁷⁶ Ohba Tsugumi and Obata Takeshi, the mangaka duo of *Death Note* and *Bakuman*, use a slightly different system, where Ohba will write a script and draw a crude *nēmu* for Obata, who then illustrates a completely new *nēmu* along with dynamic character designs based off of Ohba’s general layout. See “Ohba Tsugumi: *Gensaku* (Original Story),” in *Manganō no kitaékata* (How to Train the Manga Mind) ed. Kadokura Shima (Tokyo: Shueisha, 2010), 242-43.

Elaborate full-page spreads of characters in dynamic poses are thought to be one of the greatest ways to attract readers votes, though some mangaka now abuse this strategy to include such layouts in nearly every manga chapter. The sequence of how pages are produced by no means follows the sequence of how the manga's story proceeds. Pages are produced according to the mangaka's inspiration, convenience, or through the amount of additional work required by assistants in order to meet tight deadlines. If more time and work is needed to illustrate an elaborate two-page spread, then that is where the construction of the *nēmu* may begin. It is urgent for mangaka to finish the *nēmu* as soon as possible, since this is the final stage of production before the work is handed off to the editor for approval and to assistants for detail. Once the editor approves the *nēmu*, the mangaka will add small directions on the page for his assistants and hand off each page for work detail.

The Assistants: Anonymous Trainees

While mangaka have more creative control over their work than just about any other mass-produced visual media in Japan, very few mangaka produce their manga completely on their own due to the heavy demands for regular manga production. When the work of a mangaka is accepted for serialization in *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, they are expected to produce an episode a week for 49 weeks a year. Other than three weeks off for national holidays, this means that mangaka are expected to produce practically year-round with no time off. Over the years, this has resulted in a production system that demands high efficiency in order for mangaka to keep to schedules and deadlines. While the *shōnen* manga magazine is structured to train its readers into both fans and creators, this training does not stop at the manga magazine; training and feedback are shaped around the manga

industry, its organization, and the relationships of those who create and sustain it. This chapter's final two sections will detail the manga production system and its reliance on labor that supports the creative efforts of mangaka: contracted assistants and salaried editors. These sections will focus on how mangaka, assistants, and editors weekly negotiate collective labor in the atelier. The personal accounts of mangaka, assistants, and editors that inform this side of the industry reveal not just what labor is enacted by whom, but also how those individuals producing manga attempt enact their own agency.¹⁷⁷

Assistants arrive at the mangaka's atelier in the middle of the production week, typically on a Monday or Tuesday. They are each assigned a desk, typically lined up as an island in the middle of the room. The mangaka might have a desk at the head of the room to oversee the assistants and answer any questions they have about the *nēmu*. Assistants are often required to work late into the night and early the next morning to meet tough deadlines or in case of changes to the manga mid-week, so a separate sleeping quarters (or a comfortable set of sofas) is also arranged. Trains in Japan typically stop running around midnight, so when crunch time is near or a week's workload is particularly strenuous, assistants are expected to miss their last train to finish up any necessary work and catch up on sleep when they can no longer function. Some mangaka, like Akimoto Osamu, enforce a working day with strict hours, having assistants punch in and out of time cards when they arrive in the morning and when they leave at night.¹⁷⁸ Most other mangaka, however, have assistants come in when they are able, and stay for however long is required.

¹⁷⁷ The account of the assistant's work week here is informed by my interviews with two manga assistants, and is confirmed in an autobiographical memoir of one woman's year working as an mangaka assistant, as well as the anonymously-authored autobiographical web memoir, *Mangaka Assistant Story*. See Jamie Lynn Lano, *The Princess of Tennis* (Sparkler, 2014) and *Mangaka Assistant Story* (28 April 2005) <<http://blog.goo.ne.jp/yes-de1>> (4 December 2014).

¹⁷⁸ "Akimoto Osamu: *Rensai* (Serialization)," in *Manganō no kitaékata* (How to Train the Manga Mind) ed. Kadokura Shima (Tokyo: Shueisha, 2010), 258-259.

Depending on the difficulty and detail of the manga's construction, as well as the available funds generated from the manga's popularity, most mangaka employ as few as one or two and as many as seven assistants, though not all will work full-time on the one manga. They are in charge of drawing as much of the detail of the manga as possible, turning the *nēmu* into a *genkō*, or final manuscript. Upon receiving a page, assistants must do a variety of tasks that will "finalize" the manga *genkō* for publication. First, assistants must be competent in "inking." This involves tracing the manga's pencil drawings with various ink pens. The most time-consuming and detailed work involves *haikei*, or "background drawing." This can range from generic mountains and valleys in an imaginary fantasy world, to highly-detailed streets and buildings in Tokyo. Contemporary locales such as cityscapes involve an immense amount of work, as real locations are used as models to be traced and shadowed in minute detail.¹⁷⁹ Assistants must also work on adding screen tone, or various shadings and textures to the manga's monochromatic color palette such as sand, light, and various other gradations. *Beta*, or blacking out or whiting in specific areas of the panel is also labor-intensive work that requires little skill, but a good deal of time and concentration. Trusted assistants will also help with other duties to improve the working environment, such as basic chores, cleaning up the work area, and picking up lunch for the whole staff if delivery is unavailable. When Thursday evening arrives, everyone goes home, and the cycle begins anew. The *genkō* is given to the editor, who inspects the manga one last time before running it to the printing company.

While assistants are an important part of the process for the regularized production of weekly manga, oftentimes, their job is to be on standby. They have little input as to the

¹⁷⁹ *One Piece* mangaka Oda Eiichiro is famous for drawing all of his backgrounds himself. He frequently corrects his assistants' work, much to their consternation.

direction of what is produced and when, so they are at the whim of the mangaka when it comes to receiving their work. Assistants can only get to work on the details when the mangaka is finished with a page of the *nēmu*, but there is rarely a free moment during the day. If assistants are finished with their work and have free time, they are expected to help out their more harried colleagues. With younger or less organized mangaka, many assistants are expected to miss their last train and work well into the night, sleeping on couches or bunk beds when they can no longer function. Some mangaka, such as Akimoto and Nakai, employ a strict policy where staff are required to be on time, but also go home every evening. They also rarely spend much time around the atelier when they aren't working due to their own personal obligations. "Sometimes we go out to eat," Nakai says. "But lately, my assistants all have their own families and they want to eat the home-cooking of their wives. I can't force them to come with me, but it makes me a little sad."¹⁸⁰

The familial working environment can engender close relationships, but can become problematic when private issues arise, such as when assistants feel pressured to ignore personal obligations to stay with the staff, or if assistants develop and/or end intimate relationships outside of work.

Assistants have an intermediate relationship with mangaka and readers. Mangaka often start as assistants before creating their own series, and both mangaka and assistants begin as readers of their favorite manga magazine before entering the field itself. If mangaka are part of the "precariat," then assistants are part of an aspirational culture that seeks to join the ranks of mangaka, who only officially earn their title upon serialization and pay for their work. Readers become assistants basically in one of three ways. One basic method is for the magazine to put out a call for assistants in the magazine, and take

¹⁸⁰ Nakai, 71.

applications based on the hiring call. Another way is to ask budding mangaka directly. Upon having their manga rejected for publication, assistants are often recruited by editors to work on other manga for the magazine. Some mangaka or assistants will recommend friends for the job, and some assistants pursue the work as a full-time career. There is always a need for and supply of assistants as the work is intensive, and the attraction of working and learning from mangaka is strong for budding artists. While working to improve their own series, assistants can hone their skills on manga, though the opportunity for growth is limited due to relentless deadlines.¹⁸¹

Despite this reliance on assistant labor, assistants are often an afterthought in the recognition of manga creation. The quality of their work is highly visible, particularly in contemporary manga that require immense background detail, but their presence is invisible in the manga's authorship. Assistants can be instrumental for making highly detailed backgrounds, and some assistants are known for the quality of their screen tone or line work, but few artists aspire to be assistants.¹⁸² Regardless of their active role in the creation of the manga, there is only one credit for the manga's authorship that resides with the mangaka. Mangaka are recognized for their authorship and authority; they are provided with multiple forums for engaging with readers, encouraging them to become mangaka in their own right. What Pierre Bourdieu calls "cultural capital" is difficult for assistants to

¹⁸¹ Some older assistants, moreover, do not have any aspirations to publish their own work. "Professional assistants," older artists often with family obligations of their own who have largely given up creating their own manga, receive a steady paycheck and constant work from the publisher for their ability to organize and streamline the work environment of a busy mangaka. Veterans in their work, they can delegate which assistants do what in an assembly line process that a mangaka would be hesitant to employ. And if the mangaka's serialization were cancelled, their services would still be in high demand for another popular new manga.

¹⁸² There is little dialogue around becoming an assistant within the magazine itself, though this is an area of work that is growing due to the demands placed on mangaka, the increasing amount of assistants who fail to break into their own series, and the increasing amount of artists who don't have the talent to create stories but who can draw or trace well.

obtain in such circumstances where there is only a single credit for the manga. Assistants willingly, and in some cases grudgingly, accept these conditions for networking opportunities that will hopefully lead to future serialization of their manga. As Erin Hill has noted of assistants in the film and television production in Los Angeles, “The industrial mythology of dues-paying is in place to keep workers at low salaries from demanding more.”¹⁸³ This is why every assistant I spoke with had the goal of eventually creating their own manga and getting the recognition (and paychecks) they felt they deserved.

This does not mean the work of assistants does not go unrecognized by staff or mangaka themselves. There are a few ways that assistants gain cultural capital for their work while remaining in the margins of the manga. While the magazine does not credit assistants, some mangaka go out of their way to acknowledge their assistants. The *tankōbon* is again a forum for additional material for fans of the manga, as assistants will occasionally have their profiles listed in the cover flaps in lieu of details on the mangaka’s personal life. For example, *Naruto* mangaka Kishimoto Masashi uses the blank pages in between episodes of the *tankōbon* to allow his assistants to write their own profiles, as well as their interpretation of the manga’s artwork.¹⁸⁴ In this way, Kishimoto allows his assistants a forum to display their own style and voice. While he still maintains control and authorship of the entirety of the manga itself, his actions acknowledge the labor necessary for the manga’s quality and construction literally in-between the serialized pages.

Kishimoto’s approach, however, could simply be considered crumbs from the table, the creative equivalent of a handout of pocket change. But in other cases, assistants can leverage their time with the publisher to actual employment opportunities. Other mangaka

¹⁸³ Erin Hill, “Hollywood Assistanting,” in *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries*, eds. Vicki Mayer, Miranda J. Banks, and John T. Caldwell (New York: Routledge, 2009), 223.

¹⁸⁴ See Kishimoto Masashi, *Naruto* Vol. 6 (Tokyo: Shueisha, 2001), 26, 66, 106, 146.

will occasionally allow their assistants to author one-offs of their manga, creating alternate perspectives or extensions of the manga's characters and world. Sometimes this can lead to entirely new series. Toriyama Akira has frequently allowed his popular battle manga *Dragon Ball* to be adapted and extended well after the completion of its initial run. Ōishi Naho, who began her career as an amateur mangaka under the pen name of Gishi, worked with Toriyama on storyboards and the manga adaptation of a television anime special of *Dragon Ball*. She then authored an original parody of Toriyama's manga set in an alternate universe, *Dragon Ball SD*, with Toriyama's blessing. "She knows so much about *Dragon Ball*. I've forgotten so much about what happens, but Ōishi remembers everything 1000 times better than me," he said. "What I admire most, though, is her considerable artistic talent and skill with framing. I think she made something that's even more interesting than the anime."¹⁸⁵ Toriyama endorses the work of someone who he considers not just an assistant to his manga, but a mangaka in her own right. Like Kishimoto, he also displays little territoriality or possessiveness when it comes to interpreting his work. In fact, Ōishi revealed that Toriyama inspected her *nēmu* and gave her advice during the process of construction.¹⁸⁶ This aspect of Japanese transmedia, which is addressed in more detail in the next chapter, allows for and recognizes alternate interpretations of an author's work to keep the original material lively and fresh.

Such displays and opportunities for assistants, however, are rare, and sometimes it is up to the assistants themselves to make their presence (and talent) known. Some take to social media to advertise their daily lives and experiences working for mangaka. Jamie Lynn Lano, one of the few non-Japanese working as an assistant, chronicled her experience

¹⁸⁵ "Dragonball ossu! Kaettekita Son Goku to nakamatachi!! Senpen" (Dragon Ball, Hey! The Return of Son Goku and His Friends!! First Half) in *V-Jump!* (May 2009), 1.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 1.

working for mangaka Konomi Takeshi on the manga *New Prince of Tennis* (2009-ongoing) for *Weekly Shōnen Jump*'s monthly brother publication, *Jump Square*. Through her blog, she published weekly updates regarding how she got involved working as an assistant, the nature of the daily work, the ups and downs of the hectic schedule, and the types of relationships she had with her boss and peers over the course of a year. Her posts regarding the unpredictable nature of monthly publishing work, in particular, were especially detailed, as Konomi would go days without updating or contacting his assistants regarding the progress of the month's manga episode.¹⁸⁷ Assistants would be on standby for days, patiently waiting for the *nēmu* to come in so they could begin inking and go home. Most assistants were paid a monthly salary, so their downtime was considered an afterthought to the mangaka. Lano used her blog not only as a forum to voice her daily experiences, but also to vent about the exploitative labor conditions as an assistant in the manga industry. Lano stated numerous times on her blog that she would like to work as a mangaka in the future, though the frankness of her public expose might earn her some unneeded industry enmity from any editors who happen to come across it.

The Editors: Salaryman Mentors

In the spring of 2012, former *Weekly Shōnen Jump* manga editor Abe Mitsuhiro greets me in front of Shueisha's corporate headquarters in Jimbocho. The lobby is decorated with both properties from *Weekly Shōnen Jump* as well as the brother and sister magazines of Shueisha's comics division. In this building, hundreds of staff gather for the work of building not just individual manga, but the entirety of several widely-circulated manga magazines. We walk through the *Dai-3 Henshubu* (3rd Editing Section), a single

¹⁸⁷ "The Honeymoon is Over," in *Living Tall in Japan* (1 August 2013) <<http://www.jamieism.com/1629/japan/working-as-an-assistant-on-the-prince-of-tennis-p24>> (8 August 2013)

floor where editors, media liaisons, license managers, and public relations staff are clustered together to work on the company's most important boys' manga magazines: *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, *Weekly Young Jump*, *Saikyō Jump*, and *Jump Square*. Rows upon rows of desks line the floor, bunched together in small horizontal areas (see figure 8). Some desks are unstaffed, as the editors are often away from their desks to meet with mangaka. Editors here work as a team, with a section chief overseeing their work in a single desk at the head of the row. The desks are lined with figurines of famous manga and anime characters, and stacked with manga *tankōbon*, magazines, and piles and piles of manga *nēmu* and *genkō*. It is here where much of manga is collated, where decisions for publications are made, and, most importantly, where mangaka come to get their feet in the door. "Every year, between two and three thousand new graduates apply to work at Shueisha," Aso says. "Out of those thousands, about eight or nine are accepted every year, and of those eight or nine, a third go directly to working on *Shōnen Jump*, since it's absolutely our most important publication." All other publications rely on *Shōnen Jump* appealing to children at a young age and raising the readers to adulthood, but it is up to editors to bring out the talents of mangaka.



Figure 8: Shueisha exterior and interior in the manga editing division

The communication between editors and mangaka are paramount for training unseasoned mangaka into professional creators. Sharon Kinsella has documented the

importance of editors in the creation of manga, observing that editors for one particular manga magazine for the publisher Kodansha exerted such influence in the nineties as to shape the content and direction of the entire publishing division itself.¹⁸⁸ In Japan, these relationships are what form the bond between mangaka, editors, and readers. Jennifer Prough has written about the importance of these human relationships, or *ningen kankei*, for *shōjo* manga, arguing that the affective labor between editors and mangaka strongly impact the creation of the manga itself.¹⁸⁹ In the case of *shōjo* manga, both male and female editors would form close friendships with their charges. By sharing their experiences with less-seasoned or shy mangaka, they helped in creating manga that was able to tap into deep human experiences for more meaningful stories. With *shōjo* manga, however, the affect is inscribed on “two fronts,” through both stories and production environments that produce human relations, intimacy, and interiority. In Prough’s words, “The affect comes in precisely where production and consumption meet for these young editors.”¹⁹⁰

With *shōnen* manga such as *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, however, affective labor is not in service of stories that revolve around affect. While stories can be emotional experiences, most characters and relationships in *shōnen* manga are reproductive of Japanese conceptions of masculinity that focus on exhibiting achievement and sociality through craft and work.¹⁹¹ In the case of *Shōnen Jump*, the magazine’s masculine ethos is exhibited in its fan-created and editor-sculpted motto: every series must, in some way, reflect the values of “hard work,” “friendship,” and “victory.” In other words, *Shōnen Jump*’s manga is built on

¹⁸⁸ Kinsella, 167-169.

¹⁸⁹ Prough, 93-97.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 107-108.

¹⁹¹ For sociological examinations of male working culture in Japan, see Dorinne Kondo, *Crafting Selvess: Power, Gender, and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workforce* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) and Ogasawara Yuko, *Office Ladies and Salaried Men: Power, Gender, and Work in Japanese Companies* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998).

sociality from achievement, what Mitsuya Makoto has referred to as *Jump*'s particular advocacy of "capitalism" where heroes prevail through sheer will.¹⁹² These values are, in a large sense, what structure the relationships between editors and their work: managing manga over a long period; working closely with mangaka to produce interesting stories; and competing with other publications (as well as other editors and mangaka) to create stories that exhibit friends working hard to achieve success in various forms.

Shueisha, like most Japanese companies, hires a new graduate cohort once a year. Students must graduate from a four-year university to apply, and since Shueisha is one of the top publishers, this means that their pool of new hires tends to be from the top universities in Japan. Recruits must take an application test, the results of which whittle down about 90% of the hundreds of applicants. From there, successful candidates go through four to five grueling interviews, with questions often probing candidates for their specific goals and vision for the company. For a budding manga editor, for instance, they will be asked what kind of manga they want to create, how it differs from existing manga, and how they expect it make money. While the recruits' interests are considered, they are hired on their general editing ability and intelligence, and not for a specific affinity towards any single type of publication. Though they can ask to be placed in a certain division, the decision is ultimately left to the company's needs. Editors are often moved around to multiple divisions throughout their career. Some are placed in manga divisions directly, while others possibly start in a travel or fashion magazine before moving into the manga editing division. Some never participate in manga construction at all.

¹⁹² Mitsuya, 1-8.

Once hired, recruits are placed on a permanent career track of *sōgōshoku* (integrated/managerial) or *ippanshoku* (clerical) like other major corporations in Japan.¹⁹³ Similar to what Omori Maki documented in her study on working men and women in Japan, most women, with a few exceptions, are placed on a clerical track.¹⁹⁴ The managerial track requires more overtime commitments and the strong possibility of a geographical transfer. While the clerical track does not require this type of sacrifice, there is also less vertical movement within the company. Most women are encouraged to follow the clerical track with the expectation that they will leave the company when they get married and have children. Following current labor trends, a variety of contract and part-time staff make up the rest of the staff, hired and fired based on performance of the company. Mangaka, the producers themselves, are always signed to contracts and live on the performance of the manga, though since they are the rights-holders for their properties, the incentives of serialization over time can frequently outperform the lifetime earnings of permanent salaried staff. Thus, mangaka are in a position not directly tied to the structure of the corporation, as the editors who manage them are always permanent career track staff employed directly by the publisher.¹⁹⁵

Shueisha divides its publications into *shōnen* and *shōjo* manga divisions. Each division is then further divided into sections that are responsible for a group of magazines segmented by age and theme. Like other manga magazines, *Weekly Shōnen Jump* has a *henshūchō* (editor-in-chief), *fuku-henshūchō* (deputy editor-in-chief), and as many as fifteen *henshūsha* (editors) who are in charge of working directly with several mangaka.

¹⁹³ This follows Yuko Ogasawara's translation of these two career tracks. See Ogasawara, 28.

¹⁹⁴ Omori Maki, "Gender and the Labor Market," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 19, no.1 (1993): 79-103.

¹⁹⁵ This sort of gendered sectioning is largely absent in art schools, literature departments, and manga or anime trade schools that feed the creative industries.

When the new hires are assigned to *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, they become *tantō*, or “in charge,” of several different manga series.¹⁹⁶ While mangaka are responsible for creating the manga’s art and story, it is up to the *tantō* to ensure that manga finds an audience within the magazine’s readership. This principle applies to all manga magazines. The editors of the manga magazine are, more or less, those responsible for the direction the manga takes through finding manga that they believe will gain an audience in the magazine. This basic outline of the structure of Shueisha’s manga hiring practices and manga divisions emphasizes how the production of commercial manga is fundamentally a corporate enterprise. Through this corporate structure, editors are empowered to shape the direction that the magazine takes. Editors of *Weekly Shōnen Jump* structure both the magazine’s values, as well as its style and content. While the tone of the magazine is set by the editor-in-chief, who is responsible for the sales figures of the overall magazine, editors report to him on a weekly basis regarding the status of the individual series that they *tantō*. These editors are the ones who are responsible for working with mangaka to create stories that will sell individual volumes and increase readership.

Editors for manga have a very strong managerial role in the creation of the manga. As one veteran editor put it, “Unlike our Western counterparts, Japanese editors do not simply proofread texts. They coordinate putting things together, actually working with the artists to make the stories and then the magazine. The editors who work on a magazine have a great deal of influence over its style and content.”¹⁹⁷ The mangaka must perform in the end, but the editor’s job is to clear a path for success through a range of creative

¹⁹⁶ *Tantō* translates to “take charge,” but the word here also conveys the highest degree of responsibility for the manga’s success. In this respect, *tantō* is both verb and noun, and can mean to both “take charge” and “be in charge” of a series.

¹⁹⁷ Prough, 93-94.

assistance. Editors adopt a “whatever it takes” mentality, helping mangaka with everything from research to unexpected artistic duties. Of central importance is that the work is produced on time. This was a large hurdle in the past, as the stress of making episodes every week frequently burned mangaka out. Occasionally, a mangaka will take a week or month off to recharge, but such situations are rare even for veteran mangaka, and all-but-unheard of mangaka just starting out. As one editor explained to me, “Some mangaka cannot draw without editors breathing down their necks because they are too lazy. Editors will sometimes wait at the mangaka’s atelier for them to complete the *genkō*, sometimes running it directly to the printing company himself if the deadline is that night.” This is confirmed by the countless testimonies by mangaka of writing until the very deadline.¹⁹⁸ Of course, this editor’s opinion obscures the Herculean task of producing fifteen to twenty pages *every week* for fifty weeks, year after year. One editor told me about a mangaka who took a bathroom break and escaped through window in order to avoid the deadlines. The editor eventually tracked the mangaka’s whereabouts: he was holed up at his parents’ house in his hometown.

Editors, however, are more than just babysitters or debt collectors. Much of their work is intended to be supportive, drawing on experience or networks for additional help when the mangaka is busy with the weekly cycle of production. Former *shōnen* manga editor Sato Maki told me, “Now that we have the internet, there isn’t a great need to scout locations, but in the past, we had to find specialty books on what the mangaka wants to write about, or take pictures of locations that the mangaka would want to draw. We would often have to do lots of fieldwork.” She explained to me how she assisted on the

¹⁹⁸ Ohba Tsugumi, for example, only starts writing the plot for his manga when there is absolutely no time left. See Kadokura, 242-243.

background research of Shiozaki Yuji's firefighter manga, *Ikki Tōsen (Battle Vixens)*. Shueisha ended up organizing a trip to Ikebukuro in order to visit a firefighters' training program, where the mangaka got to wear a firefighter's suit and experience simulated fire conditions. Editors even managed to acquaint themselves with the producers of the film *Backdraft*; they all flew to the film's set in Chicago for three nights to experience the type of conditions firefighters face, realized by Hollywood special effects. Such trips are atypical, however, and the type of help editors offer routinely is one of their own labor and resources. One editor who had just started at the magazine claimed he helped his mangaka with *beta* and other assistant work because the mangaka could not afford to pay an assistant in the early stages of serialization. Another editor I spoke with brought an artist friend to work on the mangaka when a deadline was fast approaching. Connections, friends, and the people you know often contribute in unseen and undocumented ways that grow in importance as they build up over time.

Of course, the relationship an editor has with a mangaka depends on the mangaka's personality; some work better alone and at odd hours of the day, while some are more professional and respect the idea of a routine schedule. The top artists of very popular manga are fairly similar in their devotion to their manga and the demands they place on the editors who are tasked with their manga. Akimoto Osamu, mangaka of the long-running *Kochikame*, is a bit different. As a veteran mangaka of *Weekly Shōnen Jump* for 38 years, he requires little supervision and has his own routine. Young and less experienced editors are instead assigned to him in order to learn from a master about the ins and outs of manga construction. All relationships between editors and their mangaka differ depending on the

individuals involved, and the role of mentor also varies according to the age and experience of the mangaka or editor.

When editors work with veteran artists – mangaka who have long-running series in the magazine – there is often very little to do other than wait for them to finish and have the weekly meeting. As a former *shōnen* manga editor who now produces digital manga, Takeuchi Hiroki put it thusly: “The purpose of our work is not to manage big manga. The most important principle for any editor is to find young mangaka and raise them and their manga into popular manga. If someone submits for a contest and they don’t win, but we see some talent, our biggest challenge is to bring up that amateur into a mangaka capable of supporting themselves.” In very big contests, the hundreds of applications are given to the young editors who read them, whittle them down to a few worthy candidates, and pass them on to more experienced editors. These veteran editors then decide what the editor-in-chief and the senior editors will see. Mangaka can submit any month, even without a contest, and the editor’s job often entails going through the manga with the artists – page by page, panel by panel – with the expectation that the revisions will be conveyed in the later work. “Some will get discouraged,” Takeuchi told me. “But some will respond with better work.”

The primary task of the work of an editor is personnel development, producing not just art, but people who can become artists and storytellers. Editors work behind the scenes to improve the mangaka’s ability, and many likened their job less to managers than to sport coaches, working late into the night with the mangaka and teaching the mangaka the tools of the trade: tips on artistic direction, efficient storytelling, and narrative punch. They work with the mangaka at every stage of the process, looking at the plot and *nēmu* to determine

what changes should be made. Once the input is conveyed, the mangaka will go back and revise the *nēmu* until the editor gives the go-ahead for the mangaka to make the *genkō*. Once the *genkō* is complete, the editor will make a final pass before sending it up to the editor-in-chief. Watching one such editing session between an editor and a young mangaka in a story meeting is instructive. The *nēmu* is littered with red marks in areas where changes need to be made. Details within the manga's story or world must be consistent. In one panel, the hat a character is wearing – a baseball cap – should be changed slightly to reflect the alternate reality of the world. In another panel, a computer looks too modern; better to change it to something more antique. A great deal of revisions concern the manga's pacing, a problem that is common among young mangaka. The editor tells the mangaka that some narration at the beginning of the chapter is necessary, but the rest needs to be as tight and concise as possible. The editor turns to another another page, and as an example shows the mangaka how the same person is speaking in two different panels; he should just combine the panels and reduce the speech balloons.

An overwhelming amount of changes mangaka and editors discuss involve the characters. *Shōnen Jump*'s characters must exude the values of the magazine, which means constructing characters who show initial flaws or weaknesses and overcome them through internal will and the support of friends. Often, characters in battle or sports manga must go through immense trials and hurdles, some approaching near death before emerging as better and stronger people. This was common in Yudetamago's *Kinnikuman* gag battle series, as characters would be subjected to excruciating pain and torture before emerging victorious. Other manga, such as Toriyama's *Dragon Ball*, took this idea to farcical extremes with intense, prolonged training periods, with one masochistic race of warriors becoming

physically stronger after recovering from being beaten half to death. The main characters of sports manga, on the other hand, undergo intense training periods to display their stamina and dedication to the team. In order to become a competent mid-range shooter and stretch his team's offense, the main character in Inoue Takehiko's *Slam Dunk* takes 20,000 jump shots in an isolated gym the weekend before the national basketball tournament

When characters are introduced in the manga, however, they have little background. They must quickly endear themselves to readers through their design, a point that editors frequently dissect and work with the mangaka to improve. In one editing session, the editor points out that the main character's expressions convey a personality that is irritable, which isn't appropriate for the magazine's optimistic heroes. The protagonist might have moments of doubt, but his charisma should typically inspire others to overcome their own fears. Editors also attempt to establish the character's catchphrases by parsing the manga's dialogue. The main character shouldn't complain this much, the editor argues, because he might turn off readers too fast lest they think he's a whiner. The editor and mangaka discuss how the phrasing of a certain comment is awkward, and then decide to scrap the comment altogether.

These meetings can go well into the night, editors dissecting panel by panel to improve the manga until the last minute. The stamina of both mangaka and editors are tested when deadlines are approaching and an agreeable resolution has not been reached. When tasked for advice on how to overcome such writer's block, mangaka nearly always respond with the same stock advice: continue working and "never give up," a platitude straight out of the pages of the magazine itself. Indeed, both Nakai and Shimada of Yudetamago, in separately authored memoirs on their careers, have entire chapters

dedicated to how they grew as artists and people during the crunch of the working week, and how they often found their greatest ideas and inspiration when working until the very last minute.¹⁹⁹

This sort of adulation of stamina, effort, and hard work is not unique to the manga industry; many have argued for the Japanese celebration of hard work and persistence of craft mastery, and some have even extended this to the Japanese economy itself on the backs of the *salaryman*, a company worker who toils countless overtime hours in service of the company's performance. The rhetoric of *shōnen* mangaka and editors, however, strongly mirror the themes in manga of *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, which praise and reward masculine characters who work hardest and longest over those born with natural gifts. The discourse is an example of John Caldwell's articulation of "stress aesthetics," where in order for workers to demonstrate exceptionalism, "a posture is adopted to justify production deprivation under difficult circumstances."²⁰⁰ *Weekly Shōnen Jump* prides itself on being a manga magazine for the common boy, after all, who might not be gifted with prodigious talents, but can make up for that dearth of ability with his own grit. Shortcuts, cheating, and general laziness rarely go unpunished in the pages of the magazine, and stories abound with characters who are born of low class and rise to prominence through the support of their friends and their own perseverance. These ideals characterize the magazine's stance towards its stories, and these values are then conveyed by the mangaka and editors themselves to readers in interviews, memoirs, and most importantly, to one another in their working relationships. Many authors I talked to said what separates those

¹⁹⁹ See Nakai Yoshinori, *Shōgaigeneki, kajiba no mangashigotojutsu* (Lifelong Service, Manga Work Skills in the Fire), (Tokyo: Wani Books, 2012) and Shimada Takashi, *Kajiba no shigotoryoku* (The Power of Work in the Fire), (Tokyo: Wani Books, 2012).

²⁰⁰ John Caldwell, "Stress Aesthetics and Deprivation Pay Systems," in *Behind the Screen*, eds. Petr Szczepanik and Patrick Vonderau (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 92.

who succeed and those who don't is effort. "We all can draw, and some are geniuses," one author explained, "but in the end, those who make it work hardest." When mangaka are asked about their success, stories such as their dedication to their craft or pure joy in drawing go hand in hand with the amount of hours they spend each day or week agonizing over their creations, or war stories detailing the daily stress they feel butting up against the deadline every week. Obsession is regarded as the highest form of praise.

Editors and mangaka downplay the negative physical hardships of creating manga, and emphasize the positive emotional rewards that are harvested through working relationships. Many editors eventually develop strong friendships with the mangaka they *tantō* based on a mentorship role they provide to younger creators. Most mangaka for *shōnen* manga are very young, as the nature of the work and the subject matter itself is catered towards those with more time, fewer commitments, and a greater degree of physical and mental stamina. Many mangaka have not gone to university, and some have not even finished high school. As Takeuchi put it, "They often lack real-world experience, something editors can provide when mangaka are looking to create realistic character behavior or more sophisticated world settings. For young mangaka, editors can be like parents, finding apartments and assistants for them, or even lending them money. Editors can take them out to nice restaurants or hostess clubs to meet girls. They treat them like members of their own family so they can experience things in life and not be consumed by their work." Many editors reflect this father-son, or older brother-little brother relationship with their mangaka, teaching them not only about manga production, but about life experience. Many mangaka feel comfortable asking their editors intimate questions or advice that they wouldn't ask anyone else. This is aided by the fact that editors are often

younger themselves, and often, the editor and the mangaka will grow with the magazine together.

Such a dynamic is somewhat present with regards to mangaka and assistants, but is not as frequent or intense as the bonds that develop between editor and mangaka. For one, the goal of many assistants is to become serialized, and long-term assistanting can curtail progress in this regard. For another, mangaka are often so busy working on their manga every week that they do not have time for extensive apprenticeships; assistants are there to work, not get mentored, and any learning that happens is from their own initiative. Finally, professional assistants are often older than the mangaka to whom they are assigned; the pros are better able to compartmentalize the job functions with their social lives and responsibilities, form fewer close work relationships, and can be shifted around by editors to different mangaka depending on the need and stability of the manga.

The work on both editor and mangaka is strenuous, and it is the job of the editor to push the mangaka to make weekly deadlines, especially in the early stages of the artist's career. This can have a toll on the lifespan of editors, one of whom told me, "Editors have a lot of enthusiasm and must spend a lot of time on the manga and, especially, with the mangaka. When editors get married or have children, or just get old, the work is very tiring and it becomes difficult to continue." Indeed, editors are *salarymen* first, and craftsmen second, meaning they must adhere to company directives and wishes. Most do not often remain editors for their entire career. While some talented editors work their way up to positions of greater influence such as editor-in-chief of *Weekly Shōnen Jump* or other manga magazines, many move around to different divisions and departments. Even editors for very popular manga are switched to different titles or different magazines in order to

attempt to raise the popularity of new talents. In some cases, editors who fail to produce a hit are removed from the manga divisions and transferred to other areas of need, but very few leave the publisher entirely. While they might voice a request to continue working on manga production, they have very little influence as long as they continue to receive a paycheck from Shueisha. However, as every editor explained to me, being an editor requires an incredible amount of time, energy, and drive, and the work takes a physical and mental toll that is increasingly difficult to maintain in older age. Most former editors I spoke with expressed relief for no longer having to work the weekly manga schedule.

There is also a gendered component to the mangaka-editor relationships. While women occupy the editorial staff of Shueisha's *shōjo* manga magazines, as well as other hobbyist manga magazines, the *shōnen* division prohibits any female hires. According to Abe, "The company policy is that no women work for the manga in the third editing office." In other words, all editors for *Weekly Shōnen Jump* are men. This is in stark contrast to the *shōjo* manga industry, where some 75% of editors are men, and the majority of mangaka are women.²⁰¹ One reason I was given for this editorial decision is that since boys were the main readers of *shōnen* manga, they were also best equipped as creators to know what other fans wanted. This echoes the analysis of manga scholars who argue that both mangaka and editors today are products of the manga readership.²⁰² In the incipient stages of *shōjo* manga production, mostly male editors determined the content of the magazines, but they were soon joined by female editors who had a stronger knowledge of "what girls

²⁰¹ Prough, 96.

²⁰² See Takahashi Yoji and Yonezawa Yoshihiro eds. *Shōjo manga no sekai I, Kodomo no shōwashi, Shōwa 20-37* (The World of *Shōjo* Manga: Shōwa Children's History, Shōwa 20-37), *Bessatsu taiyō* (Taiyō supplemental volumes) (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1991), 6.

wanted” based on years of fandom of their favorite manga magazines.²⁰³ Women began to exert more influence on the manga through their experience reading manga geared towards other women, and their more obvious real-life experience dealing with issues women face in contemporary Japan. As a result, *shōjo* manga began to reflect the lived experiences of both the mangaka and editors themselves.²⁰⁴

While this might explain the wealth of male mangaka, this does not sufficiently explain Shueisha’s decision to limit the creative pool to male editors. One reason suggested to me by multiple editors is that female editors for rival manga magazines have run into trouble with the male mangaka for whom they were *tantō*. Some women reported that mangaka were stalking them away from work, while others found it difficult to work with mangaka who could not withhold their affections for their female editors. As shut-ins typically too busy to foster meaningful relationships, some mangaka’s only contact with the opposite sex is through their female editors. In the *shōjo* manga industry, male editors are valued for their “direct input” and emotional distance; as professionals who ostensibly did not grow up reading the magazine, they are less emotionally invested in the stories they edit. But romantic relationships still develop. According to Sato, “Editors can be parents, brothers, sisters, and yes, lovers. It’s very common in the *shōjo* manga industry for mangaka to fall in love with their male editors. They’re very kind to them, and they work so closely together that feelings develop almost inevitably. Many mangaka end up marrying their editors, who continue to edit their wives’ manga until the manga ends or the two split up.” As she described it, Shueisha requires this sort of professional distance for

²⁰³ Prough, 127-134.

²⁰⁴ Consequently, through the guidance of a new generation of female editors, *shōjo* manga began to turn away from fantasy stories set in exotic foreign locales and towards modern stories set in Tokyo. See Takahashi Yoji and Yonezawa Yoshihiro, 112.

shōnen manga in large part to protect mangaka-editor relationships from becoming unprofessional and uncomfortable at best, and dangerous and illegal at worst.

At the same time, this regulation of relationships covertly reinforces the types of relationships *Weekly Shōnen Jump* values most: male homosocial friendships. Where in *shōjo* manga, romantic relationships form the basis for exploring the changing and complex feelings of adolescent girls', such subject matter is largely out of place in the masculine storylines of *Shōnen Jump*, where lead characters are often male, and female characters exist mostly in supporting roles as healing/nurturing types or erotic/sexual fantasies. Male editors frequently take their mangaka out on male bonding activities – drinking in pubs or chatting up hostesses while getting plied with liquor. When female editorial help is enlisted, it is often to address a perceived lack in male perspective, such as to extract details from biological limitations. Sato told me how she was probed for more personal details on more than one occasion to “enrich” the manga. “One comedy manga story was about a genius who made women’s underwear,” she said. “They wanted to know how to draw and wear lingerie. They asked me, as a woman, certain details involving lingerie, and they even asked me about my sexual fantasies, what kind of lingerie would make me feel sexy. I’m okay with stuff like that, but I can see how some might view this as sexual harassment. They wanted to know a girls’ point of view since it was essential to know how the heroine might feel or react.” Akimoto Osamu revealed that he had a female editor once who was helpful in similar ways: “She gave me ideas that I wasn’t normally interested in. When we had our meetings, I would ask her about how to make soap or bead accessories. That kind of stuff just doesn’t come up when I have meetings with male editors, but I would always

ask about that with the female editors.”²⁰⁵ In these situations, female editors were enlisted in order to provide details for male-centered storylines, acutely aware of the inappropriateness of the task, but also hesitant to rock the boat. While mangaka endeavoured to provide accurate representations of female characters in the manga, the female editor’s opinions were solicited to provide perspectives in service of the male characters and views of the male mangaka.

Female editors are rarely solicited at all, so the gesture itself can be considered more generous than the typical *shōnen* storylines. An unspoken but acknowledged reality of *shōnen* manga is that female viewpoints are rarely addressed because, unlike *shōjo* manga and the emphasis on male-female relations, *shōnen* manga magazine stories typically revolve around action-oriented spectacle. These storylines rely on the drama of exterior actions and bold declaration, rather than the more introspective and psychologically-probing interior dramas of *shōjo* manga.²⁰⁶ Instead of realistic romantic relationships, *shōnen* manga’s most attractive qualities are related to the individual characters that populate the magazine’s pages, and the values of the magazine that are embodied in those same characters’ homosocial bonds. *Shōnen* manga replaces examination of character psychology and introspection with obstacles that are solved through elaborate “training” segments; these are periods where the character learns to fix his internal weaknesses and improve himself through rigorous trials. These are often assisted by close friends or mentors who have more experience than the hero and provide guidance in times of duress. This training extends from learning the art of the perfect

²⁰⁵ “Akimoto Osamu: *Rensai* (Serialization),” in *Manganō no kitaékata* (How to Train the Manga Mind) ed. Kadokura Shima (Tokyo: Shueisha, 2010), 262.

²⁰⁶ Indeed, this male-male bonding has been the basis for a sub-genre called *yaoi*, the majority of which is drawn by female fans of *shōnen* manga, which places the heroes of *shōnen* manga in increasingly erotic and intimate situations.

counter punch from a master boxer in prison, to acquiring additional superpowers from a veteran ninja warrior. In *shōnen* manga, the emotional and psychological pains that the hero endures are overcome through physical tests of strength and character. What matters, in the end, is the hero's stamina, endurance, and threshold for pain, and his friends who lend him the physical or emotional support he needs to overcome these arduous tasks. The thematic emphasis of *shōnen* manga – in the minds of editors and mangaka experienced reading such texts, suffering deadlines, enduring all-night editing sessions, and replicating such male-male relationships in their own work environments – gives male editors a professional weight with one another that is apparently lacking with female editors.

As previously mentioned, editors are salarymen, which means they must toe the company line and produce sales in the form of high volume sales of popular manga. But despite the long and grueling hours, high pressure atmosphere, and even occasionally repetitive work, few editors expressed any frustration with the job to me. Though this could just be a case of putting on a good company face, editor-in-chief Abe told me that editors rarely ever ask to be transferred out of the manga division or quit the company entirely. There is a pride in working “past the limit,” as many described it to me, in order to produce the most popular manga, and few wanted to relinquish the opportunity to work closely with mangaka to produce a story that bears their creative stewardship. Like mangaka and the stories of trials and hardship, the struggle to create was cited as just as satisfying as the creation of a successful manga.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how *Weekly Shōnen Jump* trains a readership that in turn becomes the creators of that magazine through the collaborative efforts of mangaka, their

assistants, editors, and readers. The chapter also shows how the creators form a production process that consists of mangaka, their assistants, and the editors who collectively shape and structure the manga magazine. Editors in particular form close mentorships with mangaka that both shape and is shaped by the content and history of the magazine. These groups are not always mutually exclusive, but are borne and evolve from the same milieu: the manga magazine itself and its system of training creators. Each group is not exclusive to the other, but rather emerges from and contributes to one another through a constant dialogue both fostered by the magazine and the stories within. As readers and assistants become mangaka and editors, their relationships and experiences feed into the stories themselves and provide the backbone to the magazine's weekly production cycle, a process too large for any one talented creator to manage.

In fact, *Weekly Shōnen Jump* titles have grown so big in the last several years as to require multiple editors. Since the manga are frequently branched out into large, multi-tentacled media properties consisting of various merchandise, a second editor is hired typically for popular manga that have been adapted into television animation. This second editor is responsible for all media related to the original property. Abe puts this manga magazine management this way:

Now, popular manga are too big of an enterprise, so the mangaka must inspect all the different media properties to insure it keeps with their vision since they are the official rights-holders of the work. But this is too much work for a mangaka who is publishing on a weekly basis, so a trusted editor will act as an official representative, checking in on products, attending product or television meetings, and negotiating for contracts so that the mangaka can focus on creating the manga itself.

The editor must act as a stand-in for the mangaka, so their relationship must also be similarly close. As Sato explained to me, “Oda Eiichiro, the mangaka of *One Piece*, told his editor, ‘I’m thinking about *One Piece* 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you’re going to be my editor, I want you to think like me, 24 hours a day, about *One Piece*.’ So if Oda-san calls the editor when he is with his family, or in line for a ride at Disneyland, he must respond to his call. Like a sports or talent agent, the editor must be available to the mangaka at all times.”

This manga magazine management is the process of linking manga to its larger transmedia. Editors must be ostensibly attuned to the wishes and demands of the original mangaka in order for the transmedia to function, and this is impossible for one person to handle. What this creative stewardship leads to is the creation of a media platform for the manga’s ideas, the birth of a “dispersed text” for the manga and the subject of the next chapter. Editors must be managers of *media*, letting the manga spread into different directions. Where the manga is created by a small band of professionals and a dedicated group of readers, the transmedia of the manga is spread out through a variety of media professionals in ways that are both organized and unpredictable. Looking at a single manga series and the creation of its transmedia reveals how networks of people work to produce meaning from small elements, and how the manga itself is a platform for ideas and further creativity. The creation of one such transmedia franchise, behind the popular *Weekly Shōnen Jump* action-comedy *Toriko*, is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Case Study – *Toriko*’s Database World

We get to do our own thing, but we all have a responsibility. In the end, it all comes back to the manga.

– Anime scriptwriter Murayama Isao

This chapter shifts from the small, guild-like production of static, print-based 2D drawings to examine the role of dispersed collective creativity in onscreen, moving images – what is, in essence, the construction of *shōnen* manga transmedia. As this chapter will make clear, the term “convergence” and “convergence media” need not necessarily be related to new media technologies and their discourse. A number of scholars such as Mark Steinberg, Anne Allison, Mimi Ito, and Thomas Lamarre have argued for the permanence of the “media mix” in Japanese society long before the words “transmedia” and “convergence” were popularized by Henry Jenkins in the mid-2000s.²⁰⁷ Jenkins himself acknowledges this in his book, *Convergence Culture*, tracing the development and influence of several instances of Japanese transmedia as they related to American film franchises. Even the word “media mix” is often misunderstood to have formed in the 1980s under Kadokawa Tsuguhiko, the media mogul who ostensibly coined the phrase and used it to launch a series of Japanese successful book-to-film franchises.²⁰⁸ The principles of the media mix have been in place, as Steinberg argues, since the early 1960s with the birth of Tezuka Osamu’s anime adaptation of his manga *Astro Boy*, and its success has been historically and contextually dependent on different variables than what Jenkins’ argues is the basis of transmedia.

²⁰⁷ See Anne Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Thomas Lamarre, *The Anime Machine* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009); Mizuko Ito, *Fandom Unbound: Otaku Culture in an Interconnected World* (New York: Yale University Press, 2012); Mark Steinberg, *Anime’s Media Mix: Franchising Toys and Characters in Japan* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

²⁰⁸ See Kadokawa, *Wa ga tōsō: Furyō seinen wa sekai wo mezasu*.

When a manga is adapted into an anime, the process opens up the potential for a flood of related media tie-ins that revolve primarily around the manga's characters and worlds. Much of this media goes beyond plain merchandise (stationary and backpacks) and into the realm of additional creative endeavors (films, video games, and live shows). Jenkins has argued that producers of franchises now adapt coordinated storytelling in the age of media convergence for the purpose of "integrating multiple texts to create a narrative so large that it cannot be contained within a single medium."²⁰⁹ Convergence media is created for consumers who are complicit in "collective intelligence," a process of creative franchise expansion that he refers to as "transmedia storytelling," where media consumption "unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole."²¹⁰ There are obvious economic motives to the approach, but it is assumed that consumers of all the different media of the franchise will likely have a richer experience and better understanding of that franchise's story than someone who has only watched the film, or read the book or comic of that property. Regardless of the artistic achievement of the transmedia on display, this inevitable flow across media platforms is a boon to media conglomerate bottom lines, where a single property provides the entry point to a wealth of interconnected material goods. Merchandise from franchises is nothing new in the history of film or other forms of visual media.²¹¹ But where "transmedia storytelling" differs from previous media is in its

²⁰⁹ Jenkins, 97.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 97-98.

²¹¹ See *Finding the Force of the Star Wars Franchise: Fans, Merchandise, and Critics*, eds. Matthew Wilhelm Kapell and John Shelton Lawrence (New York: Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 2006) and *Disney Discourse: Producing the Magic Kingdom*, ed. Eric Smoodin (New York: Routledge, 1994) for the role of merchandise within film franchises. For an examination of merchandise and tie-ins in contemporary Hollywood feature films, see Justin Wyatt, "Merchandising and Ancillary Tie-ins" in *High Concept: Movies and Marketing in Hollywood* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994).

allowance for readers, viewers, and fans to collectively assemble and connect the narrative of the story on their own through deep engagement in supplementary texts.

In contrast to “transmedia storytelling,” which looks at the narrative as connecting the various media in a franchise through a single, long, additive thread, this chapter will argue that the success and survival of popular creative franchises in Japan are dependent on the dispersed construction of compelling and variegated characters and worlds. While manga is frequently praised for the complexity and maturity of the narratives, the transmedia that is created from it is reliant on drawing out the depth, feeling, and backgrounds of a database of characters and worlds that populate those narratives. This database is then utilized in various ways in the creation of a “dispersed text” that is assembled through anime and other media forms. This chapter will analyze how the manga’s transmedia is sustained by and through the collective activity of a variety of professional and fan creators, each of whom draw out these character and world elements from the manga’s database for deeper engagement with the original manga.

Multi-Use Databases

One reason for a focus on both professional and amateur creators of Japanese transmedia is to complicate the idea of the spread of media primarily through fan creation, and instead look at the spread of media through different forms of engagement. Jenkins has distinguished between many forms of transmedia that allude to the depth of user engagement. Jenkins’s now-famous example of Lana and Andy Wachowski’s *The Matrix* illustrates what video game designer Neil Young has called the “additive comprehension” (how new media texts add information that makes us reevaluate our understanding of the

media as a whole) of transmedia.²¹² The initially popular film was succeeded by subsequent sequels, spin-off anime, video games, and comic books which each unlocked a small piece of the narrative and, when combined, revealed a massively complex historical epic. Jenkins persuasively argues that consuming all the incarnations of *The Matrix* enables more elaborate forms of engagement, as audience members are told that they must participate in order to unlock the various mysteries of the Wachowski brothers' universe.

Jason Mittell has called this type of engagement “drillable” media, for while it inevitably will engage far fewer people, it will also “occupy more of their time and energies into a vertical descent into a text’s complexities.”²¹³ Without such deep engagement, individual texts of a transmedia story are not always satisfying or successful. To take Jenkins’ example, while the subsequent feature films for *The Matrix* did well at the box office, they ultimately proved cryptic and critically dissatisfying to audiences who did not inundate themselves with the other optional media side-quests. Indeed, there have been few successful American transmedia franchises that have proved both critically and financially successful with audiences. As Mittell and others have argued, however, the concept of transmedia storytelling is in its infancy, and more engaging works are likely in the future as film studios and creators become more adept at devising franchises from the ground up.

The idea of drillable media has its correlation in Japanese cultural industries with Otsuka Eiji’s concept of “narrative consumption,” where viewers of a particular franchise hungrily devour any material that explains the labyrinthine history of their favorite work. Consumption of media is driven in large part, Otsuka argues, “by setting up their grand

²¹² See Jenkins, 127-134.

²¹³ Mittell, Jason. “Forensic Fandom and the Rise of the Drillable Text,” *Spreadable Media Blog*, 17 December 2012, <<http://spreadablemedia.org/essays/mittell/#.VK9UcsZLdGI>> (28 December 2012)

narrative or order in the background in advance and by tying the sales of concrete *things* to consumers' awareness of this grand narrative."²¹⁴ Otsuka and other scholars argue that historical war anime, such as the space opera anime series *Mobile Suit Gundam* (1979-80), created the first generation of *otaku*, or fans and personal consumers of anime and its related merchandise. The series alluded to, but never fully explained, a complex history and mythology that left viewers needing to do additional work to solve answered questions, and this "work" birthed a rabid fandom dedicated to piecing together the various mysteries of these fictional universes. Each episode was a single narrative, but also hinted at countless narratives relating to the characters' national origins, personal histories, concurrent lifestyles, and interpersonal relationships. These character details can be organized into a system, a "grand narrative," that is in the background of every anime episode or piece of merchandise created. What Otsuka calls "narrative consumption" is the process of "tricking" the audience, through carefully calibrated and designed animation narratives and ancillary merchandise, into "consuming a single cross-section of the system in the form of one episode of the drama, or a single fragment of the system in the form of a *thing*."²¹⁵ This systemic production eventually extended to franchises, as countless additional *Gundam* anime series were created, all supposedly part of the same fictional timeline, with merchandise invented to reveal detailed biographies and lineages of important characters, or specifications of piloted mechanical military robots. Such deep engagement could conceivably have no bounds, as long as there are fans willing to continually invest in it. Like Jenkins' theory of transmedia storytelling, this deep engagement was the result of fan interest in the historical complexity of the series' "world." Their curiosity was fueled by

²¹⁴ Otsuka Eiji, "World and Variation: The Reproduction and Consumption of Narrative," *Mechademia* 5 (2010): 107.

²¹⁵ *Ibid*, 109.

unlocking the cryptic puzzles and hidden mysteries that were only available in bits and pieces to the audiences at the time.

In contrast to this deep or “drillable media,” Jenkins, Sam Ford, and Joshua Green have proposed the idea of “spreadable media,” a concept of media that refers to the capacity of the public to engage actively in the circulation of media content through social networks and, in the process, expand its economic and cultural worth. The term “spreadability” refers to the technical and economic structures that facilitate media circulation, as well as the particular desirability of certain media texts to be circulated through “social connections among individuals, connections increasingly made visible (and amplified) by social media platforms.”²¹⁶ Spreadable media competes for eyeballs through social circles that share and participate in the creation and promotion of media. One of the most famous examples of spreadable media is internet video of the singer Susan Boyle, a Scottish woman who appeared on an episode of *Britain’s Got Talent* (2007-ongoing), the British version of the U.S. singing competition television show, *American Idol*. Boyle quickly became a viral internet sensation, garnering millions of views on YouTube from viewers all over the world uploading and re-uploading her performance. Part of what fueled her rapid popularity was that viewers could share video of her performance through video uploading and link sharing sites and social networking platforms. However, her celebrity increased and her presence only truly spread through how she was discussed and passed around as a topic for various conversations from assorted communities such as prayer circles, karaoke clubs, reality-TV blogs, and fashion websites. People who had no interest

²¹⁶ Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford, and Joshua Green, *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture* (New York: NYU Press, 2013), 6.

in the show *American Idol* were suddenly thrust into its orbit through a seven-minute clip of one of its stars that became a cultural touchstone.

Spreadable media might have grown in speed and intensity through new media platforms and networks, but the spread of media through consumer engagement and cultural exposure has its corollary in Japanese character-based transmedia. Specifically, the “spreading” of material forms of manga or anime characters makes these media creations ubiquitous in various manifestations of everyday life. Steinberg has called this spread a mediatization of the environment in Japan, where postwar Japanese visual culture “saw the installation of character merchandising and the dissemination of the character image into the lives of Japanese children and, eventually, citizens of all ages.”²¹⁷ The anime of Tezuka Osamu’s *Tetsuwan Atomu* (Astro Boy, 1963-66) was able to turn Tezuka’s manga into media through its weekly broadcast on Japanese television, creating the potential for a stream of merchandise that enables a perpetual media environment. Most important to this mediatization was the development of *Atomu* stickers, included in individual-sized boxes of Marble chocolates by the show’s sponsor, Meiji Seika. Where the anime enabled the character of Atomu to move from the magazine page to the television screen, the sticker took the character from the compartmentalized world into the everyday reality of the child’s lunchbox or rucksack. In essence, the figure of Atomu became portable, but more importantly, the character could become anything, and anything could become an extension of the character. Kusakawa Sho has argued that the introduction of commercially-produced television anime represented a significant transformation in Japanese postwar culture: a

²¹⁷ Steinberg, ix.

shift to a service-based economy from a manufacturing one.²¹⁸ In this formulation, characters mediated and endorsed the consumption of various objects and commodities.

Atomu's media fluidity fundamentally altered consumers' relationship to commodities, specifically in how the media character and the commodity itself begin to overlap. This overlapping of image/content and product/commodity is what leads to a environment saturated with interconnected media. Matthew Fuller calls this environment a "media ecology," where media systems and formats have "various and particular shared rhythms, codes, politics, capacities, predispositions, and drives."²¹⁹ Media today is now reliant on its connection to other forms of media, as well as our relationship to increasing forms of media consumption. In the media mix's anime system, the character – tied to other media forms upon its inception – becomes the primary commodity for Japanese consumers.

This does not mean that the anime's transmedia has not undergone significant change since its adoption by the Japanese animation industry in the 1960s. To take one recent example, while the basic ways in which characters remain spreadable through multimedia exposure has remain unchanged, large groups of audiences are now primarily attracted to characters in and of themselves, rather than as entry points into grand narratives of the works from which they emanate. Azuma Hiroki has argued that fans today consume characters with entirely different motives than previous generations. Counter to Otsuka Eiji's model of "narrative consumption," Azuma argues that a new generation of *otaku* emerged in the 1990s largely disinterested in grand narratives. In contrast to the *Gundam otaku* of the 1980s, Azuma labels these fans "*Evangelion otaku*," after the incredibly

²¹⁸ Kusakawa Sho, *Terebi anime 20-nen shi* (A Twenty Year History of TV Anime) (Tokyo: Rippu Shobō, 1981), 30-32.

²¹⁹ Matthew Fuller, *Media Ecologies: Materialist Energies in Art and Technoculture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 2.

popular mecha anime *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (1995-96). These fans are less interested in piecing together the world of *Evangelion*, instead choosing to obsess over settings, erotic drawings, and enormous robot builds. Azuma calls this new model of fan engagement “database consumption,” where the narrative or story is less important than the entirety of the story’s world: its characters and settings that are linked to “consuming the database of *otaku* culture as a whole.”²²⁰ In this view, narratives and coffee mugs are one and the same, merely fragments of a larger media ecology to be consumed based on attractive character and setting designs that fans are already familiar with. Azuma’s theory helps explain how transmedia franchises have arisen from various media forms in the last twenty years such as video games, light novels, animated music videos, and even company mascots. In many of these instances, narratives were created *a posteriori*: the creators conceived the characters first, and the narratives were constructed only after there was enough response and attraction to the characters. In these cases, the narratives can emanate from anywhere, even the fans themselves.

Where does *shōnen* manga fit in to these conceptions of transmedia and media mix as “deep,” “drillable,” and “narrative” versus “networked,” “spreadable,” and “database?” Frankly, *shōnen* manga, as one of the oldest but still pervasive media forms in Japan, somewhat complicates these dichotomies of engagement with its franchises. *Shōnen* manga shares with other “drillable” texts the idea of a “mothership,” or central text to which all other media texts, and a large segment of fans, show a large degree of adherence. A large part of this fidelity is due to the manga’s portability to other media forms, particularly the anime. Both the manga and the anime share a serial format, with episodes often comprised of two to three chapters of the manga. Because of this, the manga often acts as a creative

²²⁰ Azuma, 54.

blueprint for the anime series, providing a running narrative, a set of characters, and an established fan base that mitigates risk on the part of the production companies. Since fans are the ones whose purchasing power and survey results determines whether a manga gets made spun out into a larger franchise, the publisher and the mangaka's creative rights are privileged in the construction of the alternative media texts of a manga property. The participation of a mangaka in the construction of other media properties varies greatly. Some mangaka do not pay attention to the anime adaptation, while other popular mangaka can be vocal in their criticism about how their works are animated. In order to appease the ire of the mangaka, fidelity to the original is usually the approach most anime take in order to satisfy both the official sponsors (publishers) and unofficial sponsors (fans) who fund the anime's production with the hope that the increased exposure will lead to increased book sales. In essence, without explicit approval from the mangaka to significantly deviate from the original manga source, the anime is usually expected to add or amplify the concepts, characters, and narratives of the "mothership."²²¹

However, *shōnen* manga transmedia also shares "spreadable" properties that reflect its relationship to the Japanese media environment. The transmedia of *shōnen* manga, in fact, provides an opportunity to refine the concept and practical use of media mix for definition purposes. Tanaka Ema provides a valuable clarification in contrasting the two dominant approaches to content creation and transmedia franchise production in Japan. While media mix is often used interchangeably with transmedia, Tanaka states that the

²²¹ There have been situations where manga adaptations deviate from the source material, such as in feature-length animated films of popular series. One of the most significant examples is the eighteen theatrical *Dragon Ball* films produced by animation company Toei. This is also the case in live-action television *dorama* (dramas) and feature films. Some examples include the original plots and characters of the live-action feature films *Death Note* (2006) and *Rurouni Kenshin* (2013), both based off of *shōnen* manga properties that had also been adapted into television anime.

term “media mix” can be thought of as a media strategy which is applied at the time of the franchise’s construction (see figure 9). In this application, the “media mix is able to augment revenue streams through delivering multiple distribution channels of the content’s world.”²²² On the other hand, when the decision to franchise a property occurs after the property has already been established, this application can be termed “multi-use.” Thus, multi-use properties “participate in other distribution channels without changing the characteristics of the original two-dimensional content.”²²³ In this formulation, *shōnen* manga is less a full-fledged media mix, conceived as a multi-media franchise from its inception, than it is a text that becomes a multi-use transmedia franchise after gaining an initial audience.

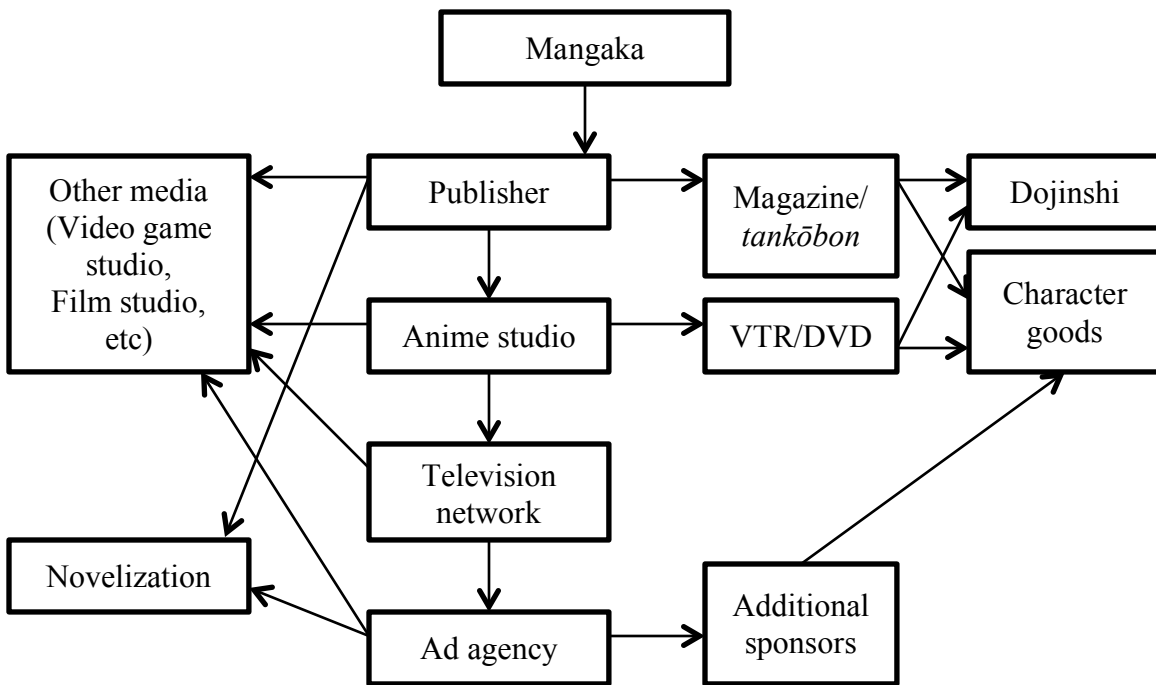


Figure 9: Nakano Haruyuki’s map of manga transmedia²²⁴

²²² Tanaka Ema, “Industrial Structure of ‘Japan Cool’: Co-Existence of Media-Mix and Diversity of Contents by Production Committee Systems in Japan,” *The Journal of the Japan Association for Social and Economics Systems Studies* (October 2009): 46.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Nakano, 79.

What distinguishes multi-use transmedia, and particularly manga transmedia, from the media mix is its dispersion of diverse content and labor across media forms. Unlike the centralized production of media mix transmedia (the subject of chapters three and four), multi-use transmedia's content is conceived and fixed before the possibility of franchise production. Such franchises typically have ancillary media that ties in weakly to the original property. *Shōnen* manga, however, are unique in their expansion due to their large casts of attractive characters and thematic worlds. These are deep settings which creators are able to take and reshape into slight remixes or reinterpretations of the original. Such cases are especially common in *ōdo*, or “king's path,” works that appear in popular *shōnen* manga magazines such as *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, *Sunday*, and *Magazine* and which are designed to engage broad audience through popular genres.

To take a single example of this dynamic, Toei Animation adapted Toriyama Akira's *Dragon Ball* from 1986-96 in a weekly television anime series that stuck closely to the original manga's narrative serialized in *Weekly Shōnen Jump*. However, the manga's producers also crafted annual films that set the characters in situations or against enemies that were not a part of the original manga's timeline, but hewed closely towards them in terms of narrative and aesthetics. Many of the plotlines and designs in the films were loosely based off of events that were transpiring in the manga's narrative during its serialization at the time. In the film *Dragon Ball Z: Cooler's Revenge* (1991), protagonist Son Goku encounters an alien being named Cooler, who is a distant relative to Freezer, the main antagonist in the manga at the time of the film's release. The film's story centers on Goku's transformation into an elite warrior called a Super Saiyan, a plotline that was built up over several years in the manga. Several elements of the film also deliberately call upon

the manga's visual design. Cooler's character design, color palette, and multiple battle forms mimic the bodily transformations of Freezer. Even specific camera angles from the manga's panel compositions are weaved into the movie's battle sequences. Writers and animators thus refashioned bits and pieces of the manga into the animated film and were able to create a new, but slightly derivative experience for fans of the manga or television series. Films, video games, musical performances, and spin-off comics all take a similar attitude of flexible fidelity when creating original works as part of a larger media franchising strategy, and the original creators either encourage these efforts at best, and ignore them at worst. By staying faithful to the basic tenets of the original manga (its narrative and design), but by also neither adapting or cohering to every part, the multi-use transmedia strategy focuses on dispersing elements of the manga by way of a range of narratives, worlds, and characters.

One way of thinking of how such transmedia is formed from the dispersion of manga elements is to think of manga transmedia as a form of "database narrative," or even more particularly as a "database world." As Otsuka and Azuma postulate, narratives and databases would seem to be natural enemies, as the former implies a cause-and-effect trajectory of a series of events, while the latter provides a list and refuses to organize those events. However, this does not mean that both are incompatible as far as media synergy entails. An important relationship is made by new media theorist Lev Manovich, who says that, "While narratives and databases share the same content or information, their interfaces are separated."²²⁵ Interfaces can provide easily understandable access points to the same realms of complicated information, whether it is linearly organized in a narrative or organized according to different ordering processes in a database. Manovich, moreover,

²²⁵ Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), 227.

dedicates a chapter in his book, *The Language of New Media*, to show how “cultural data” (such as texts, photographs, films, music, etc.) is accessed through “cultural interfaces” which employ textual and cinematic language that we are already familiar with such as the web browser, the computer folder, or the DVD menu.²²⁶ With database narratives, therefore, it is possible to create different cultural interfaces – the computer browser, the mobile camera, the graphical layout – to the same content through the media that is employed.

This conception of database narrative construction aligns with the theories of Marsha Kinder, who has similarly argued that database narratives have a structure that “exposes or thematizes the dual processes of selection and combination that lie at the heart of all stories and that are crucial to language: the selection of particular data (characters, images, sounds, events) from a series of databases or paradigms, which are then combined to generate specific tales.”²²⁷ Kinder has applied this thinking to the films of Luis Bunuel, revealing the director’s films as a template for its characters’ arbitrary choices. These combinations of characters, images, and events could lead to not only potential other narratives, but the entry to other worlds in the director’s film oeuvre. Bunuel is the director who chooses from these lists of elements for his films, constructing a sort of Bunuellian mediascape that connects his films, characters, and worlds.

In the case of the transmedia for a manga franchise, these interfaces manifest into different entry points of the same database of characters and world settings. A similar concept can be applied to manga. Mangaka create a series of characters and worlds that are then “combined to generate specific tales” by different media forms and creators, who must then similarly choose from the template of characters, images, and events provided in order

²²⁶ See Manovich, 75-98.

²²⁷ Marsha Kinder, “Hot Spots, Avatars, and Narrative Fields Forever,” *Film Quarterly* 55, no. 4 (2002): 7.

to construct interfaces into new narratives and media formats.²²⁸ These cultural interfaces depend on the media that each practitioner engages in, but each interface reveals or emphasizes content in the database.

With such complex remix processes that are engendered from a single manga text, thinking of the manga as a database of elements – an assemblage of characters, images, sounds, events, narratives, settings, actions, and emotions – allows us to think of the creative remix of manga as a series of interfaces which lead to additional interpretations, imaginations, and the potential “possibility of making other combinations which would lead to alternative stories.”²²⁹ The key to the media mix’s sustainability is the reliance on multiple creators to take these elements and spin them into new media forms. The manga’s characters and world are given additional backgrounds, profiles, emotions, and experiences that attempt to enrich the experience of the original, but not replace it, through the television anime, animated and live-action feature films, spin-offs, video games, fan art, and fan fiction that emanate from the manga. Thus, manga is highly “spreadable,” though under different terms. Where Ford, Green, and Jenkins emphasize spreadable media’s social aspects through audience engagement, they downplay the efforts of the array of professional and semi-professional creators in the initial dispersion of the text. Spreadable media does not necessarily need begin with audience creative action; rather, what the creators in the transmedia of *shōnen* manga do, in effect, is construct a “dispersed text” through creative activities centered on the original manga. Similarly, transmedia takes many shapes and forms and need not rely on storytelling or the organization of showrunners for deep engagement; instead, a dispersed transmedia *world*, rather than a

²²⁸ Ibid, 5.

²²⁹ Ibid, 6.

coherent transmedia story, connects the manga to the anime and various other properties through the manga's characters and world settings. These elements are taken from the manga, developed even further in the anime, and then dispersed to other media channels for deeper engagement or alternative readings.

This chapter will focus on the creation of a manga's transmedia through the elaboration of these world settings and characters. World settings, or *sekai-kan*, include such ideas as geography, wildlife, monsters, treasures, and details that flesh out the existence of the world the characters inhabit. These world settings are introduced in the manga and are then developed by mangaka, fans, directors, writers, video game designers, and other creators, who use parts from the series to generate new world information, opening up the map of the manga into larger territories and deeper reservoirs of information. Characters, or *kyara*, on the other hand, are the central protagonists and antagonists of the manga's narrative. Their designs, poses, and personalities from the manga are templates that are given greater range and emotion in the anime and by fan artists who generate new media potentials. By examining the manga's dispersed text through the structure of a database (the mangaka's original manga) and its various interfaces (the secondary creators), this chapter hopes to complicate some of the binaries that have developed between scholars and critics of transmedia, particularly the privileging of "stories" over "characters," and "auteurs" or "showrunners" over "committees" and "fan circles." In doing so, this chapter will complicate the ways in which critics and scholars have typically engaged with collaborative media production as either a "top-down" model with an auteur or show-runner at the helm (the Wachowskis' *The Matrix*) or a "bottom-up" phenomenon dispersed and reassembled by intrepid fans (videos of a singing Susan Boyle

spread by social media). The transmedia of manga is particularly able to show how these dichotomies become hazy when looking at the authoring activities of professionals such as screenwriters, animation directors, and video game designers, as well as fan readers and slash-fic authors. It is their collective activities that fuel the idiosyncratic styles and constant renewal that is part and parcel of the dispersed text of manga transmedia.

Toriko Origins: Gourmet Manga

As a case study to explain the manga's dispersed text, I've chosen *Toriko* (2008-ongoing), Shimabukuro Mitsutoshi's fusion battle manga about food hunters in the fictional Gourmet World. Shimabukuro's manga is a fitting choice for an example of the dispersed text for a number of reasons. As one of the most popular titles in *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, it has been serialized in the manga for over seven years and was just adapted into an anime in 2011, which was roughly the time I began preparing to conduct ethnographic fieldwork for this dissertation. Analyzing *Toriko* was thus a window into seeing how the manga's transmedia is constructed from its earliest point.²³⁰ Through access to staff at both the publisher and animation studio of *Toriko* in Tokyo, as well as members of fan circles that produced spin-offs of *Toriko*, moreover, I was able to ask questions directly to these creators about the limits of their control and their own desires or wishes when creating *Toriko* properties. Through these interviews, in addition to close analysis of the various texts of *Toriko* itself, this chapter reveals the individual logic behind the creation of various segments, or "interfaces" to the *Toriko* database. While I limit my analysis to the transmedia of *Toriko*, the conclusions can be applied to practically any *shōnen* manga that has been animated and dispersed into other media forms and creators. *Toriko*, like other

²³⁰ And consequently, its conclusion, as the anime for *Toriko* ended its broadcast in March of 2014.

shōnen manga, is able to create a dispersed world through a database of elements that are remixed by a variety of creators.

Toriko is also appropriate as it represents a certain tendency for contemporary *shōnen* manga to incorporate various genre elements. From an authorial point of view, Japanese manga transmedia is a hodgepodge of professional and fan creators who recycle or revamp key stylistic tools and character/world-based components, but *shōnen* manga itself often combines separate genres to create “fusion” stories. *Toriko* is, at its most basic, a comedy series. The manga is heavily imbued with broad comedy comprised of sight gags, exaggerated reaction shots, gross bodily humor, and sexual puns. Shimabukuro began his career as a gag mangaka, authoring the award-winning *Seikimatsu Leader-den Takeshi!* (The Fin-de-Siecle Legend of Takeshi!, 1997-2001). The bawdy comedy of his young work often finds its way into *Toriko*, with frequent deformations of character and expressions that are more in line with a newspaper comic than a serious action story manga.

However, *Toriko* represents other genres in stronger, historically-appealing ways. *Toriko* is also a *gourmet* manga, or manga about culinary pursuits and professions. According to Saito Nobuhiko, gourmet manga portray three key points: “the cooking of food, the process behind its creation, and the expression of its taste.”²³¹ While many pre-war and early post-war manga portrayed chapters that revolved around food topics or meals, none fit Saito’s criteria of gourmet manga that take food as a thematic constant throughout the series. However, when gourmet manga first emerged, they were in service to the action genre and the overwrought expressions associated with that genre in order to display the characters’ reactions toward food. One of the first identified manga to take food as a main theme is Mochizuki Mikiya’s *Totsugeki Ramen* (Ramen Assault, 1970), serialized in

²³¹ Saito Nobuhiko, *Manga no idenshi* (Manga’s Genetics) (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2011), 162.

Weekly Shōnen Jump. Mochizuki's manga was less a story revolving around chefs and recipes than it was an action entertainment with ramen as a side dish. Set during the early 20th century, the manga focused on food nostalgia as a method to explore the psyche of Japanese soldiers stationed in the Russian wilderness. In one epic scene, characters eat a Russian borsch in the foreground of the page, while bombs explode and soldiers die in the Russo-Japanese war in the background. Food in these early manga were used as a means to plumb deep human desires and psychological depths, often in the service of dramatic events. Hagio Moto's musical manga *Cake Cake Cake* (1970) also used food as a way to express her characters emotions and reactions in song and dance. But Moto's manga took on the relationship between food and action more directly, having the chefs in the manga engage in a pseudo-cooking contest. The idea of food battle was amplified in *Hōchōnin Ajihei* (Cook Ajihei, 1973-77), where cooks competed against one another in staged cook-offs – most notably one involving Japanese curry – that were evaluated by panels of judges who taste the food and declare winners and losers based on sophisticated culinary criteria. Taking their cue from *supokon*, or “fighting spirit” manga about sports, these food battle manga used cooking competitions as a way to dramatize cooking and eating, with chefs utilizing “special moves” when cooking to draw out the maximum flavor of certain ingredients.²³²

Manga specifically about the collection, cooking, and consumption of delicious ingredients gained traction in the late 1970s and 1980s, during the economically prosperous “bubble era,” due to a heightened Japanese interest in upscale dining. Kariya Tetsu and Hanasaki Akira's *Oishinbō* (1983-ongoing) stars food journalist and former professional

²³² Otsuka Eiji, *Sengo manga no hyōgen kūkan* (The Space of Expression in Postwar Manga) (Kyoto: Hozokan, 1994), 255-56.

chef Shiro Yamaoka as he travels the world in search of genuine food served without pretension. Its title is a portmanteau of the words *oishī*, which means delicious, and *kuishinbō*, which means a person who loves to eat; the manga gained such popularity that its title began to be used broadly to describe “gourmets,” or people who were obsessive about food, their origins, and the celebrity of the culinary world. Though *Oishinbō* evoked upper class obsession with fine dining and imported ingredients through its depiction of meticulously prepared meals, Yamaoka grounded such pretensions by frequently taking to task elite customers, celebrity chefs, and anyone else who ate or prepared good food merely to show off their culinary sophistication.

While such food manga was popularized by a new public attention towards the culinary world, many of its tales chose similar humble protagonists in order to emphasize food for deeper conceits such as the comfort of its sustenance during difficult periods, the bonding over it in family settings, and the rewarding accomplishment of perfecting its preparation. Dichotomies were created between appreciation and ostentation, or taste and waste. Gourmet manga protagonists were thus often people from everyday life, such as journalists (*Oishinbō*), orphans (Kobayashi Mitsuki’s *Kitchen Princess*) salarymen (Kusumi Masayuki and Taniguchi Jiro’s *The Solitary Gourmet*), gangsters (Tsuchiyama Shigeru’s *Gokudō Meshi*), and a pastry shop run by a former boxer and a gay patissier (Yoshinaga Fumi’s *The Antique Bakery*). Gourmet manga such as Tsurugina Mai’s *The Chef* (1985-2013) and Ueya Matochi’s *Cooking Papa!* (1985-ongoing) during this period began to focus less on battle and the reaction of judges, and more on the pursuit of the perfect food experience. An almost obsessive attention and interest in food origins and ingredient detail emerged in food manga during this time, to the extent that these stories

were considered “information manga” for the amount of trivia and research that could be packed into a single chapter.²³³ It was also during this period that the word “gourmet manga” was first used regularly and began to be considered a discrete genre in the public discourse.²³⁴

Gourmet manga, no longer derivative of sports genres or exclusively featuring the stories of chefs, began to focus on a range of topics that dissected food through non-cooking protagonists such as food critics, scientists, professional eaters, and ingredient collectors, of which *Toriko* is an example. *Toriko* takes strands from the early and later “gourmet” manga, portraying the physically exhausting collection of wild game and exotic ingredients, the near impossible demands required of their preparation, and most importantly, the appreciation of their sacrifice for demands of human joy and nourishment. The manga also piles great deals of ingredient information and preparation into its pages, much of which is even collected and catalogued in dense fan books.²³⁵ Similar to the original gourmet manga, all of this culinary attention is in service of another genre and adds considerable depth and detail to the fictionalized Gourmet World in which the manga’s story takes place. In *Toriko*’s case, the genre the gourmet manga serves is the battle manga, the origins of which stretch back for decades.

Toriko Origins: Battle Manga

Battle (and sports) manga are typically regarded in *Weekly Shōnen Jump* as *ōdō* manga, or manga that tread the “king’s path.” These manga aim to satisfy the largest audience possible and try to become “king” of the manga magazine through garnering the

²³³ Tomofusa Kure, *Gendai manga no zentaishō* (The Full Picture of Contemporary Manga) (Tokyo: Futabasha, 1997), 202.

²³⁴ Saito, 176.

²³⁵ See Shimabukuro Mitsutoshi, *Gourmet Hunting Book* (Tokyo: Shueisha, 2011) and *Toriko 29.5* (Tokyo, Shueisha, 2014).

most votes from readers every week. In its first forms, battle manga typically portrayed young men working towards the mastery of a particular traditional combat sport. The first manga that revolved around martial arts is said to have begun in 1952 with Fukui Eiichi's judo manga, *Igaguri-kun* (1952). Published in the monthly manga magazine *Bōken ō*, the manga revolved around young Igaguri, a judo expert who is determined to restore honor and integrity to the compromised world of professional judo, which has been tainted by controversy, violence, and questionable financial dealings. Igaguri fights to rise in the ranks of the judo association, but also to protect people from bullies, burglars, and neighborhood gangsters. Coming after the end of the American occupation in 1950, where the depiction of traditional Japanese sports such as judo, karate, and kendo were banned in the media and educational curriculum due to what was thought of their reflections of traditional *bushidō* values, *Igaguri-kun* was the first manga in the post-war era to depict traditional Japanese martial arts and Japanese protagonists participating in competitive sports. The manga sparked an interest in traditional martial arts manga, where Schodt argues young men directed their national pride and aggressive tendencies in place of military outlets.²³⁶

This increased interest in sports manga mirrored Japan's rising success in international sports. The genre rapidly gained popularity with boys in the 1960s and 1970s on the heels of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, as a slew of international sport-themed manga featuring baseball, volleyball, and professional boxing were introduced. *Weekly Shōnen Magazine* in particular had some of the most impressive titles adapted into anime, often illustrated by the prolific Kajiwaru Ikki, that portrayed heroes training to become champions in professional wrestling (*Tiger Mask* 1968-71) and karate (*Karate Baka Ichidai*, 1971-77). Perhaps the most famous of these stories in *Shōnen Magazine* was Kajiwaru Ikki

²³⁶ Schodt, 79-80.

and Chiba Tetsuya's *Ashita no Joe* (*Tomorrow's Joe*, 1968-73). The manga chronicles young orphan Yabuki Joe's climb from poverty and obscurity to fame and boxing legitimacy. Joe first learns to box in a juvenile prison and first meets Rikiishi, a boxing prodigy who dominates Joe in their first brawl. Joe, however, manages to fight Rikiishi to a draw using his special "cross-counter," and gains the attention of Dampei, a former boxing trainer who teaches Joe how to box. Joe becomes a symbol of the underclass as he learns to box, win matches, overcome slumps, and eventually fight his way to champion status before dying heroically in the ring in the final fight of the series in 1973. *Ashita no Joe* typified boxing and professional wrestling manga at the time with its Horatio Alger-like emphasis on a protagonist of meager origins who overcomes the hardships of his social background to achieve success in Japanese society. This is largely accomplished through intense training periods where strength and discipline are cultivated, special moves are honed, and character is built through overcoming defeats. Heavily melodramatic story arcs also abet each match, as characters imbue each battle with significance and emotion through their own personal backgrounds. Battles in such boxing or wrestling manga become tests of personal drive and masculine strength, as the protagonists begin to literally stake their lives on victory or defeat.

The artistic design for manga also developed duringt his period as the stories for such sports tragedies became longer, denser, and more dramatic influenced by the *gekiga* style. As described by Tatsumi Yoshihiro, *gekiga*, or "theatrical pictures," used a more complex template of speed lines, thicker inking, and varied shot compositions to pair

cinematic style with the more mature narratives.²³⁷ First published in 1950s *kashibon*, the *gekiga* style emphasizes realism by eschewing character deformation and imparting a dark expressionistic look that draws chiefly on shadows and thick, painterly brush strokes which accentuate the form of the manga. It is as much an artistic as a political choice, as *gekiga* manga were drawn for older audiences and had a rebellious tone. With an abundance of sex and violence, *gekiga* manga found its audience with teenage males. The *gekiga* manga style eventually appeared in *shōnen* manga magazines, but the manga was also read by high school and university students due to their adult subject matter and frequently nihilistic themes.²³⁸ *Ashita no Joe*, one of the most popular manga to exhibit the style, had such a strong impact on readers at the time that a real-life funeral was held in a Shinto temple when Joe finally died in the last chapters of the manga.

The *gekiga* manga movement also spawned heightened depictions of sex and violence in *shōnen* manga. Battle manga during the 1970s now featured sexy heroines in scantily clad or nude attire killing off villains in the most graphically detailed ways possible. Nagai Go's *Kekkō Kamen* (1974-78), for example, was set in the Sparta Academy, a misogynistic “elite” high school, where perverted teachers would punish the female students through various forms of sexual humiliation. *Kekkō Kamen*, a mostly nude female superhero dressed only in a red, rabbit-eared mask, gloves, scarf, and boots, uses her body to distract lecherous teachers from sexually assaulting the schoolgirls before defeating them with acrobatic martial arts moves. Her special move is the “pubic hair jump,” (*oppiroge*

²³⁷ For an autobiographical account of Tatsumi's career in drawing *gekiga* manga, as well as a personal history of the formation of *gekiga* and the central artists involved in its popularization, see Yoshihiro Tatsumi, *A Drifting Life* (Montreal: Drawn and Quarterly, 2009).

²³⁸ Many famous *shōnen* manga emerged to borrow from the *gekiga* style and were subsequently animated, such as Kajiwarai Ikki's *Kyojin no Hoshi* (Star of the Giants, 1966-71) and *Tiger Mask* (1968-71), illustrated by Kawasaki Noburu and Tsuji Naoki, respectively. The anime adaptations of these shows, moreover, subsequently kept the original *gekiga* visual design and emphasized the form of the author's line within the anime itself.

jump) which involves her leaping into the air, spreading her legs to distract her enemy, and then crashing into her enemy's face, causing him to lose consciousness. Originally intended as a parody of the superhero television series *Gekkō Kamen*, it was serialized for five years in *Monthly Shōnen Jump* and had its own anime adaptation. Nagai penned several other series for a number of *shōnen* manga magazines in the 1970s such as *The Abashiri Family* (1969-73), *Devilman* (1972-73), and *Cutey Honey* (1973-74), all of which typically featured wild plots, grim violence, and abundant female nudity.

By the late 1970s, the most popular manga content in the *shōnen* manga magazines had gravitated away from masculine sports stories, hard-core science fiction, and the *gekiga* style, and toward lighter fare that reflected the influence and popularity of *shōjo* manga. Romantic comedy manga in both *shōnen* and *shōjo* manga magazines, in particular, triggered a “boom” which lasted until the mid 1980s. This change in audience preference found its way into the battle manga of the late 1970s and 1980s. The manga of *Weekly Shōnen Jump* was most conspicuous in carrying on the mantle of battle manga, but in service of comedy (Yudetamago's *Kinnikuman*) or romance (Hojo Tsukasa's *Cat's Eye*) stories. *Shōnen Jump* manga also took inspiration from traditional folklore, such as Chinese (Toriyama Akira's *Dragon Ball*) and Greek mythology (Kurumada Masami's *Saint Seiya*). *Shōnen* manga during this period – led by *Weekly Shōnen Jump* – serialized a collection of titles over a number of years that placed characters not in Japan, but in fictional alternate realities and worlds. These titles drew upon a wide array of classic and contemporary mythology for themes that drew inspiration from Western fantasy sources. Bronson and Hara Tetsuo's *Fist of the Northstar* is one of the most well-known examples, which casts its main character – a figure that is an amalgam of martial arts figure Bruce Lee and

Hollywood action star Arnold Schwarzenegger – in a post-apocalyptic landscape inspired by George Miller’s *Mad Max* (1979). It also notably has a visual style inspired by *gekiga* manga and is incredibly violent, with the exploding heads and torsos of American horror movies another one of its chief inspirations. As Otsuka Eiji has argued, the preference for fictional worlds in manga parallels the simultaneous growth of a new popular form of entertainment: role-playing video games.²³⁹ Such titles also began to even display the crossover of talent between the two industries when mangaka Toriyama Akira illustrated the character designs for Enix’s *Dragon Quest* in 1986, before the game went on to become the highest grossing video game in Japan.

By the end of the 1990s, most *shōnen* battle manga were set in complete fantasy landscapes, or fantasy versions of Japan. Most manga worked in themes and genres from a variety of sources, reflecting the diversification of manga’s readerships, as *shōnen* manga were increasingly read by audiences of both male and female gender.²⁴⁰ *Shōnen* battle manga began to incorporate visual styles and character designs from *shōjo* manga, with *shōnen* manga heroes attracting strong female fan attraction. Togashi Yoshihiro’s *Yūyū Hakusho* (1990-94), for example, proved popular with female fans for its androgynous character designs that owed a debt to cross-dressing female heroines in *shōjo* manga and anime from *The Rose of Versailles* (1972-73) to *Revolutionary Girl Utena* (1996-97). Watsuki Nobuhiro’s *Rurōni Kenshin* (1994-99), one of the most popular battle manga in the late 1990s, starred a slender, brooding, pony-tailed samurai who vowed never to kill his enemies. His strongest bond, moreover, was not between his friends or his comrades, but

²³⁹ Otsuka, 345-350.

²⁴⁰ Kate Allen and John E. Ingulsrud, “Reading Manga: Patterns of Personal Literacies Among Adolescents,” *Language and Education* 19.4 (2005): 275-76. While few boys in secondary school admit to reading *shōjo* manga, university-aged males and older more frequently read *shōjo manga*.

with the female owner of a swordsmanship dojo. Both of these stories are notable for casting heroes that are less traditionally masculine in both physical stature and emotional projection than previous *shōnen* battle manga, appearing to have the psychological depth and sensitive appearance of *shōjo* manga male protagonists.²⁴¹ Both manga are also notable in that while they are set in Japan – *Yūyū Hakusho* is set in contemporary Tokyo, while *Rurōni Kenshin* is set in Edo of the Meiji Era – they incorporate fantastical elements. The contemporary Tokyo of *Yūyū Hakusho* is mirrored by a world of demons and magic, while the Meiji Era of *Rurōni Kenshin* loosely incorporates contemporary costume design, advanced technological weaponry, and special martial arts moves that defy human ability.

Toriko, set in the fictional Gourmet World during the invented Gourmet Age, is the latest in *Weekly Shōnen Jump*'s line of battle-fantasy hybrids. Along with Oda Eiichiro's *One Piece* and Kishimoto Masashi's *Naruto*, it is one of the three most popular battle manga in the magazine. The manga is a hybrid of genres, from gag to gourmet to action and adventure. It is also reflective of the trend towards fantasy, as the story is set completely in an invented world with its own lore. While the main characters are over-muscled, reminiscent of the type of battle manga popular in the 1980s, its characters have also proven uniquely popular with female readers, who have spun their own versions of the characters through organized manga writing groups called "circles." Its subject matter is excessively violent, with severed limbs and copious spurts of blood that evoke the exaggerated gore and realistic dimensions of *gekiga*, though its visual style is cheerful, utilizing the clean lines and bright colors of *shōjo* manga. Thus, *Toriko* is a true hybrid manga that is typical of *shōnen ōdō* manga appearing in weekly manga magazines today: it

²⁴¹ There are still overtly masculine characters in the worlds of both manga, though their presence heightens the contrast between the two types of heroes.

mixes genres, audiences, visual styles, and provocative content in a deep, fictional world that pits male characters against one another in competitive battles of wits and strength. The next section will look closely at the style and content of the manga of *Toriko*, and how it creates its characters and world settings that provide the elements for its database world.

Reality: *Toriko* and the Mangaka

Toriko first debuted in *Weekly Shōnen Jump* in 2002. The story was written and illustrated by mangaka Shimabukuro Mitsutoshi in a one-shot (*yomikiri*), which gained a very high rating by readers in the *ankēto* system.²⁴² Editors faith in Shimabukuro's one-shot paid off. *Toriko*'s distinctive characters, imaginative world settings, and mix of genre elements proved to be popular on a regular basis with readers. As of this writing, the manga has spanned over thirty *tankōbon* volumes, which have collectively sold over 20 million copies. Readers typically rank *Toriko* as one of the top five manga in every magazine issue, and its brisk *tankōbon* sales eventually led to a short anime episodes, an anime feature film spin-off, and finally a weekly television anime series that began airing in April of 2011.

Toriko is set during the Gourmet Age in a world not dissimilar to our own that prizes chefs, four-star restaurants, and *bishokuya*, or “gourmet hunters.” Employed by wealthy culinary establishments and criminal organizations, these hunters specialize in the acquisition of rare culinary ingredients and dangerous animals. Toriko is one such hunter, a man with wild blue hair and a massive frame who uses his brute strength to defeat enemies and acquire such rare goods. Toriko scours the world to complete his ultimate “full course,”

²⁴² Shimabukuro was busy working on another gag manga that was already in serialization in *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, but was arrested for violating child prostitution laws. His manga was immediately cancelled and he spent two years in prison. Upon his release, he returned to writing manga and produced a sequel to his one-shot in 2007. The sequel to the one-shot, which introduced many aspects of the series that would eventually become *Toriko*, proved once again to be very popular, and the series was approved for serialization in *Shōnen Jump* on May 19, 2008, six years after the appearance of his last manga in the magazine.

a meal consisting of the world's strongest and most delectable foods and beverages. He is accompanied on his journey by a small but talented chef named Komatsu, who sets out to improve his own culinary skills and overcome his own timidity. Much of the manga's story involves Toriko and Komatsu hunting for rare foods – which prove increasingly menacing and/or tricky to capture – and defeating enemies, animals, and other obstacles as they make their way around the Gourmet World.

Like most *shōnen* manga and nearly all battle manga, and in contrast to most superhero comics, *Toriko* is a “story manga,” which means that each chapter that appears in the manga magazine every week is one part of an ongoing serialized story. The overarching story of *Toriko* in many ways mirrors the “rebel resistance” mythology of George Lucas' *Star Wars* (1977). Toriko and his powerful outcast friends seek to prevent the powerful criminal organization known as the Bishoku-kai, or “Gourmet Clan,” from monopolizing the world's food supply. While this larger story lurks in the background, much of *Toriko* is organized on smaller story arcs that run for a dozen or more chapters. These story arcs chronicle Toriko and Komatsu's trips to exotic lands in pursuit of special ingredients, as well as the new friends they meet, foods they eat, and enemies they make along the way. Thus, each smaller arc of investigation, battle, discovery, and personal growth contributes piecemeal to the larger story arc of global war and collective resistance.

There are several characteristics within *Toriko* that, like other *shōnen* manga, give the manga its unique reality. Ito Go has identified three traits in postwar manga that are particularly striking and give it a realism that, similar to the reality conveyed by watching movies, “makes the average person believe that the fictional world they are seeing is real

while being unconscious of the myriad shots used to construct that world.”²⁴³ These three traits are the manga’s *kyara*, *komawari*, and *kotoba*, or its characters, framing, and dialogue. For the first trait, Go distinguishes between the Japanese *kyarakutaa* and *kyara*. The former, which translates literally to the English word “character,” refers to the personality, background, and depth of a protagonist; deep “characters” are what we typically think of when referring to interesting characters in films or novels. The latter, which shortens the word “character” to *kyara*, is a visual representation which suggests deeper connotations. This distinction of the *kyara* is its reliance on its visual signs and cues to suggest its personality; the words imparted on it then give it a the matching or contrasting depth. While this chapter will simply utilize the word “character” to signify characters in the manga, it is important to distinguish that strong characters in the context of manga refer more to their initial visual design rather than any particular quirks of personality, deep background stories, or displays of their humanity.

Portraying characters in *shōnen* manga is no easy feat since there is limited space in every magazine issue to convey the story, not to mention that each chapter is printed on cheap paper with monochromatic ink. Popular series receive color spreads, and the initial chapter of any series has the first four to five pages illustrated in color, but the majority of the series is told in chapters of fifteen to twenty pages, in blacks, whites, and greys. This means that distinctive character designs are necessary to convey possible personalities and backgrounds. All of this needs to be rendered simply; since these designs will need to be drawn every week, too many intricate details will tax assistants and become difficult to reproduce on a weekly basis. Popular *shōnen* manga also have a much higher chance of

²⁴³ Ito Go, *Tezuka izu deddo: hirakareta manga hyōgenron* (Tezuka is Dead: Postmodernist and Modernist Approaches to Japanese Manga) (Tokyo: NTT Shuppan, 2005), 85.

being adapted into an anime than other manga, so the designs must also not be too precious to reproduce for animators, who are often even more overworked. The task for the mangaka, then, is to suggest the character's history with just a few important qualities.

A number of mangaka and manga scholars have created theories of how to create compelling characters for manga narratives. Miyamoto Hirohito, for example, has diagrammed six essential features for designing characters focusing on originality, individuality, potential, complexity, opacity, and inner depth.²⁴⁴ As manga and anime has existed now for several decades, moreover, audiences have become familiar with what certain design features could signify. As Azuma Hiroki argues with regards to designing attractive characters for *otaku*, “each element, with its own origins and background, constitutes a category that has been developed in order to stimulate the interest of the consumers.”²⁴⁵ Each element is a sign that emerged through market principles oriented towards popular characters. With the design of a single avatar, a wayward hair strand might be symbolic of a lazy or slightly daffy personality, or it might just be a way to draw affection from readers who are attracted to characters with such qualities. In either case, greater symbolism is imparted to certain features of the character's design. This is what might be called the “manga literacy” of Japan, where even casual readers recognize the meaning behind visual signifiers in the design of characters.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Miyamoto Hirohito, “Manga ni oite kiyakutaa ga ‘tatsu’ towa douiukotoka” (What it means for characters to “stand” on their own) in *Nihon jidō bungaku* (Japanese Children's Literature) 3-4 (Tokyo: Komine Shoten, 2003), 48. See also Otsuka Eiji, *Kyakuta mēka* (Character Maker: Six Theories for a Workshop on “Creation”) (Tokyo: Ascii Media Works, 2008).

²⁴⁵ Azuma, 42.

²⁴⁶ See John Ingulsrud and Kate Allen, “Strategies for Comprehending Manga,” *Reading Japan Cool: Patterns in Manga Literacy and Discourse* (Lanham: Lexington, 2009), 127-146 and Takekuma Kentaro, “Hitome de waku ‘keiyū zukan’” (Simple Guide to Understanding “Graphic Symbols”), in *Manga no yomikata* (How to Read Manga), ed. Inoue Manabu (Tokyo: Takarajimasha, 1995), 78-105.

For *shōnen* manga, this means design quirks are usually limited to specific areas of the character's body, such as the hair, the face, or the wardrobe. Toriko, like many *shōnen* heroes, has flowing hair in spiky bunches that cascades around his shoulders. This makes him easy to identify in scenes with multiple characters, large compositions, or in silhouettes, but such a hairstyle has antecedents in manga from the 1980s, which itself drew heavily upon American action films from the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, the hairstyle suggests Toriko's personality is masculine, wild, unpredictable, direct, or one with nature. All or none of these potential conclusions could be true, but they are conveyed simply in the choice of hairstyle. Toriko's martial arts *dōgi* is similarly modeled on one or two easily recognizable ornaments: a bright orange jacket and matching baggy orange pants. The orange martial arts suit draws upon a similar design in Toriyama Akira's *Dragon Ball* and Kishimoto Masashi's *Naruto*, where the fighting protagonists of both stories wore non-traditional, attention-drawing orange-colored *gi*, a wardrobe color that has come to represent the protagonist's outsider status. The clothing also covers a massive build that reinforces Toriko's dedication to physical training. Toriko's *gi* is more utilitarian, featuring pockets, zippers, and a collar; this matches his occupational background, since he is a professional hunter before he is a fighter.

Finally, Toriko's face underscores his wild nature. Shimabukuro said that with Toriko, he wanted to create a "giant *kuishinbō*," or "eater." Regarding Toriko's face, Shimabukuro emphasizes the protagonist's heroic qualities: "His presence is ace (*batsugun*). When I look at him, I have his eyebrows jutting out in front of his hair. This really conveys his presence!"²⁴⁷ On the other hand, when describing Toriko's comrade

²⁴⁷ Shimabukuro Mitsutoshi, *Toriko mini fukusei genkō book!!* (Toriko Mini Reprinted Manuscript Book!!) (Tokyo: Shueisha, 2013), 5.

Coco, Shimabukuro focuses on his odd attributes: “He’s calm and quiet. His sideburns are long, a confounding earring, one strangely long strand of hair. Since he’s a fortuneteller, his movements are unfamiliar.”²⁴⁸ In both instances, Shimabukuro focuses on qualities that are centered on what is conveyed through the characters’ countenance. A closer examination of Toriko reveals careful choices regarding his facial design. eyes and mouth are drawn with thin pencil lines, but his frequently angled eyebrows are drawn as the same width as his eyes, which is given an added touch of menace due to an animal’s three-clawed scar located under his right eye. Toriko’s jet black eyebrows contrast with his toothy grins and smiles, giving him a mischievous and cocky personality, but also a dark side that is expressed during moments of rage. Toriko’s facial design demonstrates how “deformation” in comics can signify traits. Scott McCloud argues, characters in comics can be abstracted and designed simply as icons in order to assist in reader identification and “allow readers to mask themselves in a character and safely enter a stimulating world.”²⁴⁹ These simple patterns are used in lieu of more detail to connect the characters to patterns that readers would be familiar with, but also with an aim toward flexibility and evolution; should Toriko grow or evolve during his travels, his hair can change colors or his gi can be customized down the road. While his personality is easily interpreted from visual ties, his design also lends itself to new interpretations down the line by both the mangaka and, eventually, other creators who want to emphasize or de-emphasize certain aspects of his personality.

The other two traits that allow manga to convey a realism to its readers, framing and dialogue, varies in strength and boldness depending on the type of manga, particularly

²⁴⁸ Ibid, 8.

²⁴⁹ McCloud, 43.

whether the manga is regarded as *shōnen* or *shōjo*. *Shōjo* manga, on the one hand, relies to a greater degree than *shōnen* manga on dialogue and backgrounds than precise framing to convey its realism. One reason for this reliance is that much of *shōjo* manga focuses on psychological interiority, with narratives going deep into the minds of its protagonists to convey their emotions and feelings. *Shōjo* manga frequently have lengthy sequences that are almost entirely in the head of a single character, and moments of joy, fear, angst, depression, shock, or ecstasy are given a heightened degree of realism due to their detailed expression from talented mangaka able to give voice to such deep emotions. Such sequences typically adhere less to strict framing, which separates blocked panels with the use of a “gutter,” or blank space in between panels. *Shōjo* manga frequently ignore the gutter for intense moments that cover entire page spreads, bleeding panels into one another for hallucinogenic effect, having characters drawn on top of a series of panels to communicate their thoughts, or ambiguously separating panels through characters straddling multiple panels to create a sense of suspended time. In cinema studies terms, *shōjo* manga is a *mise-en-scene*-based art form for its creation of meaning in large page spreads that collect details and draw attention to the depiction of dramatic scenes. The use of gutters in *shōjo* manga echoes Will Eisner’s idea of the gutter as a “non-frame” that speaks to unlimited space and “has the effect of encompassing unseen but acknowledged background.”²⁵⁰ Because of this intense focus on dialogue and interior affect, each frame tends to have a flat composition that relies less on depth within each individual panel so as to communicate interiority when juxtaposed against the gutters of the rest of the page.

Shōnen manga, on the other hand, relies largely on framing and less on interior dialogue and gutters to convey its sense of action, its movement of characters, and its scale

²⁵⁰ Will Eisner, *Comics and Sequential Art* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008), 44.

of world. *Shōnen* manga is a montage-based art form for relying on a series of panels, or “shots,” to convey meaning through the combination of their sequencing. Part of *shōnen* manga’s shot reliance is the early adoption of a cinematic storytelling style that has its roots in modernism, Russian formalism, and the influence of Disney animation. This can be considered part of the debt to Tezuka Osamu and his incorporation of Eisenstein’s theory of montage, where images in rapid succession can deliver greater emotional (and potentially ideological) impact. Yomoda Inuhiko likens the idea of manga’s montage to a director’s storyboards, comparing Okamoto Kihachi’s storyboards for his film *Japan’s Longest Day* (1967) to that of a manga page, noting the same attention to the framing and blocking of actors and characters.²⁵¹ Many scholars place the influence of this cinematic style on Tezuka Osamu and his revolutionary *Shin-Takarajima* (New Treasure Island, 1947). The 192-page manga told a long and involving adventure yarn using a series of successive panels displaying different perspectives and angles, as well as speed lines and deformed or distorted bodies, to convey sequences of rapid movement.²⁵² Tezuka was heavily influenced by Eisenstein’s theory of montage, where a series of continuous shots in successive order creates a different and/or deeper meaning than a single shot by itself. Takeuchi Osamu calls this the “montage style” of manga, though he is also quick to point out that pre-war manga also used bits of montage where the panel would show a character’s point of view, such as a close-ups of maps, watches, and when looking through binoculars.

What Tezuka brought to manga was the “awareness that he was utilizing montage to show

²⁵¹ Yomoda Inuhiko, *Manga genron* (Principles of Manga) (Tsukuma Shobo, 1994), 15-16.

²⁵² Speed lines are lines that designate action and are used around particular objects or movements to convey motion. *Shōnen* manga uses such lines with a great degree of frequency, in contrast to the flowing, softer lines of *shōjo* manga, in order to emphasize the action and impact of particular scenes. On one page of *Toriko*, for example, the protagonist lifts a giant barracuda out of the water. The scene is framed in a long shot to convey the size of the fish in comparison to Toriko, but the entire fish is surrounded by sharp lines that start at the edge of the panel and fade toward the body of the fish, directing the reader’s eyes toward the fish and conveying the impact of its body bursting out of the water.

a relationship between people and people, or people and things.”²⁵³ Tezuka, in other words, connected his panels in a way that did not prioritize the perspective of the protagonists, employing a variety of zooms and angles in the service of speeding up the reader’s digestion of the narrative. This style of movement was picked up by *akabon* mangaka and caught on with audiences and other mangaka, but was popularized most heavily through the 1960s and 70s with *shōnen* manga, filled with genre stories that conveyed movement such as action, adventure, sports, and battle. *Shōnen* manga, when compared to *shōjo*, is made cinematic through panel construction that conveys a sense of speed and movement within each panel, and which is heightened when stacked against a series of other panels in sequences of montage.

Toriko frames layouts within panels according to cinematic guidelines that direct the reader’s attention and draw on the reader’s reactions. There are several ways that *Toriko* uses such cinematic language in service of its story. Panels are framed according to cinematic compositions which all have their specific dramatic use. Panels that take up the space of the entire page introduce the scene and place the characters within that scene. Such shots function similarly to establishing shots or other wide-angle shots in cinema in that they tell the reader to focus on the surrounding details, establish the space of a particular scene, or communicate the psychology of the character through his or her juxtaposition against a background. Close-ups of faces or objects are used to convey subtle emotion or minute details. Shifting the eye level and perspective can also evoke different feelings in the reader. A normal sitting or standing eye line conveys very little, but a slightly lower eye line can convey the viewpoint of a child. A low angle composition can

²⁵³ Takeuchi Osamu, *Manga hyōgengaku nyūmon* (Introduction to Manga Expression) (Tokyo: Tsukuma Shobo, 2005), 97.

emphasize the size of an object or a menacing feeling in the frame, while a fisheye or distorted shot can imply a zoom lens or limited perspective. *Nēmu*, or manga scripts, have their layouts done in two-page spreads, so a mangaka must also be conscious of how the two pages play against one another. For example, manga are typically read from right to left, so the topmost right corner should have some indication of the action that preceded it in the previous page. This could be the completion of a character action in the previous page that was not finished yet, or if it is an entirely new scene, then an establishing shot that introduces the space of the new location. This also means that the bottommost-left corner of the page should also indicate an interesting action since that will lead the reader to want to turn the page to find out the rest of the action.²⁵⁴

Such an interplay between panel perspective and layout is evident on nearly every page of *Toriko*. In one two-page layout (see figure 10), Toriko's house is introduced to the reader through a wide-angle establishing shot of the house, far off in the horizon.²⁵⁵ The following panel shows a clearer medium shot of the house with the mailbox framed in the foreground, moving the reader closer to the scene of the action. The next panel is a close-up of Toriko's mailbox that conveys information, as it shows the mailbox with a large package protruding out of it. The following panel is a close-up of a cicada flying through the air, introducing an object that will move the reader towards the interior of the house, as the next page begins with a wide angle shot of the cicada flying into an open window in Toriko's room. The next panel, a medium shot that frames the interior of Toriko's room, shows Toriko lying on his bed in the right corner, his legs towards the reader and his face

²⁵⁴ Otsuka has stated in manga workshops that the best place to put climatic or eye-catching panels is in the topmost left corner since the eye is somehow naturally drawn to that area when the reader opens the page.

²⁵⁵ Shimabukuro Mitsutoshi, "Rainbow Fruit," in *Toriko Vol. 1* (Tokyo: Shueisha, 2008), 100-101.

hardly visible. In the same shot, the cicada is flying towards what appears to be a large, sticky pillar of chocolate. The next two panels are close ups of the cicada sticking to the pillar, followed by a panel of it singing with sound balloons noting a wailing sound. Finally, in the left bottom corner is a shot of Toriko waking up to the singing in the form of a large speech balloon that has bled into his shot, displaying his sleepy countenance. A small series of lines left of his head signal that he has been alerted to the sound. The reader is left to turn the page to see how Toriko will presumably now go about his day.



Figure 10: Framing in Toriko

The framing of panel size can also determine the narrative and temporal balance of a manga through the control of reader eye movement. Many comics and manga follow the rule of thirds, a technique also found in film and photography. Splitting the panel into three vertical sections and setting the characters or focus within the sections or on the guidelines can generally guarantee an interesting or balanced shot, but purposefully breaking these

rules can also alter the narrative balance of a shot. By placing a character off center, the reader's eye can be directed towards action that follows in the next frame, such as a quick movement in a character that is beginning to move or run. The reader's eye is directed around the panels of a page, so in effect, the reader's eye movements also function as camera movements. Different sized panels can also indicate the passage of time. Logically, the reader's eye will stop on larger panels to analyze them more, indicating a slower passage of time, where shorter, smaller panels indicate a rapid progression of events and a faster passage of time.

Indeed, *Toriko* adjusts panel size and balance especially frequently due to its large number of battles. To take a single battle as an example, Toriko and Komatsu confront a giant horde of four-armed apes in order to retrieve a rare fruit from a sacred tree in the distance.²⁵⁶ The establishing shot of the battle is in a single frame that covers two pages. Toriko is in the foreground, though off to the side with his back to the reader. Komatsu cowers at the edge of the frame while hundreds of apes stand ready to attack. In the far distance can be seen a single tree amidst a backdrop of shadowy mountains and a stormy sky. The large establishing shot is followed by a series of smaller panels that focus on Toriko's movements but fragment the carnage of the battle. On one page, Toriko stuns one of the apes in one of the panels while the charging face of another ape is displayed in the right corner of the panel. A small panel just underneath shows Toriko's eyes darting to his left. The following successive panels are of Toriko grappling around various parts of the ape's limbs, using his stun gun to disable their movements and his special moves – martial arts chops and thrusts he calls his *knife* and *fork* – to dispatch them if they get too close.

²⁵⁶ Shimabukuro Mitsutoshi, "If You Wont Eat," in *Toriko Vol. 1* (Tokyo: Shueisha, 2008), 165-183.

These lean panels display Toriko's entire body in relation to the limbs of the apes, showcasing both Toriko's relatively smaller stature, but also his nimble movements. The succession of such small, wordless panels suggests that the battle proceeds at a high pace and that Toriko is quickly dispatching his enemies. The panels also continue for over six pages, suggesting that the onslaught is relentless and will eventually exhaust Toriko's stamina. Thus, both the manga's effective use of panel size and off-center compositions propel the reader forward through the space and time of the battle, while providing a sense of Toriko's movement and fighting style.

Toriko's dialogue is frequently in service of its framing. Characters mouth dialogue to express their emotions, reveal plot details, or convey personality. Moments of interior dialogue are sporadic but less self-reflective, often used in situations to express character doubt, fear, or insincerity.²⁵⁷ *Shōnen* manga, then, relies more on dialogue to convey the complex plot of the manga, as well as a uniquely designed set of characters to execute that plot through dynamic movement. Shimabukuro designs and framing shows his *kyara* and the world in which they live, and its scale relative to other objects or creatures through careful frame juxtaposition. With these elements in place, the dialogue is created to provide personalities to characters and give meaning to their actions and histories; the plot is often recognized as the most interesting aspect of *shōnen* manga, but it is always in service to the characters and their world. Through careful character design and framing, then, Shimabukuro provides real characters and world settings for the manga to live and breath

²⁵⁷ In this respect, *shōnen* manga's use of *gion*, or onomatopoeic sound effects to represent the sounds of certain objects or actions, are more representative of its use of unique dialogue than that which anchors its plot. *Gion* vary in size according to the loudness or impact of the sound portrayed, and they also vary in shape according to the sharpness or softness of the sound as well. Since *Toriko* has a plethora of characters and animals that populate its pages, the range of its *gion* also varies dramatically according to what Shimabukuro wants to convey.

on its own when taken and molded by other creators. The following sections will show how various creators take these elements of characters, plots, world settings, movements, and emotions, and use them to create additional patterns for *Toriko*'s narrative and stylistic tapestry.

Crossover: Collaborative Anime Writing

Weekly animated television serials, what most of the world knows as anime, are most commonly used to transform manga from static two-dimensional artworks into moving image transmedia. While anime takes various forms – features, short films, direct-to-video original animation, commercials, instructional videos – television anime is the most ubiquitous and lucrative, with over 150 new animated television programs and over 70 animated feature films and original video/net animation films produced every year.²⁵⁸ Fan surveys function as the “upfronts” in determining what gets launched as anime. This does not mean that every popular manga becomes an anime, as the content of some *Weekly Shōnen Jump* manga are deemed too mature, risqué, or realistic for children, the target audience of a *Jump* television anime program. Even the most appropriate or carefully conceived manga never become franchised, since manga only receive such offers after enough readers mail in votes to *Shōnen Jump* or, more importantly, enough *tankōbon* of the manga are sold in bookstores and online retailers. Some manga instead become adapted into television dramas, live-action feature films, or “sound novels,” playable versions of the game voiced by professional voice actors.

Toriko's anime was also decided through a trial process. *Toriko* had been in serialization for over a year when it was first decided that an animation would be produced to test its popularity among audiences. The first anime, made by the animation studio

²⁵⁸ Masuda, 10-15, 21, 27.

Ufotable, was a high-quality, 28-minute short film that animated the first chapter of the manga. It screened only once, however, at the 2009 Jump Super Anime Tour. Audience reception was mostly positive, though *Toriko*'s popularity in *Weekly Shōnen Jump* relative to other series did not yet warrant a full-scale weekly television anime adaptation. A second short film based on original material written by scriptwriters of Ufotable was produced for the 2010 Jump Super Anime Tour, titled *Toriko: Barbarian Ivy wo Hokakuseyo!* (*Toriko: Capture the Barbarian Ivy!*, 2010). At this point, reception was very high due to the manga's increasingly strong presence in the magazine. It was clear that, by the end of 2010, there was enough of an audience to justify the production of a weekly television animation based on the *Toriko* manga. The animation duties were passed to Toei Animation, a studio with the staff to produce episodes on a weekly basis for an indefinite period of time, as well as a rich history of adapting *shōnen* manga to the big and small screen. While Shueisha and Shimbukuro own the rights to the manga, Toei Animation and broadcast network, Fuji TV, negotiate the programming schedule for the anime. The plan was to start the television anime series in April of 2011, when children begin the new school year, but with a bang: a feature length animated film that would screen in theatres a month before the television series began its broadcast.

Producers of the *Toriko* anime calculated that it would be to the series benefit if it could gather the fans and viewers of a more established manga in *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, so a film based on Oda Eiichiro's *One Piece* was paired as a double bill with the first Toei-produced *Toriko* film. To add an incentive for audiences to head to the theatre, the screening was entirely in 3D. Following the film's premiere, *Toriko* and *One Piece* worked together for a true collaboration special, as the first episode of the *Toriko* television anime

combined the characters of the long-running *One Piece* manga/anime series with the characters and world of *Toriko*. In an original episode that does not appear in the manga, both the characters of *Toriko* and *One Piece* find themselves on the Hungry-la Island in search of rare and delicious ingredients and animals.

Murayama Isao, the head scriptwriter for the *Toriko* series, wrote the first episode and paired certain archetypes with one another in order to establish the similarity between the two sets of characters. Toriko and Luffy, the respective heroes of *Toriko* and *One Piece*, joust for alpha male status through continual feats of one-upmanship displaying their braggadocio, fighting skills, and massive appetites. On the other hand, Komatsu and Nami, two central sidekicks of their respective series, become kidnapped by koala-like beasts and are effectively turned into damsels in distress, a feat that ironically minimizes Nami's considerable prowess in battle to match the weaker, battle-averse Komatsu. The episode mostly revolves around other characters similarly paired based on personality traits, while they all work together to save Nami and Komatsu from the enemies. Upon the conclusion of the episode, the *One Piece* pirates continue on their journey for the lost treasure, while the characters of *Toriko* begin the television anime series in earnest based on the manga's storyline.

The television anime was an official collaboration that helped connect the thematic energies of the two series on several levels. *One Piece* shares a similar artistic style with *Toriko*, as well as a similar genre emphasis on battle and exploration to different worlds, meaning the two groups of characters did not stretch credibility appearing in the same storyline. The characters, most importantly, shared many similarities from their basic personalities to their super-powered battle abilities. Shimabukuro grew up reading Eiichiro

Oda's *One Piece* when he was younger, and the two are admittedly good friends who were enthusiastic about the idea of using collaborative anime episodes to connect the two shows when approached by editors at Shueisha. To provide an even stronger connection beyond one episode, Shimabukuro and Oda together worked on a one-shot crossover manga installment that had a similar storyline wherein the *One Piece* pirates meet the *Toriko* friends on Gourmet Island.²⁵⁹ Published in *Shōnen Jump* the same week of the broadcast of the anime's first episode, the episode functioned to advertise *Toriko*'s anime debut by spiritually tying it to *One Piece*. Oda created special beasts for *Toriko* to capture, while Shimabukuro created a special "devil's fruit," which is a trademark of the *One Piece* universe. The episode was so highly watched that additional crossover episodes and films between *Toriko* and *One Piece* characters were produced over the course of both series' runs. The collaboration was possible because of Shueisha's managing of these various series and ability to approach their mangaka, but also because of Shimabukuro and Oda's respect for and friendship with one another. Marvel has done similar projects that crossover their licensed characters and worlds, most notably the superhero team *The Avengers*, but a major difference with the series of *Shōnen Jump*, however, is that editors must get permission from the graphic-literary sector – the mangaka – when using their characters to create collaborative content. If the mangaka aren't on good terms or feel the connection is forced, then the collaboration won't happen just to satiate business demands.

On the other hand, mangaka of *Weekly Shōnen Jump* and other similar *shōnen* titles mostly keep their hands off the anime and merchandise side of creative decision-making once the weekly production of anime is underway. This allows for creators to freely use

²⁵⁹ Oda Eiichiro and Shimabukuro Mitsutoshi, "Jisshoku! Akuma no mi" (Read Food! The Devil's Fruit," in *Weekly Shōnen Jump* No. 17 (2011).

material, with the condition that their judgment will contribute to both series popularity. Such creative freedom can generate entirely new experiences such as those found in the anime through crossover and original episodes that are scripted by screenwriters. Head writer Murayama is responsible for writing the first episodes of the series to set the tone, but also for overseeing a small team of writers to make sure they don't stray too far from the essence of the manga series. This story construction in the anime involves a fair bit of collaboration with the editorial staff and mangaka of the original work, but since *Toriko* runs every week, the mangaka and editors can only supervise so much, relying on Murayama and his team of writers to use their best judgment in presenting the original story and characters. This means that the television anime must cater to fans of the manga before trying to reinterpret the series. "The manga and the anime should be one whole," Murayama said. "If we come up with something very different, then the series won't reflect the manga anymore. I could come up with an original character and allow it to grow, but people watching wouldn't be interested in that since they would view it as apart from the manga. At the same time, I can't decide to give the main characters new abilities, because then I would be growing the characters at a different pace."²⁶⁰ Here, Murayama encapsulates the two key responsibilities of the scriptwriter adapting a popular manga series for a weekly television anime series: preserving the characters' original story arcs, and adding material without changing the direction of the story or the essence of the world. If viewers can see both the anime existing in the same world as the manga, then the anime will have its intended effect of spreading the manga's universe to new audiences.

²⁶⁰ Murayama Isao, interview by the author, March 2014.

Television vs. Anime: Anime's Competing Content

Walking this temporal tightrope is the job of anime scriptwriters, who often must go to great lengths in order to “stretch” episodes. One television anime episode is equivalent to roughly three manga chapters, or three weeks’ worth of content. What inevitably ends up happening is that the anime will “catch up” with or even surpass the manga’s storyline. In this case, scriptwriters have two options: they can find ways to elongate episodes, making two manga chapters, or even a single manga chapter fill out an entire anime episode. This can lead to episodes with a pace that horribly drags, so scriptwriters can choose the second option of creating entire story arcs separate from the manga that comprise a set number of episodes. In Japanese, this is referred to as the anime’s “original content,” though English-speaking fans deridingly call this material “filler” content that is simply keeping time until the anime picks up the manga’s original storyline. What Murayama and other writers must account for when writing episodes is that any original content must not too heavily anticipate or redirect developments in the *Toriko* manga’s story.

Any individual episode that does not appear in the manga can incorporate characters and even introduce new characters and concepts, just as long as those concepts do not overlap with a plot development that has yet to occur in the manga. Much of the direction of the show is determined in planning and scripting meetings well before the process of animation even begins, but the pressure is on the writers to make these original episodes engaging or interesting despite the constraints placed upon them in creating original ideas. This sort of devotion to the “master ship” is typical for series like *Toriko*, which run on television every week for an indeterminate amount of time, and are created to

increase readership in the concurrently serialized manga.²⁶¹ This can occasionally influence the mangaka as well, and there have been cases where mangaka have told writers not to use an idea in the series because it was unimaginative, only to slyly incorporate it into the manga anyway with only the slightest of changes.

Murayama was tasked with making most of these original episodes, in large part because the ordeal of confirming with editors regarding new story ideas or characters could be difficult for freelance writers not devoted to the entire series. Murayama now works as mostly an anime series scriptwriter, but he first began his career as a director for television. Through years of working on anime series, however, he has developed ways of knowing how his screenplays will translate to the drawing board. Murayama says one of the key points of the anime is making it more accessible. One way of doing this is toning down any violence and sex in the manga. “In the manga, there’s a lot of grotesque imagery. *Toriko* is constantly killing animals and then eating them immediately after. These sorts of scenes need to be handled carefully.”

Murayama touches on a key transitional element: the contextual nature of the adaptation process and censorship law. After World War II, free speech was permitted in Japan’s constitution through Article 21, which explicitly outlined that “no censorship will be maintained.”²⁶² However, the Japanese penal code contains the 1907 “obscenity law,” Article 175, which restricts the sale and distribution of materials deemed “obscene.” Since the end of the war, the obscenity law has been challenged in courts, with the most notable

²⁶¹ The strict adherence to the manga’s story is somewhat less common to anime series with shorter runs of one or two seasons that must compress a large amount of story, in some cases creating new endings for the anime series if the manga has not yet concluded its serialization. For long-running series like *Toriko*, the anime continues in perpetuity as determined by the partner that is bearing the largest costs of its production – i.e. the animation studio.

²⁶² Lawrence Ward Beer, *Freedom of Expression in Japan: A Study in Comparative Law, Politics, and Society* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1984), 336.

trials being the 1957 and 1969 Supreme Court cases involving the prohibition of D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Since these high-profile cases, however, there have been relatively few challenges to the obscenity law in the courts, largely in line with Japan's low rates of court litigation and a "social preference for informal methods of regulation and conflict resolution, rooted in a cultural emphasis on social harmony and consensus, the abhorrence of public displays of conflict, and the importance of avoiding face-loss."²⁶³ Instead of litigation, "quiet socio-economic interactions roughly delineate restraints" on censorship such as sex and violence.²⁶⁴ This has largely resulted in film and television industries in Japan that self-regulate and police themselves.

Unlike films, which have a ratings system determined by the Eiga Rinri Kanri Inkai (Eirin for short, or the Motion Picture Code of Ethics Committee), television programming varies in its content according to the broadcast timeslot. Content for anime is always determined first in script meetings, where production representatives from the animation, broadcasting, and (occasionally) publishing sides are present to ensure that the content is appropriate to the broadcast's audience. Late-night anime, for example, can be more liberal with risqué content and art since it is being made for an older audience, while anime made for the "golden time" of prime time weekday evenings, or early morning weekends, must be more sensitive in their depiction of such situations. *Toriko* is a very violent manga, with characters routinely losing limbs in battle and beasts frequently killed in gruesome ways. The producers and broadcaster for *Toriko*, however, decided to slot the program on Sunday mornings, as a lead-in to the ratings magnet *One Piece*. The producers, writers, and directors were aware that muting the violence of the original would be required,

²⁶³ Aleardo Zanghellini, "Underage Sex and Romance in Japanese Homoerotic Manga and Anime," *Social & Legal Studies* 18, no. 2 (June 2009): 161.

²⁶⁴ Beer, 355.

in order to appeal to the young children who would be watching at that hour, and their parents who would file complaints with the network if anything upset their kids.

The writers were first in line to make decisions that would tone down the violence.²⁶⁵ To eliminate gore and excise scenes of decapitation, Murayama instructed other writers to follow scenes where Toriko slayed a beast with scenes of exposition or time ellipses. “We can’t just write the scene according to the manga,” Murayama said. “We have to also imagine how a scene will look animated. Through enough time, you develop a sort of sensor as to what will look okay in the anime and what will look unacceptable for most people.” Murayama himself set a tone for the series in the first episodes by emphasizing Toriko as less of an aggressor than in the manga, reacting more in self-defense rather than as a hunter and animal killer. In the manga, animals and beasts tend to growl or screech when attacking Toriko or his friends, but the hurting of such weaker creatures could be viewed as a form of bullying. Beasts in the anime, then, were often made to appear possessed by a kind of dark energy that made them seem like demons rather than animals, and their slaughter would be rationalized as a justified one.

This emphasis inadvertently slightly changes the portrayal of the central characters. Toriko, for example, is given additional dialogue that reinforces his pacifist nature and shifts his personality away from his primal hunter-gatherer in the manga to that of a rugged explorer-martial artist. Here, this desire for accessibility leads Murayama to make alterations that indirectly change the intent of the characters so as not to influence children into bad behavior and invite complaints from angry parents. In one scene, a character

²⁶⁵ Murayama said that such a decision was also made with the show that follows *Toriko* in the same time block, *One Piece*. However, producers and writers determined that the elimination of gore and the erasure of blood would severely impact the overall tone and essence of the show, so the decision was made to preserve most of the violence in the case of *One Piece*. The show also benefited from an initial “golden time,” or prime-time slot, which was geared more towards entire families rather than solely young children.

named Rin cuts her face with a fork to look more like her idol Toriko, but this scene was removed from the television episode since there was a fear that children watching would mimic the action. In another scene, the supporting character Komatsu carries a kitchen knife when journeying with Toriko, but writers inserted dialogue for Komatsu, saying that he will “only use his knife to cook for, and never to hurt, others.” Protagonists are made to appear less ambiguous but also less threatening overall, while antagonists are made simpler and more menacing for children to easily delineate between the good and evil, as well as good and bad behavior.

Explanatory decisions litter the production of the *Toriko* television anime series, clarifying cryptic passages with additional information and description. In one stroke of genius in lieu of the narration that is present in the manga, creators of the show came up with a regularly appearing character named Tina who reveals facts about the Toriko world, as well as seasonal promotional campaigns and contests, after the end of each episode. In cases like these, the anime series would benefit by addition from subtraction, or at least, addition by less addition. By repeating such basic information to an exhaustive degree, television anime based on popular manga are often accused of being repetitive and dull by fans of more creative original animation, or anime series created with a limited, seasonal run. By the same token, through the removals of character ambiguities and reinforcement of personality stereotypes, the television anime can rob the characters of some of their unique flavor. Since writers are asked to make these episodes without contributing anything permanent, they must thus resort to repeating the same types of situations, the same character reactions, and even the same jokes between characters. Because of this repetition, the characters themselves become permanent fixtures in the land of Japanese television,

changing slowly or infrequently on a weekly timeframe. The television anime series thus indirectly accomplishes one of its central purposes, which is to repetitively expose its characters and their personalities to audiences on a regular basis.

Playoff: The Japanese Weltanschauung

When the writers are at their best, however, they can create entirely new worlds and ideas that may even rival any of the clever creations from the original mangaka. Unlike the story arc and plot development of *Toriko*, these more creative moments are typically reflected in what can be called the “world elements” of *Toriko*. While *Toriko*’s story is cemented in the manga’s narrative, *Toriko*’s world is much more fertile for expansion and interpretation. In Japan, the strength of a world’s permanence or reality even has its own word, *sekaikan*. This typically translates to the German Weltanschauung of “worldview,” but when applied to the creative arts also connotes the “feeling” of a particular world. There is no single formula to producing successful *sekaikan* in a creative work since it is entirely dependent on the genre, medium, and format of the media being utilized. Much like in a work of good fantasy or science fiction, a strong world in a manga or anime need not be based in reality, though it should convey the feeling that it exists or has existed before the reader has picked up the text. Some manga will pay incredible attention to concept art or character design to convey the reality of its world in the details of the landscape of the geography or the clothing of the characters. *Toriko* has a long chronology, spanning hundreds of years and multiple histories to give its world a depth through the details that life has existed in its world apart from that depicted in its central storyline. With dark-fantasy media properties, this abundance of historical detail that provides a deep backstory to the central storyline is often referred to as the story’s “lore,” or its

accumulated traditions, facts, and beliefs. *Sekaikan* and lore are similar, though the former often manifests itself in life forms and character details as much as history. *Sekaikan* is depicted *Toriko* through the accumulation of “settings”: countless facts, images, and details about the world’s geography (locations) and wildlife (plants and beasts). While the manga spends a considerable amount of time introducing such settings in each chapter, the anime amplifies this lore and uses it to create a chain of creative purposes.

One way that the anime adds considerably to the lore of the series is through the creation of entirely new locations that do not appear in the manga. Since *Toriko* has such a massive world that is still mostly unexplored even in the manga, scriptwriters can come up with side journeys to lands that have not been conceived in the manga. These locales would serve as thematic backdrops for a series of episodes where the characters can encounter new wildlife. These episodes can display highly creative and beautiful art and ideas from writers and artists using merely the template of *Toriko* characters and world settings. In one example, scriptwriters created three original episodes during the fall broadcast season. Inspired by an incident in the manga where Toriko breaks off from his duties to hunt ingredients for his “full course menu,” the writers created a mountain for Toriko to visit which is 20,000 kilometers long. Its incredible length extends to the weather, which is perpetually set in the autumn season. As such, ingredients in the forest go through a slow and long ripening process, making them even more delicious. Ingredients and beasts on the island are available only in the autumn season, including the Supear, a super-sized, translucent pear-shaped super fruit which grows only once every 38 years. The three episodes, moreover, were animated without the manga as a reference point, so artists

provided lush background illustrations of colorful autumn foliage and landscapes, art which was and leaps beyond the simplistic backgrounds that appeared in most *Toriko* chapters.

Creations such as Autumn Mountain don't always remain solely part of the anime series as "filler." Creative ideas can find their way back to the original source, complicating the idea of the linear adaptation. In some cases, creative material from the anime cycles back to the manga, or is given a spin-off in the manga following a successful appearance first in the anime. Murayama created a "collaboration episode" with *Toriko* and *One Piece* (Episode 1 – "Toriko x One Piece Collaboration Special: Arrival on Gourmet Island! The Gourmet Hunter Toriko Appears!") which featured the Hungry-La Island, an island filled with mostly rare and delicious sweets. The island is rumored to house a precious dessert delicacy, but in fact, the island itself is the delicacy, with mountains shaped like pudding a la mode and a natural chocolate fountain. Before the episode aired, however, producers of the anime gave Murayama's idea to Shimabukuro, who himself created a manga chapter featuring an island with similar topography. Shimabukuro wanted to promote the creative efforts of the anime by referencing it in his manga, using the location and some of the wildlife of the anime episode, but with a separate story specific to the manga. With *Toriko*, the manga took the world settings created by the anime to generate its own side story and add to the *sekaikan* of the series as a whole.

Such synergistic adoption is not rare for anime adaptations of manga, and sometimes extends beyond content into the very visual style of the manga itself. For example, in a short documentary on the Fuji TV morning program *Mezamashi TV* which aired on December 2, 2014, the mangaka of *Naruto*, Kishimoto Masashi, admitted to changing the look of his characters to more closely match the character design of the

television anime adaptation. Kishimoto was willing to create greater synergy between the manga and the anime, going so far as to alter his style to fit the anime's design. One speculative reason for Kishimoto's willingness to adopt the anime's look is his adoration of the work of animator Nishio Tetsuya, who also functions as the anime's character designer.

When the manga generates ideas, however, they usually find their way to other media. In the best cases, a chain of ideas is created and a connective *sekaikan* is birthed from one media form to another in a process of incremental, ground-up, distributed authorship. This can be seen most clearly with the creation of the Megamori Island, a large archipelago in the shape of a cheeseburger. The island was created for the anime as another original episode (Episode 42 – “The Gourmet King Championship! Search for the Ultimate Sweets!”, 2011). Toriko and his friends must go to the island to find the legendary Grand Berry, a fruit filled with many flavors. The episode is inconsequential, with Toriko and his comrades being diverted into finding various sweets. The scriptwriters use the island to provide their own sweet concoctions and rare ingredients such as the Butterspice, a delicious killer butterfly, and Friction Sweet Potatoes, which are spuds that need to be cut with the most delicate slices lest they explode.

Once the episode aired, game designers for Namco Bandai decided to explore the island in more detail. They created a digital version of the island for a Playstation Portable game (*Toriko: Gourmet Battle!*, 2011), with each layer of the burger comprising a section of the island's layout. Players progress through the islands' deep layers, such as the Buns Jungle and Meat Caves, while fighting and collecting beasts in a manner similar to the best-selling Capcom action role-playing video game, *Monster Hunter* (2004). Players can use avatars of Toriko and his friends to explore each stage like a 3D platformer, fighting

various beasts from the manga to defeat and collect. The game sold fairly well and inspired a sequel of sorts for the Nintendo DS, *Toriko: Gourmet Survival!* (2012). The game's mechanics were pedestrian, but the interface featured a full-sized map of the world of *Toriko*, charting its islands and lands respective to one another. What made this feature notable was that nothing of its kind had theretofore appeared in the manga. When the world map was finally introduced in the manga, it matched the map that appeared in the game perfectly, suggesting that Shimabukuro or his editors supplied a world map for the game makers. Namco Bandai then went a step further: the company created a separate toy model of the island after the game's release. The model featured small figurines of the manga's characters, but also had additional areas that are not available in the video game, enticing people to buy the manga, anime, game, and toy to fully explore Megamori Island (see figure 11). Thus, the *Toriko* anime generated a single location that spread out into entirely different media that were increasingly less reliant on the original manga. The key to the connective thread to the transmedia was not the story, but the world; to fully explore the island, fans had to piece together different areas of the island through the ancillary media texts that provided paths into different areas of the manga's geography and, by extension, its *sekaikan*.

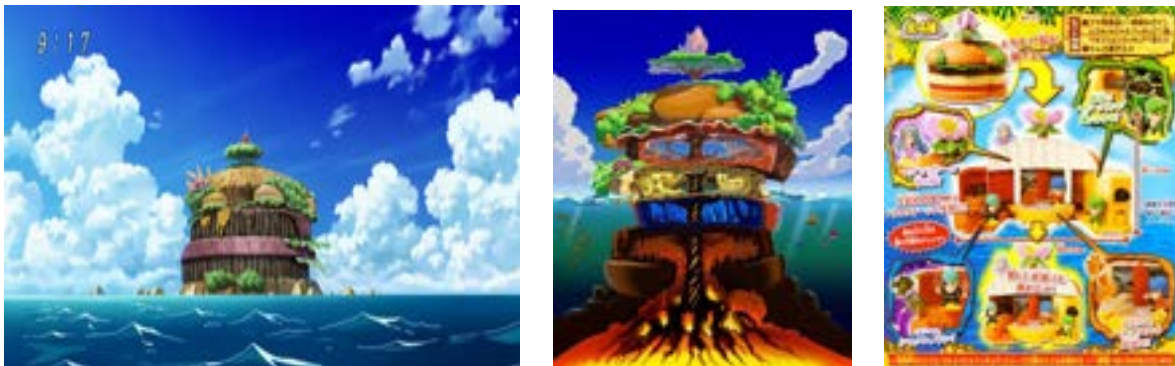


Figure 11: From anime...to video game...to toy

The previous examples show how professional creators expand the *sekaikan* of the manga, but manga-based transmedia differ significantly from Hollywood transmedia properties in their active mobilization of fan imaginations. Fans themselves can function not only as interpreters *of* the manga and anime, but also as creators who partake in generating new ideas *for* the manga. The extent of this participation is entirely dependent on the manga in question, though as delineated in the previous chapter, *Weekly Shōnen Jump* has a strong attitude toward raising and including readers in the creation process, even going so far as to hold contests and solicit submissions with professional editorial feedback. It should come as no surprise that *Shōnen Jump* manga have a history of featuring reader contributions in various ways through the magazine and *tankōbon*. Readers are often featured prominently in the sides and margins of the manga when they are profiled through mail-in letters; their photographs are displayed in the back pages of *tankōbon* alongside the written responses of the mangaka. With *Toriko*, however, fan participation is incorporated directly into the pages of the manga itself through the addition of fan-generated character details, creature creations, and ingredient information. The minutiae of characters amounts to an increase in the depth of the manga's *sekaikan*. The benefit to readers, as well as creators, is that the *sekaikan* can often be added to and expanded as the manga continues.

Every week, Shimabukuro must conceive of the manga's wildlife: new plants and beasts that populate the world of *Toriko*, some of which are the targeted prey of Toriko and his friends, some of which merely comprise the background and provide color to the world. Some chapters have half a dozen new chimeras made up of wild combinations of food and animals, creatures such as giant lobster-fish, or ingredients such as mushrooms made of

cream. Fans took inspiration from these ideas and began to mail in their own ideas of plants and beasts. Shimabukuro quickly decided that he would begin featuring some of these fan ideas, as the process of constantly coming up with new inventions each week became increasingly exhausting and difficult. In the thirty-fourth chapter, he illustrated the first fan contribution: the *shōyu-batta*, a grasshopper with a delicate orb of soy sauce perched upon its back which, when removed, was richer in soy flavor than any man-made distillation method. The creature was created by “YH,” a fan reader from the Saga prefecture, and it was credited to the reader through a footnote in the magazine, along with a comment from Shimabukuro imploring readers to continue sending in their own ideas.²⁶⁶ From there, reader ideas poured in every week, and editors would send nearly every idea to Shimabukuro to see if he wanted to include them in the manga. A crucial component of *Toriko*’s creative process was outsourced to intrepid fans each and every week, for the simple payment of a few *Toriko* stickers and seeing their name appear in their (and their friends’) favorite manga magazine.

The *tankōbon* and anime display the ideas of readers whose works were not singled out for inclusion in the manga magazine. Instead of a simple caption that displays their name, however, the full artwork and descriptions provided by reader mail-in submissions are included in the back pages of each *tankōbon*. These same back pages also include data and profiles of characters already introduced in the manga, such as their strength, intelligence, and special characteristics in relation to other characters in the story. In this way, Shimabukuro and the editors attempt to be transparent about fan ideas and contributions. For example, there are notations on each original reader contribution that has been included in the manga and in what chapter it appears. Shimabukuro frequently tweaks

²⁶⁶ Shimabukuro Mitsutoshi, “Komatsu and Sunny,” in *Toriko Vol. 4* (Tokyo: Shueisha, 2011), 179.

the artwork of the fan-submitted ideas as well, and the new drawings are held up to the old so that readers can compare how their artwork has (or in some cases, hasn't) changed depending on details the mangaka felt were more interesting or germane to the particular scenario. Scriptwriters also piggybacked off of these unused ideas to enhance the *sekaikan* of the anime. Before the beginning of each *Toriko* episode, two ingredients that have never appeared in the manga are introduced to viewers and given a lengthy description by the narrator to show the depths of undiscovered riches in *Toriko*'s world. Television sponsors of the show collected these ingredient ideas in a contest before the series even aired, and the writers selected from these hundreds of responses each week for every scenario they penned.²⁶⁷

While the fan contributions above are unique in their frequency and consistency for a mainstream *shōnen* manga, they are still corralled and vetted by editors, producers, writers, and mangaka. Not just any ideas can be accepted, and there are some explicit or inappropriate ideas that never make it past the editors. The extent of fan participation here is subject to a screening process that designates what is and isn't acceptable for the publication, and the locus of control are still with the creators of the official media associated with Shueisha. The extent to how many and which fans are actively participating in the creation of *sekaikan* is also limited. Though many readers mail in ideas with pennames, most readers submit their basic biographical information. The demographics of these readers tend to be young males in elementary and junior high, roughly ages six to fifteen years of age. This is Shueisha's target demographic for *Weekly Shōnen Jump* manga, suggesting *Toriko* is doing a good job at drumming up interest in its collective *sekaikan*

²⁶⁷ Unlike the manga magazine and *tankōbon* volumes, the viewer names cannot be listed, as their permission has not been obtained before the airing of the episode, but their ideas live on in animated form.

project. Young male readers are the ones most invested in unlocking the lore of the *Toriko* world, are most committed to adding to its detail and, to a greater extent, mastering its data and information.

Transformational Characters: Action-based Animation

The previous two sections focused on how the manga's database of story and world settings is expanded through the dispersed labor of manga crossover promos, anime scriptwriting and art design, and fan submissions. The final two sections will focus on how manga characters supply illustrators with a template of designs and personalities. In the process, these creators show how characters can be made into organisms of their own, with different creators imparting a sense of movement or feeling to characters according to their own interpretations. The first section will focus particularly on movement, something uniquely tasked to the anime and its animators' ability to provide movement to the manga's characters. As noted previously, manga is occasionally adapted into television dramas or live action feature films, and directors and writers must take creative liberties due to the large differences between the two mediums and the various production committees that are attached to such projects. But when a manga is adapted into an anime, the anime production typically lines up with the visual style of the original manga and its creator. This means that the original character designs from the manga remain the same in the transition to the anime, albeit with some alterations depending on the situation. For instance, character designers might simplify complex manga characters in order to make them easier to animate, or they might make rough or artistic manga designs cleaner and more brightly colored so that they can appeal to a larger audience. Regardless, the original designs are what must be worked with, and too much deviation from the manga's visual style is

generally frowned upon by audiences and producers. The manga becomes a stylistic blueprint for how the anime will proceed, and its visual style is kept more or less intact.

While cost and time management are the two most salient factors for anime production, the integrity of the characters and their importability is important to sponsors, authors, and fans who consume such characters in different media formats. When Tezuka Osamu adapted *Astro Boy* for a weekly television animation broadcast, he agreed to sell the project to Fuji TV at roughly one-third of the expected budget (approximately 500,000 yen each).²⁶⁸ In order to accomplish this feat, special animation techniques were employed to create weekly animation that featured the manga's iconic characters. Though these characters were taken out of the manga, their poses and designs remained intact and were given more dynamism through the use of "limited animation" techniques that were instrumental in animating still images. It is useful here to consider the concept of the "gutter," the blank spaces in-between the manga's panels. Both Scott McCloud and Will Eisner emphasize the author's ability to use the gutter as a way to signify action and movement beyond the boundaries of the panel.²⁶⁹ As noted previously, while *shōnen* manga can occasionally make imaginative use of the gutter, most manga rarely eclipse the borders due to the wealth of the information and story in each chapter, as well as a narrative style that relies on fixed framing. But the gutters are not simply empty space; when juxtaposed against other panels and images, they, too, become spaces that fill in the gaps between panels, portraying the movement of characters or the passing of time. The work of animators can be considered the work of activating the unused gutters of the manga's layouts, taking the dynamic compositions and cinematic framing of the original

²⁶⁸ Akita Takahiro, *"Koma" kara "firumu" e: manga to manga eiga* (From "Panel" to "Film": Manga and Manga Films) (Tokyo: NTT Shuppan, 2005), 153.

²⁶⁹ See Eisner, 39-51 and McCloud, 60-93.

panels and imparting additional material that enhance or expand our knowledge of the manga's characters and their world.

This is accomplished through the use of limited animation, or the process of reducing the overall number of drawings. In contrast to “full animation,” limited animation requires fewer drawings per second. Film is projected at twenty-four frames per second, but full animation only requires twelve drawings per second in order to produce smooth animation. This is called shooting “on twos,” and is the style of fluid animation that is typical of the so-called classical Disney style, which used twelve drawings per second.²⁷⁰ On the other hand, to limit the number and cost of cels, limited animation shoots “on threes” (*san-koma-tori*), which means it uses only eight drawings per second of film.²⁷¹ Limited animation is not exclusively used in Japanese anime, as it is most commonly recognized in the 1960s cartoons of Hanna Barbera such as *The Flintstones* (1960-66) or *The Yogi Bear Show* (1961-62), as well as contemporary cartoon sitcoms like *The Simpsons* (1989-ongoing) and *Family Guy* (1999-ongoing), but it has come to be understood as the defining visual feature of its anime's look and movement. Today, limited animation has been described as the biggest way to distinguish Japanese anime from the animation of other nations.²⁷² This method reduces the number of total drawings, especially that of the in-betweens, which are the drawings that animate the foundational drawings of character movement, called key frames. While limited animation is typically seen as lower quality than full animation, it improves the flow from manga to anime for several reasons. First, it

²⁷⁰ Chris Pallant calls this style “Disney formalism.” See Pallant, *Demystifying Disney: A History of Disney Feature Animation* (New York: Continuum, 2011), 35-53.

²⁷¹ Tsugata Nobuyuki, *Nihon animeeshon no chikara: hachijūgo nen no rekishi o tsuranuku futatsu no jiku* (The Power of Animation: Two Axes Running Through 85 Years of History) (Tokyo: NTT Shuppan, 2004), 32.

²⁷² See Maureen Furniss, *Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics* (New Barnet: John Libbey Publishing, 1998), 133-149.

saves time, as animators can concentrate on key frames rather than the tedious work of in-betweening that makes movement more fluid. Second, it saves cost, reducing the total frames and labor necessary for a single episode, an essential goal for the production of weekly animation. Third, by following the rules, or elements, of limited animation, animators can more easily repurpose the manga form and space.

Episode directors of *Toriko* take the manga's chapter and create storyboards and layouts based off of the manga's panels, but the manga blueprint can only provide the parameters for any single anime episode. With the proper setups and transitions following a series of established animation rules, directors and animators can take important panels from the manga and give them the appearance of movement based on their storyboard. Animators, most notably former Mushi Pro animation director Yamamoto Eiichi, have diagrammed some of the most utilized of these rules.²⁷³ One way in which this movement and action is portrayed is through the abundance of layers. For example, *hiki-cel*, or pull cels, involves pulling background art behind a foreground image in order to give the impression of movement. Another method called *kurikaeshi*, or repetition, involves looping a single set of images repeatedly; when combined with pull cels, this technique can create scenes much longer than the labor needed to draw them. In one scene in the manga, Toriko sits atop his massive wolf, Terry, as he rides to a village.²⁷⁴ The scene is simply illustrated in a single panel, with horizontal speed lines and a small stream of dust indicating the rapidity at which Terry is moving. But in the anime, this movement is communicated through pull cels: a single background of a horizon of a cloudy night sky is slowly pulled to the right of the screen, which creates the appearance that Terry appears to be running

²⁷³ Ibid, 141.

²⁷⁴ Shimabukuro Mitsutoshi, "Gourmet Santa," in *Toriko Vol. 20* (Tokyo: Shueisha, 2012).

toward the left of the screen. Another layer slides a foreground of buttes and rocky formations rapidly to increase the appearance of Terry's speed, as if he is moving like a blur. Terry himself, meanwhile, moves his legs and tail through the air to simulate his running. These backgrounds, as well as Terry's movements, are no more than a half dozen images, and yet they account for six seconds and 144 frames.²⁷⁵

Another way to capture movement is drawing out movement from still images. *Tome-e*, or stop images, are single still frames that are used when animation is not required, such as pans over background art, crowd scenes, or close ups of a character's eyes while they are speaking. Japanese animators also typically use many *cuts*, or "shots," which are shorter in duration, in lieu of longer shots which require more animation. The same aforementioned chapter of the *Toriko* manga opens with eighteen panels spread over three pages that establish the scene and plot of the episode. The anime opens with twenty-three images spread over 103 seconds and over 2400 frames, which equates to roughly four and a half seconds per image. While each sequence will vary depending on the action and movement required, the opening scene limits the appearance of movement due to a combination of stop images and short shots. The establishing shot of the chapter, a wide shot of a solitary craggy island, is broken up into three different shots. Roughly three seconds apiece, the first shot is framed in roughly the same angle as the manga, but the second shot cuts to a closer view: a ledge of the island and a dimly lit warehouse. The third shot cuts to a medium shot of the now more brightly lit warehouse with stacks of large packages outside. The fourth and final shot cuts to a long shot of Toriko and his comrades.

²⁷⁵ Thomas Lamarre has dedicated a large section of his book *The Anime Machine* to the efficient use in anime of sliding layers. In Lamarre's view, anime's heavy and artistic reliance on sliding panels to create the illusion of movement is what distinguishes Japanese animation from other forms of limited animation around the world. See the chapter on "Compositing," 26-44.

Each image is accompanied by vertical or horizontal panning of the camera, so that parts of the image can be “stretched” through slow pans that track across the screen and reveal more of the image or characters. Not only does this rapid-fire succession of frozen images stretch the single panel of the manga, they are also more effective than the manga in establishing the scene, fleshing out the details and atmosphere of the island, and placing the main characters location within the island itself.

Specific animation techniques can also create movement from fewer drawings. *Bubun*, or sectioning, is used to animate only the part of the image that requires movement, such as an arm or mouth of a given character. *Kenyo*, or the “bank system,” recycle cels from earlier in the episode or even from previous episodes. These are frequently used tools in a manga like *Toriko*, where characters wear the same costumes and sport the same hairstyles every chapter. Background art in the anime is frequently lifted from some of the earliest episodes in the series, and character poses are reused countless throughout different episodes through sectioning. While the manga can afford more dynamic compositions with characters, using a variety of angles even for scenes of dialogue, the anime frequently sticks to tight framing of the characters in close-ups that capture the characters from the head to the shoulders. The character’s head remains stationary while the mouth flaps move during moments of dialogue. These shots are then kept in a “bank” and used repeatedly through the episode, with backgrounds swapped out for scene changes. Combined with short shots, these cuts can run the risk of becoming too rapid and disorienting, as heads can begin to float in space without the proper medium or wide shots to balance the shots and orient the characters in their space.

Limited animation is essential to creating the illusion of character movement in anime while still retaining the original manga's character designs, poses, and dialogue. However, this does not mean that animators cannot create movement within the characters themselves. Takashi Murakami has argued for a style in anime called "superflat," exemplified by the work of the animator Kanada Yoshinori, which flattens the foreground and background for the purpose of fixating the eye on rapid movement across the screen. These composited structures, Murakami argues, are characteristic of a Japanese aesthetic that focuses structural composition on flat images stretching back to the time of Hokusai's Edo-era woodblock prints.²⁷⁶ However, Murakami's stance would preclude the movement of sliding images and backgrounds at all, an issue Thomas Lamarre attempts to correct in describing the work of anime and animators as "full-limited animation." Lamarre argues that the tension between stillness and movement in anime is not a limitation and that if we understand how techniques of limited and full animation work together in the arsenal of the animator, then "we can understand anime as generating movement in a very different way, one whose dynamism opens the image in very different directions."²⁷⁷ For example, since the schedule of anime production makes consistent full animation impossible, some talented animators tend to use more detailed animation in small chunks when they feel it is necessary for a particular scene. These small displays of rapid full animation reveal how animators imprint their own sense of movement and timing onto characters, making some of the manga's sequences more intense and personal in the anime, and also showing how the character's dynamism relies on human interpretation. When different animators render

²⁷⁶ See Takashi Murakami, "Suupaafuratto Nihon bijutsu ron" and "A Theory of Superflat Japanese Art," in *Super Flat*, ed. Murakami Takashi (Tokyo: MADRA Publishing, 2000), 8-25.

²⁷⁷ Lamarre, 191.

the character differently, as Lamarre states, “the anime character begins to operate in different avatars and renditions, preparing for its leap across media.”²⁷⁸

Kagawa Hisashi, a veteran character designer and animator who also serves as the chief animation director for the *Toriko* anime series, animates or supervises many of these sequences. Kagawa has a reputation for rapid, fluid movements dating back to his work as animation director of the original *Sailor Moon* and *Revolutionary Girl Utena*. One of his most elaborate sequences in *Toriko* involves a battle between a comrade of Toriko named Sunny and a villain of the Bishoku-kai named Tommyrod. The manga battle takes place over four chapters, with panel after panel sequencing the movements of the characters and the slow attrition of the fight in bouts of one-upmanship. A defining feature of the battle is Sunny’s special power, as he can manipulate the trajectory and reach of his long, colorful hair. In the manga, Sunny’s hair becomes the focal point, as it slowly evolves during the course of combat to the point where it can coil itself into points, attacking and devouring its prey like a snake.

Sunny’s template in the manga provided Kagawa the platform to use his animation skills, as Kagawa’s animation of Sunny’s hair gives it a depth and life that is unable to be imparted simply through sliding panels or other limited animation techniques. All four of the battle’s manga chapters take place in but a single episode of the anime, with the writers and directors condensing the plot into twenty-two minutes. It is up to Kagawa and his team of animators to render these movements as quickly as possible, while also imparting a sense of the energy of the battle to the audience. The episode begins typically enough, with both Sunny and Tommyrod setting up the action through long sequences of dialogue. Most of these scenes have very little character movement and rely on limited animation

²⁷⁸ Lamarre, 204.

techniques. However, when Sunny's hair takes on its "Satan" hue, Kagawa changes the animation style. For his first attack, for example, the camera begins on Sunny's eye and swiftly pans out into a wide shot of Sunny's huge frame in less than two seconds. This quick reverse zoom imparts a sense of Sunny's own increased speed, as well as a heightened drama of the action, like a gunslinger drawing his revolver on an opponent. Sunny's face, frame, and twisting, snarling hair are, moreover, rendered in bolder lines and shadows to give the character a depth and ferocity separate the thin lines of his ordinary animated design. This bold design conveys expressiveness, with painterly brush strokes emphasizing the form and beauty of the medium (see figure 12).



Figure 12: Sunny in the transition to anime

Kagawa renders Sunny's hair zig-zagging across the frame, moving and reacting in unpredictable ways. He does this largely through the timing of his animation, slowing down and starting movements before they are fully complete in order to create a jerky rhythm to the hair itself. This style of animation, known as the "Kanada School," was pioneered by the animator Kanada Yoshinori to give his characters a more elastic sense of movement that retooled the "squash and stretch" style of early Disney animators for limited animation. Kanada developed his own sense of unique timing that stretched characters bodies and snapped them back into place for the character to hold a trademark pose. This dynamic of stretching and snapping of the character and his body is just one example of

how anime is able to take the manga character and give it life, while also keeping to the integrity of its original form. This is in keeping with what the animation scholar Paul Wells calls the “acting” of animation, where “the character may be understood through its costume or construction, its ability to gesture and move, and the associative aspects of its design.”²⁷⁹ Kagawa’s animation, like Kanada’s, creates a series of rapid movements for Sunny’s hair that make it appear to have a life of its own as it darts across the screen or splits into hundreds of tiny strands and segments. He also introduces rapid cuts – twelve shots in a twenty second sequence – which blur the sequencing of the action, shooting lines across the screen in some shots that last no more than a second. The sequences also display dynamic camera movement and suggestive framing, with the shots quickly zooming out during moments where Sunny’s hair threatens to spread out of the shot (and very often does). Kagawa animates Sunny as if he can’t contain the character within the bounds of his screen, with the character almost appearing to operate independently of the background world. The contrast to the rest of the episode is jarring, to say the least, though it is clear that Kagawa viewed this sequence as an important one, putting in an incredible amount of work to impart the impact of a pivotal scene. Had the writers and directors decided to stretch the four manga chapters into multiple anime episodes, Kagawa might not have viewed the scene as an opportunity to impart Sunny with such dramatic movement. Churning through the manga’s panels in this manner is not constructive for “stretching” the manga out into many episodes, but Kagawa’s brief sequence gives the episode an electricity that is consequently missing from other, staid episodes in the television anime (and from most television anime based on long-running manga). The most memorable and interesting sequences of *Toriko* are produced like this, with efficient sliding layers of

²⁷⁹ Paul Wells, *Understanding Animation* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 104.

beautiful backgrounds punctuated by bursts of dynamic, volatile, and unpredictable character animation.

Affective Characters: Emotional *Dōjinshi*

This final section will look at how fan creators take the *Toriko* characters and form new stories based on their personalities and designs. Blurring – of genres, boundaries, and official/fan-fiction work – is one of the chief characteristics of Japanese transmedia, even when the media spreads to boundaries beyond what the official creators monitor and control. Though young boys seem to be the most active readers of *Toriko*, older readers explore *Toriko* in ways that are not available through the manga or anime’s commercial channels. Contrary to the assumption that *shōnen* manga is exclusively for teenage boys, *shōnen* manga is also widely popular with women through the parodying of their stories and characters in amateur fan-fiction called *dōjinshi*. *Dōjinshi* – which translates literally to “self-published work” – and sales of its related character merchandise accounts for over 10 billion yen in sales every year.²⁸⁰ Contrary to the stereotype that fandom in anime and manga is populated by young men, more than 70 percent of *dōjinshi* authors are women in their twenties and thirties.²⁸¹ *Dōjinshi* parodies of mainstream manga primarily explore identities and desires that are not expressed in the original works. Oftentimes, these desires take the form of erotic or sexually-charged romances that portray male-male homosexual relationships. This form of fan-fiction is known as *slash* fiction in the West, and typically *yaoi* or BL (boys’ love) in Japanese manga, though the two terms are not exactly interchangeable. Western scholars of *slash* have defined the term as “a form of fan fiction

²⁸⁰ Komiketto Junbikai, *Komikku maaketto 30’s fairu: 1975-2005 komikku maaketto sanjū shūnen kinen shiryōshu taisei* (Comiket 30’s File: Commemorative Collection of Documents for Comiket’s Thirtieth anniversary, 1975–2005) (Tokyo: Komiketto, 2005).

²⁸¹ Ibid, 290. Also see Lam Fan-Yi, “Comic Market: How the World’s Biggest Amateur Comic Fair Shaped Japanese *Dōjinshi* Culture,” *Mechademia* 5 (2010).

(i.e. fiction written by and for fans on a not-for-profit basis) that centers around romantic and/or sexual encounters and relationships between same-sex characters drawn from the mass media.”²⁸² Japanese erotic fan-fiction, on the other hand, covers a range of different homosexual fan-fiction targeting different genres and female demographics. As Kumiko Saito has made clear, there are many distinctions regarding the protean nature of Japanese slash.²⁸³ The many Japanese terms for slash (*yaoi*, BL, *bishōnen*, etc.) do not distinguish between original and secondary fiction, indicating Japanese slash covers a wide range from original material for mainstream publications to *dōjinshi* fan-fiction parodies of mainstream texts. Japanese slash also covers a wider range of genres, similar to the range of genres covered in *shōnen manga*, and unlike Western slash, which typically tends to revolve around a few select texts such as *Star Trek*, *The Lord of the Rings*, or *Harry Potter*. Most importantly, most Japanese slash is adapted from existing manga and anime, meaning that the slash takes its form in manga narratives, rather than the prose fiction typical of Western slash.

An overwhelming amount of *shōnen* manga from *Weekly Shōnen Jump* is parodied in *dōjinshi*, with the annual Comic Market – Japan’s largest amateur comic market – designating specially-marked “genres” to *Shōnen Jump* titles such as *Prince of Tennis*, *YuYu Hakusho*, and *Gintama*. The content of these parodies range from simple comedies to more elaborate erotic romances, though the plot elements are almost entirely dependent on the characters and world settings of the original series. Why would a magazine that consists of 90 percent male readers and 80 percent teenagers provide such fertile ground for

²⁸² Daniel Allington, “‘How Come Most People Don’t See it?’ Slashing *The Lord of the Rings*,” *Social Semiotics* 17, no.1 (2007): 43.

²⁸³ Kumiko Saito, “Desire in Subtext: Gender, Fandom, and Women’s Male-Male Homoerotic Parodies in Contemporary Japan,” *Mechademia* 8 (2011): 175-76.

parodies by women over twenty? According to cultural journalist Watanabe Yumiko, *shōnen* manga appeal to female readers through the characters. The characters in *Shōnen Jump*, in particular, work hard to overcome obstacles, share deep homosocial friendships, and develop respect and/or affection for their opponents who they seek to defeat.²⁸⁴ With *shōnen* manga, these friendships are the core and meaning of the battle, where strength and technique is mobilized to protect loved ones or sacrifice for the good of others. The emotional and psychological aspects of these relationships are at the forefront of *dōjinshi* erotic fiction. In many *yaoi* and BL parodies, these relationships often pair a male hero with another male comrade, or the hero's nemesis. The content of the stories focus on the equal relationship and gender ambiguities between the characters, and their mutual affinity often changes to a deeper love through battle or competitions that emphasize both of their capabilities.

The appeal of *yaoi* and BL *dōjinshi* are in their appropriation of masculine characters for relationships that display equal standing, though how these relationships play out in the *dōjinshi* is often through the reinforcement of traditional gender roles and representations. *Yaoi* and BL are often advertised through pairings denoted with an “x,” such as Toriko x Komatsu, or Coco x Toriko. The former name in the pairing denotes the *semé*, or aggressor role, while the latter denotes the *uké*, or passive receiver role. The *semé* thus reflects the traditional masculine role and the *uké* displays traditional feminine behavior in the two's relationship. This behavior manifests in various situations typical of male-female relations in romantic comedies, and also in the sex acts themselves, where deviant sexual acts are rarely portrayed. The representation of the characters also reflect

²⁸⁴ Watanabe Yumiko, “Seishonen mangakara miru yaoi” (Looking at *yaoi* from the Perspective of Boys' and Young Men's Manga), *Eureka* 29, no. 7 (June 2007): 73-74.

traditional gender dynamics, as male-female sexual positions are reinforced through displays of sexual dominance and submissiveness, where the *uké* rarely has his back to the *semé*, nor engages in fellatio. Thus, as characters might be equal in their mutual affection and respect, their genders are fixed in dominant and subordinate roles in their sex scenes.

While these representations might reinforce traditional gender roles and appear on the face of it to reinforce mainstream sexual relations, the *dōjinshi* typically identify with both positions. *Toriko dōjinshi* tend to mix identification points to a high degree. For example, the small Komatsu is often paired with Toriko or his masculine comrades in the role of the *uké*, assuming the feminine role of caretaker. Playing off of his character as a chef and supporter of the protagonist Toriko's heroic exploits, Komatsu is frequently subjected to the dominance of stronger partners. These pairings, however, are not limited to Masculine Character x Komatsu, as Toriko and his friends are more frequently paired with each other, and the role of *semé* and *uké* is often interchangeable depending on the author. Toriko, for example, assumes the role of dominant father figure to Komatsu, nurturing older brother to the sensitive Coco, and submissive sibling to the barbaric Zebra over the course of three different *dōjinshi*. While the pairings are dependent on the characters' original personalities, different aspects of their personalities can be emphasized and brought out dependent on the pairings. Furthermore, unlike male pornography which caters to men by rarely showing the male subject's face or the female object's viewpoint, *yaoi* and BL frequently display panels of characters juxtaposed to show both of their reactions in and out of the sex acts. In one scene, an intimate moment between Toriko and Coco is followed by a pair of panels that show both of their reaction shots in a shot-reverse shot manner. Saito calls this the answer to the "homosexual's heterosexuality" paradox, arguing that the

display of both characters' viewpoints asks the reader to identify with both the subject and object of love.²⁸⁵ The characters are shown in a shot-reverse shot pair of panels that show both of their feelings, reinforcing the equal relationship of the pair despite the clear gender roles they assume. While this dual portrayal is a contradiction, female fan-fiction writers embrace these contradictions in order to negotiate their subordinate positions in society. By challenging patriarchal standards while simultaneously adapting to them, these fan-fiction writers attempt to work in-between the nexus of male and female desires.

Unlike the fan contributions mailed into the manga magazine, it is debatable how much of these fan interpretations make their way into the original manga. Mangaka rarely directly address *dōjinshi* spin-offs of their work, but can frequently respond through adding “fan service” in the form of BL-directed content. One example of this is through changing character designs to more attractive forms. This can be seen most conspicuously in the evolution of the character of Komatsu in the *Toriko* manga. Komatsu in the manga began as a meek sidekick character with features – such as wide-set eyes, large nostrils, a military haircut, miniature stature, and utilitarian clothing – that suggested he was an unattractive figure in the Gourmet World. His expressions were frequently deformed to express the character as a figure of comic relief. In later chapters, however, Komatsu appears as a more attractive character, particularly in alterations to his nose, eyes, hair, height, and muscularity that convey his status as a beautiful boy (see figure 13). Narratively, Komatsu also becomes a great point of affection for Toriko and his comrades, where the hunters “take turns” defending him from dangerous monsters. In the opening scene of one chapter, the comrades are covered in tears – or some watery substance – when a near-dead Komatsu

²⁸⁵ Saito, 185.

is brought back to life.²⁸⁶ Each panel in the scene shows Komatsu embracing each of the men, all of them dripping in “tears.” Such displays of affection convey the evolution of the characters relationships towards one another within the narrative, but in service of affective responses that are typical of *dōjinshi* manga. Komatsu’s changes in character design can also be interpreted as how Toriko and his comrades’ attitude toward him changes from that of an ugly little toad to a beautiful friend who complements, rather than burdens them. In these ways, the content and design of Shimabukuro’s *Toriko* has arguably adjusted, consciously or unconsciously, to account for circulating BL interpretations.



Figure 13: Side by side Komatsu in Volume 1 vs. Volume 30

When asked to explain these desires and their enthusiasm for *Toriko*, however, most *dōjinshi* mangaka have difficulty articulating what it was that inspired them to want to write *dōjinshi* about *Toriko*. One illustrator with the penname HAZ said that she was drawn to the *sekaikan* of *Toriko* and its constant creativity. Though she has not written in to the magazine her own ideas for creatures and ingredients, she told me, “I loved the concept of new discoveries being introduced every week.”²⁸⁷ HAZ incorporates this aspect into her own *dōjinshi*, albeit with some racier ideas that would not make it into the original manga. HAZ here actively seeks to contribute her own ideas for *Toriko*’s *sekaikan*, while resisting what editors and censors at the manga and anime companies deem appropriate for mass

²⁸⁶ Shimabukuro Mitsutoshi, “Collapsing in Tears,” in *Weekly Shōnen Jump* No. 17 (23 March 2015).

²⁸⁷ HAZ, interview by the author, August 2014.

consumption. Many others, such as AquaAqua, a writer of *Toriko* fan-fiction, could not say exactly what it was that made them inspired, but that they felt a “burning” (*moeru*) sensation when reading the manga. This sensation is akin to the feeling of adoration or lust for another human being, but many writers and illustrators I spoke to such as AquaAqua described their feelings for *Toriko* and its characters in these terms. “It’s like a boyfriend or a lover,” she said. “I can’t explain why I like it so much, but I feel good when I read it and when I write about it.”²⁸⁸

It is less important that *Toriko* fan-fiction writers know why they feel a certain way about the characters of the manga than that they have these feelings at all. Several scholars have advanced theories for Japanese female attraction to homosexual characters in fiction.²⁸⁹ Mark McClelland echoes the common argument that “these beautiful young men are projections of the largely female audience’s own femininity, the idea being that in a society as sexist as Japan, women can only identify with truly autonomous figures in male form.”²⁹⁰ Yet, the different ways in which *dōjinshi* mangaka portray both the feminine and ultra-masculine characters of *Toriko* suggest that the loci of desire and identification are not fixed. As Kazumi Nagaike argues, the terrain of such writers is a “multiple, shifting, and synchronic process of identification experienced by female readers during the act of

²⁸⁸ Aqua Aqua, interview by the author, August 2014.

²⁸⁹ See, for example, Tomoko Aoyama, “Male Homosexuality as Treated by Japanese Women Writers,” in *The Japanese Trajectory: Modernization and Beyond*, eds. Gavan McCormack and Yoshio Sugimoto (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 186-204 and Midori Matsui, “Little Girls Were Little Boys: Displaced Femininity in the Representation of Homosexuality in Japanese Girls’ Comics,” in *Feminism and the Politics of Difference*, eds. Sneja Marina Gunew and Anna Yeatman (Halifax: Fernwood, 1993), 177-96.

²⁹⁰ Mark McClelland, “Why are Japanese Girls Comics Full of Boys Bonking?”, *Refractory: A Journal of Entertainment Media* 10 (December 2006): 12.

reading yaoi manga.”²⁹¹ Thus, multiple character types from the porous aesthetics of the franchise are available to the *dōjinshi* mangaka for the purpose of handling differing registers of attraction and desire. That *dōjinshi* mangaka felt the appropriateness of comparing their relationship with the manga characters to that of a real-life relationship underscores the deep emotional investments fans have in these characters. What makes *dōjinshi* mangaka unique among fan-fiction writers is their strong attachment to the designs of the original, while wishing to more fully express their interpretations of those designs through their own versions of the characters personalities and relationships.

Conclusion

Female fan-fiction writers and male mail-in writers both contribute to the dispersed text of *Toriko* in their own ways. While young male readers seek to add to the *Toriko* lore and *sekaikan* by adding data through the official channels, female readers add psychological and emotional affect to *Toriko*’s characters and *sekaikan* through self-published *dōjinshi* back channels. Both groups of readers are able to add to the text something they felt was lacking from before. While fan submissions are able to contribute to the “official” manga and its transmedia offshoots, female fan-fiction writers are able to attach entirely new dimensions to the characters that were left unanswered in the production process, but which reflect their own desires in some unarticulated form. Both fan contributions speak to the ways in which *Toriko* and other *shōnen* manga are generative databases of content beyond the realms of mangaka, writers, producers, and directors, providing a buffet of options that creators can pick and choose to make the meal they desire. At the same time, animation writers and directors are asked to use their considerable skills

²⁹¹ Kazumi Nagaïke, “Perverse Sexualities, Perverse Desires: Representations of Female Fantasies and Yaoi Manga as Pornography Directed at Women,” *U.S.-Japan Women’s Journal* no. 25 (December 2003): 88.

to keep the integrity of the manga's form and design, but also to generate new experiences through stylistic and narrative additions in areas of the animating process such as storyboards, key frames, in-between animation, coloring, art design, camera and editing work, and digital visual and sound effects. Their decisions can add personality and backstory to the still images of the manga by creating additional back or side-stories or imparting dynamic movement unique to particular characters through both full and limited animation techniques.

Shōnen manga, interpreted by a variety of audiences and backgrounds, is now less a stable genre than a mode of production that represents certain personalities, incorporates suggestive designs, and evokes certain feelings. This case study of *Toriko* shows that while Shimabukuro Mitsutoshi is the author of the *Toriko* manga, many different creators take authorship of their roles in expanding the manga into a transmedia franchise. This sort of co-creation across multiple networks, professions, and geographies is engendered by the database of the manga text, providing a platform of characters and world settings for creators to take and amplify through their own creative interfaces. The manga's dispersed text is able to exist because of this hidden energy behind the manga itself, but also due to a media environment that allows for the simultaneous and instantaneous re-interpretation of existing media texts. The manga's relationship to anime in this respect is extremely important, for it relies on a network of professionals working closely together to produce more expensive and elaborate anime episodes based off of the manga's output every week.

While the first half of this dissertation focused on the generative potential of *shōnen* manga and its related transmedia that expands from the manga database, the next two chapters will show how transmedia can originate without source material in the form of a

best-selling manga or novel, the sort of close, committee-based creation that is characteristic of the Japanese “media mix.” The second half of this dissertation will thus look at the transmedia of what is called in Japan *original animation*, or animated material that is conceived without any prior sources, and a case study of the *shōjo* anime media mix. In the case of media mix that revolves around anime, even tighter networks of people must work closely together to create characters and worlds, though this collective work is contingent on the shared interests and creativity of various industries, participants, and environments. This highly collaborative co-creation and one of its successes will form the basis of the next two chapters.

Chapter 4 – Anime Production and Toei Animation Studio

When I talk to inexperienced animators or producers, they always have a lot of ideas about what they want to do and how different it is from other stuff. But I don't really care what they have to say about their great idea if it isn't accompanied by a way to generate money for its staff. What we do isn't all that different from what Shakespeare did with his theatre troupes; we need to feed our creators. When Othello was showing at the Globe Theatre in London, vendors waited outside selling handkerchiefs. The basics of making art profitable haven't changed.

– Anime producer Seki Hiromi²⁹²

We will be the Disney of the East.

– Okawa Hiroshi, founding president of Toei Dōga

The previous two chapters focused on the production of *shōnen* manga and its concordant transmedia. While manga is reliant on a small group of craftsmen for its origins, a dispersed network of creators take the elements of the manga for their own creative purposes and provide interfaces into a powerful database of ideas and imagination. Manga transmedia, in other words, is strongly determined by the object of the manga – its form, characters, content, and settings that are provided by and developed through the manga magazine itself. Given the influence of Shueisha and *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, and an example in Shimabukuro Mitsutoshi's battle manga *Toriko*, it is tempting to see the manga as forcing creative efforts in certain directions, particularly that of animation. But it would be a mistake to apply this sort of determinism to all transmedia, since it would be ignoring the protean forms that Japanese transmedia takes and continues to take with the development of new media economics, technologies, and audiences, as well as changing socio-cultural responses to emergent media forms. It is here where I would like to turn to the production of animation in Japan for television and film, reliant as it is on the same method as manga of using hand-drawn pictures to create stories out of original characters and settings, but

²⁹² Seki, spoken comments at a talk titled “Animation sangyō: hitto no himitsu” (Animation Industry: The Secret of a Hit), 12 October 2014.

through different social and institutional structures that must support a large network of creators.

If Japanese transmedia relied on manga such as *Tetsuwan Atomu* in the 1960s to create characters and worlds, then it was equally reliant on anime to present those characters to a mass audience, spreading the character designs to mobile formats. As shown in the previous two chapters, while manga is often the brainchild of a single or duo mangaka, with a supportive environment regulated by editors and staffed by assistants, anime disperses the content and the labor. Anime storylines can be conceived in dedicated studios in western Tokyo, scripted and storyboarded in discrete boardrooms in Osaka or Kyoto, animated by key-framers in Fukuoka or Sendai, outsourced to in-betweeners in the Philippines or colorists in South Korea, and voice-recorded in any urban area with a large soundproof booth.

Studios are responsible for most adaptations of manga, which fuels many of the large *shōnen*-based media mix franchises. Buoyed by Tezuka's success in adapting *Atomu* to Japanese television, studios began creating television anime based off of manga properties as early as 1963. Animation companies like Toei Doga, advertising agencies like TCJ, and manga studios like Tatsunoko all began producing television anime, leading to the "first anime boom" towards the end of the 1960s.²⁹³ Towards the end of the 1970s, studios such as Sunrise and Office Academy began to create propriety anime series that did not rely on an existing manga source, creating a "second anime boom."²⁹⁴ With increasing amounts of anime produced in the 1980s through the mid 2000s through additional revenue

²⁹³ Tsugata Nobuyuki, "Anime no rekishi" (The History of Anime), in *Anime-gaku* (Anime Studies) eds. Takahashi Mitsuteru and Tsugata Nobuyuki (Tokyo: NTT Shuppan, 2011), 28.

²⁹⁴ Masuda, 122-23.

streams such as original video animation, anime grew to an industry worth over three trillion yen.²⁹⁵

Manga is the source for a great deal of television anime series, with roughly 40% of series using a pre-existing manga to produce a series.²⁹⁶ However, while most anime franchises are adapted from manga sources, studios and the workers employed or contracted within create a number of original anime properties as well. Termed “original anime,” these titles account for roughly 20-30% of television series and do not rely on a pre-existing source and are instead planned and developed as anime from their inception. In the cases of “original anime,” franchises typically count less on television ratings advertising revenue, and instead rely on revenues from the royalties derived from ancillary merchandise such as toys, cards, music, events, and sales of DVDs and Blu-Ray discs. While a manga somewhat guarantees a built-in audience, an original production can prove much more financially lucrative to the studio since they are not beholden to the mangaka and publisher’s copyright. For example, Sunrise’s long-running *Mobile Suit Gundam* franchise produced 80 billion yen in revenue in 2014 for its parent company Bandai-Namco, with over 18 billion of that coming from toy sales.²⁹⁷ The revenue from *Gundam* is over double that of the revenues from Bandai-Namco’s two largest manga-based properties, *One Piece* (26.8 billion) and *Dragon Ball* (11.4 billion) combined. A more recent original anime, *Puella Magi Madoka Magica*, produced over 40 billion yen in revenue from merchandise (figures, toys, books, school supplies, etc.) for its producers, Aniplex and Shaft, with nearly

²⁹⁵ Ibid, 115.

²⁹⁶ Tanaka, 50.

²⁹⁷ Namco Bandai Holdings, *Financial Highlights for the Fiscal Year Ending March 2014*, 8 May 2014.

half a million sales of DVD and Blu-Rays.²⁹⁸ These productions were made through the collaborative efforts of animation production staff, advertising agencies, television networks, merchandising licensors, or toy manufacturers. Many of these titles were in the boys' market of transforming robots and machines, such as Sunrise's *Gundam* franchise, with an alternative strand of transforming magical girls, such as Aniplex/Shaft's *Madoka Magica*.²⁹⁹

This chapter and the next will examine Japanese transmedia that does not rely on manga for its creation and dissemination: the transmedia of "original anime." In this chapter, I look at the culture of animation production behind several television shows and its principal creators. My analysis is centered on the production company that developed the anime adaptation of Shimabukuro Mitsutoshi's *Toriko*, as well as countless other series since its creation in 1956: Toei Animation Studios. Japan's oldest and largest animation production company, Toei Animation has a long lineage of animating television series adapted from *Weekly Shōnen Jump* manga like *Toriko*, as well as other global hits such as *Dragon Ball Z*, *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, and *One Piece*. Toei has also created countless animation features, many of them productions without source material spawned from the imaginations of producers, directors, writers, and animators that need not be *shōnen* in concept. Indeed, Toei original anime television series and feature-length films are targeted towards young children, girls, and even adults. The variety of productions at Toei Animation is thus more

²⁹⁸ Takata Manabu, "Sekai no otaku miryoku intel ga ninki anime to korabo: 400 okuen ichiba tsukutta 'Mahō Shōjo Madoka Magica'" (The Appeal of World Otaku, Intel Collaborates with Popular Anime: The 40 Billion Yen Market that "Puella Magi Madoka Magica" Built), in *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, 9 July 2013.

²⁹⁹ Robot series increasingly incorporated toy designs that became ever more complex, while magical girl series included clothing such as tiaras and wands. For a brief account of how boys' anime and toy media evolved in the 1970s, see Onozuka Kenta's study of Murakami Katsushi, the man who first designed the *chōgōkin*, or "super alloy" diecast toy models: Onozuka Kenta, *Chōgōkin no otoko* (The Super Alloy Man) (Tokyo: Ascii Shoten, 2009), 23-46. For a brief account of how toys were first incorporated into girls' anime, see Takemura Mana semi-autobiographical look at "magical witch" anime: Takemura Mana, *Majokko Days* (Magical Girl Days) (Tokyo: Bug News Network, 2009), 105-108.

diverse than that at a typical boys' manga magazine; at any one time, Toei Animation could be creating television anime adaptations of *shōnen* manga, animated feature films based on original screenplays or best-selling novels, cross-over anime with American comics producers, and online anime designed to sell merchandise such as playing cards and toys.

Unlike most manga, the majority of television anime is multiplatform, that is, designed to move across media lines. Characters are birthed with a plethora of duties, telling stories, singing songs, connecting various audiences, selling merchandise, and propping up the studio structure. Toei Animation has spent nearly sixty years creating worlds and brands out of characters that are both adapted and original. In some ways, the studio can be said to perform a similar role of the manga magazine by providing a platform for content generation. But where manga are created between mangaka and editor, anime are created by small divisions of various professionals, all of whom provide a unique skillset towards making images move. In essence, the studio houses these interconnected divisions to form a network of skilled labor who are tasked with both the production and management of character-based creative worlds.

This chapter will examine the creative network that is organized in and around Toei Animation, looking specifically at the various anime creators who collaboratively generate anime brands. Unlike manga, which relies on a central authority for its database of characters and settings, anime creates an entirely different framework for production through the reliance on collaborative creation from its inception. This collaboration is focused on making characters move conceptually, emotionally, and physically, creating a multi-tiered production of character-centered media. Understanding how this “character management” is undertaken at a studio such as Toei's will begin to show how transmedia

in Japan can swiftly move through media forms, technologies, and audiences when the character is applied to an extensive, collectively-produced media mix.

Ethnographic Fieldwork in the Anime Studio

My examination of the production cultures of anime is informed by fieldwork I conducted through the cooperation of the Toei Animation studio. Thanks to several key contacts at Toei, I was allowed access to the inner workings of the studio and observed the production of television animation over a ten-month period during 2012. Toei occupies a unique position in the Japanese anime industry in that they are able to staff multiple television anime series through a dedicated animation studio, where much of the planning, scripting, and direction is able to be done “in house.” With a long history of trademarked IPs, they are able to staff several teams at once in order to produce a wide variety of both original and adapted anime productions. Due to their relative stability, I was granted access to just about every part of the production process of two different television anime series. In addition to this fieldwork at Toei, I conducted “offsite” inquiries into other studios for the sake of comparison, talking to animators, anime magazine writers, scholars, and fans both through personal connections and at fan-sponsored sites such as the Comic Market in Tokyo. Through this fieldwork, I was able to observe and understand in detail the social interactions that fuel the processes and production systems involved in making anime at a large studio.

The majority of anime, it must be said, does not make much money. Unlike manga, the expense of producing a single episode costs millions of yen. As several of the people at Toei confessed to me, the work of an animation professional does not coincide with the compensation received; some even asked themselves in mid-conversation why they do the

work they do for the little money they get. Individuals must assume more than their specific job roles require in order to produce anime on a weekly basis, and this requires immense sacrifice on the part of nearly everyone involved. My purpose in observing these field sites is to diagram and map the collective responsibilities and interactions involved in anime production. I wanted to see how anime production is organized under Japan's anime studio system, and this chapter will reveal aspects of studio organization from a range of worker perspectives. But I also wanted to see why creators worked in the anime industry, considering the financial rewards are relatively small for the work produced. I viewed the opportunity to observe a close-knit professional network such as an animation studio as a way into learning how teams of workers become deeply invested in cultural production. My observations in the animation studio helped me to understand how anime produced collaborative networks of creators, each of whom are invested in the success and completion of their anime series in their own ways.

These networks can be found in small forms in, for example, the production of manga. As chapter two detailed, the social network that is cultivated between workers and readers is what fuels and propels creative production in manga beyond what could be considered "reasonable" hours or labor. Communication between work hierarchies, the creation of familial social roles, and the production of art and entertainment that is tied to the ethos of the magazine's character-building brand all manufacture an atmosphere where creators are fueled by more than a paycheck. But while this social network might begin in the manga atelier and even extend outward into communities of readers and future creators, it is still confined to the particular creative platform of the manga. The process of socialization that stems from taking part in the consumption or creation of the mangaka's

database is derived from the shared pleasure of and acknowledgement of existing characters and worlds. The construction of original anime works, on the other hand, is a process that is more collaborative from its inception since it involves creation from a blank slate. Producers, directors, writers, character designers, animators, colorists, background artists, digital effects artists, technicians, and voice actors all harness authorship and attention for the particular area of their creative work. Observing such collective negotiations in the social networks of the animation studio allows us to see how different producers negotiate what they determine to be important in the process of creation.

My method of participant observation is informed by several key ethnographic inquiries into media industries, both in Japan and abroad, that focus on deciphering social relations in and around production cultures. Following Horace Newcomb and Amanda D. Lotz's "levels of analysis" for studying the production of media fiction, I focus on participant observation in two distinct tiers of media production: particular organizations and individual productions.³⁰⁰ Specifically, I explain the organization of Toei Animation through my observation of the production of two different series. I also will include, at various points, the backgrounds, observations, comments, and actions of various individual agents within Toei as examples of the studio's organization, and their roles in various anime productions, though I do not delve into the careers or oeuvres of any creators too deeply. Rather, I focus on their relationships to one another and the production of anime texts themselves. While I limit my scope to the participant observation of Toei Animation Studios, many of my conclusions can apply broadly to the production of anime in Japan today. Though each studio has its own methods and its own franchises that entail certain

³⁰⁰ Horace Newcomb and Amanda Lotz, "The Production of Media Fiction," in *A Handbook of Media and Communications Research*, ed. Klaus Bruhn Jensen (New York: Routledge, 2002), 62-77.

processes, methods, compromises, and negotiations, the roles of individual workers, and the particular forms of value that workers attach to their work, are similar to what I witnessed through documentaries and interviews with staff of other anime studios such as Sunrise, Production I.G., and A-1 Pictures.

My approach to looking at the studio is partly formed by the limits of my own access. Access to the creative media industries in Japan is, in many ways, no less secretive and difficult to “break into” as the Hollywood independents. As Sharon Kinsella has stated, for example, investigative work into the manga industry has become much more difficult in the years since she completed her observational study of Kodansha publishing.³⁰¹ This has become even more the case with the globalization of many Japanese creative media properties and the economic stakes these global efforts entail.³⁰² Toei Animation, however, is a studio that is exceptionally cognizant of its own brand and international standing. One reason for this consciousness comes from the studio’s early attempts at global distribution of their product. This can be seen as the studio’s conscious effort to chronicle its own history and impose a narrative of their importance within animation history.³⁰³ Partly because of their self-aware performance of the studio brand, Toei has been open to facilitating the work of independent researchers in Japan and university-affiliated researchers from outside the country.³⁰⁴

³⁰¹ Kinsella, 15.

³⁰² For a critical analysis of an example of the global spread of Japanese intellectual property, see Joseph Tobin ed., *Pikachu’s Global Adventure: The Rise and Fall of Pokémon* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

³⁰³ See, for example, Toei’s self-published history commemorating its 50th anniversary, *Toei Animation 50-nen shi, 1956-2006: Hashiridasu yume no saki ni* (Toei Animation 50th Anniversary, 1956-2006: Beyond the Running Dreams) (Tokyo: Deko, 2006).

³⁰⁴ See, for example, Tze-yue Hu, *Frames of Japan: Culture and Image-Building* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University press, 2010) and Misono Makoto ed., *Zusetsu terebi no anime zensho* (Complete Book of TV Animation: Illustrated) (Tokyo: Hara Shobō, 1999).

Due to my affiliation with the University of California, I was able to gain access to places and hold conversations with figures who would otherwise not likely have granted me the time or consideration. I was limited to observing areas of production on specific series, though this permitted me the opportunity to view production from the level of the salaried producer (above the line) all the way through to the contracted artists and animators (below the line). Despite Laura Nader's caution to "study up" the chain to see who controls the power in cultural production, I did not attempt this. I was placed smack in the middle of the production teams, and the focus of my study is less about individual power than about collective creativity and how authoring activities are dispersed across the animation production chain.³⁰⁵ Instead of "studying up," I borrow from Sherry Ortner's idea of "studying sideways," a term Ortner coined while observing independent filmmakers in and around Hollywood. As Ortner argues, studying sideways "recognizes the relative complicity between us and our informants, and which also acknowledges our own elite status more fully."³⁰⁶ Studying sideways allows observers to more fully inculcate themselves into the social spaces of their subjects by recognizing the similar backgrounds between the two. As a child of a Japanese national, I grew up watching and having the same experiences with anime and manga series as a good number of the professionals I spoke with, especially ones of the same generation. On the other hand, while my status as an outside university researcher was reinforced by my very visible presence as a foreigner in multiple senses of the word, some of the older directors related to my experience as an American film school student with exposure to studying Hollywood film history. One

³⁰⁵ Laura Nader, "Controlling Processes: Tracing the Dynamic Components of Power," *Cultural Anthropology* 38 (1997): 711-737.

³⁰⁶ Sherry Ortner, "Studying Sideways: Ethnographic Access in Hollywood," in *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries* (New York: Routledge, 2009), eds. Vicki Mayer, Miranda J. Banks, and John T. Caldwell, 184.

director talked with me about his love of Hollywood film, and asked me if I studied his favorite director, William Wyler. Of course, since I am not an animator or animation professional, there are obvious limits to how much I could identify with the crew, but my status as both foreigner and Japanese allowed me to wear multiple cultural hats. In this respect, my background for film and Japanese popular culture helped me gain the trust among various tiers of staff, but also allowed for staff to go about their business, not feeling the need to explain or break down processes they assumed I would already be familiar with. Rather than studying strictly “sideways,” tapping into dual cultural backgrounds allowed me to study bilaterally.

Another reason for the reluctance of “studying up” is to examine how workers across the studio conceive of their own roles in producing anime texts. My analysis of the anime studio is informed by both participant observation and “thick description” of interviews, and my data was comprised of the people “on set:” the directors, producers, animators, writers, technicians, and voice actors who formed the staff of anime productions. Even here, I spent more time with certain groups (producers, writers, directors, voice actors) than others (cameramen, editors, sound mixers). The highest-ranking studio executives who determine the direction of what productions will be made figured very little into my observation, largely because I was interested in seeing how anime was constructed on a social level between various participants. Thus, my analysis is embedded in what Paul Willis has called the everyday of workers’ experiences.³⁰⁷ This “theorizing from the ground up” follows the work of John Caldwell, whose forays into television production focused not just on network executives, but on gaffers, grips, and other below-the-line technical

³⁰⁷ Paul Willis, *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Become Working Class* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 201-203.

crafts that comprise the “nomadic labor system” of television production in Los Angeles.³⁰⁸

Caldwell’s study of “critical industrial practices” focuses on the highly reflexive interpretive schemes of rituals, artifacts, and other media forms of film and television workers, but what I find particularly helpful in examining the anime studio is his call to look at how social activity and professional interactions are deployed within the industrial environment of media production.³⁰⁹ Where Caldwell uses Bruno Latour’s “actor-network” theory (ANT) to explain these relationships, I fall to Clifford Geertz’s concept of “thick description” to understand the complexity of practices and the varied agency of those who work in the anime studio.

Part of the reason why I eschew Latour’s theory is that some have criticized ANT for downplaying the human element, ignoring the emotions or feelings of participants in favor of an objective diagramming of subject movement.³¹⁰ These critics might say that ANT as a methodology is lacking in “soul.” To this point, I also hew toward Ian Condry’s anthropological study centered around various anime creators and studios, which attempts to find the “soul” of the anime industry. Though Condry’s study was published after the completion of my fieldwork, it helped me to reconsider issues of social organization in the studio in relation to anime transmedia. Condry’s focus on the production sites of anime is an intervention of sorts that seeks to address an imbalance in anime studies that focus exclusively around the textual object. Rather than focusing inward on the content of anime narratives, he suggests a turn outward, looking at “the social relations, emergent business

³⁰⁸ John Caldwell, 113.

³⁰⁹ Ibid, 6-7.

³¹⁰ See Eric Laurier and Chris Philo, “The Region in the Boot: Mobilizing Lone Subjects and Multiple Objects,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 21, no.1 (2003): 85-106.

networks, and day-to-day activities that expand the cultural universe of anime.”³¹¹ An outward analysis can reveal the “social energy” that drives anime production, guided by its creators and fans, which forms the “soul” for the media object. This soul is powered by the collective and collaborative energy behind small social networks organized around the anime object. Such a study, in its own way, provides another alternative to the concept of “spreadable media” formulated by Ford, Green, and Jenkins. Rather than focus solely on the media object as it spreads through different social contexts, honing in on the producers themselves as they spread media reveals how people imbue value into media objects before they are unleashed into the world. This approach thinks of media in terms of the people doing the spreading and the value that they attain from their actions rather than the inherent transmediafication of the media object itself.³¹² Looking at anime production in this way can help us to better understand how media gains life, or a soul, through its movement across social boundaries, media forms, and categories of producers. Such a method not only provides a supplement to the many excellent close textual readings of the manga or anime text, but also begins to formulate what Condry calls a “critical theory of production,” a way of looking at media texts through the meanings creators attach to them, rather than the cultural meanings they might communicate to spectators or audiences.³¹³

Anime (as well as manga) are a particularly useful focal point for a critical theory of production, as it spreads media not through stories or narratives, but through the proliferation of characters and worlds. The Toei Animation studio functions as a massive network, each of which allows for small divisions of collaborative workers to generate their

³¹¹ Condry, 30.

³¹² This is a concept I elucidate in chapter three of this dissertation and the construction of producer-powered interfaces of manga texts.

³¹³ Condry, 43.

own characters and worlds across projects. While networks might seem distributive of control, they actually establish power relations within their very structures. Just because the network of a production involves dozens of creators and craftsmen does not mean the in-between animator has as much say as a producer (or any say at all). As Alexander Galloway argues, “The network, it appears, has emerged as a dominant form describing the nature of control today, as well as resistance to it.”³¹⁴ Working in networks does not allow its participants to completely elude forms of control, from the studio boss and producer on down the production line. But networks can, as Christopher Kelty explains, reorient cultures into working together to create something of value to one another. Kelty calls those who participate in massive creative platform activities such as free software movements “recursive publics,” or participants who exert control and maintenance over their environments and “which, in turn, constitutes their everyday practical commitments and the identities of the participants as creative and autonomous individuals.”³¹⁵ The production of anime is tiered, with the script and storyboard exerting more control over the production than the key animators and background artists. But what is key to the collaborative activity in anime networks is how the creative work and opinions of several tiers of workers is not only respected, but solicited. This, in turn, allows workers to feel a sense of control over their own work, even if the locus of control (and money) is centered elsewhere in the studio.

This chapter’s emphasis on individual agency, divisional management, and segmented creative work does not intend to obscure or compensate for the scientific management principles that organize Japanese anime production. Toei Animation was one

³¹⁴ Alexander Galloway, *The Exploit: A Theory of Networks* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 4.

³¹⁵ Kelty, 6-7.

of the first studios to institute Taylorist management practices into its workplace, breaking down the animation process into discrete tasks carried out by individual workers. While anime production in Japan has been influenced to some degree by post-Fordist changes in management structures – principally the incorporation of new technologies that reduce the need for labor, as well as the near total adoption of contracted labor for most animators – the model for anime production in Japan has changed remarkably little, with writers, directors, animators, artists, and voice actors continuing to occupy the same industrial roles that they assumed in the late 1960s.

This institutional production means that constraints are placed on creative labor for the sake of the studio's bottom line of standardized production. Vicki Mayer has shown how repetitive Taylorist principles and Japanization *kanban* and *kaizen* management standards produced anxiety among workers constantly under surveillance in media production environments.³¹⁶ Upon visiting the Toei Animation Studio in the late 1950s, the animator Jimmy Murakami called it an intense and serious “factory,” with employees who weren’t “sitting there and joking around like [the American studio] UPA did!”³¹⁷ During this brief period, Toei ordered its animators to form three or four man units and make “whatever they wanted” to fill the time, but these experimental teams soon were dissolved to make way for systematic television production.³¹⁸ The sort of workplace anxiety and feeling of disempowerment that Mayer describes was later echoed by the director Hayao Miyazaki, who stated that during his time at Toei, “I felt ill at ease every day – I couldn’t

³¹⁶ Mayer, 44-47.

³¹⁷ Andrew Osmond, “A Ton of Work (Jimmy Murakami Interview),” *Manga UK*, 4 March 2012 <<http://www.mangauk.com/?p=3656>> (2 March 2015)

³¹⁸ Otsuka, 82.

understand the works we were producing, or even the proposals we were working on.”³¹⁹

Miyazaki lamented the reduced role of the animator in the new production process, where instead of conceiving everything in a film including the storyboards, the animator became “someone who merely draws as ordered and makes those drawings move.”³²⁰

But, as Mayer notes, workers in these situations “look creatively for solutions to stressful limits because *they had no other choice*.”³²¹ Workers, and not solely animators, at the animation studio find ways to exert their own creativity within the limits that are imposed by their own talents, experiences, or the studio’s bottom line, and these “sanctioned” creative actions within the studio network’s divisions are in service of managing discrete areas of characters and worlds. This chapter will map these creative actions within the network and each of its divisions of character management (see figure 14): the idea men and women of the *seisaku iinkai*; the producers who function as staff/character caretakers; the scriptwriters who manage narratives; the directors, animators, and artists who function as the builders and movers of worlds; and the voice actors who become the celebrity faces and voices of the anime series. Some of these divisions (largely concerning pre-production) are directly employed through the anime studio, while others (production and post-production) are contracted from separate companies, but all have a direct relationship to character management as it is organized through and centralized at Toei’s studio.

Figure 14: Mikami Koji’s map of the animation workflow³²²

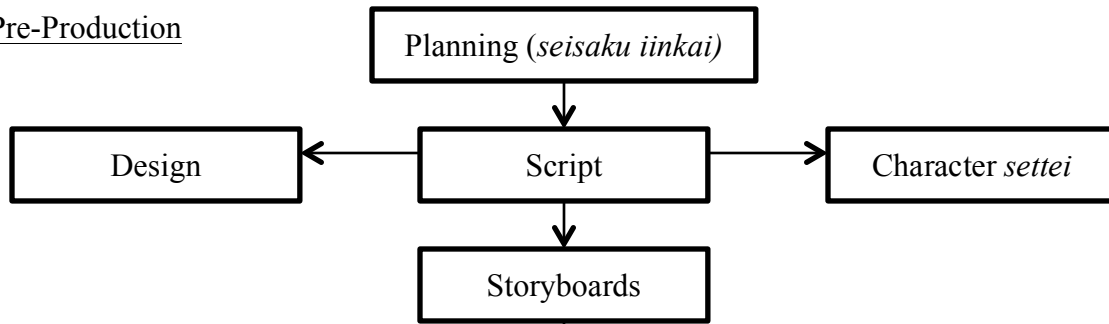
³¹⁹ Miyazaki, 70.

³²⁰ Ibid, 30. This was a large reason for Miyazaki’s impetus for leaving Toei and, eventually, forming his own studio, Ghibli. The studio was dedicated to making the sort of quality, feature-length animation that he felt Toei had stopped producing after abandoning its concentration on feature-length films.

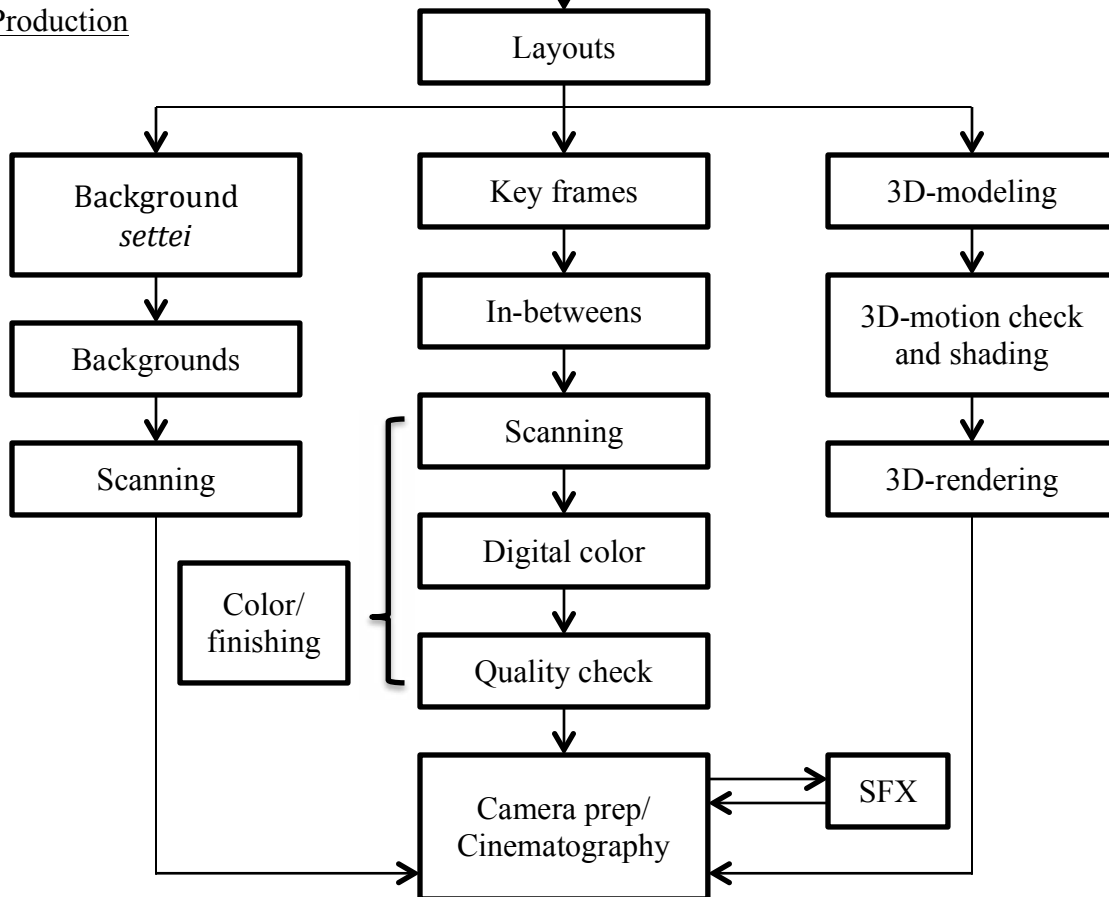
³²¹ Mayer, 47.

³²² Mikami, 75.

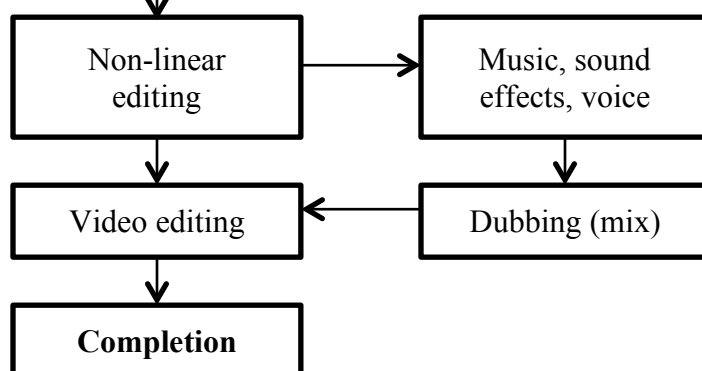
Pre-Production



Production



Post-production



By understanding how the anime studio functions as a massive network of people sharing and expanding compelling characters and worlds, then we can begin to see how the logic of each studio is organized according to its creators within. Indeed, I came to this conclusion through my fieldwork at Toei Animation. I had first conceived of my study of the production of the Japanese media mix through an industrial focus on both *shōnen* manga and anime, though I soon realized that the processes that organize boys' manga are entirely different for animation studios. While the production of boys' manga magazines and the manga therein creates social communities that rely on the reinforcement of certain ideals, character types, visual patterns, social practices, and working relationships, the anime studio operates according to a more variegated template.

A studio as large as Toei must work with what they can acquire and conceive, with a variety of productions in different genres and audiences in order to minimize and spread risk. This often means adapting *shōnen* manga since the precedent has already been established and the returns are more reliable; but other times, this means creating entire series for marginalized demographics in order to draw the eyeballs and wallets of previously ill-served audiences. The economics of studio production dictate that a focus on solely *shōnen* anime would be not only unwise but impossible, for a studio as large and diverse as Toei requires they look for new market opportunities, make anime that takes advantages of new technologies, cater to emerging audiences and genres, and generally take on any number of productions in order to hedge their bets in case any one series or genre performs poorly. This also means creators have the opportunity to work on a variety of projects, testing their skills out in constantly new directions. Toei was encouraged from a very early period to vary its production in this way, mostly creating anime films and

television programs for boys, girls, teens, and families. Thus, while the codes and expectations that organize *shōnen* manga are central to the manga magazine and the manga, the transmedia that is created through anime operates according to its own logics of production. Looking particularly at the logics and history of Toei's network can give us insight into a different mode of collaborative and diversified creation that propels the media mix of anime.

Pre-war and Early Post-war Animation in Japan

In order to better understand the contributions of Toei Animation in the post-war era, this section will first briefly outline the development of animation in Japan in the first half of the 20th century. Toei is the first Japanese studio to commit to the production of full-length feature film animation in the vein of America's Disney studio. The efforts that went into this project created a market and training of animators who would grow and support a full-fledged animation industry. But the history of animation in Japan precedes the foundation of Toei Animation by several decades, and experienced craftsmen comprised a cottage industry of illustrators and animators who developed their craft well before the establishment of Toei. This section will briefly examine the production of animation in Japan before the formation of Toei, showing how assorted movements and processes within Japanese society were established in the pre-war and post-war years that laid the seeds for the establishment of Toei.

The earliest animation to circle the globe came in the form of what Tom Gunning has called a "cinema of attractions," a mode of film experience that favored theatrical

exhibition over narrative continuity.³²³ The trick films of Georges Melies, for example, were not explicitly animation in the sense that they did not show drawings, but films such as *Trip to the Moon* (1902) incorporate stop motion and other visual effects to convey the appearance of movement. The first examples of animation with drawings, such as J. Stuart Blackton's *Lightning Sketches* (1907) and Windsor McCay's *Gertie the Dinosaur* (1914), incorporated the directors themselves into the experience of viewing the animated images.³²⁴ Koga Futoshi has argued how these films made their way to Japan, exerting a strong influence on Japanese magic lantern performances and *kamishibai* performances which used light and moving scrolls to simulate animated movement.³²⁵ The first Japanese cartoons emerged from these sideshows. While there is some dispute as to the exact date of when the first Japanese-produced animation screened in Japan, the year 1917 was significant in that it saw the screening of three short animation works by Shimokawa Oten, Koichi Junichi, and Kitayama Seitaro.³²⁶ The latter of this trio released his short films through the film studio Nikkatsu and would go on to make many more. The subject material of these early shorts was often nonsensical manga escapades or adaptations of children's folk stories.³²⁷

In the next decade, Japan would see the first small studios dedicated to producing animation. Cel animation did not become widespread in Europe until the 1930s, and would

³²³ See Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectators, and the Avant-Garde, in *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser and Adam Baker (London: British Film Institute, 1990), 56-62.

³²⁴ Donald Crafton, *Before Mickey: The Animated Film 1898-1928* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984), 50, 111.

³²⁵ See Koga Futoshi, "Melies wa itsu kara shirarete ita no ka: Nihon ni okeru Melies kotohajime" (When Melies Was Recognized: On Melies' Beginnings in Japan), in *Nippon eiga no tanjo* (Birth of Japanese Film) ed. Iwamoto Kenji (Tokyo: Shinwasha, 2011), 44-62.

³²⁶ See Tsugata Nobuyuki, "Research on the Achievements of Japan's First Three Animators," *Asian Cinema* vol. 14 no. 1 (2003): 13-27.

³²⁷ Stingray and Nichigai Associates eds., *Anime sakuhin jiten* (Dictionary of Animation Works) (Tokyo: Nichigai Associates, 2010), 217.

be rare in Japan until 1934, when Fuji film corporation began manufacturing it domestically.³²⁸ Methods of production varied during this period from animators who preferred paper cut-outs (Murata Yasuji) to *kirigami* colored paper (Ofuji Noburo) to the newest and latest cel animation technologies imported from abroad (Masaoka Kenzo). During the 1920s and 30s, animators were heavily encouraged to make educational films, receiving subsidies from the Ministry of Education “for the production of films for pedagogical purposes.”³²⁹ These films were screened in town halls and colleges, ensuring animators received a paycheck while also honing their craft. The content of these stories were narrative-driven, often using folk tales with their appeals to national culture, as well as sports stories to appeal to the nation’s increasing modernism and interest in international competition.³³⁰ While most of these films were black and white and silent, by the end of the 1930s, many were synched with sound and some even developed technologies to convey color tinting, such as Ofuji Noburo’s *chiyogami* works that used kaleidoscopic patterns of brightly colored paper.³³¹

The end of the 1930s saw significant changes to both film and animation production in Japan. The Film Law (*Eiga-ho*) of 1939 saw heavy restrictions placed upon filmmakers by government authorities. Cast and crew had to be licensed, and films themselves had to fit within a program that consisted of newsreels and “cultural films” designed to “nourish

³²⁸ Jonathan Clements, 49.

³²⁹ Daisuke Miyao, “Before Anime: Animation and the Pure Film Movement in Pre-war Japan,” *Japan Forum* vol. 14 no. 2 (2002): 203.

³³⁰ See Murata Yasuji’s *Dōbutsu Olympic Taikai* (Animal Olympic Games, 1928), described by Jonathan Clements and Helen McCarthy as “the first identifiable sports anime,” in *The Anime Encyclopedia: A Guide to Japanese Animation Since 1917*, revised and expanded edition (San Francisco: Stone Bridge Press, 2006), 607.

³³¹ Ofuji was an animation pioneer in many respects. He constructed the first camera set-up that used multiple glass planes separated by a few inches, in essence prefiguring the first multiplane camera which would be patented by Disney in 1940. See Thomas Lamarre, 23-24.

the national spirit.”³³² All films henceforth were regulated to contribute to national policy, and foreign films were phased out of theatres.³³³ Animated films had already begun to exhibit propaganda content, such as *Sora no Shanghai Sensen* (1938, *The Aerial Battle Over Shanghai*), but after 1939, animation would be mobilized in full for the use of the Japanese government and its imperialistic ambitions. Anime historians note the importance of the multi-reel animated films *Momotarō no umiwashi* (Momotarō’s Sea Eagles, 1943) and *Momotarō umi no shimpei* (Momotarō’s Divine Sea Warriors, 1945) the latter of which – with a running time of seventy-four minutes – qualifies as “the first truly feature-length Japanese cartoon.”³³⁴ Sponsored by the Ministry of the Navy and directed by Seo Mitsuyo, the film stars the folklore hero Momotarō leading a band of Japanese chimps against the anthropomorphized allied forces in an epic sea battle. Both *Momotarō* films were a notable technological leap forward in their utilization of the multiplane camera, patented by Disney in 1940, to create the illusion of depth in its aerial battles through the use of multiple panels of art, and the films offered animators valuable experience with cel animation techniques.³³⁵ But there were other avenues for Japanese animators to work through contributing to the national effort. As Jonathan Clements documents, the “shadow staff,” a group of animators commissioned as a Special Film Unit, made a number of unrecognized, secret animations during the war instructing soldiers on level bombing theory and practical bombardment.³³⁶

³³² Jasper Sharp, *Historical Dictionary of Japanese Cinema* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2011), 63.

³³³ Kyoko Hirano, *Mr. Smith Goes to Tokyo: Japanese Cinema Under the American Occupation, 1945-1952* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1992), 207.

³³⁴ Clements, 64.

³³⁵ Mochinaga Tadahito, *Animation nicchū kōryūki* (A Chronicle of Sino-Japanese Animation Cultural Exchange) (Tokyo: Toho Shoten, 2006), 92-94.

³³⁶ See Clements, 57-60.

The post-war period saw the end of the Film Law and a second ordinance by the occupation forces that no new films would espouse national propaganda. Foreign cartoons such as those from Disney and Fleischer flooded the market shortly after the war, adding to the competition for domestic animators. Disney's feature-length color films made an especially strong impression on both the public and the nascent animation industry. While animators struggled all year to produce a seventeen-minute black and white short, Disney released the 83-minute *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) in full color in Japan in 1950. Disney films would continue to be the only feature-length animated films screened in Japan for a full decade, and their influence on animators and audiences was significant not only in production scale, but also in thinking of how to create an industry around animation sales.³³⁷ The Japanese public could not know of the immense costs both in time and money that the Disney films incurred when they were first produced, but the expectations for animation quality and content rose considerably upon its initial screening in Japan.

With new leaders and censors came new sources of income for animators. The end of the war was a great disruption in animation production, but animators such as Masaoka Kenzo and studios such as Toho quickly established studios such as the Shin Nihon Dōga-sha (New Japanese Animation Company) and the Nihon Dōga-sha, or Nichidō, respectively. Commissioned by Occupation authorities to make animation films with an educational purpose, many of the animators made films for children, such as Masaoka's gentle pastoral, *Sakura* (1947). Failing to please Occupation censors, a good number of these films were never screened for audiences,³³⁸ though studios such as the Yokohama Cinema Shokai did

³³⁷ Tsugata Nobuyuki, *Animation gaku nyūmon* (Introduction to Animation Studies) (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2005), 64-65.

³³⁸ Yamaguchi Yasuo ed., *Nihon no anime zenshi* (Complete History of Japanese Animation) (Tokyo: Ten Books, 2004), 64-65.

make several films instructing children in the finer points of manners and morals.³³⁹ Toho, like most film companies at the time, struggled to balance the demands of the new censors with theatrical profits amid rising inflation and dismal exports. Staff in film and animation production were forced to endure long hours with very little pay, leading to several employment disagreements and labor strikes in 1947-48.³⁴⁰

By the mid 1950s, however, a new source of income was now starting to become available – television animation in the form of animated commercials. While independent radio broadcasts began in Japan as early as 1925, government authorities understood the new medium's influence and importance. By mid-1926, several companies were forced to merge into a public interest national monopoly, the Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai, or NHK. By the outbreak of the war, what little independence NHK had was completely in control of the state as a propaganda arm.³⁴¹ Following the war, Occupation authorities refashioned Japanese broadcasting under the Broadcast Law of 1950, which divorced NHK from state control and cast it as an independent, publically-funded corporation. To ensure competition, authorities wrote into the law the establishment of commercial broadcasting and a dual system of public and private broadcasting.³⁴² Thus, when the first public television broadcast aired on NHK in February of 1953, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* newspaper company and advertising giant Dentsū collaborated to form the Nihon TV network and air their own broadcasts later that year. *Mainichi Shimbun* newspaper quickly followed suit by building their own network around the Tokyo Broadcasting System (TBS) in 1955, and the *Sankei*,

³³⁹ Tsugata 2005, 166.

³⁴⁰ Hirano, 224-229.

³⁴¹ Ellis S. Krauss, *Broadcasting Politics in Japan: NHK and Television News* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2000), 91.

³⁴² Krauss, 93-94.

Asahi, and *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* all formed their own broadcasts by the end of the 1950s.³⁴³

As film exhibitors increasingly dropped shorts, newsreels, and cartoons from their programs, cartoon advertisements grew through television programs for the new broadcasters.³⁴⁴ Television ownership exploded in Japan during this time, and the number of television sets in the country skyrocketed from 866 in 1953 to close to two million by 1959.³⁴⁵ With the increased sales of television sets came an increased demand from advertising to fill empty slots. Wealthy new patrons for animation emerged in the form of advertising companies such the spice company Momoya and the whiskey producer Torrys. The vertically-integrated Dentsū, in particular, was a major client for animation, having secured over 60 percent of prime-time advertising slots by the 1960s.³⁴⁶ Tsugata Nobuhiko estimates that during this period, over 70 percent of advertisements used some form of animation.³⁴⁷ With its more lucrative returns and steady work, it was during this period that animators first began working for television production in Japan.

The Formation of Toei Dōga

During the early post-war period, Nichidō, the largest surviving group of Japanese animators, was struggling to maintain its roster of animators with full-time work, and most

³⁴³ D. Eleanor Westney, "Mass Media as Business Organizations: A U.S.-Japanese Comparison," in *Media and Politics in Japan*, eds. Susan J. Pharr and Ellis S. Krauss (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), 60-61.

³⁴⁴ Similar to the United States, film studios in Japan initially viewed television skeptically, refusing lend films or stars to television broadcasts after the summer of 1956. But by 1957, due to an absence of American-style laws that forbid studios from vertically integrating, many film companies reacted to rapidly falling box office receipts by investing heavily in emerging television studios. See Joseph L. Anderson and Donald Richie, *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 254. The opposite can be seen today, however, with television broadcasters having a stronger foothold in Japanese advertising than ever. Networks such as Fuji, TBS, and TV Asahi have invested heavily in smaller production companies, and NTV even owns a majority stake in former studio major Nikkatsu.

³⁴⁵ Anderson and Richie, 254.

³⁴⁶ Mark Tungate, *Ad Land: A Global History of Advertising* (London: Kogan Page, 2007), 187.

³⁴⁷ Tsugata 2011, 24.

staff members were forced to take on part-time jobs at other companies to stay afloat. Mori Yasuji, an animator at Nichidō at the time, took on a job as an advertising artist at a department store for a year, while other animators had to manage their schedules when demands for labor suddenly arose on urgent projects.³⁴⁸ In 1956, however, Nichidō was acquired as a subsidiary of the Toei film company, one of the newly formed “big five” studios in the post-war period and itself a subsidiary of the Tokyo-Yokohama Railway Company.³⁴⁹ With the newly acquired Oizumi Eiga studio and roughly thirty theatres in its possession, Toei believed it was equipped to produce niche entertainment for new audiences. Nichidō was rebranded as Toei Dōga and moved to a state-of-the-art facility across from their Oizumi film studio (see figure 15). The word *dōga* literally translates to “moving pictures,” and was coined by Masaoka Kenzo when he set up the Nihon Dōga Kyōkai (Japanese Animation Association) in 1937 so that the Japanese would have their own word for “animation,” rather than referring constantly to the Western word.³⁵⁰



Figure 15: Toei Animation’s production facility in Oizumi, Tokyo (2013)

³⁴⁸ Mori Yasuji, *Mogura no uta: Animator no jiden* (The Mole’s Song: An Animator’s Autobiography) (Tokyo: Animage Bunko V, 1984), 117-118.

³⁴⁹ Sharp, 251. See also Richie and Anderson, 259-260.

³⁵⁰ Yamaguchi Katsunori and Watanabe Yasushi, *Nihon Animation Eigashi* (A History of Japanese Animated Films) (Osaka: Yūbunsha, 1977), 12-13.

Both the introduction of Disney and television in Japan were instrumental in Toei Dōga's formation. The ability to produce commercials for the growing medium of television was a strong business opportunity that would justify Toei's employment of large standing staff of animators.³⁵¹ In many ways, these short animated films nurtured the technical and creative talents of many novice animators into eventually producing full-fledged television animated series. Toei's larger goal, however, was to mimic the business model of the most highly visible animation studio in the West. Inspired by Disney productions such as *Dumbo* (1941) and *Bambi* (1942), the latter of which was especially successful in Japan, newly appointed studio president and defacto Toei Dōga head Okawa Hiroshi vowed to make Toei Dōga the "Disney of the East."³⁵² Using the American animation studio as a model, Okawa had designs to make Toei Dōga a producer of animation that could be exported across the globe, with an output of "two feature-length and four short animated films a year."³⁵³ In order to do this, Toei Dōga needed to increase production capabilities by bringing in many new and less experienced animators, and having them be trained by veterans. In just two years, the first of these films, the all-color *Hakujaden*, was released in 1958, successfully imitating the length, look, style, and sound of Disney. It is a watershed film that marked a number of firsts for a Japanese animation production – the first Japanese animated color film, the first post-war animated feature-length film, and the first Japanese feature film that was exhibited to audiences in the United States, as *Panda and the Magic Serpent*.³⁵⁴ The circumstances that led to its rapid creation

³⁵¹ Tsugata Nobuyuki, *Nihon animation no chikara*, 122-123.

³⁵² Yamaguchi, 67.

³⁵³ Mori, 125.

³⁵⁴ Clements, 99.

are a testament to the studio's consolidation of animation veterans, as well as its formation of a system that sought to hastily develop new talent.

Created as a subject for export to Asian markets, with funding secured by Okawa from Shaw Brothers in Hong Kong, *Hakujaden* is based on the Chinese legend *Madam White Snake*. Since there were not enough experienced animators available at the studio, in order to achieve the high quality look of Disney, the staff animated much of the film through rotoscoping, a variation of animation where actors are recorded beforehand to provide the models for sketches and drawings.³⁵⁵ The process was colossally expensive, as Daisuke Miyao notes it was “like making two films, a live-action film and an animated film.”³⁵⁶ While the human characters in the film are rotoscoped using professional actors and actresses (Sakuma Yoshiko and Ishikawa Yoshiaki), the animal characters, on the other hand, are animated with considerable malleability, exhibiting an elasticity to animals that was popularized by Disney in the “squash-and-stretch” method.³⁵⁷ The result is a film that displays both considerable range and beauty in its animation, though also, as Hu Tze-yue has argued, diplomatic aspects that assert Japan's international benevolence and industrial ingenuity to its Asian neighbors.³⁵⁸ It is to this newfound exhibition of technical aptitude in which *Hakujaden*'s legacy is most conspicuous. *Hakujaden* did not find a large reception from audiences in Japan, but the film had the more profound effect of acting as a casting call for the most talented animators in the country, as well as drawing would-be animators who were interested in making full-length and color animated films in the Disney style.

³⁵⁵ Yamaguchi and Watanabe, 66.

³⁵⁶ Miyao, 207-208.

³⁵⁷ See Frank Johnson and Ollie Johnson, *The Illusion of Life: Disney Animation* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1981), 47-51.

³⁵⁸ Hu Tze-yue, “The Animated Resurrection of the Legend of White Snake in Japan,” *Animation* Vol. 2 (March 2007): 56.

Toei Dōga would continue to make an animated feature-length film every year, with the release usually timed for spring, but because of the large number of staff needed to make the productions, crunch periods needing many staff members were followed by lulls in production where animators had very little work. The studio was forced to find ways to occupy staff through short films and commercial work, but the studio's employment of such a large standing staff meant the company was rapidly losing money for every month that revenue wasn't coming in.³⁵⁹ Okawa realized this, though he saw the process as a sacrifice for gains further down the road when staff became more experienced to produce animation at a faster, standardized rate. Until then, he treated Toei as a training academy, a view echoed by former employees who called the studio the "Toei Animation University" (*Toei Dōga Daigaku*) in reference to the immense amount of experienced animators it trained and created after the war.³⁶⁰ Young artists would be placed under the wing of more experienced animators, who were given roles as section chiefs. As the new animators worked on various projects, veterans would assess and advise on the quality of their work. With enough feedback and on-the-job training, they would learn enough to prove capable of handling their own in production and gradually advance in seniority within the studio.

When it came time to work on *Hakujaden* in 1958, a *dai-ni genga*, or "seconding" system was established, creating small teams of three animators working under one of the only experienced animators at the studio – Daikuhara Akira or Mori Yasuji. Under this system, Daikuhara and Mori would draw hundreds of rough key frames – the main drawings used to signal transitions in movement – while less experienced animators would

³⁵⁹ Tsugata 2007, 195.

³⁶⁰ Sugiyama Taku, "Terebi anime no zenshi: Toei chōhen anime no jidai" (A Pre-History of TV Anime: The Era of Toei's Feature-length Anime), in *Zusetsu Terebi Anime Zenshō* (Complete Book of TV Animation: Illustrated) ed. Misono Makoto (Tokyo: Hara Shobō, 1999), 119.

polish up the drawings before sending them to do the next line of animators.³⁶¹ Through repeated implementation in subsequent features, this system trained notable talents such as Kusube Daikichiro and Otsuka Yasuo, who would go on to work on some of the most memorable animated works at Toei and the internationally recognized Studio Ghibli.³⁶² Animators became more proficient through the training, and the studio's output increased to the point that a feature-length animated film was produced each year. By 1962, Otsuka Yasuo notes that staff members were now experienced enough to split off onto two different features a year. The following year, a third team was created to handle the production of a new weekly animated television series.³⁶³ In six years, Okawa's vision for a fully-functioning animation studio producing both features and other commercial material had been realized.

The system did not come without other problems, notably the low wages of novice staff members working during what was viewed as a training period. Okawa viewed these animators as receiving a free education, though staff members who struggled to subsist on the low starting salary thought otherwise.³⁶⁴ Toei, like most Japanese conglomerates, hired employees based on a tiered salary system, where male management track employees who were university graduates received a salary more than double that of female and/or high-school graduate animators.³⁶⁵ Eventually, animators agitated for a union and began negotiations for improved conditions with Toei management in late 1960. Among their

³⁶¹ For a more detailed breakdown of the seconding system, see Otsuka Yasuo, 65-72.

³⁶² Despite this training, there was also a noticeable degradation of quality by the fourth feature, *Sinbad the Sailor* (1962). The animator Sugiyama Taku laments this process, arguing that the standardization of the animation leads to a noticeable loss of personality that prioritizes the wishes of the corporation over those of animators. See Sugiyama, 108.

³⁶³ Otsuka, 115.

³⁶⁴ Sugiyama, 113.

³⁶⁵ Kano Seiji, *Nippon no animation wo kizuita hitobito* (The People Who Built Japan's Animation) (Tokyo: Wakakusa Shobō, 2004), 92.

demands were the scaling back of mandatory overtime, fewer work obligations during breaks and lunchtime, the ending of abuse by section chiefs, and the elimination of pay discrepancies between new staff and those hired mid-career.³⁶⁶ As Sugiyama Taku humorously notes, this became known as “the *katsudon* proposal” when the animators asked to be able to treat themselves on occasion to a bowl of *katsudon*, a meal of pork cutlet and egg over rice.³⁶⁷

Negotiations turned hostile in 1961, however, and union members held short strikes in December to coerce management into concessions. Okawa reacted strongly to the strikes, locking the studio gates and barring animators from entry and exit, the latter of which happened to occur ironically when several animators were locked in while working yet another graveyard shift.³⁶⁸ The union and studio finally met again a few days after the lockout, though the concessions by both sides resulted in a number of changes to Toei and its relationship with workers. The studio conceded to worker demands and small salary increases, but put pressure on the most unruly animators, forcing many well-regarded animators to defect to other studios.³⁶⁹ The most important change that came from the labor disputes, though, was that Toei switched from hiring animators as permanent employees to contracted freelancers, a system which remains in place today and in the industry at large.³⁷⁰

A second major change that occurred at Toei in 1960 led to large-scale changes in how the anime industry would organize itself. Toei’s third film was to be an adaptation of

³⁶⁶ Minakawa Yuka, *Nippon dōga no kōbōshi: Shōsetsu Tezuka gakkō* Vol. 1 (Rise and Fall of Japanese Animation: The Story of the Tezuka School) (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2009), 126

³⁶⁷ Sugiyama, 112.

³⁶⁸ Oguro Yuichiro, *Plus Madhouse 04: Rintaro* (Tokyo: Kinema Junpō-sha, 2009), 30.

³⁶⁹ Ibid, 31.

³⁷⁰ Sugiyama, 114.

Tezuka Osamu's *Boku wa Son Goku*, a variation of the *Journey to the West* story of Chinese mythology known as *Saiyuki*. Toei and Tezuka agreed to have Tezuka himself storyboard the film, a first for feature-length animation in Japan.³⁷¹ While famous as a best-selling mangaka, Tezuka had harbored ambitions towards becoming an animator earlier in his career. Commuting to the Oizumi studio every week and taking part in schedule and staff meetings was Tezuka's introduction to the processes of production and managing teams of animators. According to Otsuka Yasuo, his storyboards and approach to animation were difficult to work with, conveying too much information and inattentive to the rise and fall of dramatic action that was part and parcel of Toei's storytelling at the time. The animation process, on the other hand, was made much simpler than *Hakujaden* due to Tezuka's "modern" designs.³⁷² Tezuka's characters were drawn with a simplified and uncomplicated line that lent themselves to easy reproduction and, consequently, smoother adaptation to animation. *Saiyuki* ended up being animated with over one hundred-thousand cels, a record at the time, though the film looks somewhat less accomplished than *Hakujaden* due to the simplicity of the designs.³⁷³

Following the film, however, Tezuka poached a number of Toei staff to form his own studio, Mushi Productions. Tezuka's aim was to adapt his own manga series, *Tetsuwan Atomu* into animated form on a weekly basis for the emerging medium of television. The intricate, cel-intensive animation at Toei, what was described as "full animation," was impossible for regular weekly production, so Tezuka implemented the "limited animation" production scheme, similar to that used by the American company Hanna-Barbera. This style of animation involved, as diagrammed by former Mushi Pro

³⁷¹ Clements, 112.

³⁷² Otsuka, 94-95.

³⁷³ Ibid, 96.

staff Yamamoto Eiichi, a series of elements listed in the previous chapter such as shooting on threes for fewer images per second of film, stop-images or still frames to reduce animation where it isn't required, pull-cels or sliding cels that give the impression of movement, repetition of animation that loops certain backgrounds and sequences, sectioning animation in characters to certain parts of their bodies, shorter shots that create the effect of montage, and the image bank system, which recycled cels – such as poses – from previous episodes into newer episodes.³⁷⁴ But even these changes were not enough to bring the costs of production significantly down, as Tezuka was employing a large staff of experienced animators at Mushi Pro.

Tezuka found a potential solution by partnering with Mannen-sha, an advertising company that purchased television spots for advertising revenue, broadcast network Fuji TV, and Meiji Seika, a confectionary maker that partnered with Tezuka to include *Tetsuwan Atomu* stickers in their boxes of Marble Chocolates. Mannen-sha, however, was reluctant to pay for much of the costs of production due to the risk involved in television's first anime series. It was here, in late 1962, that Tezuka made the fateful decision to sell his anime to Mannen-sha for several hundred-thousand yen below the cost of production, with the hopes of making back the production's losses in merchandising and advertising revenues once the anime found an audience.³⁷⁵ With the funding hurdles somewhat cleared, Mushi Pro proceeded with production, and *Tetsuwan Atomu* premiered on Japanese

³⁷⁴ Yamamoto Eiichi, *Mushi Pro no kōbōki: Ani meita no seishun* (Chronicle of Mushi Pro: The Youth of Ani Meita) (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1989), 105-106.

³⁷⁵ Yamaguchi, 74-75. This decision would have a lasting impact on all future television anime, with the average production today incurring a loss of roughly one million yen. See Tada Makoto, *Kore ga anime business da* (This is the Anime Business) (Tokyo: Kosaido, 2002), 81.

television on January 1, 1963, garnering high television ratings and advertising revenues in the process.³⁷⁶

Tezuka's decision to set the value of anime at only a portion of its actual production costs with the hopes of making revenue through alternative means was a watershed moment in the animation industry, and its ripple effects continue to reverberate to this day. Following *Atomu*, several studios began making animated television productions of their own. Toei Dōga was one of the first, hiring former Tezuka disciple Tsukioka Sadao to helm *Ōkami Shōnen Ken* ("Wolf Boy Ken," 1963), Toei's first television animated series about a boy raised in the jungle, itself also sponsored by a confectionary company. The show premiered in November, in the same year as *Atomu*, but Toei took the extra step of using their own movie theatres just a month later to show several of the show's first episodes, spliced into a single program called the *Ōkami Shōnen Ken Daikoshin*. *Ken* used many of the same methods of production that Tezuka pioneered at Mushi Pro, a similar foreignness in its setting and story, and a similar business model of spreading production costs around a committee. Other studios, such as TCJ's *Tetsujin 28* (1964), quickly followed suit with television anime productions of their own. By 1964, what is now generally viewed to be the main elements of *anime* – limited animation style, borderless settings, production committees, licensed merchandise – had come to define animation production for television in Japan, as distinct from what Toei had envisioned when it first sought to be the "Disney of the East." As Tezuka supposedly put it to his staff upon the making of *Tetsuwan Atomu*,

³⁷⁶ Though these same revenues slowed to a trickle just three years later by the time of *Atomu*'s cancellation which coincided with the manga's end and the move to color television production at Mushi Pro. See Clements, 125.

“Gentlemen, what we are making is not animation. It is television anime. Let me repeat: a-ni-me.”³⁷⁷

Toei continued to make feature films alongside its television anime, culminating in the masterpiece *Taiyō no ōji Horus no daibōken* (Hols, Prince of the Sun, 1968), the first film that brought together director Takahata Isao, animation director Otsuka Yasuo, and key frame animator and scene designer Hayao Miyazaki in a feature that greatly expanded the possibilities of the medium beyond children’s entertainment. However, the film performed poorly at the box office. By the end of the 1960s, Toei would significantly scale back its production of feature films in favor of anime “festivals” (*Toei manga matsuri*) that showcased several episodes of television anime spliced together alongside new shorts and the latest live-action *tokusatsu* or special effects films. The studio continued to produce primarily television anime, with feature-length anime films made typically from original scenarios based on popular television anime series. In addition, the studio also worked continuously on the animation of several American cartoons in the 1980s. These shows include *G.I. Joe* (1983-86), *Transformers* (1984-87), and *My Little Pony* (1984-87). In 1998, Toei Dōga changed its corporate name to Toei Animation, reflecting its original creator’s desire to be viewed as a producer of world-class animation. While the studio has gone back to making feature-length animated films today, including annual prestige features such as Sato Keiichi’s *Asura* (2012), most feature-length anime films are spin-offs of existing television anime properties. These trends follow Toei’s priority in making serial television anime and its concomitant media mix over stand-alone feature-length animated films, an emphasis that remains in place to this day.

³⁷⁷ Takahashi Ryosuke, “Anime enshutsuron – Anime ni okeru enshutsu, matawa kantoku towa” (On Anime Direction: Regarding Anime Direction and Directors), in *Anime-gaku* (Anime Studies) eds. Takahashi Mitsuteru and Tsugata Nobuyuki (Tokyo: NTT Shuppan, 2011), 48.

Compared to manga, the production of anime requires much more in the way of labor and costs, so much so that the creation of anime entirely relies on a collaborative network of designated roles and divisions. The next several sections will map the making of a television anime production through fieldwork analyses of two different television anime series: *Saint Seiya* and *Pretty Cure*. Both are original productions created by Toei's brain trust, though the former is based on Kuramada Masami's popular *shōnen* battle manga of the 1980s, while the latter is based off of a long history of *mahō shōjo*, or "magical girl" anime produced by Toei. Both shows share several similarities despite their difference in subject matter: they are shows that run for four consecutive *cours*, each of which is a season that runs for thirteen weeks; they are catered toward specific gender and age demographics; they are responsible for creating a cast of heroes who do battle against a horde of evil villains; and they are produced by a committee of various interests including advertisers, publishers, or toy companies. Both shows ran concurrently while I was observing their production at Toei, and I was a participant-observer for a period of roughly five months apiece. Each show also faced nearly the same types of production obstacles and solutions, and I was privy to seeing how staff work through these hurdles to nevertheless produce a single episode of animation every single week for a full year. As Otsuka Yasuo puts it, these are the "cogs in the machine," though my examination of these various creators shows the anime "machine" requires constant communication, collaboration, and individual creativity to operate at full capacity. This chapter will focus mainly on the production of *Saint Seiya Omega*.

Before I began my fieldwork, both series had already been conceived and planned by a *seisaku iinkai*, or “production committee.” *Seisaku iinkai* are one of the most important distinctions between the transmedia franchises of Japan versus the rest of the world. Unlike the United States, where corporate mergers and acquisitions coordinate media integration, even large conglomerates tend to work collaboratively in Japan through these cross-corporate media partnerships. First appearing in the 1980s through Kadokawa-style media mix film productions, *seisaku iinkai* became popular in the 1990s with anime productions like *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (Project EVA, 1995) as a way of mitigating risk by spreading costs around to multiple partners.³⁷⁸ The *seisaku iinkai* system is used in Japanese film and television productions to share the cost of production between various organizations, each of whom have a stake in the work being produced, and each of whom are responsible to “maximize the exploitation of, and continually reinforce, intellectual property rights.”³⁷⁹ Production committees can consist of film or television studios, media distributors, theatrical exhibitors, talent or advertising agencies, music or fashion labels, toy manufacturers, banks, and any number of independent video or animation production houses.³⁸⁰ Through strategic, inter-company partnerships, well-managed *seisaku iinkai* can achieve the sort of horizontal media integration that characterizes US media conglomerates’ management of intellectual property (see figure 16).

³⁷⁸ Tanaka, 48.

³⁷⁹ Rayna Denison, Woojeong Joo, and Hiroko Furukawa, *Manga Movies Project Report 1: Transmedia Japanese Franchising* (University of East Anglia: Arts and Humanities Research Council, 2014), 13.

³⁸⁰ Masuda, 132-133.

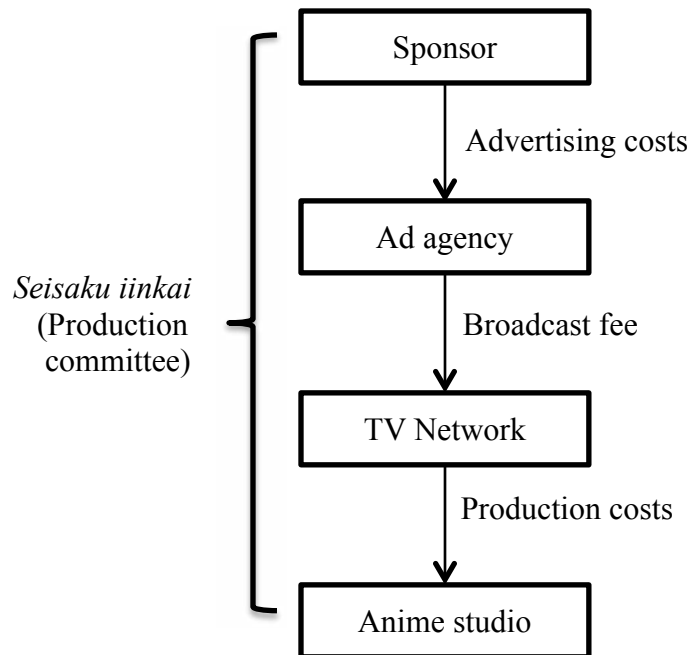


Figure 16: Map of *seisaku iinkai* (production committee)

Toei's *kikakubu*, or planning department, is responsible for coming up with business strategies for intellectual property. The *kikaku* department is the highest creative division of the studio, comprised of senior ranking producers responsible for creating conceptual ideas for new anime series, continuing series, and series based on pre-existing media. Whenever a television anime series is made, the top priority for the *kikaku* is to justify its existence through production committees. When an anime is adapted from a manga, its goal is to increase volume sales for the publisher and mangaka, but also to tie-in the brand to other sponsors, generate merchandise, lead to alternative media, and create a cash flow that will sustain the production staff's income and make the studio money. When an original anime is made, the pressure is on *kikaku* to conceive of a way for that anime to make a profit, largely to due the precedent set by Tezuka Osamu's first television anime production ensuring that all anime would be made at a loss unless there was enough cooperation from sponsors. In some cases, a third party – a game developer or a manga

publisher – will approach Toei to adapt their existing property. In other cases, a toy company might have an idea for a project where the anime will sell toys. In increasingly rare cases, an anime series can be made purely for the sake of selling DVD or Blu-Ray copies after the series has concluded its broadcast, though this model of financing has become less common as hard disc sales have rapidly shrunk since 2007. For the most part, a television anime series must act in some way as an advertisement for a product, and *kikaku* is never a one-way process.

Seki Hiromi is one such member of the *kikaku* division. A longtime employee of Toei Animation, she is currently a section chief for feature-length anime. While she was a student at Waseda University, one of the top private universities in the country, she began writing scripts for television series. She submitted scripts to Toei for their *tokusatsu*, or special-effects driven children's program, "Bizarre Comedy Series," and her screenplays were adapted into episodes on *Robot 8-Chan* (1981-82) and *Batten Robomaru* (1982-83), two live-action children's programs based on Ishinomori Shotaro's popular manga series. Upon graduation, she wrote for various magazines before entering Toei as a full-time employee in 1985. Her interest was in making anime series. "The anime that first got my attention when I was a child was the magical girl series *Himitsu no Akko-chan* (Secret of Akko-Chan, 1969-70)," she said. "It was based on a manga by Akatsuka Fujio, but the anime is what I got hooked on." She was soon involved as an assistant producer on the *shōjo* anime series *Lady Lady!!* (1987-88), and received her first producing credit on *Ghost Sweeper Mikami* (1993-94). Seki acted as producer on some of the most successful franchises Toei has created, particularly the various iterations of the card-battle anime, *Digimon* (1999). Her proudest works, however, involve helping to create the *shōjo* works

that inspired her as a child such as the historical romance *Ashita no Nadja* (2003-04) and the magical girl series, *Ojamajo Doremi* (Troublesome Witch Girl Doremi, 1999-2003). Now in an executive producer and planning role, Seki is responsible for coming up with concepts for new series, such as the *Pretty Cure* franchise, but also new directions for studio animation production. She was behind the innovative *Kyōsōgiga* (2011-12) net animation that was eventually made into a late-night television animation in 2013.

All planners have their own logic when it comes to how and why a series will be successful, though most share a common agreement that the original concept need to have compelling characters, settings, and premises. Seki ensures these elements are accounted for by placing a great deal of emphasis on the scenario. Likely stemming from her background in constructing screenplays, her opinion shows the importance of the tightness of an original concept: “I’m a firm believer in coverage. When I went to America, all the producers were familiar with coverage of scenarios, and this helped the discussion flow much more smoothly. I think by breaking down a story according to the strength of its characters, settings, premise, or structure, we have a much better idea of how a story can work.”³⁸¹ Seki asks her young producers-in-training, as well as new scriptwriters and directors, to provide coverage to a variety of films and anime they watch in order to know the difference between a strong or weak script. When producers submit new concepts to the planning department for review, their experience with writing story coverage ties the script to previous works and scenarios that have succeeded in the past, a process producers like to call “providing comps.”

Story coverage also ties into the most important idea for a planner: the reality of an anime’s success. As her comments in the epigraph to this chapter show, Seki presses for

³⁸¹ Seki Hiromi, interview by the author, August 2011.

business acumen in any creative concept. All television anime at Toei must, in some way, sell something. When Toei began their feature film productions, the films sold themselves and recuperated costs (or lost them) through the ticket gates. But with television, the anime itself must in some way to be tied to the product. Seki's reference to Shakespeare in this context is an appeal to the history of art and commerce, arguing that the two have forever been terminally intertwined, but it is also an argument that anime is itself a legitimate art form, and not merely a method to shill goods. For the former to exist, the latter must do its part. Looking at how *Saint Seiya Omega* was conceptualized is instructive for how planners must always imagine a built-in audience and target product in mind for television anime.

When *kikaku* conceived of a new series to follow the early morning slot occupied by *Digimon Xros Wars* (2011-12), they opted to make a new installment of Kurumada Masami's classic *shōnen* manga franchise, *Saint Seiya* (1986-91), which was serialized in *Weekly Shōnen Jump*. *Saint Seiya Omega* (2012-14), or *Omega* for short, is a spiritual successor to the television anime adaptation of *Saint Seiya* (1986-89), itself animated by Toei Animation and based off of Kurumada's *shōnen* manga. The story follows Seiya and his brothers, a group of orphans called "Saints" who are able to harness their spiritual energy, or "cosmos," in battle. The Saints protect themselves with "cloth," a magic armor imbued with mystical powers derived from the constellations of Greek mythology such as Pegasus, Andromeda, or Cygnus. The Saints have various ranks such as bronze, silver, and gold, but they are all unified in their duty to protect Kido Saori, the human reincarnation of the warrior goddess Athena. Entire story arcs cover battles between the Saints and minions of Hades or Poseidon.

The *kikaku* department created *Omega* as a pseudo-sequel to this story arc, unburdened from keeping to Kurumada's manga like Shimabukuro's *Toriko* and other *Shōnen Jump* manga.³⁸² While *Omega* intended to borrow from the world of *Saint Seiya*, the planning committee would conceive of how to make the series profitable. The project's planning committee was expanded to include senior Toei staff members like Seki who have worked on multiple anime productions before, but also representatives from Kurumada Pro, the copyright owners; TV Asahi, the network sponsor; and Dentsu, an advertising company which represents the toy company Bandai Namco and who are responsible for purchasing the air space from the network in which *Omega* airs. *Omega*'s broadcast time was from six-thirty on Sunday morning, suggesting either that the sponsors had low expectations for the show's performance, or felt that the broadcast time mattered little in terms of attracting its core demographic of young males and their parents. The only elements that were decided at this basic stage was that the series would evoke the spirit of the original, with Saints, armored cloth, and passionate characters powered by their "cosmos" in battle. This bare bones foundation was all that was needed, for in the case of *Omega*, the planning committee already had the green light to proceed on production through an association with the already popular *Seiya* franchise.

With a new series, a stronger *an*, or premise, needs to be in place to alleviate the fears of sponsors. Even with existing series, the sponsors' involvement in the creation of the premise can also be tied to the degree in which the products are tied into the anime itself. This is the case with anime such as *Pretty Cure*, whose sponsors request heavy product incorporation into the show. With *Omega*, Toei had more freedom to figure out

³⁸² Permission for the use of the *Seiya* name and concept was required not from the publisher of the original *Saint Seiya*, Shueisha, but from the owner of the manga's and intellectual property copyright, Kurumada Masami and Kurumada Productions, which gave the go-ahead for the series.

what Bandai Namco product could be sold to its key male demographic. Most television anime series at Toei are created to appeal and sell merchandise to children, though *Omega* had the added benefit of attracting fathers nostalgic for the original series in the 1980s. Matt Hills has called this process “double-coding,” where both children and adults can both enjoy the same work, and even grow into deeper understandings as they mature while the work continues to sustain itself within popular culture.³⁸³ By appealing to these two groups, *Omega* could hedge its bets and count on revenue streams from two different audiences. These audiences, moreover, were not mutually exclusive, but rather could reinforce one another. Children used to getting up early for Sunday morning cartoons might get their fathers to join them, while parents nostalgic for the *Saint Seiya* anime of the 1980s could prod their sons and daughters into watching a new version of the anime with which they grew up.

The series’ products were designed to hit both demographics. *Omega* was part of a long-tail media mix strategy, whereby the series would run for four *cours*, a full year, while generating hype for various other media during its morning time slot. The first product featured in *Omega* was a recycled idea from the original *Saint Seiya* anime: figurines. Bandai Namco concluded through its market research that boys love to study the *Seiya* characters’ intricate “cloth” armor, which are continually upgraded with new powers and designs in the series. The cast of the original *Seiya* was also quite large, with countless supporting characters and enemies based on the various constellations, making for a *Pokemon*-like setup where fans would collect all the Saints in order to field a complete lineup. When a show needs to stick to a concrete storyline or integrate products, then the

³⁸³ See Matt Hills, *Triumph of a Time Lord: Regenerating Doctor Who in the 21st Century*, (London: IB Tauris & Co., 2010), 119-139.

sponsor can coordinate with the staff to ensure that products are reflected in many aspects of the series, but in *Omega*'s case, the main products being sold were figurines, meaning as long as the show emphasized the characters in various poses and exhibiting a range of emotions, then the sponsor's obligation would be met. With *Omega*, however, Bandai Namco pumped out a new, deluxe line of die-cast figurines comprised of expensive polymers and polyvinyl chloride. The figurines only showcased the Gold Saints from the original series, in considerably more detail and with a considerably higher sticker price of anywhere between six and ten thousand yen (see figure 17). The planning committee here relied on the notion that parents would be as attracted to the new show as their children, and catered their main product accordingly. Commercials for the figurines, which aired during breaks in each episode, were overtly targeted not towards children, but to the fans of the original series. The ads used aural cues, visual signs, and colorful graphics that were a trademark of the first manga and anime, even putting the figurines into poses that only fans would find significant. With this strategy, Bandai Namco concluded that it would be more cost effective and less risky to market to an established audience rather than a new one.³⁸⁴



Figure 17: High-quality figurines appeal to the older fans of the anime

³⁸⁴ Bandai Namco, I was told, also proposed an alternative idea of wearable cloth for children that was designed to correspond to a series of elements, but neither side embraced the idea.

The emphasis on high-quality figurines did not mean that the planning committee had abandoned making a show for its children's segment; it merely meant that it prioritized the existing base over the potential one during *Omega's* initial episodes, and decided to move the new audience gradually into the existing property's world. Other media events and productions were organized around tapping into the original anime's legacy and characters, particularly that of feature-length animated films. While the anime garnered fans and media attention during its broadcast, the digital effects group at Toei began working on a *Saint Seiya* feature-length film animated completely with computer graphics to be released in the summer of 2014. The story and characters of the film skewed heavily toward the original *Seiya* anime; while it would have been geared towards only the adults familiar with the original series, *Omega* effectively could function as a year-long advertisement for the film for children new to the series. Meanwhile, depending on the success of the series, other spin-offs could be conceived, such as an "origins" story for the original *Seiya*.³⁸⁵ In essence, *Omega* would function simultaneously as a sequel and revival for the old franchise.

Perhaps no media event signaled the planning committee's reliance on the original series more than the extravagant "Seiya Night." Hundreds of fans from both Japan and abroad gathered at Shinjuku's Balt 9 Cineplex for a sold-out midnight premier screening of *Omega's* first episode. The event was a hot ticket, for it would feature not only the first episode of *Omega*, but also a talk show before and after the screening with the producer, director, and the voice actors and actresses of the series. The premier was simulcast to fans who gathered in cinemas across Japan to witness the event firsthand, but it was also

³⁸⁵ The spin-off origins series, *Saint Seiya: Soul of Gold*, chronicling pre-story of the Gold Saints of the first series, was eventually produced and premiered in April 2015.

broadcast to select countries around the world, even being presented by a Japanese and English-speaking master of ceremonies. The original *Saint Seiya* was especially popular in Brazil and France, and the latest iteration of the series was anticipated in both countries for many months. Indeed, the crowd itself was filled with a mix of Japanese, Taiwanese, Brazilian, French, and Italian fans chatting in a variety of languages before the event began. Toei had these fans in mind, many of whom bought tickets or were tuning in based on the *Seiya* legacy, as well as the opportunity to revel in its nostalgic past. Kageyama Hironobu, the singer-composer of the original *Seiya*'s opening theme song, was greeted to thunderous applause and an impromptu sing-a-long, as he was brought in to perform the themes to both the original *Seiya* and the new *Omega*. Following the screening of the premier episode, a half-dozen *Saint Seiya* animated movies from the original series were screened until the first trains began running again early in the morning. The event's straddling of dual media creations effectively encapsulated the merging audiences of the old and new *Seiya*.

Creative Caretakers: Producers

The person in charge of events like the "Seiya Night," as well as a host of other coordination duties once the series has been approved, is the producer. The producer's job and role can change from production to production. Most anime have several producers who are responsible to their corporate employers, and their roles vary according to the nature of the anime series and its planning committee. In Toei's case, the producer has a much larger role than most anime productions to be the creative voice that steers the general direction of the project. Akahoshi Masanao has argued that Toei employs a "producer system" for their animation, where the producer's voice and general opinion

hold considerable sway in creative decisions.³⁸⁶ Where most anime employ a chief director to guide the creative vision of the series, Toei instead hires “series directors,” a seemingly small distinction that makes a considerable difference in how the anime program operates. For Toei series that continue for a number of years such as *Toriko* or *One Piece*, the series director might be replaced or request to leave the production in order to work on another series. In this case, the producer’s job is to maintain continuity between the production staff and ensure that the series does not suddenly display notably different visual or thematic changes. Toei’s producers are the constant on the anime when a team is overhauled, overseeing aspects of production apart from the animation such as the series’ scripts, music, merchandise, promos, events, and the selection and overall contentment of its staff.

Producers are managers, first and foremost, of human relations, ensuring that the various directors of each division can produce without interruption. While series directors at Toei might impart a certain visual style or technique to the series they direct, the types of characters, worlds, and narratives are often more in line with the producer’s/studio’s sensibilities and judgment. This idea is echoed by Akahoshi, who writes that scholars looking to find an authorial consistency to Toei anime directed by specific directors will be disappointed to not find thematic tendencies among their works since they are often hired to direct single episodes. Those interested in the personality behind a series or a collection of series should instead look at the body of work of Toei’s producers, who exhibit certain tendencies over a long career for genres, character types, and thematic conflict. This unconscious reflection of personality in anime production echoes Peter Wollen’s auteur

³⁸⁶ Akahoshi Masanao, “Toei Dōga no kenkyū” (Toei Animation Research), in *Zusetsu Terebi Anime Zenshō* (Complete Book of TV Animation: Illustrated) ed. Misono Makoto (Tokyo: Hara Shobō, 1999), 215-219.

theory of “structural” patterns which manifest in preferences of themes and, particularly, sets of characters, such as the male-intensive narratives of Howard Hawks.³⁸⁷

Producers at Toei are not directly involved in the animation process, though many come from backgrounds in production and other fields. Several producers, as well as the vice-president of Toei Animation, were former anime directors at one point. One producer was a reporter for a major Japanese media outlet; another was a staff member of a minor film production studio; another defected from a large advertising agency. Some are more intrusive on creative decisions than others, but each brings a set of skills that create a distinct working atmosphere. Two of the producers I observed, Wakabayashi Go and Hasegawa Masaya, come from backgrounds intensive in film production and analysis. Wakabayashi was the producer for *Saint Seiya Omega*. He had spent several years studying in the United States before applying to Toei after graduating university, a requirement for any permanent staff.³⁸⁸ Wakabayashi recounted:

I knew I wanted to be involved in creating something, but I didn’t know that I wanted to be involved in Japanese media until I went to Los Angeles, ironically. While I was studying in Santa Monica, I watched a retrospective of Fukasaku Kinji’s yakuza films he made under Toei. They were unbelievable in their energy and spirit. That was a big catalyst for my applying to Toei, and probably even getting the job.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁷ See Peter Wollen, “The Auteur Theory” in *Signs and Meanings in the Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), 74-115.

³⁸⁸ Toei, like most major Japanese corporations, hires employees to begin in April, though their recruitment periods are biannually rather than the typical annual hiring of other companies. For a breakdown of the Japanese corporate structure, see Arthur Whitehill, *Japanese Management: Tradition and Transition* (London: Routledge, 1991).

³⁸⁹ Wakabayashi Go, interview by the author, May 2012.

Wakabayashi told this story to the human resources staff who interviewed him for a job at the studio, concretely tying his interest in working in filmmaking and the studio to his initial awakening to the wild and energetic film productions of Toei's 1970s *yakuza* and pinky violence movies. There might have been some destiny as well. Wakabayashi Go was the name of one of the lead actors of *G-Men '75* (1975), a popular television detective series that was produced by Toei's film division, a fact that did not go unnoticed by the producers in the interview.

Wakabayashi was assigned to the company's international marketing division and spent four years in France before transferring to the producing department back in Japan. He was an assistant producer for *Toriko*, as well as a producer for *Heart Catch Precure!* (2010-11) and *Dragon Ball Kai* (2009-11) before he was assigned to *Omega*, ensuring that he had the bona fides to helm a *shōnen* series. Being a company employee means that Wakabayashi has little say in which productions he works on, or even which department he works in. "To be honest," he told me, "Working in the marketing division was great. I got to see a side of film that very few people understand. I took a lot of pleasure out of seeing our films or animation screen in foreign countries to non-Japanese audiences. But when Seki-san came to France, we got to talking, and she told me to come back to Japan to become a producer, and that was that."³⁹⁰ One of the aspects that appealed to Seki was Wakabayashi's smooth handling of several events for French fans of various Toei series. His quick-thinking helped him deal with any number of problems that arose during the events in France. This ability to handle problems as calmly and efficiently as possible is one of the most important traits for any producer at Toei. I personally witnessed Wakabayashi handle a sudden dilemma when one of the voice actors sprained his ankle the

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

day before an important commercial recording and claimed he could not perform his role that day. Wakabayashi propped him up on a stool, an unconventional practice for voice actors, and insisted he record the performance while sitting.

The official role of the producer is to appease the financial expectations of the various sponsors behind the production's budget, as well as the creative desires of the production staff. The first management duty a producer has is towards the human relations of the *seisaku iinkai*. When it comes to the production of the series, Wakabayashi is responsible for leading the *seisaku iinkai*, simultaneously appeasing the various parties in the committee, as well as maintaining a standard of quality for Toei's anime production. The producer is also responsible for organizing and managing creative team that includes a director, head writer, and character designer/animation director; these are the key figures who work together to construct the characters, world, and main story of the anime, meeting every week to construct scripts for each episode of the series. The members of the production committee can choose to have producers attend these meetings as well, and some meetings are stacked with a handful of producers in addition to the creative team.

The producer must be a manager of the relations of the staff. In order for the series director and project manager to make sure the production runs on time, the animators aren't overworked, and the quality of each episode is high, the producer must handle many of the side functions to ensure staff are provided with the resources they need. Beyond basic budgeting issues, producers handle staff events, MC for company parties, and grant interviews for media outlets. Wakabayashi was the last staff member left at the "Seiya Night," greeting fans when they deliriously left the theatres at six in the morning. Producers must also do generally nice things for the production team like pay for team

dinners. In the case of *Omega*, Wakabayashi frequently spent time with various members after meetings or work socializing over drinks until late into the night and sometimes into the next morning. He felt that these were valuable opportunities to get to know his team, but these drunken pow-wows also functioned as moments where he could hear freely from staff members who were not in the presence of other regulars about team issues, problems, or discomfort. Wakabayashi felt it his obligation to accompany any member and lend them his ear at the end of the day, with confessions, frustrations, and ambitions expressed on a regular basis. These moments of “real talk” were also areas where Wakabayashi could gauge issues with production he was not aware of in a form of soft surveillance. A key part of Wakabayashi’s work day began when he assumed the role of proverbial counselor and watchdog at the end of the normal shift.

This is not to say that all producers partake in this ritual, nor that all teams demand it. Hasegawa Masaya, the producer of *Pretty Cure*, rarely went out with staff after meetings. A family man, he likely concluded that what he could gain in staff relations would harm the relationship with his wife and daughter back home. Hasegawa also felt less obligated to weigh in on creative matters regarding story or character construction. Some of his reticence was due to this being his first production at Toei, though his attitude is shaped in large part by how he views a producer in the scheme of the anime’s production. He, too, views the producer as a manager, but entirely in the stead of the characters’ *merchandise*:

I might have some ideas on stories or how a shot should look like, but I generally leave that to the staff. I need to be vigilant about potential problems as well, such as parental complaints about offensive content. Mainly, I want to make sure the toys are featured in the story as much as possible. If the character toys aren’t featured,

then the anime, for all of its other virtues, will be a failure. Sometimes this means asking directors to alter their storyboards or change the script entirely if I feel it's inappropriate. Some animators might have a problem with this, but I would argue that they should work on some other anime other than *Pretty Cure*. It's my job as a professional to make sure that their creative whims don't impinge upon the integrity of the franchise.³⁹¹

Hasegawa's view of his role as producer is largely shaped by the influence of his sponsors, who had heavy input into how the character toys would be incorporated into the show, and who finance the show through sales of merchandise. While *Omega* is no less obligated to helping sell figurines and video games, the series construction had considerable more creative freedom for Wakabayashi and his team since the sponsor was not so heavily involved in incorporating its merchandise into the production. Even here, Hasegawa attitude illustrates the producer's responsibility for overseeing the entirety of the franchise's brand and style, embodied in his sense of duty for what is "right" for the particular series and its world.

Besides managing the production committee, Wakabayashi's other managerial role is as a character caretaker, a role that is central to the anime's media mix, particularly in the case of *Omega*. Firstly, he is the link that connects the idea of creators should the anime continue in perpetuity. Unlike other original productions that run for a year, *Omega* was extended another four *cours* for a full, second-year run. Much of the original cast decided not to continue on for the second year, including the series director, the animation director, and the lead series writer. This meant that not only was Wakabayashi responsible for selecting replacements for his head staff, but he was also the only link between the separate

³⁹¹ Hasegawa Masaya, interview by the author, June 2012.

production teams and series' story arcs. The second season was produced with an entirely separate cast of characters, though the first season's characters and world settings were constantly referenced throughout. For a new staff unfamiliar with the series' characters and world, Wakabayashi's input was instrumental. His knowledge of characters and the established world helped bridge the production teams, especially in the initial episodes of the second year, through tweaking dialogue that didn't fit his perception of the character's personality, or asking for additional scenes to feature certain characters in order to delve deeper into their relationships.

Wakabayashi's other role as a character manager comes into play when he represents the anime as it incorporates other media, from figurines to music CDs. Every week, Wakabayashi leads a meeting with various sponsors, who go over sales of television ratings, event revenues, and sales of the many legs of merchandise tied to the series' characters. The producer typically helps organize the construction of ancillary media that is incorporated into or from the series. Wakabayashi, for example, was responsible for choosing the show's multiple opening musical themes. For the first theme, he chose to reuse the opening theme song from the original *Saint Seiya* in order to connect the show nostalgically to older viewers and thematically to the previous series, of which it would be a direct sequel. However, to bind the show to a new audience, he had the song performed by the new lead heroine of *Omega*, an idol and personality popular with young children and serious hard-core anime fans. When it came to create a new opening theme for the second season, Wakabayashi also approved the new version after listening to several song samples of varying quality before finally selecting the one that best reflected the tone and themes of

the series. This involved telling the producer to use certain phrases and catchwords, such as “Pegasus,” “Saint,” and “cosmos,” that were popularized in the original series.³⁹²

Some producers will leave the creative decisions to the director and lead writer, though Wakabayashi was more vocal in his creative input. Like many of the other Toei staff, he is well-versed in both film and animation history, especially Toei’s, and had strong desires to make anime through his own proposals to *kikaku*.³⁹³ Wakabayashi unofficially viewed his role as making the anime as interesting as possible, going as far as to suggest story ideas during meetings. To him, the characters were more important than any other feature, evident in everything from the story construction to the merchandise design. He illustrated this to me in his explanation of the differences between two poster designs for Toei animations:

The first one here, it’s quite beautiful, but it’s difficult to get a feel for the characters with this design. They all look the same, or are hard to see. Some of these characters have their backs to us. I wouldn’t have OK’d this design. You need to feature the characters; we need to see them. Their poses should be dynamic, and their faces should be distinct. Even if the character designs might be similar, it’s our job to make them appear as individuals.³⁹⁴

³⁹² I accompanied Wakabayashi to the recording of the song – a pop number sung by an up-and-coming boy band. When we arrived at the studio, only one of the members was there to meet us. The recording was organized so that each member of the band would record his part individually, and the various voices arranged by a sound mixer afterwards. This was presumably done because the members would not be able to sing effectively together, and after witnessing each one fail to carry a tune in their solo recording, I can confirm this decision was a sound one.

³⁹³ Producers and other staff members are encouraged to pitch their own proposals to the senior staff at Toei. The chance of any one proposal getting the green light for an anime production is minimal, though ambitious producers can grease their chances through working with other staff to include concept art, product ideas, and a total conception of the production’s media mix. Wakabayashi was constantly pitching new series, from a co-production with Marvel’s *Avengers*, to a historical adventure caper heavily inspired by *Lupin III*.

³⁹⁴ Wakabayashi Go, interview by the author, August 2012.

Wakabayashi saw himself as the producer of the world and characters of *Omega*, believing every facet of the production should bring out the existence of that world. His design for the poster of *Omega* reflected this desire, with the characters placed in the center of the frame in dynamic poses that displayed their personalities and traits.

The producer has the same responsibility when it comes to media derived from the anime. Meeting with a producer for Bandai Namco, Wakabayashi presents a game premise written by one of the young staff writers that he'd like to be used in the PlayStation Portable game, *Saint Seiya Omega: Ultimate Cosmos* (2013). The premise is accompanied by concept art for a special character that will be created only for the game. While the game is a two-player brawler of likely middling quality, Wakabayashi feels it his duty to ensure that the game both reflect *Omega's* characters and world, as well as provide fans who bought the game a compelling story and additional characters beyond what is represented in the anime. This sort of thought for fans and players is indicative of what the game designer Iwatani Toru has called gaming's *itareritsukuseri*, which is the creator's wish to "leave nothing to be desired."³⁹⁵ Obviously the addition of new content can provide fans with extra incentive to buy the game, though the participation of the show's producer in its construction is more akin to organization of what Michael Clarke calls "tentpole TV" through its showrunner. But where those big personalities lord over the ancillary media in film and television franchises like *Heroes* or *Lost*, Wakabayashi merely provides his suggestions for creating something compelling. Such ideas are less demands or directives than strong wishes that the game's producers can technically ignore, though they would be disrespecting Wakabayashi and his staff's strong concept of the *Omega* characters and

³⁹⁵ Iwatani Toru, "Foreward," in *Video Games Around the World*, ed. Mark J.P. Wolf (Cambridge, MA: MIT press, 2015).

world. Similar to the handling of original material in the manga's transmedia, producers willingly respect and approve the intent of the original creators as a sort of unspoken industry ritual that must be performed to the satisfaction of the original owners of the copyright before moving on to construct a separate media form.

Storytellers: Writing by Committee

The producer selects the core staff for the production to create the series' premise and concept details with the possible help or requests of the planning committee, but the director and scriptwriters construct scenarios for each individual episode before it goes to the production staff. These members meet every week with the producers throughout the course of the series' construction to hash out the overarching development of character details and story premises. This creative team sets to work on the pre-production of the anime, creating series premises that are fleshed out bit by bit. The gradual, collaborative work of the pre-production process reveals how character construction in anime is often generated and slowly developed by committee. This creative team of director, writers, and producers is effectively in charge of managing the anime blueprint: the script. In contrast to manga-based transmedia, where the manga serves as a sort of blueprint, the script of original anime is what determines the creative design and direction of the production staff.

The creative team shared a belief that to create something interesting, they would not appeal to fans of the original work. While this decision to create a series of new characters and premise seemingly stands in contrast to the producers and production committee's expectations of honoring the original series, it is actually consistent with the anime's intention of tapping into the original *Seiya* world. The directors and writers would rely on the world of the original *Seiya* and its considerable lore built upon the manga,

anime adaptation, and countless spin-offs, while the characters and premise of *Omega* would be created from scratch,. The ancillary merchandise, which relied heavily on characters from the original *Seiya*, would reinforce this lore to a younger audience unfamiliar with its world and history. In essence, extra-textual materials that reference the original *Seiya* such as the recycling of the original theme, the commercials featuring classic figurines, and the events marketed towards older fans served as tiny hints into the unexplained deeper mythology of *Omega* to pique the curiosity of younger fans left in the dark to the *Seiya* backstory. In this respect, ads serve a function that reveals the text in ways that are more direct than the text itself.

The creative team first worked together with producers to create the premise of the series. In *Omega*'s case, the first premise revolved around a sequel to the original *Seiya*, set a number of years in the future, with a new Saint teaming with the original Pegasus Seiya to once again protect Athena from the enemy. A second premise was proposed that added to this story by focusing on a single new Saint representing the Pegasus constellation. Attached to the new premise was a generic situation that involved a tier of enemies to fight from the original *Seiya* called the Sanctuary. Both premises were heavily dependent on the characters and story of the original *Seiya* series, but the creative team wanted to revive the spirit of the original series by creating a new storyline that would be interesting for contemporary children. Wakabayashi took this premise to Kurumada, who gave the group encouragement to continue in this general direction.³⁹⁶

³⁹⁶ Kurumada, in fact, has a reputation for being very protective of his creations, and was rumored to be displeased with a previous Toei adaptation of his original work, but the *Seiya* creator found a windfall of money from the use of *Seiya* in a series of pachinko machines, a form of legalized gambling in Japan in which players attempt to steer little metal balls through a maze of pegs into holes on a vertical grid. This lucrative pachinko revenue is said to have made Kurumada more open to letting Toei take free reign with the newest creation.

Wakabayashi took the premise back to the team and continued to brainstorm. The creative team tweaked the proposal and decided on a final list of characters, as well as their backstories and motivations. Upon receiving a blessing from Kurumada regarding the pursuit of a different direction, Wakabayashi offered several proposals that would be in line with an original production, and not a direct sequel to the original series.³⁹⁷ The creative team decided on a protagonist, Koga, who would not know he was the Pegasus Saint, nor the existence of other Saints. This stark contrast with the original *Seiya* was decided in order to explain to viewers what Saints are, and to establish a drama in becoming one. The final cast of characters consisted of several Saints. Some were designed to link the histories of the old and new series, such as the second generation of Dragon Saint, Ryuho. Some characters mined new territory to reflect a more diverse audience, such as the Aquila Saint, Yuna. In the original *Seiya*, only men were allowed to become Saints of Athena, and women who desired to become Saints were forced to wear masks to conceal their gender identity. Kurumada himself suggested the idea of a female Saint who refused to wear a mask and hide her gender. In total, a cast of six Saints was created, united in fighting an extra-terrestrial god-like enemy named Mars.

The concept of an anime series is often conceived through the characters and their basic personalities. How characters will interact with one another, the way they reflect the world and its history, what motivations they will bring to the story, and their potential for depth is offered as a starting point for anime in lieu of a concrete narrative. Character templates exhibiting emotions and feelings of what the characters represent are prioritized

³⁹⁷ In one of his proposals, he suggested a ninja Saint as the protagonist, thinking the idea would be popular with foreign audiences and especially in France, where he had witnessed firsthand the country's embrace of ninjas in popular culture. Though the planning committee decided to have Pegasus Saint, Koga, as the protagonist, Wakabayashi's ninja was embraced by the director and found its way to the final version in the form of another character.

over deep backstories. Some would call these characters “archetypes,” though there is enough combining and mixing of different personalities and elements in these characters to make them more varied and less dependent on a single trait. In *Omega*’s case, character personalities also need to straddle the interests of multiple audiences. The Saints more complex personalities were made somewhat more understandable through the added premise of Saints representing light against the forces of a generic dark evil. At the same time, certain characters were packed with references to the previous world. Ryuho, for example, evokes the first Dragon Saint, Shiryu, through his cloth and special abilities. His personality, however, is gentle and sickly, evoking the one of the most popular characters of the original *Seiya*, the Andromeda Saint, Shun.

It is up to the *series kōsei*, or head writer, Yoshida Reiko, to take these character concepts and form the basis of a series chronology, and write the first episode’s script for the studio and its sponsors. Yoshida has been one of the most in-demand scriptwriters in the anime industry since her breakout hit about an all-female school band club, *K-On!* (2010). She trained through the Brother Noppo writing school, a school for anime scriptwriters established by Koyama Takashi, a veteran scriptwriter for Toei and other studios whose most famous work is the anime adaptation of *Dragon Ball* and nearly every one of its feature film spin-offs. Upon graduating, Yoshida worked on several Toei anime, but proved herself capable of writing both original material and adaptations for just about any story. Her most popular series, such as *Kaleido Star* (2003-04), *K-On!*, and *Girls und Panzer* (2012) have been geared towards men but feature casts of self-assured and individually unique female protagonists. One of the first series compositions she constructed was for an original video anime spin-off of the *shōnen* period anime *Rurouni*

Kenshin: Trust & Betrayal (1999). She injected the comedic action of the *shōnen* series with a fresh element, inventing a plot detailing the protagonist's brutal past as an assassin and the tragic murder of his wife. The script won plaudits for its combination of *shōnen* elements with a tragic-romantic strain. Yoshida was brought on to provide a similar humanity and pathos to the battle-heavy *Seiya* story.

Yoshida's job is to take the premise and manage a series of motifs for the characters and their world. This is the beginning of the construction of the character *settei*, or design. She first creates a chronology of the characters, tracing the story back to the original manga and anime and making sure there are no inconsistencies in the details of the lore. She then fills in the blanks, creating potential backstories for the characters and defining characteristics of their personalities. These backstories are built out of the relationships between the protagonists and antagonists of the anime. Since the central character would know as much about the world's Saints as a five-year-old viewer, she had to build a story where the protagonist is awakened to their existence and his potential of becoming one. Yoshida said the suggestion to use pair characters with elemental abilities such as fire, wind, and water helped clarify their personalities:

Character designer Umakoshi Yoshihiko requested little dramas for the characters to help him illustrate their designs, so I used the elements to fix the *settei*. The “wind” element user Yuna is a wild and headstrong character, but also soothing and gentle. The “fire” element user Soma has a warm side, but also a cruel and ferocious one when he burns. The “water” element user Ryuho can be rapidly swept away if he's not careful, but is sturdy once he faces the current. Some of the other

ones were simpler – the “earth” user is very persistent and persevering, while the “lightning” user is violent and proud.³⁹⁸

Using Koga’s elemental ability as a catalyst, Yoshida fixed on the idea of the central character representing the light, but struggling with the temptations of the dark in a vein similar to George Lucas’s *Star Wars*. She named the protagonist Koga, a name which is spelled with the Japanese kanji for “light” and “fang,” but cast the central villain Mars as the villain representing the dark. To continue with the sci-fi homage, she made Mars into Koga’s estranged father who abandoned and nearly killed him as a child. The other characters were then provided with various backstories and supporting roles that fit into this central conflict of light versus dark. Characters, in other words, establish the themes and motifs of the world, working as blank vassals for the *series kōsei* to inscribe upon her own profiles and backstories.

Once Yoshida came up with the how the various characters fit into the story, she provided a script of the first episode. This episode, much like the backstories, sets the tone for the series through establishing dialogue, tone, pace, and conflict. While Yoshida knows how the series will conclude, a team of scriptwriters pens individual episodes throughout the course of the year. Yoshida and the team of writers decide on script direction through a collaborative meeting called an *uchiawase*, a meeting that is both presentation and discussion. I observed a number of these meetings, where writers, producers, sponsors, and the director all interact and bounce ideas off one another to generate the right idea. Unlike the Hollywood writer’s room, ideas are not just limited to the screenwriters, but are expected of anyone in the room, from the studio producer to the director to the television producer, who may or may not have worked on anime before. The same might be said of

³⁹⁸ Yoshida Reiko, quoted in Kobayashi Miki, *Saint Seiya Pia* (Tokyo: Pia, 2012), 27.

the scriptwriters. *Omega* employed an unusually large staff for an anime writing team, partly because of the 50-plus episodes needed for the year's quota to be met, and partly because Toei tends to give writers a chance who are starting out through professional connections. Two such writers – the son of the head of Brother Noppo, and a more experienced novelist of light works and erotic video games introduced by Yoshida – were working on their first anime. Their job in the first months was to observe, like myself, the scripts of the more experienced staff and to contribute ideas when team members were stuck. Eventually, they would pen their own scripts, go through many tough revisions, and eventually find roles as key writers on the staff during its second season.

Creative Shepherds: Directors/Designers

The directors of an anime are its most important creative voices. When the premise is established, it is up to the series director and animation director to provide a visual template for the anime series. Through the collective wishes of the creative team, they are the managers of the look and pace of the entire anime. For *Omega*'s series director, Wakabayashi chose Hatano Morio. Morio had been with Toei since 2001 and had worked with Wakabayashi on several Toei productions as an *enshutsu*, or episode director, for *Heart Catch Precure!* Wakabayashi remembered the episodes that Hatano directed were dynamic, possessing camerawork and layouts uncharacteristic for a girls' anime, and he felt that Hatano would be able to provide the visual style and dynamism characteristic of the *Seiya* universe. I saw down to chat with Hatano at a coffee shop directly across the street from Toei studios, shortly after the completion of the *Omega* series. I wanted to discuss his history with the studio and the role he played as series director of the first year of *Omega*. In particular, I wanted to know what was his role in the early stages of the series'

conception now that the series was finished. Had I not waited until this time, he likely would have been too distracted to sit with me for such a long period. Hatano revealed to me during a staff dinner towards the end of production that he had taken just three days off the entire previous year, one of those days being when he was incredibly sick and couldn't make it out of bed. In fact, he exited the dinner early to go back to the studio and work on storyboards and art for an important upcoming episode.

Hatano first entered Toei Dōga after studying history in graduate school since he had no interest in a career in academia. "I couldn't even be bothered to finish the thesis and dropped out after finishing my coursework," he told me. Hatano liked animation as a child, even drawing manga in secondary school, but soon developed a passion for cinema. He entered a program at Toei for animators, specializing in a directing course, with the goal of becoming a director and making the kinds of films he was interested in. He was offered a contract by Toei upon graduation from the program, one of less than a handful employed by the program every year, and began directing individual episodes of a variety of series from *Kaidan Restaurant* (2009) to several magical girl series. A key point for him was the potential to make original work and not only adapt the work of other artists:

Toei is unlike any other company in Japan, with the exception of Sunrise, in that they make original animation for an entire year or more. Most anime is made for one or two *cours*, and this is to limit risk, but it's too short to really get invested in the characters or setting, in my opinion. Toei offered the opportunity to create something really big and original, even if it was somewhat linked to another work.

This is the appeal of this studio.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁹ Hatano Morio, interview by the author, February 2014.

Hatano's background and comments reveal some of the key differences with animators versus mangaka. Where mangaka must push their work into a demographically-designated manga magazine to reach a broad audience, animators work on a variety of material that is sent their way. The production conditions of studio animation demand animators be flexible with what they can draw, rather than adhere to a single style of art, line, or narrative. In such conditions, the opportunity for original work, untethered to another visual source, is most attractive for directors. Though he was working on the sequel to one of Toei's most successful hits, Hatano said his priority was not about making a nostalgia trip for old fans, but in making something unique for new viewers. This would be no easy task; there was considerable pressure to make something that would be part of the *Seiya* "universe," not just from fans, but from original *Seiya* mangaka Kurumada, who has a reputation for being demanding of adaptations of his work, as well as the vice-president of Toei Animation, Morishita Kozo, who directed the original *Seiya* over twenty years prior.⁴⁰⁰

Toei Animation's series directors are responsible for more of a series production than most anime series directors. They are the ones who oversee the entire anime, coordinating with various staff to steer it to completion. They are responsible for cementing and fixing staffing, receiving and ensuring each department works to put together a final package for delivery to the network. Series directors are responsible for storyboarding the first episode and other episodes of any given series, establishing a tone in a similar way to

⁴⁰⁰ Morishita had directed the animation for the American series *Transformers* and worked closely with Kurumada to make sure the anime version of *Saint Seiya* would bring out the characters and *seikaikan* of the original. Under the prodding of Bandai, Morishita changed the cloth and character designs of the manga to provide a better fit for the anime and its toys. The series garnered high ratings and sold over six million figurines, but also went severely over-budget repeatedly. See Morishita Kozo, *Toei Animation 40-nen Funtōshi: Anime Dragon Ball, Saint Seiya, Transformers wo tegaketa okoto* (Toei Animation and 40 Years of Struggle: The Man Who Wrestled with the Anime of "Dragon Ball," "Saint Seiya," and "Transformers") (Tokyo: Ichijinsha, 2010), 126-138.

the head scriptwriter. While separate episode directors helm other individual episodes in the series, each of them reports to the series director, sending in storyboards and conferring with the series director when questions arise. If there are problems with the storyboards, the series director will correct them him or herself. The series director similarly checks in on each section of the animation process, from key frames and artwork to the computer graphics and voice recording, to ensure quality and their particular vision for the series. Series directors at Toei are also responsible for overseeing the direction of the voice actors in recording sessions. As they have eyes on every aspect of production, series directors have the most creative control for the anime's story and style, working with the character designer and animation director from an early point to establish the look of the characters and settings. Since they are the only ones involved in every aspect of production, they are frequently tasked with making many important creative decisions. At Toei, most series directors need to have considerable experience working as an episode director of various series before being given the shot at directing an entire series, as the amount of work and responsibilities required are daunting.⁴⁰¹

Hatano said he was fortunate that Umakoshi Yoshihiko was assigned as character designer and *sakuga kantoku* (*sakkan*), or the chief animation director for *Omega*.

Umakoshi is one of the most well-regarded animators in the industry, having done key animation and character designs for a number of series at Toei and other studios. His previous work at Toei was on magical girl anime such as *Ojamajo Doremi* and various iterations of *Pretty Cure*. Umakoshi's designs for these girls' anime were typically bright and colorful, distinctive in their extreme deformity and exaggerated long proportions, but

⁴⁰¹ Hatano told me that he was at the studio for roughly seventeen to eighteen hours a day during the entire year-and-a-half in which he supervised *Omega*'s production.

also hiding a dark side, with facial expressions that just as easily express horror as well as happiness. He was apparently inspired early in his career by the work of Araki Shingo, the character designer of the original *Seiya*, *Rose of Versailles*, and a number of other high-profile anime. Umakoshi has a reputation for creating characters made of “flesh and bones,” easily recognizable through their appearances. One director remarked, “I would get the designs back, and though there were no names attached to the characters, I knew who they were right away and think, ‘Oh, this character is so-and-so.’”⁴⁰² Instead of trying to explain to me his designs, he let his art do the talking for him. Though Umakoshi had done key animation for a *Saint Seiya* original video animation several years before, he said he was most motivated by the youth and freshness of the new project. Though he had done key animation for an original video animation (OVA) series of *Saint Seiya* several years prior, he was not sure if *Omega* was the right project for him. “I had my own ideas, but I had the strong belief that this should be an anime that can get young people excited,” he said. “Seeing guys much younger than myself like Wakabayashi and Hatano try their best to make a new *Seiya* made me motivated to make myself useful for them.”⁴⁰³

Umakoshi used Yoshida’s character backstories to create a *settei*, or a set of character drawings and designs to get a sense of how the world will look like. Examining the *settei* reveals how Umakoshi conceptualized Yoshida’s backstories. The protagonist Koga, for example, is a Saint that is embodied by the element of “light,” with a design that is seemingly appropriate for the melodramatic backstories supplied by Yoshida. “Koga is a hot-blooded and straightforward young man, but I didn’t see him as just your typical *shōnen* hero. I wanted him to have a dark side. While he’s supported by the element of

⁴⁰² Igarashi Takuya, quoted in *Umakoshi Yoshihiko: Toei Animation Works* (Tokyo: Ichijinsha, 2011), 203.

⁴⁰³ Umakoshi Yoshihiko, quoted in *Figure King* No. 170 (April 2012), 14.

‘light,’ I saw him as equally supported by the ‘darkness.’”⁴⁰⁴ Most of this is communicated in the shapes of the eyes and mouth, which in Koga’s case is left expressionless. This sort of vague character template is uncharacteristic for a lead protagonist of a battle manga, reflecting Umakoshi’s desire to have Koga be a complicated hero with deep-seated anxieties. On another level, Koga’s body reveals several aspects of the world and look of *Omega*. His bodily proportions are exaggerated, with long and angular limbs characteristic of Umakoshi’s background in magical girl anime drawing feminine protagonists. While he is wearing the “cloth” of the Saint, it is so tightly attached to his body that it is almost undistinguishable. Umakoshi designed the “cloth” as constructed from a futuristic material, with a tactility that is akin to a second skin. The cloth in this evolved world of *Omega* is more of a suit than an armor, giving the Saints a greater visual affinity with magical girls than masked warriors. In his own way, Umakoshi pairs a feminine visual aesthetic – familiar to fans of *shōjo* anime – to Yoshida’s sensitive and romantic character backstories.

With television anime *settei* such as *Omega*’s, characters create the narrative and represent their world, rather than the other way around. But while character-driven media creation is the most efficient, it is not all by choice. Part of this prioritization of character over narrative is due to time constraints. Hatano told me that he would have liked to focus on the *sekaikan*, or world settings and atmosphere, if he had two or three months to really create the world from scratch:

I would have liked to first establish the enemy’s history and motivations, and really go into the backstories of where the characters are from. Doing an entire chronology or history of the world would be attractive and help other staff members with understanding the world. But we had no time, so we came up with a generic

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

character named Mars. To be honest, I have no idea why we decided on him and his minions as the enemy.⁴⁰⁵

Hatano amusingly speaks to his creative frustrations here with the tight deadlines of television anime construction. While Toei spends considerable time planning for a series, so many series are constantly being produced that staff are under constant pressure and deadlines once the series construction is underway. Indeed, the timeframes for production would seem herculean to most Western cartoon studios. From the premise construction stage to scripting to animation to recording to editing to air is only a matter of nine months, and in extreme circumstances, shows can be animated, recorded, and delivered only mere hours before the national broadcast. Thus, like many forms of commercial art, character-driven media construction is borne out of industrial constraints.

In the middle of this production is Hatano, a key figure who discusses series construction with the producers and scriptwriters, but also a production head who must manage an entire team of animators. Hatano's job is unenviable, for there is truly never a moment where he is totally "off." At any point outside of meetings with staff or animators, it is possible for him to work and make the show "better," whether those improvements come in cosmetic changes to storyboards, revisions to the scripts for voice actors, or trimming of scenes to fit time constraints, all while never letting go of the bigger picture of the series entirety and continuity. Hatano's role as a middleman for the script team and animation team is essential for bridging the ideal and the possible. During one meeting, a powerful saint character is introduced representing the Gemini constellation. It is not clear from his writing of the character whether that person is sufficiently good or evil, a deliberate choice made by the scriptwriter to play on the saint's dual personalities. But

⁴⁰⁵ Hatano Morio, interview by the author, February 2014.

Hatano points out that the script is too wordy in its conveyance of this point, and that there needs to be more reliance on the animators to paint this picture.

In the script, the Saint is defeated by a “pretty” version of a powerful super move, but this sort of language conversely does not convey the meaning of the move properly. Here, more detail is needed to explain how this move will look in relation to the rest of the episode. “Aren’t all our drawings pretty?” he quips. He whips out a pen and pad and begins sketching a detail of the scene, giving examples of what he thinks the writer means.

Though Hatano claims to not have any talent as an artist, the sketches are varied and show a command of different camera angles, character blocking, and visual possibilities to expand upon in the animation. The enemy hides in an area called “The Zodiac Temples” (*jūnikyū*) and the series calls for a vision of how this will look. Hatano conveys his impression to the rest of the room – a smattering of tiered floating islands, each connected to the next by suspended steps as they cascade to the sky. The group nods in approval, giving suggestions as to how perspective could look more dynamic or the background art could give the scene more depth. For the most part, Hatano’s sketches are rarely revised here, and serve to provide the writers with a literal drawing board for them to see how their ideas will work in the animated form. But his impromptu illustration serves to connect the ideas to the action in real time, the genesis of worlds forming before our eyes. For experienced writers like Yoshida, this is largely unnecessary, but for the new writers and myself, the lessons proved illuminating.

World-Builders: *Ekonté/Enshutsu*

While the script is in construction, Umakoshi creates an *image board*, or model pack of characters in various poses, expressing a range of emotions, and wearing an

assortment of clothing. Animators then use the boards to create the layouts for each episode. Typically, the designs should be as detailed as possible so that animators do not go off model and lead to more work in corrections for the chief animation director. If there are new characters that need designs, Umakoshi will create new image boards. Sometimes these designs will go back to the scenario room and the writers and producers will weigh in on the characters' appearances, but in many cases this will simply be hashed out between Hatano and Umakoshi. After the final draft of the is approved, the director takes it to the animators, who begin the process of turning the words on the page into a visually interesting moving image. This begins with the episode directors, who are tasked with the visual and narrative design of individual episodes. Episode directors function as mini-managers, in charge of small temporal chunks of the anime's narrative and design.

The first step of the animation process is constructing the storyboards, or *ekonté*, which literally translates to “picture continuity.” The storyboards summarize what will happen in each episode, shot for shot. They typically consist of a drawing showing visuals, dialogue and sound effects, and camera instructions. The storyboard is like a second script, giving visual detail to the instructions in the written script. In many cases, changes to the script are inevitable when constructing the storyboard. As the late director Kon Satoshi has remarked, “Even after you’ve composed the details of the screenplay, in the process of drawing the storyboards – when the characters’ faces are made, the locations begin to take shape and the compositions are determined – they change, even though the scenes and plot don’t.”⁴⁰⁶ In most respects, the anime storyboard is a much stronger and concrete visual diagram for the episode than a film or television storyboard, and animators are not expected

⁴⁰⁶ Tom Mes, “Interview: Satoshi Kon,” in *Midnight Eye*, 11 February 2002, <<http://www.midnighteye.com/interviews/satoshi-kon/>> (4 January 2014).

to deviate greatly from the delineated shot setups and camera directions. As Ian Condry puts it, storyboards “help guide the collaborative creativity of anime production in distinctive ways.”⁴⁰⁷ Specifically, storyboarding is the process of the beginning of world movement: both the beginnings of movement of the anime episode itself, and the migration of the anime world and its characters from the finished space of the writer’s room to the collective creators in the animation studio. The storyboard serves as the in-between space between ideas and execution, a guide that takes the collective ideas of the creative team and imparts them to the animators and artists for collective action.

At Toei, nearly all directors are expected to complete their own storyboards for the episodes they helm.⁴⁰⁸ In the Toei Animation department, I huddle with Hatano as he shows me his storyboards for the final episode of *Omega*’s first season (see figure 18). On the left-hand side is a series of panels in a vertical row, much like that of a filmstrip. To the left of the panels are two columns, one designating the scene count, the other designating the shot count. The storyboards break the script down into two parts for television: an A part – before the mid-point commercial break – and the B part, after the commercials have aired. Together, the two parts in the final episode contain over 300 shots, for a total of about 3500 drawings.⁴⁰⁹ To the right of the panels is a wide column for stage directions, and another wide column for dialogue and sound effects like that found in manga. At the far right of the page are a series of smaller columns for the time count, music cues, and visual effects. These sets of columns contain information explaining the action in the panel

⁴⁰⁷ Condry, 9.

⁴⁰⁸ Directors who cannot draw, such as Studio Ghibli’s Takahata Isao, give animators a set of instructions to do their storyboards for them.

⁴⁰⁹ This figure likely ran over for the denser and more detailed final episode)

to the key animators who will be taking Hatano's storyboards and attempting to create layouts from their sketches.

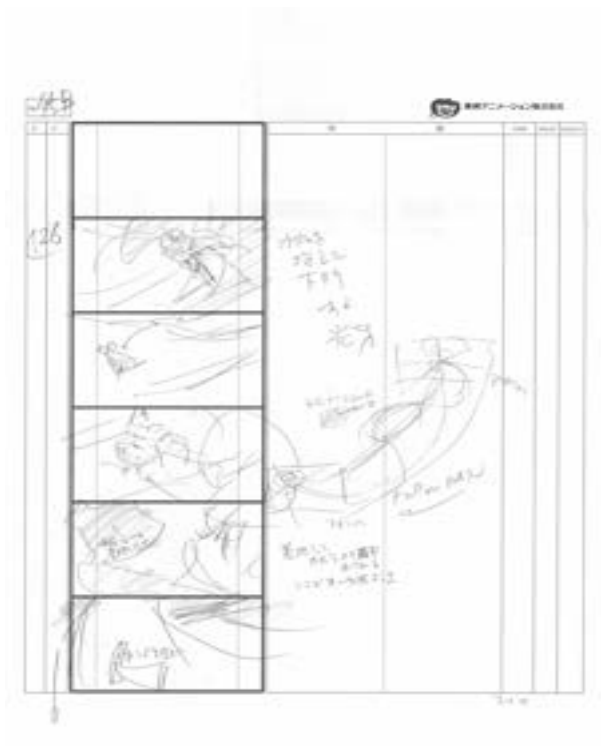


Figure 18: Director Hatano at work on storyboards for the final episode of *Omega*

Some storyboards are cleaner or rougher depending on the style of the director and the nature of the production. Directors with exacting standards, such as Miyazaki or Kon, have meticulous storyboards that could double as layouts. Hatano's sketches are admittedly rougher than the more polished storyboards that are on display in the art books of feature

animation studios such as Studio Ghibli or Madhouse. Hatano says he isn't the most skilled artist, though the drawings' rough quality can owe more to the time crunch of the production than to the talent of the director. Because of the roughness of the sketches, it is difficult to discern a visual style to Hatano's direction, especially when viewed in light of his other work (or other especially skilled animators), though there are a few tells for how Hatano wants the episode to look. One tactic Hatano uses is an abundance of short shots. With television animation, long and detailed character animation is difficult given the intensive time and labor needed to draw such animation. Hatano typically has shots that are a single drawing and with very little dialogue, which would mean that they are very brief in length. Because of this sequencing, the cuts are fast and less repetitive. A side effect of this fast-cutting method is that there is little opportunity to showcase detailed character animation, a benefit considering the lack of time and talent available. With more elaborate scenes, however, the shots are longer, consisting of three to five frames apiece. Towards the end of the episode, even shots of character faces are comprised of three frames, the drama unfolding "moment to moment" rather than "action to action."⁴¹⁰ While there is no hard and fast rule about how storyboards must proceed, depending on the scene and the nature of the shot, the storyboard conveys a greater or lesser amount of detail.

Hatano also compensates for his rough sketches by imparting each scene with several concrete instructions. For example, on one page, he gives detailed instructions for how a battle scene should proceed. Three panels are dedicated to a single arm, with very

⁴¹⁰ Scott McCloud describes panel/frame transitions through six different modes depending on how much time passes between each frame. McCloud argues that Japanese manga has a tendency to widely vary the passage of time so that some frames might tighten the temporal gap to the extreme, while other frames have little relation to the previous panel and come across as mood-setters or non-sequiturs. McCloud's analyses of manga panel composition is extremely useful in showing how manga artists use a variety of cinematic techniques to display narrative and atmosphere, though he also extrapolates this concept for far-reaching generalizations about Japanese art and culture as a whole. See McCloud, *Understanding Comics* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993), 70-80.

little differentiation. To the right of the panels, however, is written, “Koga is pushed to the ground. His fist strikes the earth with great force. He attacks!” Hatano’s instructions reveal the extent of direction needed for a team of animators. For less experienced animators, more detailed visual signs might be needed to convey the meaning of a given scene. But here, Hatano draws more or less the same drawing for a shot that will need to be provided with more movement by the animator. In this case, Hatano knows and trusts the animators of this scene are capable of such detailed movement. On a subsequent page, the drawings are even harder to make out, but Hatano draws a detailed camera setup to the right of the panels, showing a two separate camera setups connected by a swooping line (see figure 18). The directions call for a panning shot that will follow the character as she flies through space. In this case, more instruction is needed for the movement of the scene to be properly conveyed.

Detailed camera directions such as these coupled with sound effects can accompany the crude drawings to provide more of a scene than the visuals themselves allow. If there’s enough time, a storyboard that illustrates this movement within the panels might be easier to understand, but directions like these can describe the movement of the scene without relying on the panels alone. This is the key difference between manga and storyboards. The former can adjust panel sizes to incorporate more expression or detail, eliminating or incorporating the gutter in order to best convey an idea on the page. As the director Aikawa Kenichi states, “With manga, you can adjust the panel size or even shape, spilling the characters out into the gutter for more dynamic compositions. The main purpose of storyboards is to frame the camera perspective.”⁴¹¹ Storyboards are limited to the 4:3 (or

⁴¹¹ Aikawa Kenichi, *Eizō enshutsu no kyōkasho* (Manual for Visual Direction) (Tokyo: Genkōsha, 2011), 86.

16:9) aspect ratio of the screen, but anything in the “gutter” can serve as an additional command when the layouts are completed. Unlike manga *nēmu*, which is a rough approximation of a manga chapter, the *ekonté* is a blueprint for the anime episode, where the shots themselves become improved and modified through the key animator’s layouts.

Once the storyboards are completed, they are given to the episode director, or *enshutsu*. *Enshutsu* often translates as “director,” but in this case really means the director of the particular episode. In some cases, such as pivotal episodes in the series, Hatano will act as *enshutsu*, but the job will usually fall to another series director so Hatano can supervise other episodes that are being produced simultaneously. *Enshutsu* is one of the most difficult and demanding jobs on any given series. At Toei, they are responsible for supervising the episode from script to completion, coordinating with the animation director and the animated scenes under production, setting up the various scenes for camerawork and editing, and even supervising the voice recording sessions by directing voice actors. The *enshutsu* is often, though not always, responsible for the storyboard that gives the episode its visual and narrative direction.⁴¹²

Using a variety of *enshutsu* is essential for such large productions running for one or more years, but the director-*enshutsu* system is also how most Toei standardizes its production and keeps the visual look of series consistent from episode to episode. The technical ability of the *enshutsu* and animation director might change depending on the episode, but Hatano and Umakoshi check and retouch the storyboards, key frames,

⁴¹² Toei prefers its directors to provide storyboards and direction, though with time constraints and understaffed productions, the storyboard might need to be outsourced. Hatano told me that, as a series director, he often prefers to have the storyboards outsourced instead of drafted by series staff. “When someone on the staff draws up the storyboard and I want to change something, it’s more difficult to tell them straight what I want or what I think is wrong,” he told me. “But when it’s from someone outside, it’s very easy to give instructions on what I think needs to be improved.”

camerawork, and backgrounds to ensure that the overall quality of the episode is in line with other episodes of the series. This sort of standardization ensures that no *enshutsu* drastically stands out, making it more difficult for the average viewer to see an individual's style or design in ways that are more pronounced or emphasized in other productions with fewer episode directors. There are, of course, still various ways that *enshutsu* and even animators can put their stamp on an episode, and Toei gives their *enshutsu* relative freedom when it comes to directing their episodes. Sometimes, a well-directed episode can deviate from the rest of the anime, just as long as the layouts, key frames, and subject matter don't stray too off model. But no one person at Toei does more than a dozen *enshutsu* of a single series, and typically several directors will be working on multiple episodes at any given time. This makes it easier to add or lose *enshutsu* from season to season for especially long-running productions, all while reducing the studio's dependence on any one talented animator or director. While there are advantages in production economy and efficiency through this model, there are creative sacrifices in dividing up directors on projects in such a way. The producer, after all, does not draw any frames.⁴¹³

World-Movers: Animators

Once the storyboards are completed, the directors coordinate with the *seisaku buchō/desk*, or production management controller, to assign shots to animators.⁴¹⁴ Either

⁴¹³ Toei, to its credit, has been responsible for producing a number of auteurs through this model. Every year, they produce the odd challenging work, such as the ongoing feature-length film adaptations of Tezuka Osamu's *Buddha* (2011, 2012), as well as the the wildly experimental original net animation *Kyōjūgiga* (2013). In both cases, the anime did not perform very well commercially, but were artistically some of the most mature and inventive created by any studio in those years. Both were also the products of small teams of animators who worked together on the project from beginning to end.

⁴¹⁴ *Seisaku* project managers, or the "desk," coordinate all the different departments for the production process. *Seisaku* is responsible for schedules, meetings, budgets, and every cel, pixel, paper, or drop of ink used for the production. Production managers have a difficult and demanding job, for they must get on animators who are falling behind or who are sick, and must coordinate with staff at the studio, freelancers, and outsource companies. They coordinate with the series director to make sure the production is

the series director or *sakkan* is responsible for assigning shots and scenes from the storyboard to individual animators based on their strengths. Animators are given entire shots or sequences and animate everything in them, unlike Western cartoonists who typically animate only a part of a shot. After animators have been assigned certain shots, they will have a meeting with the *enshutsu* to know exactly what they want from those shots so there are no problems later in the process. When assigned a shot or sequence, the director and *sakkan* will usually know what to expect from that animator given their experience and talent level. Some animators come to be known for being highly skilled at particular scenes like mecha action or battle sequences or character animation. One of the facets that make anime interesting is that this distribution of labor can result in entire sequences of an episode that look very different from the rest of the episode, both in good and bad ways. Animators are thus responsible for managing, to a large extent, the foundational movement, and a large part of the personality, of the anime's characters.

While digital and computer-generated tools have simplified much of the later stages of the animation process, the foundation for most anime today is still drawn on paper by hand (see figure 19). Animation involves two processes: the movement, involving the drawing of layouts, key frames, and in-between animation; and art, which involves the backgrounds. The combination of the two is what forms the animated image: the relationship between the characters and their backgrounds/worlds. Overseeing all of this is, once again, character designer Umakoshi. Upon winning the job of character designer through an audition, Umakoshi was also assigned as *sakkan*, or chief animation director, a

proceeding according to schedule, and ensure the animators spend plenty of overtime at the studio if they are behind. A typical episode of *Omega* contains roughly 3500 drawings, so *seisaku* is responsible for making sure that the episode doesn't go drastically over since that will strain the production's budget. They take on an immense amount of work, though theirs is more of an administrative role than creative.

dual designation fairly common in the anime industry in order to create greater consistency and easier workflow between design and animation. The title “chief animation director” is a bit of a misnomer, since it implies that the role has more creative control than it actually has.⁴¹⁵ The *sakkan* checks the animation of the key animators and makes corrections to their layouts if the quality of their drawings is subpar. Most of the time, this work revolves around ensuring that the drawings of characters do not stray too far from the original models; otherwise, the artwork will look too varied depending on the technical ability or personal style of the individual animator. Many animators would rather draw designs or key animation than be *sakkan*, since the work is repetitive and can be especially laborious if the key animation has been outsourced to a careless studio. Some *sakkan* will correct everything, and some will only correct the faces and leave the movement relatively intact. The nature of this correction depends on the personality of the *sakkan* and the schedule of the project.

Animation is divided roughly between *genga* and *dōga*, or the key animation and in-between animation. The first step of the animation process is creating layouts. Key animators, also known as *gengaman* (even though there are female key animators), are almost always responsible for turning the drawings on the storyboards into layouts. Layouts are a more detailed image that concretely establish the look of a particular shot and size of the scene, the camera angle and framing of the shot, and, most importantly, the relationship between characters and backgrounds. Once the various directors approve or revise the

⁴¹⁵ The role was first created at Toei by Mori Yasuji on the film *Wanpaku ōji no orochi taiji* (Little Prince and the Eight-Headed Dragon, 1963) due to his great influence lording all of the animation in the film. Prior to this film, no one person oversaw the entirety of the animation in the production of an anime film like is standard today, though veteran animators such as Mori and Daikuhara Akira did serve dual roles as animation directors and key animators during early productions such as *Hakujaden*.

layouts, they are then sent to the art department for background illustration. While the artists work on the backgrounds, the *gengaman* work on the key frames.



**Figure 19: Left – A typical workspace in the studio for animators and directors
Right – Stacks of drawings organized according to project and scene**

Key frames are the starting and ending points for any transition in a shot or sequence in animation. Called “frames” from being measured temporally in frames on a filmstrip, they define what the audience will see and the timing of the movement. The key frames of a character, for example, will show the most important poses along the arc of a character’s motion in a particular shot. After drawing the key frame, the key animator then creates a timing chart which tells the next step of animators how to fill in the drawings in-between the key frames.⁴¹⁶ In Japan, since key animators are responsible for entire shots and scenes, they need to understand specifically what the director is trying to convey in the scene. But while there is little room for diversion from the storyboards and the director’s instructions, talented key animators can imbue a scene with idiosyncratic or kinetic movement. Because of this avenue for personal expression, key frames are the heart of

⁴¹⁶ There is another step before the key frames are passed to the in-between animators called the *daini genga*, or “second key animation.” This stage involves animators who inspect the key frames and clean them up so that the key animators can produce more key frames without worrying about having to perfect the composition.

most animation. Each shot consists of many components, but the key animation is what gives the shot its personality. Different ways of conveying movement through the key frames is how it is possible to see highly individual pieces of animation in any given anime despite the dispersed production system. Sometimes the *sakkan* will correct a scene if it stands out too much, but if the animation is particularly effective, then the corrections might be minimal or left to mainly correcting the faces and leaving the movement intact.

Some scenes are storyboarded with particular key animators in mind, and some key animators are brought in to do animation they are particularly good at, such as character expressions or robot movements or weather effects such as lighting or rain. Himeno Michi, the character designer and *sakkan* for the original *Seiya*, was brought on for the first episode of *Omega*. In the first episode, Seiya makes a key appearance defending Athena/Kido Saori from the invading Mars. Himeno was most familiar with the way Seiya and, especially, Saori looked and moved. She was in charge of designing all the female characters of the original *Seiya*, and her touch was helpful for the new staff of animators for *Omega* in establishing the movement for characters from the old series. She says her preference for limited animation techniques is what has helped her to succeed in the anime industry:

In Japan, you can still do a good job if you have drawings that don't move. They move when you need them to move. I like this balance. With foreign cartoons, it seems like big entrances or stopping the image at the point of a transformation are discouraged. With anime, stopping the action for a dramatic moment reflects a history that stems from the Japanese culture of *noh* or *kabuki*. I love the allowance of a gap. Of course, I also think it's amazing when a character is animated right

down to the points of their hair like in Disney. I think environments that foster that kind of animation are wonderful. They must be working in environments where they can take their time.⁴¹⁷

Himeno's comments once again touch on the scheduling factor that always weighs on anime production, though she twists the limitation into a virtue and reflection of Japanese society and culture as a whole. Like Seki's comments on anime and Shakespeare, Himeno seeks to tie animation in Japan to a broader history of Japanese art and culture, similar to the attempts by the media scholar Takuji Okuno and artist Takashi Murakami to tie "Cool Japan" products to traditional Japanese aesthetics. To Himeno, creating a rhythm in the key animation is itself an artistic skill cultivated among generations of Japanese artists.

But key animation is only one half the process of animating movement. The completed key frames and time sheets are sent to the in-between animators, or *dōgaman*. The job of a *dōgaman* is to use fill in the drawings in-between the key frames for smooth movement. Time sheets and timing charts are used as reference points to designate the number of drawings and how far apart they should be spaced between key frames. Depending on the scale of the production, there can be greater or fewer drawings in between the key frames to make the animation appear more fluid, but the job of the in-between animator is to typically make the transition between the keys appear as seamless as possible, with as little personal expression as possible. *Genga* and *dōga* occupy simultaneously complementary and opposite poles of the animation process. *Genga* are prized for their sense of layout design, and in most productions are acknowledged for the

⁴¹⁷ Himeno Michi, quoted in Kobayashi Miki, *Saint Seiya Pia* (Tokyo: Pia, 2012), 79.

work they do in the credits.⁴¹⁸ *Dōga* are indispensable for making key animation fluid, and skilled in-between animation can improve rough key frames, while shoddy in-between animation can ruin even the best of them.

Though they are both responsible for the animation of entire sequences of movement, in-between animators are not always listed in the credits for the work they complete, especially if they were part of a company to which the studio outsourced some of its work. By this equation, it is hard to argue that in-between animators are truly “managers” of their work, as they are tasked with little comparative agency in the distributed animation process. If anything, they are managers of their own personal skill and self-improvement, as in-betweening is not desirable or sustainable as a long-term career. Much of this work at the lowest tiers is monotonous, piecemeal labor, in poor working environments in separate studios and entirely different countries. It is difficult to envision what form of management those just starting out as in-betweeners or colorists can enact when they are so poorly paid, valued, and treated. Theirs is the very definition of precarious life, with concerns very different from the creative dissatisfaction of a director or producer.

With a few years of experience and competent in-between work, in-between animators can climb the animation hierarchy and get promoted to drawing key animation, but they first must endure the relative monotony of their job – which involves hours upon hours of tracing near identical images over and over – as well as the paltry compensation. Roughly 30% of all animation in Japan (primarily in-between animation, as well as “finishing” work such as coloring or tracing, is frequently outsourced to cheaper labor

⁴¹⁸ This wasn’t always the case, as older production credits rarely credited the full staff of key animators and in-betweeners in the credits.

pools in South Korea, China, Taiwan, and India.⁴¹⁹ However, this still means that a good deal of anime from smaller studios and productions with smaller budgets use inexpensive studios in and around Tokyo. Some of these conditions can be very difficult to endure for young animators. All animators are compensated per drawing, but in-betweens are paid roughly 180 to 250 yen per television episode drawing versus 3000 to 4500 for key frames. Recent figures put in-between animators in Japan at roughly one million yen a year, not nearly enough to live off of with even the most meager means in a city of Tokyo's expense, and in-betweeners at the lowest-paying studios compensate by working other part-time jobs during lulls in production, in-betweening the in-betweens, so to speak. Others resort to living at their parents' home or spending weekday nights at the studio.

These brutal conditions are accepted as fact for most animators starting out, where industry ritual implicitly suggests that animators must "earn their stripes" and prove their love of the medium. Most veteran animators I spoke to said that their standard of living improved only when they were assigned to key animation after several years, and especially after they found jobs as animation directors. Of course, since key animation demands much more in the way of visual expression than in-betweening, the expectations and challenges of work rise considerably when animators are promoted to the keys. Many animators burn out before their opportunity to prove themselves arrives. One girl I spoke with, Soo-jin, had graduated from a top university in South Korea. She turned down a potential white-collar career to come to Japan and pursue her dream as an animator and character designer, working on the kind of anime that she loved as a child. But after several years of in-between animating, she had become visibly depressed and sick. "I barely make

⁴¹⁹ Toei Animation itself claims that 70% of its animation (mostly in-betweening, finishing, and coloring, with some second key animation) is completed at its studio in the Philippines, Toei Phils.

enough to get by,” she told me. “I work 14 hour days and spend overnight at the studio if I have to. I’m always tired.”⁴²⁰ When I asked her if she would be working key animation anytime soon, she replied, “Animators are a dime a dozen. There are so many not just here, but in Korea, too. I know a lot of great artists and they still don’t make much money. I don’t know what I’m working for.” After five years in the industry, Soo-jin decided to leave the industry and move back to South Korea.

Exploited or overworked in-betweeners are an aspect of the industry that many conveniently attribute to a lack of talent or motivation. Other animators I spoke with were more defensive towards the industry. Yu, an upbeat animator and illustrator, told me he spent four years in-betweening before getting an opportunity to do firearms key animation for a popular new series. “It’s not as bad as people make it out to be,” he said. “There are some bad companies, but we all accept working late. Even in-betweening, there are good companies that pay a living wage. And once you start doing key animation, it’s enough to get by. I don’t make a ton of money, but it’s not the sweatshop industry that some people make it out to be.”⁴²¹ Yu’s opinions reflected what I observed from most experienced animators, who had weathered the storms to find the clouds had parted on a less harsh-looking career landscape. Of course, differing individual circumstances mean that some have the means to handle years of difficult conditions more than others. The divide between what most people unfamiliar with animation would consider the same job shows the brutish side of the industry, where the extreme creative highs of making personal, highly expressive key animation is literally filled in with the toil of inexperienced or unlucky in-betweeners.

⁴²⁰ Soo-jin, interview by the author, 26 August 2012.

⁴²¹ Yu, interview by the author, 25 September 2014.

Background: Artists and Technicians

While the key frames and in-betweens are composed, the *bijutsu kantoku*, or *bikan*, draws up the backgrounds. This is the art director, responsible for taking the layouts and creating background image boards, or illustrations that appear in major points in the scenario. To create the image boards, directors draw their own rough setting *settei*. These model packs are similar in their variation to the character designer's model packs, replacing character poses, clothing, accessories, and expressions with landscapes, buildings, and color instructions. The *settei* sets the general tone, color, and details of the scene so that illustrators can extrapolate from them and create background art for the layouts. The *bikan*'s job, like the *enshutsu* and the character designer, is to make the *settei* clear enough for the next rungs of illustrators to do their job and fill in the next level of detail. One episode of television anime requires roughly three hundred backgrounds, sourced from a variety of different companies.

Akiyama Kentaro, the *bikan* for *Omega*, said that he frequently looks at a range of structural information to draw inspiration for his backgrounds, from landscape photography to architectural blueprints, altering them so that they can be incorporated into the anime's world. For one of the communes in *Omega*, director Hatano advised him to make it look like France's Mont Saint Michel. Rather than making a copy from a photograph, Akiyama drew up concept art based on his memory and knowledge of the island, inserting details into the background that would reflect its society and place in *Omega*'s world. The majority of the background's color and level of detail is determined by their relationships to the characters:

I decide on the design of a background based on the size of the characters' eyes. For example, with a realistic anime like *Jin-Roh* (2000), the characters' eyes were small, so I knew photographic backgrounds would make the characters not seem out of place. On the other hand, if the eyes are big, I know I have to make the backgrounds round and deformed. With *Omega*, the eyes are round and the lines have energy, so I knew that these characters wouldn't pop with realistic backgrounds. I drew the backgrounds with an abbreviated touch, using loose lines filled with a similar energy.⁴²²

Akiyama thinks of every background with regards to how they are balanced with the character designs. Just as it wouldn't do any good to make ultra-realistic backgrounds for (the robot gag anime) *Doraemon*, his backgrounds are tailored to express the characters' reality within the world of *Omega*.

The rest of the animation process is finished by teams of skilled technicians. In an ideal production schedule, both the animators and art director work on the animation and background designs in tandem so that both sets of work, upon completion, can be sent to the digital scanners, color coordinator, and digital colorists for tracing and coloring.⁴²³

Unlike the *gengaman* or *enshutsu*, a good majority of colorists are women. Both staff and producers told me that this was due to women being naturally better at understanding color schemes, though this seems to be also a convenient way to keep women in positions that do not frequently lead to many chances at promotion. What is undoubtedly true is that color

⁴²² Akiyama Kentaro, quoted in Kobayashi Miki, *Saint Seiya Pia* (Tokyo: Pia, 2012), 29.

⁴²³ Many of these tasks used to be done by hand on cels, but now all drawings at Toei are scanned into a computer, traced and painted through RETAS and Avid digital suites, and then accessed via a massive database called "Rabbit" that links up various computers in Japan and the Philippines. See Mikami Koji, "Anime seisaku shuhō to gijutsu" (Anime Production Methods and Techniques), in *Anime-gaku* (Anime Studies) eds. Takahashi Mitsuteru and Tsugata Nobuyuki (Tokyo: NTT Shuppan, 2011), 88-105.

coordination is a complex job that requires a keen sense in order for the work to be done quickly and with little revision. Color coordinators create a similar color coordination *settei*, or *iroshitei*, which provides a model pack of precise colors that the staff can refer to when painting the background and coloring in drawings. The job of the color coordinator used to be much more complicated when colors were done through mixing paints and were coordinated by specific ink codes. The coordinator needed to have an excellent memory of the colors so that she could refer to the color quickly when staff had questions, but with the move to digitization, much of this process has been automated to the 16 million colors available. Once the colors are set, then drawings goes to the *shiage*, or finishing department. These are digital painters and computer colorists who take the finished artwork and scan them into the computer for digital tracing and coloring.⁴²⁴

The digitization of anime has also led to the increased use of special effects, or *tokkō*. Many of these effects are now digital, including computer-generated graphics and post-production touch-ups, and are incorporated into various aspects of the animation process.⁴²⁵ Toei is especially known for their high-quality digital effects department, having poached a number of highly-skilled digital effects artists from video game companies. These effects can be cosmetic, creating heightened weather or lighting effects, or providing digital enhancements to existing color schemes. In other cases, digital graphics can be used to create entire opening or ending sequences, with elaborate camerawork and precise movements that would take much more time and require a significantly greater number of drawings to animate with the same amount of detail. In *Omega*'s case, digital graphics were kept to a minimum for a Toei production, though this

⁴²⁴ Much of this work is given to Toei Phils. With bigger workloads and tighter budget controls, there is an increasing number of situations where foreign staff work on coloring, in-between art, and even key frames.

⁴²⁵ See Mikami, 74-75.

did entail the use of lots of lighting effects for the characters' various elemental transformations and attacks.

Once all of the animation and background art is completed and digital effects are added, the artwork is sent to the camera and editing departments. Camera directors take each finished drawing and shoot it one frame at a time. Since the characters movements are limited due to the lower frame rates of limited animation, there is a lot more camera movement to create the illusion of movement. Camera directors of anime use pans and zooms to stretch single shots into much longer duration, especially during lengthy dialogue scenes. By shooting with a multiplane camera, the camera director can also create an illusion of movement through several layers of sliding panels. In the past they could be very creative with lighting, filters, and making the most out of still images. When the shots are complete, they are sent to the editing department, which uses non-linear editing systems to assemble the footage into a completed package. This concludes the anime production assembly line, save for one minor detail: sound and voices.

Celebrity Actors: Sound and *Seiyu*

The recording of sound and voice is done in several miles away from the Toei Animation Studios in a facility called Tovac, a large recording studio that is operated by Toei, but actually records for a number of anime, films, and video games from other studios as well. The visual and sound design at Tabac is where the “celebrity” of the character is formed. As Sugii Gisaburo has stated, the limitations of anime become more tolerable with creative voice acting, where the apparent cheapness of seeing a single frame stretched across seconds was often reduced once sound was added.⁴²⁶ Good character designs can give audiences an impression of characters just by looking at them, but voice

⁴²⁶ Tsugata 2007, 105.

actors are what make characters into distinct individuals. Today, voice actors, or *seiyu*, not only do they lend their singular voices to specific characters, but they also appear in a variety of public functions, essentially representing the characters in live-action form. While the producer meets and talks with magazines and sponsors, and the director is in charge of the anime's production, it is the voice actors and their characters who become the human "face" of the franchise most accessible to the public. The most popular voice actors in Japan are as well known as many actors of film and television, and even popular young voice actors have fan bases that reach those who only casually watch anime. Mapping the creative contributions of voice actors reveals how humans themselves, and not just the artwork produced by them, fuel characters of the media mix. As the last leg of the character creation process in the anime, voice actors get fans excited about new series, but also manage their own character brand through the social recognition of their various character roles.

Competition to become a *seiyu* is fierce, as there are thousands of voice actors working in Japan's *seiyu* industry in some capacity through one of the myriad talent agencies available, though far fewer support themselves entirely on animation. Many moonlight for voiceover work and acting jobs in addition to their anime work while taking bit jobs until they can land a lead or supporting role in a regular broadcast. The stars are the ones who manage to take on enough work to land a major role in either a popular franchise, or a series that becomes an unexpected hit. For any anime series, a casting director hires actors from a pool of available talent that is tied to specific talent agencies. Some studios have better relationships with certain talent agencies; Toei, for example, regularly uses voice actors from Aoni Pro for their television anime such as *Omega*, with a cast comprised

of a mix of experienced veterans and younger up-and-coming talent. There is special, long-term capital for voice actors who are able to attract large numbers of fans for their performative work in ways that directors and animators simply cannot. The voice actors for *Omega* not only provide voice to the anime characters of the series, but also manage a personality that extends beyond the limits of the show's characters and into other spaces.

I was able to sit in on a number of voice-acting sessions during the course of my observations of *Omega*, which were always conducted in the studios of Tabac. During the course of production, I watched voice actors meet every week for *Omega's afureko*, or “after recording.” In contrast to *prereko*, or “pre-recording,” *afureko* means that the voices for the characters are recorded *after* the animation is finished. This is in stark contrast to Western cartoons, where voices are recorded beforehand and animators then match the movement of the characters' mouths to the speed and intonation of the actors' speech. Needless to say, this process takes considerably more time and work to do accurately, and the Japanese production system rarely has the time or budget to handle such detail. As stated in chapter three's section on limited animation, animators will draw the characters' mouths in “flaps,” which are simply the opening and closing of the mouths to simulate the characters speaking and to save time.

Voice actors must be able to visualize the scenes beyond what is provided for them in ways similar to theatrical actors of the stage. Though the term *afureko* implies that the voices are recorded once the animation is completed, this is often far from the case. When the actors come to the studio to record their voices, the only thing that is complete is the scenario. Voice actors watch the animatics, or what in Japan is called a “Leica reel,” which are just the key frames, shot by a cameraman and assembled by an editor into a crude

animation of the storyboards for the purpose of the recording. Production schedules are often so tight that the recording must take place well before the animation can be completed, so voice actors are often only presented with this crude rendering of what the final version will look and play like. Their performances are thus based less on what they see of the character's actions, and are more on what they perceive are the character's personality and emotions. Considering that most experienced voice actors are playing a number of roles every week, the ability for the average voice actor to inhabit dozens of characters a year is simultaneously impressive and dizzying.

The Tovac recording studio has several soundproof booths for the actors to perform in, as well as mixing rooms where I sat and watched along with staff and sound engineers (see figure 20). At the front of the mixing room is a small observation area and window into the booth, so that directors and mixers can communicate instructions while watching the actors perform. Some productions will have a voice director specifically brought in to direct the voice actors, but as stated earlier in the chapter, Toei's policy is for their *enshutsu* to handle the voice acting for their episodes. A set of microphones in the middle of the booth is where the actors speak into to record their voices, and a large projection screen at the front of the booth shows the episode's animation to which actors synchronize their voices. Underneath the screen is a small table of snacks and drinks donated by staff or guests for the actors to keep their mouths lubricated during the recording. The sides and back of the booth are lined with chairs for actors to observe and wait their turn to act.



Figure 20: A voice-recording session at Tavec Studio

Before the recording begins, actors arrive one by one. Though the voice acting industry is comprised of mostly younger actors, the range of acting generations in any one series can be quite varied. With *Omega*, the voice actors of the Saints were quite experienced; all had been acting at least a decade, and the voice actor for the original Seiya himself, the legendary Furutani Toru, was brought on to reprise his role for the new series. There is somewhat of a *senpai/kohai*, or superior/subordinate, dynamic involved in how young voice actors treat more experienced actors, performing clerical duties such as setting up snacks and cleaning up chairs, though the willingness to do such tasks was also viewed by producers as indicative of having a strong work ethic. When the recording is set to begin, there is an implicit seating arrangement for stars and supporting roles. With the *afureko* of *Pretty Cure*, for example, the voice actors sat in teams according to their characters; the heroes sat at the center of the room, the villains sat to the side, and minor characters without a recurring role sat on the side of the room closest to the door. On the other hand, *Omega*'s more experienced voice actors sat at the center of the room, while the younger actors sat off to the side. In both the recording of *Pretty Cure* and *Omega*, the more experienced actors were the ones in the major roles, and thus were provided with the best

view of the projection screen, the quickest access to any of the microphones, and the focus of everyone's line of vision in and outside the recording booth.

Voice actors are “on” for the entire duration of recording. When the recording begins, there are several rehearsals where the actors run through the lines in synchronization with the animatics, making notations to their scenario about pauses, points of stress, and timing. They are then given directions by the *enshutsu* or the series director for their performances. If the *enshutsu* is sharp and knows how to give good instructions, then the actors can make quick adjustments to their performance, but if the *enshutsu* is indecisive, then multiple retakes become necessary, much to the chagrin of the producer and sound mixer. Recording booths cost bundles of money, though even the longest *afureko* are usually finished within four hours. One reason for this efficiency is that the voice actors are themselves efficient. When voice actors in other countries run through the entire script in a recording booth, they frequently must stop to make adjustments. Any mistakes delay the production significantly, since the recordings are done in long takes from beginning to end. But in Japan, takes are usually recorded in their entirety, and then mistakes or retakes are recorded in bits and chunks separately. This saves considerable time since the recording can focus only on the areas that need to be recorded again, but this is only possible if the voice actors can instantly jump in and out of character and scenes on demand. Voice actors must have an extraordinary sense of the character and intuitive sense of the scene to be able to do this quickly and with minimal amounts of retakes. Most experienced voice actors require almost no time at all to adjust to director instructions. One voice actor I spoke with told me that he never even read the scripts before he arrived at the studio. When I asked him that was considered unprofessional, he took offense. “I’ve

trained for all sorts of roles, and after a few episodes, I know the character inside and out. If I need that much preparation for each episode, I shouldn't be doing this work."⁴²⁷ The efficiency of voice recording can be traced in large part to anime voice actors being "in character" from the moment they enter the recording booth.

Another reason for this efficiency is that less "acting" is required from anime voice actors than Western voice actors. A voice actor for an anime is a known quantity; since there are so many of them available, staff can choose with greater specificity what voice actors fit which roles. Voice actors thus often become typecast for a certain style of acting, taking that style to various roles or specific characters, rather than coming up with a completely new voice for each anime. This was, in fact, exactly the case for *Omega*.

Directors Hatano and Umakoshi designed main character Koga with veteran *seiyu* Midorikawa Hikaru in mind. Midorikawa entered the audition expecting to play the role of several other Saints, but was surprised when asked to act the part of *Omega*'s protagonist:

Koga is a lot younger than me, so I thought, "There's no way that they think I could fit this part." Of course, I gave the audition my all. But a funny thing happened, and I gave a performance that fit my image for that character exactly. I was selected for Koga based on that audition. I didn't even receive any background information on the character, so maybe it was a good thing that I just voiced him according to my instinct.⁴²⁸

With Midorikawa, the animators created a character whom they felt would benefit from Midorikawa's own style of acting. While Koga is a young and passionate character, as Midorikawa describes him, "He's also naïve and a bit of a mama's boy. I could actually

⁴²⁷ Interview with a voice actor, name withheld, October 2012.

⁴²⁸ Midorikawa Hikaru, quoted in *Figure King* No. 170 (April 2012), 17.

draw upon my own past experiences to get at his essence.”⁴²⁹ As Midorikawa possesses a greater range of emotion than a younger voice actor, Hatano and Umakoshi felt free to design Koga as a more complex protagonist than the typical *shōnen* hero knowing that the character’s depth would be appropriately conveyed.

Voice actors play another role beyond the actual recording, providing the replayable aural spec of the media mix through lending their character voices to a number of secondary productions such as promotional videos, commercials, toys, video games, and events. With the voices of the characters, other companies can utilize the character in ways that benefit their own bottom line, while also exposing the series’ characters to audiences through additional avenues when the television series has finished. By continuing the series in various ways through these peripheral media, voice acting becomes an essential way for the characters of an anime’s media mix to extend beyond the original broadcast. Character voices become an authenticating measure added to the character commodity, providing additional value beyond the image alone. They are also able to adapt or conform to the wishes of any sponsor as long as the voice actor mouths the specific script and the animation studio creates the appropriate promotional art and designs for the actions.

In the case of *Omega*, the media mix includes toy commercials, video games, and character events for children, and “alternative” programming for adults. Voice actors appear “out of character,” in these situations, often using their acting celebrity to appeal to fans of their entire body of work beyond the character of any one particular show.

Midorikawa Hikaru hosts the *Saint Seiya Omega* show, an internet radio program that invites other characters from the *Omega* series to discuss their experiences working on the show and their feelings about the characters they perform. Midorikawa also spurs guests to

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

talk about other details related to their personal lives, letting listeners in on the private matters of the voice actors when they are not “in character.” *Omega*’s voice actors are asked to reveal their identities apart from the characters on the show, in essence appealing to and creating fans of not just the characters, but the voice actors’ brand. Voice actors gain fan capital from appearing as they are, speaking candidly as authorities who have a special insight into the feelings of their characters. This sort of character authority is reflected in several other events, including the heavily publicized “Seiya Night,” where each *seiyu* was asked to give his or her opinion on the nature of each character’s background and personality despite having voiced less than a handful of episodes and having virtually no idea of the events of future episodes or character relationships.

If voice actors have the most capital with fans, becoming the most popular celebrities behind the anime’s creation, it is also related to their individual capital as visible talent. In an industry where companies have sold their works for lower than market value and raced to the bottom for animator salaries, voice actors have a way around the studio through the brand value of voices that are easily discernable to the public. Where the work of in-between animators is invisible, and the designs or animation of key animators are recognized only by ardent fans of the medium, voice actors are literally able to make their voices heard indirectly through their characters and directly through fan events and public appearances. For the hundreds of voice actors who make a living off of their animation work, however, there are thousands more who are unable to find more than bit parts and supporting roles. Some are able to cobble a career together on these sorts of roles with hard work, but others drop out relatively quickly. And in contrast to writers and series directors, who are owed royalties for sales of the anime’s DVDs, Blu-Rays, and digital media, voice

actors have little ownership over the voice that they give their characters. What this means is that voice actors, while more independent than animators regarding their own livelihoods, are nevertheless just as dependent on the animation company's ability to construct the compelling worlds that make their contributions meaningful.

I witnessed this sort of anxiety over career flux after the recording sessions were finished, when voice actors would frequently head to local *izakaya* drinking bars with the staff. It was there where senior/junior relations were most visible, regardless of age or gender. Newer actors were deferential toward the veteran staff regardless of how old they were; what mattered was seniority within the industry. While older voice actors obviously spent more years in the industry, this did not always mean that they commanded the most seniority. Actors who had major roles in the most popular productions were as valued and respected than ones who have had a long career in bit roles or supporting parts. The veteran staff regaled new actors with tales on older productions and their experiences working with famous actors, while also dispensing with advice through half-drunken hazes to the younger actors on working harder. One popular voice actor, who had some dozen years in the industry despite his young age, severely dressed down one of his contemporaries for making too many mistakes in the few roles he received. I asked him later what he thought was the reason for why some voice actors fail or succeed:

To be honest, anyone can do this work. You might think what I'm doing is really difficult. It takes lots of training, but once you do the training, even you could do this job. What separates those who find a career and those who drop out is the amount of work you do. That might be the case in any industry, but with voice

acting, you could have days or weeks without work. Once an opportunity arrives, you need to drop everything and take the job seriously, no matter what role.⁴³⁰

This *seiyu*'s comments are similar to the prioritization of work ethic in the *shōnen* manga industry, where “effort” is followed by “victory,” but also to Hollywood myth-making, where even the hardest workers need to catch a break. It takes good fortune to land on a popular series with memorable characters at a young age. The most respected voice actors were the ones who had spent years in the industry, eventually landing a role on productions that become industry blockbusters. One *seiyu*, possibly the most well-known Japanese voice actor in the world for having lent her talents to the iconic voice of *Pokemon*'s mascot Pikachu, commanded a respect from staff and actors alike for her professionalism and randy sense of humor. She was the only voice actor I ever saw at any event who was always accompanied by her manager. What both she and the other voice actor shared was exposure. Despite their success, both appeared in dozens of roles both large and small every year, unlike television actors and actresses who try to limit “overexposure.” Since any anime has the potential to be a “hit,” the more anime characters that an actor inhabited, the greater the chance that they can manage the face of another popular brand.

Conclusion

Toei Animation employs hundreds of animators in service of anywhere from six to twelve anime series and films a year. Some of these series originate from highly popular publications, including the *Detective Kindaichi* series, spin-off anime with the American comics powerhouse Marvel such as *The Avengers*, and the *Weekly Shonen Jump* series *One Piece*, which is now regarded as the most popular and best-selling manga franchise in Japan. A series such as *One Piece* can greatly alleviate the burden of staffing a studio as

⁴³⁰ Kakiyama Tetsuya, interview by the author, August 2012.

large as Toei's for a number of years through a large transmedia network of extended merchandise tie-ins, movie spin-offs, and the licensing rights to video games, events, and shows that use the voices and designs from the television series. Toei's first high-quality, animated feature films such as *Hakujaden* and *Saiyuki* were originally birthed from Chinese folk stories, so the studio's history of adapting material in some ways has naturally made them a good fit for partnerships with publications and game companies. The studio has been able to sustain its facilities through such adaptations as early as 1964's anime version of Shirato Sampei's manga *Shonen Ninja Kaze no Fujimaru* (*Samurai Kid*, 1965). But as the previous case study on *Toriko* demonstrated, while the manga can spread through the efforts of the animation studio, the collaboration between mangaka and animators is restricted due to time constraints and media differences. Simply put, there are creative limits imposed both by the differences in media and on animation staff to adhere to the original property's characters, settings, and worlds. Thus, original anime productions both give Toei more control over the rights and production of the anime itself, as well as maximizing the creative agency of the network of creators staffed and contracted by and through the studio.

Toei Animation's studio production flows according to the network of professional creative managers outlined in this chapter. Hundreds of creative workers come together to form a team that is tasked with developing a twenty-two minute episode of animation every week. Since it is counterproductive to have all of these creators working on any given animation in the same room and at the same time, animation production is organized into the stratified network delineated in this chapter, relying on every division to make it work. With Toei Animation's productions, efficient communication within the network of

producers and writers, directors and artists, animators and voice actors is necessary for the system to function week in and week out. At the same time, each creative manager is tasked with an incredible amount of individual creative responsibility which can be recognized and rewarded. Where fans might only reward the visible efforts of voice actors, producers, writers, and directors can be hired for more ambitious projects, while animators and artists can move up the chain of responsibility and importance in creating the animated image, or become known for a particular design or style of movement. This collective creation, when it is harmonious, can lead to both project success and individual agency.

This chapter has focused on movement in its myriad forms. The movement of an idea into a concept into a design; the movement of a premise into a script; the movement of directors between production settings; the movement that animators give to the drawn object; and, most importantly, the movement of the character, the central object that passes between the hands and minds of these different creators. Characters move through the studio's networks as the connecting thread of diverse ideas, backgrounds, and work cultures, becoming deep and gaining life through the piecemeal contributions of each of the creative managers. They produce concepts, stories, and worlds through the collaborative labor that is attached to each of their creations. Through this collective build up, they gain an energy that ends up fueling the entire media mix behind the anime. Toei Animation has managed to carve out a financial niche for its salaried workers and most of its regular staff through this approach to its anime and characters that focuses on the financial bottom line, while simultaneously trusting its staff to produce work that can be artistically interesting. These decisions have significant effects on how their original anime and media mix is made, how it looks, and how it relates to its audiences. Character movement is what binds

all of these various media forms and social fields together. As the next chapter will show, the additional movement of characters through the animation studio, between media forms, and into the social environment is what becomes central to the existence of the media mix and the centrality of the character in contemporary Japanese society.

Chapter 5: Case Study – *Pretty Cure's* Convergence Text

Television anime is like eating snacks. You can't eat expensive fruit like Ghibli films everyday. Most days, you eat Choco Balls. Maybe once a year, you eat Godiva, and it's delicious. But it's expensive, so you eat Choco Balls the rest of the year, and you eat a lot of them. I stake my life on making Choco Balls, and I don't take that responsibility lightly. That's how I approach each episode of anime.

– Anime director Otsuka Takashi⁴³¹

While Toei Animation initially marketed itself as the “Disney of the East,” with an aim to produce world-class feature-length animation, it simultaneously produced animation for commercials and television shortly after its foundation. Much of their animation is thus made for regular weekly consumption, the easy and eminently snack-like “chocolate balls” of the anime industry. The television anime of Toei can be divided into adaptations from manga or other visual novel sources, and “original anime,” lucrative media mix franchises created without a literary or visual source. The production strategy of the latter is the very opposite of most contemporary Hollywood and Japanese film productions that rely on the built-in audience of a novel, comic, or television program for adapted screenplays, and where “original” scripts are far too risky.

There are two main differences between Toei's original anime and adapted anime that can apply to the vast majority of commercially produced anime and manga. First, Toei's original anime television series are conceptualized by a *seisaku iinkai*, or production committee, and a mixed team of salaried and contracted creators: producers, directors, and writers working together with teams of animators, designers, and technicians to create original characters, worlds, and stories. This collaboration goes beyond the mangaka-editor-assistant relationship by virtue of extensive meetings where ideas are generated from all those involved. Through the *seisaku iinkai*, Toei can exhibit a greater degree of creative

⁴³¹ Otsuka Takashi, interview by the author, February 2014.

control, though this creative agency must also line up with the intentions and goals of the entire production committee.

Second, Toei's original anime series incorporate commercial products based on the series concept, and these products are required based on the level of involvement of the show's corporate sponsor. These sorts of heavily integrated products are characteristic of Toei anime such as *Sailor Moon* and *Pretty Cure*, as well as a number of other popular series geared towards older male audiences (*Mobile Suit Gundam*) and kids/family viewers (*Case Closed*). Animation producers, television network executives, advertising agency representatives, music label producers, and toy account managers all work together so that their various interests are represented in the show's final form. Through the negotiation of these participants, anime becomes viable through the sponsorship of merchandising companies, and their involvement shapes the direction and content of the show. The media mix of original anime corrals creativity, relegating writers and animators to essentially making an extended, long-form advertisement as interesting as possible. A series such as *Saint Seiya Omega*, while using the name of a pre-existing manga, is a prime example of Toei creating something original based off of a basic premise, reviving interest in a moribund franchise for the purpose of selling character figurines, digital video copies of the show, and theater tickets for the upcoming CGI-animated feature film. While the motives are wholly commercial, the resulting enterprise is a great deal of creative freedom for the directors and writers and animators, even if – as in the case of *Omega* – there is some pressure to adhere to the “spirit” of the original manga and anime television series. The differences between anime and manga transmedia can be summed up in the following table (figure 21):

Manga-based Transmedia	Anime-based Media Mix
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground-up creation • Adherence to text/author • Centrifugal management • Authorial augmentation • Derivative products (optional) • Dispersed text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top-down creation • Adherence to plan/committee • Centripetal management • Collective authorship • Product-portals (optional) • Convergence text

Figure 21: Manga vs. anime transmedia models

This chapter will feature an analysis of one such original anime media mix, the “magical girl” series *Pretty Cure* (2004-2015). Through a combination of ethnographic fieldwork, participant observation, and textual analysis of episodes of the series itself, this chapter will show how characters and products are collaboratively built, marketed, and spread through a committee-centered media mix. Key to the function of the “magical girl media mix” is the convergence of multiple media forms in the broadcast of the anime program itself. Unlike the dispersed transmedia of the manga, creators for original anime like *Pretty Cure* collaborate at the level of the studio. Similarly, this creative labor is represented in the text itself, which manifests its various interests and ancillary media extensions. The broadcast, in its centralizing of media and media creation, becomes a kind of “convergence text,” tying in the anime episode, its advertisements, announcements, and, most importantly, the sponsor’s products which lubricate the machinery of the show, studio, and various other industries.

Toei’s media mix is organized not only around just its characters and worlds, but through these products that become incorporated into the characters’ reality. These products – everything from wands and dresses to clocks and compacts – then become a part of the audience’s environment through a calendar of advertisements and events that are

calibrated to their lives through shared cultural rituals and traditions. Products become a medium for the characters of *Pretty Cure* to communicate and identify with audiences, who buy such material goods not only to own a piece of the series' world, but to perform aspects of it that are integrated into a convergence text. A close look at Toei's transmedia reveals that social and cultural coordination are as important to the anime's media mix as any industrial concerns. Much of this is born from the collaborative process of anime creation itself, which blurs the roles and titles of its various creators in order to generate world ideas and nurture the growth of characters. Characters and their products in *Pretty Cure* effectively blur various cultural, national, and gender boundaries, producing a perpetual media experience that revolves around conspicuous exposure, constant commodity consumption, but also considerable participatory pleasures.

The Perpetual Media Mix Engine

Toei Animation's central original television anime is its "magical girl" series, starting from the *shōjo* manga adaptation of *Sally the Witch* (*Mahōtsukai Sally*, 1966-68), and climaxing in the 1990s with the globally popular animated television series *Sailor Moon* (1991-97) and its many spin-offs and sequels. This is where much of Toei's creative manpower is directed and capital accumulated, and for which it has maintained a particularly strong business model for the last twenty-five years. I spent six months from February to July of 2012 witnessing this very business model through observation of the production of the original television anime series, *Smile Precure!* (2012-2013). The show is an iteration of its principal magical girl series, *Pretty Cure*, which has broadcast for over a decade and revolves around contemporary Japanese girls who are granted the ability to transform into princesses with magical abilities and physical combat skills. During this

time, I sat in on script meetings with directors, producers, and scriptwriters; observed art direction meetings with colorists and background artists; watched voice-recording sessions with professional (and amateur) voice actors and actresses; met with sponsors and merchandise representatives to hear about media tie-ins; and talked to dozens of professionals on both the creative and business side of animation. Eventually, this observation spilled over into participation when I contributed some ideas for an episode and helped coach a voice actor in his English speech of a character.

This chapter will document production meetings at the level of idea creation, focusing on two key aspects. First, this chapter will examine how creative decision-making is highly centralized in anime construction. My experience observing the anime construction of *Smile Precure!* mirrored Ian Condry's experience with the production of the NHK's television anime series *Dekoboko Friends* (2002-2011). The production of both shows are prime examples of how viable, long-running anime is often organized not according to plots or stories, but by a combination of elements such as characters, premises, and world settings. These elements are then constructed through a creative network of talented creators who come together to generate ideas and overcome problems as a group.⁴³² Where chapter four diagrammed the varied management of the production process, this chapter and case study will show how these various managers come together to collaborate on the construction of individual episodes.

Second, this chapter will look at what organizes this creative activity. For a series that involves so many companies and corporate interests such as *Smile Precure!*, the series must be conceived with a mindful eye on many aspects of production. Developed by a creative team that uses the pseudonym of Azumi Tōdō, *Pretty Cure* features characters who

⁴³² See Condry, 54-84.

are principally represented through their transformation, straddling worlds and responsibilities to their families, friends, and comrades. The series' creators must similarly straddle responsibilities to various corporate bodies, interests, and audiences. A successful series might garner high television ratings or critical acclaim or fan-made material, but each series has its own *seisaku iinkai* to answer to. In the case of *Smile Precure!*, this production committee was associated with television and toy companies, effectively making the sales of toy products the most conspicuous aspect of the series' success. The job of the *Smile Precure!* television anime was to construct episodic narratives with the long-term aim of selling greater amounts of character goods for the duration of a year. Thus, the job of the anime is to draw viewers to its broadcast, with the larger goal of getting viewers to invest in the experience of *Pretty Cure* beyond its thirty-minute timeslot. This is the broad target of commercially made anime: to move beyond the timeslot of the broadcast and into the realm of the media experience, operating at all times of the day to deliver to its viewers a relationship to characters and their worlds.

Mark Steinberg has articulated this idea of “anime as experience,” calling the media mix an effective transformation of the Japanese social environment into a “media environment” that is “understood to designate both the media ecology as a system of media and its lived experience by human subjects.”⁴³³ Characters and their goods become adaptable to any format through their pairing with mobile advertisements or other portable media objects. The media mix of anime is endemic to the environment, imbricating itself into multiple areas of social life in order to better assimilate its various commodities. By asking audiences to consume various aspects of a franchise for a larger and deeper experience of that media, anime transmedia moves away from the idea of “transmedia

⁴³³ Steinberg, xi.

storytelling” to that of “transmedia world.” Perpetual worlds are obviously not the realm of anime alone. Writing of film worlds, Dudley Andrews says, “Worlds are comprehensive systems which comprise all elements that fit together within the same horizon, including elements that are before our eyes in the foreground of experience, and those which sit vaguely on the horizon forming the background. These elements consist of objects, feelings, associations, and ideas in a grand mix so rich that only the term ‘world’ seems large enough to encompass it.”⁴³⁴ Andrew’s conception of the world would stem to be as much a creation of the spectator as the filmmaker, made up of myriad experiences and backgrounds.

Chronicling how imaginary worlds are created, Mark J.P. Wolf stresses how world-building is based on this confluence of sources: “Imaginary worlds differ from traditional media entities in that they are often transnarrative and transmedial in form, encompassing books, films, video, games, websites, even reference works like dictionaries, glossaries, atlases, encyclopedias, and more.”⁴³⁵ Imaginary worlds rely on a bevy of sources to not only build their histories, but also to convey an open-ended space that resists closure. Television would seem to be an ideal medium for this sort of perpetual world-building, as the closure between text and its interruptions is masked through what Raymond Williams has described as the televisual “flow” of the broadcast and its commercials, of how the “evening’s viewing is in some ways planned, by providers and then by viewers, as a *whole*; that is in any event planned in discernable sequences which in this sense override particular programme units.”⁴³⁶ Williams concept has been prodded by media theorists, from Nick Browne’s conception of the television program and schedule as a “supertext” to William

⁴³⁴ Dudley Andrews, *Concepts in Film Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 37.

⁴³⁵ Mark J.P. Wolf, *Building Imaginary Worlds: The Theory and History of Subcreation* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 3.

⁴³⁶ Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (New York: Routledge, 1974), 93.

Oricchio's analyses of live vs. recorded television.⁴³⁷ This phenomenon of the flow of continuous media experience now extends extratextually, with American television shows since the early 2000s using websites to draw viewers into seeking additional narrative information, "live" chats with characters, and "unaired" visual and audio clips. John Caldwell has called this digital turn "second shift aesthetics," with the "first shift" television broadcast being abetted by a phalanx of hustling alternate programming strategies which cycle through "everything from interface and software design to merchandising and branding campaigns."⁴³⁸ These cases show how world-building and perpetual media exposure has become more symptomatic with the proliferation of digital media technologies. The collaborative activity and processes behind the creation of anime mirrors many of these developments, with characters and worlds comprising continuous programming, textual interstitials, interactivity, and user flows across multiple media forms.

But *Pretty Cure*, and other similarly commodity-tied anime programs such as *Digimon* and *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, creates a slightly different media experience than those articulated by these media theorists, largely based on the transformative aspects located in the texts themselves through carefully integrated merchandise. I call these instances of textually integrated toys and characters *product-portals*. Unlike character products, which are any merchandise spun off from a character image, product-portals are merchandise which serve a transformative and dynamic process in the show by delivering highly interactive media experiences that ask users to participate in the construction of the text itself (see figure 22).

⁴³⁷ See Nick Browne, "The Political Economy of the (Super) Text," in *Television: The Critical View* 4th ed., ed. Horace Newcomb (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 585-99 and William Oricchio, "Television's Next Generation: Technology/Interface/Culture/Flow," in *Television After TV: Essays on a Medium in Transition*, eds. Lynn Spiegel and Jan Olsson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 163-182.

⁴³⁸ John Caldwell, "Second Shift Media Aesthetics: Programming, Interactivity, and User Flows," in *New Media: Theories and Practices of Digitextuality*, eds. John Caldwell and Anna Everett (New York: Routledge, 2003), 132.

Similar to the manga interfaces which present the spectator or user with multiple sets of entry points into a database of elements, portals can provide organized gateways into diverse amounts of information and connect gaps in different registers of media. Products in anime can function this way, connecting multiple registers of media in a similar way to how characters spread across media. Products in these shows are ingrained in ways that connect characters to viewers, and fantasy spaces to spaces of everyday reality. Product-portals become connective tools that slide between characters and viewers: they position the viewer within the character's world, show how products integrate within it, and empower the viewer's ordinary daily routines and rituals.



Figure 22: Examples of *Pretty Cure* product-portal merchandise

Such experiences can be similar to alternate-reality games, or other transmedia activities that ask users to participate when the consumption of the original media has finished, but with *Pretty Cure* and its sister shows, the commodity is tied into the texts themselves through careful integration from as early as the level of the script's construction. In other words, the alternate media is no longer optional, but essential to constructing *and* consuming the text. This sort of coordinated sponsor involvement is different from product placement, where products are delivered either innocuously or conspicuously into the

characters' world. With product-portal integration, the product is so strongly tied into creating the narrative, the world, and its characters relationship to both that the products function as pillars, being featured in ways that showcase their designs, backgrounds, and significance to the world and characters of the text. The importance of the product-portal to anime consumption draws upon Scott Lash and Celia Lury's design focus in the "thingification of media," where mediated goods are turned into consumable material objects through their "aesthetic integrity" or a "discursive unity."⁴³⁹ Product-portals invite audiences into deeper experiences outside of the broadcast by connecting the first and second "shifts" of the television series, inviting audiences to consume and perform them through their aesthetic integration into the text and discursive extension into the environment. Thus, product-portal anime like *Pretty Cure* are heavily reliant on tying the anime's transmedia to users' environments and social lives.

To better understand how the construction of *Smile Precure!* is tied into the Japanese social environment, this chapter will first provide the contextual background from which the anime emerges and has operated for the last ten years. I situate the *Pretty Cure* franchise within the magical girl genre by tracing the genre's development historically and industrially. Here, we will see how *Pretty Cure*'s depiction of metamorphosis and gender roles coincides with changing developments in Japanese society. In particular, the magical girl anime transforms from a genre with conventional narrative and character tropes to a genre capable of combining and fusing various ideological beliefs, narrative themes, and industrial practices, embodied most emphatically by the genre-bending *Smile Precure!* This elusion of stable categories and professional boundaries sets up the creative action behind

⁴³⁹ Scott Lash and Celia Lury, *Global Culture Industry: The Mediation of Things* (London: Polity, 2007), 25.

the script meetings of *Smile Precure!* I look at how the series is developed through staff collaboration between producers, directors, and writers, who construct small and large narratives out of characters, worlds, and product-portals. These pre-determined elements provide a platform for writers and directors to work through ideas, form concepts, and create stories. The creative energy affected the research boundaries between participant and observer as well. The longer I observed, the more I was brought into the production of the series, and invested in the quality, accuracy, and completion of a single episode that, in many ways, spoke to my own background and experiences. Finally, I examine the ways in which these creative decisions manifest themselves visually and experientially in the series and its transmedia, and how audiences are brought into the text through the medium of characters and products.

Toei's Magical Girls: *Sally the Witch* to *Sailor Moon*

Toei Animation is considered to be the originator of the first *mahō shōjo*, or “magical girl,” anime with the 1966 broadcast of *Sally the Witch*. Adapted from the manga by Yokoyama Mitsuteru, the author of the robot series *Tetsujin-28* (1956-66), the show drew on the popularity of the American fantasy sitcom *Bewitched* with Japanese girls. In an attempt to fill a vacuum in television animation programming that had been theretofore targeted at young boys, the planning department at Toei decided to make a sort of *Bewitched*-lite for young girls. Yumeno Sally is an 11-year-old princess from a magic kingdom who alights to Earth and befriends two Japanese girls her age. Sally and her assistant, Kabu, are soon fascinated with their friends’ lives in a Japanese suburb and become determined to live there. They are granted approval to stay in the human world by their concerned parents, under the condition that they must return to the magic kingdom if

their identity is discovered. Sally grows fond of her new friends and learns many lessons beyond the realm of magic regarding friendship, loyalty, family, and general humanity. Like the sitcom on which it is based, she also gets into many slapstick antics involving the use of her magic. Eventually, Sally must return to the magic kingdom to become its queen, but not before revealing her powers to her friends when she uses her magic to save their school from a fire.

Sally the Witch ran for over 100 episodes, of which the first 17 were in black and white. Toei followed it immediately with *Himitsu no Akko-chan* (Secret of Akko-chan, 1969-70), adapted from a manga by Fujiko F. Fujio. *Akko-chan* stars Atsuko, aka “Akko-chan,” an ordinary Japanese girl living with her mother in a small Japanese community. She accidentally breaks her mother’s mirror, but a spirit from the mirror is moved by Atsuko’s respect toward her mother’s possession and rewards her with a “magic compact.” By chanting a spell when the compact is open, Akko-chan can be transformed into anything she desires. Akko-chan uses the compact to change into various roles to help solve her community’s problems. *Akko-chan* updates and localizes many elements from *Sally*, namely changing the foreign witch Sally into a more easily identifiable Japanese girl. The slapstick drawings from the manga are also made cuter in the animation. Most importantly, *Akko-chan* introduces the element of transformation into the magical girl series, where an ordinary girl acquires the power to change herself through the use of a special gadget.

Sally and *Akko-chan* are the two earliest magical girl anime that lay much of the genre’s groundwork. Both series are long-running television serials that featured protagonists who are *shōjo*, or young adolescent girls. With *Sally*, the protagonist is a *majokko*, a “little witch” or princess whose magical powers are ordained from her birthright.

Akko-chan, on the other hand, is a *mahō shōjo*, a “magical girl” who, through a fortuitous encounter with a magical entity, is endowed with special powers and tasked with living up to them responsibly. Both forms of *shōjo* are expected to use their magical power for the good of their family, friends, and community, and both often do this through the assistance of magical wands, mirrors, badges, costumes, and cute companions. *Akko-chan* begins a long partnership with toy company sponsors, such as Bandai, where the toy is featured in some way in the anime and sold in stores to viewers of the show.⁴⁴⁰ Sponsors, who collaborate on the show with the animation and television producers, then get audiences to buy these peripheral tools. Magical girl anime frequently become a very long advertisement for its products, largely due to the close entwinement of the sponsor with the show’s production and development.⁴⁴¹ The series provides the first use in anime of a studio and television network tie-in, as both anime were produced by Toei and broadcast and sponsored by TV Asahi.

Sally and *Akko-chan* are also two of the first anime series that feature young female protagonists who wield superpowers for the sake of others. They are, in a sense, female superheroes, though they ascribe to traditional gender roles even in their transformations. As Kumiko Saito has argued, the two shows “adapt ideological models of gender from prewar and postwar periods, a rather conservative approach against the potentially subversive symbolism of magic in the era of the women’s liberation movement.”⁴⁴² Both protagonists are young girls caught in the stage between childhood and adolescent sexuality,

⁴⁴⁰ A producer at Toei told me that the idea for the show’s compact actually came from Bandai, since they reasonably believed that compacts would sell stronger with young girls than toy mirrors.

⁴⁴¹ *Sally* and *Akko-chan* are also forever connected through the former show’s plug of the latter in a short animation that aired immediately after the final episode of *Sally*.

⁴⁴² Kumiko Saito, “Magic, *Shōjo*, and Metamorphosis: Magical Girl Anime and the Challenges of Changing Gender Identities in Japanese Society,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 73:1 (February 2014): 149.

and before the responsibilities of marriage and motherhood, the period of girlhood that is described as *shōjo*. Sally and Akko-chan's status as *shōjo*, then, is a temporary state where magic can be used to escape into fantasy, even if the responsibilities of adulthood wait around the corner as both Sally and Akko-chan limit their own abilities in order to conform to their parents' desires. Sally, for example, is defined by her free and powerful standing in her local community, but reflects her mother's obedient stance towards the patriarchal household of her father when she leaves her free life behind to return to her kingdom and become a princess. Akko-chan is similarly self-limited in her power by gender roles that define her as *shōjo*. Her transformations are always into non-gendered or explicitly female roles such as a princess or a female teacher. Saito argues that *Akko-chan* demonstrates characteristics of the *hahamono* genre of "mother"-centered melodrama that was popular with postwar audiences.⁴⁴³ Featuring a mother who endures hardship and sacrifices for her loved ones, the genre has its parallels in the character of Akko-chan herself, who eventually sacrifices her own powers to save her father's life.

In the following decade, Toei continued to make magical girl anime with tweaks to the original recipe. The magical girls were given several different upgrades to their transformational arsenals, and the plots became considerably more complex. Writers injected romantic and action elements to the storylines, and the heroines' magical prowess grew to the point that many of them were given physical fighting abilities. *Shōjo* manga became increasingly sophisticated and popular during the 1970s, fueling production of anime targeted towards various age groupings of women that caught on with broader audiences. Some of these offerings were carryovers from other genres popular with male audiences such as sports. For example, Urano Chikako's female volleyball *Attack No. 1*

⁴⁴³ Ibid, 150.

(1968-70) and TMS Entertainment's anime adaptation of it originally aimed for a female viewership, but became a crossover hit following the influence of the 1964 Olympics. Many other *shōjo* manga, however, were popular for themes and plots wholly unexplored in other types of manga. Toei adapted Mizuki Kyoko's melodrama *Candy Candy* (1975-79) into an anime that captured the life of 20th century America via a long-running serial soap opera. Aided by preselected fans of the *shōjo* manga, these new anime series did not have to feature magical girls in order for them to have either storylines revolving around female protagonists, or large and devoted female audiences.

Toei's transforming girl anime of the 1970s added more adult elements to capitalize on the increasingly diverse audience that was expanding to watch all types of anime. Two such representative shows are *Cutey Honey* (1973-74), adapted from Nagai Go's manga, and *Majokko Meg-chan* (Little Meg the Witch Girl, 1974-75), developed in collaboration with Inoue Tomo and Narita Akira's manga. *Cutey Honey* features Honey Kisaragi, an android with a device within her that allows her to materialize objects out of thin air. Through the device, Honey is able to transform into any number of personae to fit various jobs. Unlike the conservative options of *Akko-chan*, Honey's transformations were protean, having evolved in order to match the ruthlessness of her enemies, and modish, as existing media of the time propelled women to the forefront of the fashion industry. Thus, her basic fighter persona, Cutey Honey, sported a wild pink hairdo, a bright red leotard, and a sword in place of a princess gown and wand. *Little Meg the Witch Girl*, on the other hand, continued with the *majokko* theme of a foreign being visiting earth and learning lessons from other human beings. Megu is a candidate to inherit the queen's throne of the witch world, but is deemed too ill-tempered and impulsive for leadership. She is sent to the

human world to learn better manners, and winds up staying with the Kanzakis, a family led by a former witch who married a human. Meg gradually learns the warmth and importance of family under the Kanzakis' example. While Meg grows accustomed to her new family, she must also contend with Non, her older rival to the throne.

Honey and *Meg* improve and alter several aspects of the *mahō shōjo* and *majokko* formula that Toei had developed for several years. Both shows feature much more physically and sexually active heroines, embodied by their racy opening credit songs penned by composers who were working with popular idols at the time. *Honey's* transformations, for example, move away from women as homemakers or caretakers and reflect the increased aspirations of women in the labor force, with utilitarian roles ranging from biker or singer, to flight attendant and cameraman depending on the nature of the task at hand. *Honey*, moreover, dispatches her lecherous male foes with combat skills that would be more at home in the *shōnen* series its mangaka creator was well known for. Susan Napier has described *Cutey Honey* and such battling magical girls as a symbol of female empowerment and a counter to the domesticated female in contemporary Japan, though with the caveat that *Honey*, in particular, is also highly sexualized.⁴⁴⁴ Indeed, one of the hallmarks of the 70s Toei magical girl series is that they feature heroines in more scantily clad costumes and in states of near or total undress. *Cutey Honey* is strongly influenced by the bawdy sense of humor of mangaka Nagai, and the opening credits of the anime show her having her breasts fondled while riding a motorcycle, and in various near nude scenes more for the titillation of young boys than the inspiration of young girls. *Meg*, inspired heavily by the popularity of *Honey*, carries this overt display of female sexuality even

⁴⁴⁴ Susan Napier, *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle: Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 73-76.

further by showing the titular heroine wearing transparent negligees or bathing. These various states of near undress, unessential to the plot but catering to an emerging male audience, can be thought of as some of the first examples of “fan service” for primarily older male viewers.⁴⁴⁵

This additional sexual and adult content is part of a general maturation of series’ content that recognizes a transformation in audiences for anime or manga series with female protagonists. *Cutey Honey* was conceived as a media mix from its inception between Nagai’s manga studio and Toei Animation, with an anime set to begin its broadcast only a month after the manga was first serialized in girls’ magazine *Ribon*. However, the timeslot that was originally slotted for *Cutey Honey* went to a different series, and the anime was instead moved to a timeslot that had previously been occupied by *shōnen* titles such as Nagai’s *Devilman*.⁴⁴⁶ As a result, the series’ became a “gender cross-over” program, with a target audience changed to that of young boys. Thus, while *Cutey Honey* is not technically a “magical girl” anime per se, it became one of the first anime series that featured a female protagonist and aggressively sold itself to teenage boys. The series opened female protagonists in anime to not only new audiences, but a more diverse array of themes, topics, and representations. *Meg*, a sort of spiritual successor to *Cutey Honey*, is a more traditional magical girl series that nevertheless concerns itself with a number of heavy themes for a children’s anime, with episodes centering around topics such as substance abuse and domestic violence. Both shows are emblematic of a general

⁴⁴⁵ See Keith Russell, “The Glimpse and Fan Service: New Media, New Aesthetics,” *International Journal of the Humanities* vol. 6 (5): 105-110.

⁴⁴⁶ Unknown, “Majokko anime daizenshū” (Complete Works of Little Witch Anime), in *Toei Dōgahen* (Toei Doga Chapter) (Tokyo: Bandai, 1993), 72.

broadening of the genre of transforming girls, reflecting and incorporating changing social and industrial trends.

By the end of the 1970s, the magical girl genre had receded in popularity and declined in the number of total productions. Part of this decline was due to the popularity of realistic, increasingly complex characters and storylines of *shōjo* manga, such as Ikeda Riyoko's Marie-Antoinette-inspired romance *Rose of Versailles* and Yamamoto Sumika's tennis drama *Aim for the Ace* (1973-1980). Toei Animation withdrew from the genre in order to focus on adaptations of popular *shōnen* manga, ending a fifteen-year run of annual magical girl anime with *Magical Girl Lalabel* in 1981. Toei's absence opened up the field for other production companies to introduce new takes on the genre. Chief among these are Ashi Production's first television anime series, *Mahō Princess Minky Momo* (Magical Princess Minky Momo, 1982) and Studio Pierrot's *Mahō Tenshi Creamy Mami* (Magical Angel Creamy Mami, 1983) two shows that are largely responsible for a renewal of interest in the magical girl genre in the 1980s. The former is heavily credited with being a major influence on the early 1980s "lolicon" boom, or desire from fans for young female characters from manga and anime, while the latter cast its central magical girl as a music idol voiced by the new and relatively little-known real-life idol, Ota Takako.⁴⁴⁷ Both shows were notable for their popularity with older male fans and the emerging *otaku* market, as well as their innovative additions to the aesthetic of magical girl transformations.

Minky Momo and *Creamy Mami* were produced in successive years in the early 1980s, taking advantage of a number of trends that had changed and shaped anime

⁴⁴⁷ *Magical Angel Creamy Mami* wasn't the first instance of an anime using an idol's voice or songs, with singer Iijima Mari's voice-acting of the Chinese pop star Lynn Minmay in the television anime series *Super Dimension Fortress Macross* (1982-83), providing just one example of idol cross-over. But *Creamy Mami* was the first magical girl anime to so heavily integrate the idol into the story, effectively creating a media mix around the idol's musical performance.

production into a maturing and viable industry during the 1970s. Robot series such as *Mobile Suit Gundam* had for years incorporated lengthy transformation sequences for robots, what both animator and fans call the *henshin bank*, or “transformation bank.” The bank system transformation sequences fragments the robot, cutting to different angles of the robot’s body in order to showcase what also double as the sponsor’s main product: toy models. *Minky Momo* is the first magical girl anime to so heavily feature the sponsor’s product in the animation of the show itself in an elaborate bank system transformation sequence. Momo’s transformation in each episode from a young girl to an adult professional takes a full 22 seconds and begins with a close-up of the wand that Momo uses to change herself. The camera tracks the wand as its thrown into the air, and then pans down onto Momo as she is transformed into an adult woman. This stock footage sequence is then used week in, week out to showcase the product and its transformative powers. With the introduction of the home video recorder to the domestic consumer market, fans can take in these aesthetic details and sequences again and again. This hallmark of fan-viewing is a major reason for magical girl anime’s explosion in popularity during the 1980s with the emerging market of *otaku*.⁴⁴⁸

Toei took these changes and incorporated them into “team” magical girl anime for a new generation of both young female fans with *Bishōjo Senshi Sailor Moon* (Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon, 1992-97). Toei reentered the magical girl genre with a total media mix between *shōjo* manga magazine *Nakayoshi* and toy company Bandai. Mangaka Takeuchi Naoko wrote the original manga, but also worked closely with Toei’s animation department so that a television anime series would develop at nearly the same pace. The show reinvented the magical girl genre once again by drawing upon the basic concept of Toei’s

⁴⁴⁸ See Okada, 8.

Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers and similar live-action *sentai* series, where a team of several warriors fights together to overcome an evil enemy.⁴⁴⁹ *Sailor Moon* features Tsukino Usagi and several of her middle school classmates as they draw upon the powers of the planets in order to protect the galaxy from an alien force. Each magical girl possesses a different power, personality, color scheme, and role in the team and the series. In addition to their superhero duties, the series takes considerable time to show how the girls must also contend with the daily stresses of Japanese middle school life. *Sailor Moon* thus combines elements from various series, especially *shōnen* team and battle series, in order to refresh the magical girl genre. The series ran for five full seasons, spawning a media mix that included manga, books, television animated and live-action specials, video games, and stage musicals.

There were several departures from previous magical girl series that related to scale and representation. The magical girl primarily uses magic to directly fight evil forces that threaten the planet, rather than improve herself or her community. The heroines' responsibilities are almost comically scattered and schizophrenic, now having to handle school romances, classroom politics, drama between friends, and responsibilities at home alongside amplified duties of defending the world from demon invaders. Most importantly, each girl's magic is used not to transform herself into a different person or age, but is instead channeled directly into herself for the purposes of physical and psychological strength. *Sailor Moon* and other "beautiful fighting girl" shows of the same period, such as *Ai Tenshi Densetsu Wedding Peach* (Love Angel Legend Wedding Peach, 1995-96) and

⁴⁴⁹ Mangaka Takeuchi said she was directly inspired by *Masked Beauty Powatorin* (1989-90), itself a heroine-centered spin-off of Toei's *sentai* series that had been spinning its wheels for several years. See the special broadcast of *Fumetsu no sentai hero zenshū* (Complete Works of Immortal Fighting Team Heroes), TV Asahi, (Tokyo: ANB, March 21, 1995).

Maho Tsukai Tai (Magic Users Club, 1996-97) use the figure of the *shōjo* to fully take on characteristics of other genres. In these new shows, the naïveté of the *shōjo* is no longer something to escape or graduate from, but is in itself a powerful end that can subvert social norms. This spread of cute culture – embodied in the figure of the magical girl – has been described by Sharon Kinsella as “a kind of rebellion or refusal to cooperate with established social values and realities.”⁴⁵⁰

Importantly, unlike the utilitarian transformations of Akko-chan or Honey, the metamorphoses of *Sailor Moon* are more cosmetic than transformative. The Sailor Fighters transform into more powerful versions of themselves, with enhancements largely fixated on costume changes and the addition of jewelry such as tiaras and wands. Transformation becomes an excuse to take pleasure in cosmetic enhancements and accessorizing the existing youthful body, rather than drastic interior or physical change. While these transformations are displayed in long sequences, with even more emphasis placed on frilly costume changes and sexualized poses, the age and basic proportions of Sailor Moon and her friends changes little. In other words, the cuteness, youth, and positivity of the *shōjo* persona are now attributes to be amplified through transformation, rather than overcome or elided through emotional or physical maturation. This is what Anne Allison describes as the *shōjo*’s antipathy towards social production and reproduction, where “the *shōjo* (as both subject and object) has come to stand as the counterweight to enterprise society.”⁴⁵¹ In *Sailor Moon*, cuteness, in and of itself, becomes a strength, capable of being admired and consumed by multiple fan audiences, from girls who are told to buy the toys and products of the show, to the older male *otaku* fans who, as the psychologist Saito Tamaki has

⁴⁵⁰ Sharon Kinsella, “Cuteys in Japan,” in *Women, Media, and Consumption in Japan*, eds. Lisa Skov and Brian Moeran (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), 243.

⁴⁵¹ Allison, 139.

persuasively observed, develop strong emotional attachments to such cute but powerful two-dimensional characters.⁴⁵²

A New Kind of Magical Girl: *Pretty Cure*

When *Sailor Moon* ended in the late 1990s, Toei replaced its airtime slot with an original anime series titled *Ojamajo Doremi* (Bothersome Witch Doremi, 1999-2003). For the first time, the studio created a television anime series without the use of a *gensaku*, or pre-existing manga property. The *gensaku* for *Doremi* would be conceived by Tōdō Izumi, a pseudonym for a creative team in the planning department responsible for coming up with the series concept.⁴⁵³ Because the studio was not beholden to the copyright of another author, the series' success was largely contingent on the creative abilities of the studio and toy company staff to sell episodes that focused on a primary television audience. Because of this ability to tap into an audience that was not related to a pre-existing manga base, the creators targeted the anime at a much younger audience of girls as young as pre-school, moving the broadcast slot from its evening “golden time” slot to that of Sunday morning. Both content and character designs reflected this shift. The story – about a group of elementary-school witches – was more comical and episodic in its construction, while characters were made more colorful and deformed to convey less realism than its predecessor. These creative decisions would carry over to the production and media mix of Toei's longest-running and most currently popular magical girl anime series, *Pretty Cure*, beginning with *Futari wa Pretty Cure* (We Are Pretty Cure, 2004).

⁴⁵² See Saito Tamaki, *Beautiful Fighting Girl*, trans. Keith J. Vincent and Dawn Lawson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

⁴⁵³ The name is a portmanteau assembled from Toei Dōga's old company name, and their animation studio located in Ōizumi, Tokyo.

Futari wa Pretty Cure was the first in a lineage of *Pretty Cure* titles, with the tenth and newest title being *Go! Princess Pretty Cure* (2015). *Pretty Cure* took the concept of *Sailor Moon* and *Ojamajo Doremi* and added several features, while also refining the Toei formula into a model that could be replicated in subsequent series. *Futari wa Pretty Cure* revolves around two middle-school-aged girls who are granted magic powers to combat the forces of the dark. The girls have two very different personalities, but find ways to communicate and work together when they transform, using special communes and bracelets, into powerful warriors called “Cures.” This basic story formula has changed little in the years following, with new series incorporating minor changes such as the number of girls, types of items, and thematic conflicts. *Smile Precure!*, the ninth *Pretty Cure* series, is no different. Five girls from the same middle school are recruited by the magic fairies Candy and Pop to protect the magical kingdom of Marchenland from the evil lord Pierrot. He sends his subordinates to Earth to absorb the “bad energy” of humans in order to resurrect his ultimate form. The girls are granted the powers of the legendary warriors *Pretty Cure* in order to fight and “purify” these invaders using their powers, but they are able to harness these powers to the greatest degree when they are all together and in a positive state. If their relationships or mental states have been strained in the episode, then their physical strength will suffer until they can reconcile their conflict during the course of battle. They fight and overcome many opponents throughout the fifty episodes of the series, acquiring items and treasures that give them additional strength and abilities. Eventually, the five *Pretty Cures* work together to defeat Pierrot and bid a tearful farewell to Candy and Pop, who return to the magic kingdom from whence they came.

The basic premise of *Pretty Cure* combines elements from both *Sailor Moon* and *Ojamajo Doremi* to appeal primarily to a target audience of young female viewers and a barely acknowledged audience of older *otaku* male fans. The series borrows from *Sailor Moon*'s *sentai* model of fighting teams, as the story features middle-school heroines who must work together to stop an evil force from conquering the world and enslaving its people. *Pretty Cure*'s stories contain a strong fairy tale influence, with the world populated by villains such as witches, wolfmen, and Japanese *yōkai* demons. Unlike *Sailor Moon* or *Doremi*, each season of *Pretty Cure* features a different cast of main characters, meaning that no cast ever demonstrably ages.⁴⁵⁴ Content is similarly reflected in the visual design of the series, as characters are deformed and colorful in a similar way to *Doremi*, though more or less so depending on the season, its staff, and its cast of characters.

On the other hand, a major difference with *Pretty Cure* from its predecessors is the inclusion of hand-to-hand combat scenes, what is typically a hallmark of male-oriented *shōnen* series. From the late 1990s, more *shōnen* manga and anime began to introduce fighting female characters into theretofore male-dominated casts, itself a carryover from the “battling babes” of adult-oriented anime and manga of the 1980s. *Pretty Cure* recognizes this audience, as well as the changing preferences of a female audience that has absorbed both *shonen* and *shōjo* series from a young age. The heroines now are capable of elaborate martial arts moves and physical attacks in addition to magical spells, with the resulting show featuring frenetic and violent battles between the Pretty Cure warriors and the villains in the vein of an action-packed *shonen* series. This is largely by design, as the

⁴⁵⁴ The characters from *Sailor Moon* or *Ojamajo Doremi*, on the other hand, progress through four or five grade levels during the course of their series.

director for the first series, Nishio Daisuke, was the director for the long-running battle anime *Dragon Ball* and all of its feature-length animated films.

Possibly the most significant difference is in the role the *shōjo* protagonists play within the story itself. Unlike the highly-sexualized heroines of *Sailor Moon*, the physical dimensions of the girls more closely match their middle-school background, as they are represented as smaller, less fully-proportioned, and less sexualized in their wardrobe choices than in previous magical girl series. The girls now wear spandex leggings in place of the bare long legs of *Sailor Moon*, and their transformations no longer strip them down to a near-nude state. Some of this deformity of character reflects changes made in *Doremi* to target a younger audience, but *Pretty Cure* has a more contemporary bent, as characters are often designed to reflect the modern wardrobe of their target audience of girls from the ages of three to fourteen. This lack of sexuality is also inscribed in the premise of the series, as the *Pretty Cure* girls rarely form romantic attachments to the opposite sex. Where the *shōjo* was defined by her sublimation to patriarchal authority or heteronormative romance, there are now very rarely any romantic plotlines in *Pretty Cure*, and the few that appear are resolved quickly or are unreciprocated. Men in general have very little presence in the world of *Pretty Cure*; fathers are often absent or deceased, and male peers are often rendered embarrassingly inadequate when put alongside the do-it-all heroines. Unlike *Sailor Moon*, with its recurring *deus ex machina* in the form of the heroic and masculine Tuxedo Mask, the *shōjo* protagonists of *Pretty Cure* are equipped with the requisite combat skills needed to dispatch foes without the help of any male authority figures.

This elevation of the self-reliant *shōjo* reflects attitudes towards the changing social status of women in Japan in the 1990s. Miyadai Shinji has theorized that the *shōjo* is a

passive form of resistance to the “endless everyday,” the loss of hope in a bright future that characterizes the outlook of many young men and women beginning in the late 1980s.⁴⁵⁵ Miyadai observed that in an deep economic recession and spiritual desolation, *shōjo* were best equipped to not only survive, but thrive. In the liminality of the *shōjo*, one could escape not only responsibility, but also the march of history and the stress of reality. As Michael Marra observes, “These girls had no illusions (and, thus, no delusions) – only the knowledge of how things actually are. They had learned from girl comics (*shōjo* manga) that no boy was ever there to save them in some romantic fashion, and that sex free of love was pleasant.”⁴⁵⁶ Miyadai’s resistance was more passive than active – revolving around the term *mattari*, or “taking it easy” – and thus are not totally appropriate to analyzing the Toei magical girl and its narratives that hedge on responsibility to community, friends, or family, but the Pretty Cure heroines’ conflicts are now entirely resolved through female self-reflection and action. In a world without reliable men, the female protagonists of *Pretty Cure* retain their feminine appearance, but are stripped of their sexuality and endowed with masculine attributes to cope with problems both quotidian and apocalyptic.

Similar to the various magical girl anime of past decades, much of this transformation is a response to industrial innovations and audience tastes. Kumiko Saito argues that magical girl anime are no longer a genre at all, but rather, “a code that binds certain ideological values and advantages attributed to the *shōjo* identity in contemporary Japan.”⁴⁵⁷ Some scholars, such as Akiko Sugawa, argue that this collapse of gender distinctions has resulted in a new form of female superhero very different from

⁴⁵⁵ Miyadai Shinji, *Owarinaki nichijō wo ikiro: Ōmu kanzen kokufuku manyuaru* (Live the Endless Everyday: A Manual to Completely Overcome Aum) (Tokyo: Chikuma Shōbo, 1995), 18-21.

⁴⁵⁶ Michael Marra, *Essays on Japan: Between Aesthetics and Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 213.

⁴⁵⁷ Saito, 157.

superwomen in Western cartoons in pop culture, that of a “powerful but cute and nurturing superheroine.”⁴⁵⁸ Saito, on the other hand, suggests that men embracing these new superheroines signify male resistance to conservative “gendered responsibilities,” such as having a career and creating/supporting a family.⁴⁵⁹

The flexibility and evolution of the magical girl code/genre is a good example of Rick Altman’s “semantic/syntactic/pragmatic” approach to constructing film genres. Semantic conventions – such as witches, demons, wands, furry assistants, and magic kingdoms – are shaped by a syntax that arranges these conventions into coherent narratives. Altman argues that this semantic/syntactic relationship can be shaped by a pragmatic approach including institutions and audiences. Genre in this formulation is organized to “serve diverse audiences diversely,” recognizing that not all participants in the construction and consumption of a film or anime share or are served equally in their interests. The magical girl’s adaptation to the demands of various creators, studios, networks, as well as the desires of diverse audiences, signals the ways in which multiple age and gender demographics have shaped and continue to shape the genre’s construction. As Altman notes, when “the diverse groups using the genre are considered together, genres appear as regulatory schemes facilitating the integration of diverse factions into a single social fabric.”⁴⁶⁰ Thus, many forms of long-running anime today reflect and organize audience desires and ideological values according to the various genre tropes that are shaped according to both production and reception. The magical girl genre, particularly through the change of the role and reception of the *shōjo*, is a way to see how the domestic audience

⁴⁵⁸ Akiko Sugawa, “Children of Sailor Moon: The Evolution of Magical Girls in Japanese Anime,” *Nippon.com*, 26 February 2015 < <http://www.nippon.com/en/in-depth/a03904/>> (26 February 2015).

⁴⁵⁹ Saito, 161.

⁴⁶⁰ Rick Altman, *Film/Genre* (London: British Film Institute, 1999), 208.

reacts and is bound by contemporary social structures. This last point is crucial, for *Smile Precure!* embodies many of the ways in which anime today, and always generally has been, made with a Japanese audience in mind. The building of *Smile Precure!* is designed to target the domestic audience in methods that previous fantasy shows only alluded towards.

Building Character

As explained in the chapter four, the planning committee at Toei establishes most of the characters, settings, and premises nine months to a year before a show is set to air, well before the writers, producers, and directors get together to construct even a single episode. The direction of a new *Pretty Cure* series is often determined based on what did and didn't work in the previous year's series. The success of a series is always dependent on the type of show being produced, but with *Pretty Cure*, the priority is the briskness of merchandise sales. Sales and ratings for the previous year's show, *Suite Precure!* (2011-12), had dropped a bit compared to series past, so producers were determined to go back to a narrative recipe that had worked in the past: more characters. As Umezawa Atsutoshi, the producer of both *Suite Precure!* and *Smile Precure!*, explained to me: "[The idol group] AKB48 is popular now with young girls, so we wanted to include as many heroines as possible so that fans can choose which girl they like or identify with most."⁴⁶¹ Regardless of the faithfulness of this claim, what is important to note is that producers attempt to frame *Smile Precure!* in terms of an idol group that has achieved popularity primarily with both grade-school girls and a subset of middle-aged men and women. If it could not be all things

⁴⁶¹ The claim that *Smile Precure* is emulating AKB48 is slightly dubious, since the story has a brigade of five Pretty Cure warriors, whereas the ubiquitous idol group has forty-eight singing girls representing the city of Tokyo, flanked by several hundred more girls scattered around major cities across the country. *Smile Precure!*, moreover, uses the same cast of characters, and is designed by the same character designer, as a *Pretty Cure* series that had aired to great critical and commercial acclaim five years prior, suggesting that producers were merely putting a new spin on an old idea.

for all people, the new series was determined to be an important thing for a few key groups, particularly the young girls and older men who comprise the fans of AKB48.

Once the concept of the series was established, *Smile Precure!* was simultaneously pitched to the potential sponsors and co-creators of the show: the Osaka-based broadcasting network Asahi Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the ad agency Asatsu DK (ADK). This triangle of media companies is the *seisaku iinkai* of *Smile Precure!* The companies share the costs in their own ways for agreements that benefit them all. Such partnerships have become particularly necessary for anime production following the collapse of the bubble economy and video rental market, as private investors are much less willing to finance low-rated anime shows and direct-to-video productions. In the case of *Pretty Cure*, ABC paid for a broadcast slot at a lucrative time and day, while ADK represented the interests of Bandai Namco, a company which specializes in games and toys for children, and which produced toys based on the characters and world of *Smile Precure!* The toys that appear in the show are largely decided, designed, and distributed by Bandai Namco, though Toei does provide their own suggestions based on the series concept.

When I first sit in on a script meeting for *Smile Precure!* in February at a small office located just outside of Toei Animation's Oizumi studios, they are already over three months into writing scripts for the series. Meetings take place in the evenings and always near the studio, since the series directors must be on site at nearly all hours to supervise production and inspect the work of the staff. They also need to be close in order to relay changes or immediate requests from producers after meetings. The full *seisaku iinkai* is represented by Toei producers Umezawa Atsutoshi and Hasegawa Masaya, as well as a producer each from ABC and ADK. All four, save for the newly employed Hasegawa, had

worked on *Suite Precure*, and all were determined to deliver a redeeming hit based on their experience the year before. Series director Otsuka Takashi sits in the center of the room to corral the various interests. Otsuka had worked at Toei for several years as an episode director and key animator for previous *Pretty Cure* episodes, as well as serving as the director for several *Pretty Cure* feature-length animated films. This would be his first project as a series director. To Otsuka's left is Yonemura Shoji, the lead writer for the show and a veteran of various anime series and male-oriented *tokusatsu* team action series. With the advice and suggestions of the production committee, he would be responsible for writing many of the penultimate episodes and organizing the various episodes into a coherent narrative. Scattered around the room are four other writers who take on the duties of writing various episodes throughout the year, one of whom, Narita Yoshimi, has been on every *Pretty Cure* writing staff since the series began.

At the beginning of each week's meeting, the series' business numbers are delivered. The producer for ABC, Matsushita Hiroyuki, shares the week's television Video Research ratings, similar to the United States' Nielsen ratings. He explains the performance of the series in comparison to previous weeks, as well as previous series during the same week in different years. *Smile Precure!* has started off with high ratings, though the producer warns that vacation weeks are looming and to expect lower ratings. He warmly cautions everyone to not read too much into them, since children will likely be missing episodes to vacation with family. The producer for ADK, Sasaki Reiko, reports the week's merchandise sales figures as a representative of Bandai Namco. Though Candy (the toy mascot and fairy guardian of the show) is not selling as well as expected, hopes are high for the Smile Pact, the featured transformation device for the *Pretty Cure* heroines of the series

in the shape of a makeup compact, which will be released later that week. The show's characters will be showcasing these various items in question through appearances in the coming week's episode.

Once these announcements are out of the way, a schedule is passed out which breaks down all forty-nine of *Smile Precure's* episodes. While *Smile Precure!* has a running storyline, most of the episodes begin and conclude without the audience needing any information of a previous episode. This is largely done through organizing the episodes according to characters and their development. Each episode has a character assigned to it, and that character becomes the focal point of the episode's narrative arc. The theme and description of the episode are then tailored to each character and their personality. For instance, an episode revolving around a device that shrinks people into the size of an ant was chosen to feature the lead heroine. The creators shrunk both the lead heroine and Candy, in order for their relationship to grow stronger during a time of crisis and panic. Another episode set to air during the national exam week features the scholastically gifted Pretty Cure, who has a personal crisis where she questions the meaning of study. The episode is organized around her growth, and how she comes to appreciate school for helping her to learn about herself and her friends. Characters inhabit the story arc of single episodes without affecting the integrity of the larger storyline. Fans can follow the anime even if they miss an episode or two, but fans who faithfully watch each episode can see subtle changes in how characters behave and interact with one another. Premises, holidays, special guests, and other events are thus tailored to the specific personalities, backgrounds, and characteristics of each of the show's five main characters.

Character designer Kawamoto Toshie designed the five Pretty Cures – Miyuki (Cure Happy), Akane (Cure Sunny), Yayoi (Cure Peace), Nao (Cure March), and Reika (Cure Beauty) – as well as the villains and minor characters of the series. Throughout the process, the producers and series director provided suggestions well before anything else in the series was decided. As series director Otsuka put it, “Kawamura’s designs aren’t satisfying my wishes; she’s satisfying the wishes of everyone involved. Or rather, the characters are molded based on what we agree is the best direction for them. If someone has a good idea, we say, ‘Ah, that’s better, let’s go with that.’ Character designs are not about pleasing everyone, but using everyone’s ideas to get the best possible result.”⁴⁶² Kawamoto had worked on *Yes! Pretty Cure 5* (2007-08), designing a similar cast of five main girls, and said she was drawn back to *Pretty Cure* for “the desire to create something original, since much of the industry is derivative of other existing properties.”⁴⁶³ With *Smile Precure!*, she made the colors for each character brighter and emphasized their hair and wardrobe. Based on their personalities, she also created *settei* for their poses, expressions, and gestures. As the characters backstories were written, she had to go back and change some aspects of her original designs. For instance, she changed the expression of the lead heroine Miyuki once she found out that the character’s premise was that she had transferred to the school and had yet to make any friends. Upon hearing Miyuki’s voice actress at the first voice recording session, however, she went back to the proverbial drawing board. “She spoke so quickly,” said Kawamura. “Through that first observation, I was able to get a good sense of Otsuka-san’s tempo for the character.”⁴⁶⁴ Kawamura’s statements and her process of creating the Pretty Cures show how the creation and design

⁴⁶² Otsuka Takashi, interview by the author, February 2014.

⁴⁶³ Kawamura Toshie, *Kawamura Toshie: Toei Animation Works* (Tokyo: Ichijinsha, 2012), 152.

⁴⁶⁴ Yoshioka Yu, “Character Designer: Kawamura Toshie (Tokyo: Gakken Mook, 2013), 90-91.

of original characters is dynamic, changing repeatedly from the conceptual design through the continuous addition of details and ideas. Based on the small suggestions and contributions of a variety of parties, the design of the character will shift to reflect these ideas. The character design, then, is the product of a number of voices and visions, contingent on Kawamura's ability to catalogue, deconstruct, and synthesize them into a unique reflection of the whole.

Product-Portal Integration

During the script meeting, a second schedule is distributed which has different columns and categories for the featured "Cure Decor" and other goods of the week. Instructions are written for how to use the toys in the episodes, based on what Otsuka, Yonemura, and the various producers decide would best work without appearing unnatural. Cure Decors, for example, can be shaped like animals, food, fruit, cosmetics, dress, and other everyday objects, and all have a small ribbon with a heart-shaped jewel attached. There are sixty-four in total, and all are stored in divots inside a pink storage trunk called a Decor Décor, or placed inside the Smile Pact, a pink and white compact-like device with a pink ribbon on top. The Pact opens up to reveal a recess to place the Cure Décor pieces to activate different powers, as well as seven round lights in the colors of the rainbow. Inside the top of the lid is a small, circular mirror. Staff must be familiar with these toys and how they will be dispersed in the anime series. An understanding of characters and their creation can only partly explain how anime creation is collaborative, and how anime within the media mix corrals the resources of its participants. While characters guide how each episode is structured, toys and items organize the structure of the entire series' narrative arc,

functioning like connective tools in the importance attached to them, their designs, and their roles in the series' progression.

Product placement in film and television can be obtrusive or well-integrated, though the product itself often has little bearing on the characters or story. It is always done in order to satisfy a sponsor, whether it is thrown in innocuously like a fast food beverage, or highlighted for its performance like a Bond luxury car. Ellen Seiter has documented how toys function within the programs for boys' and girls' cartoons in the United States, with complex episodes structured around toy figurines from *My Little Pony* and *Ghostbusters*.⁴⁶⁵ With anime, such products appear every week and rely on consistent exposure in order to generate sales, so the anime creators and advertising representative work together to best integrate these products into the show in ways that are similarly central to the narrative. In *Smile Precure!*, Cure Decors are special magic pieces that can be used to revive the queen of Marchenland. They were stolen by Pierrot and placed in the noses of clown-like monsters called Akanbe. The Decors are used to power the Smile Pact, the Pretty Cures' main transformation device which changes them from middle-school classmates to a team of fighting magical girls. In order to transform, the girls open their Pact and place the ribbon-shaped elemental Cure Decor inside the recess. The Pact also grants powers to the Pretty Cures, gathering their fighting spirit and channeling it into energy in which the Pretty Cures perform their finishing moves. As the central transformation device, it is featured in every episode in loving detail, as well as during commercial breaks, retailing for 3,980 yen.

⁴⁶⁵ See Ellen Seiter, *Sold Separately: Parents and Children in Consumer Culture* (New Jersey: Rutgers, 1995).

Other Cure Decors grant the girls items, accessories, and abilities when set into the Smile Pact. A list of Cure Decors is passed out, displaying the first sixteen Cure Decors to appear in the series; their look and name are supplied, but their incorporation is left up to the writers. A specific Cure Decor is assigned to each episode for the Pretty Cures to collect, and more elaborate and expensive new products are introduced as pivotal plot points where the Cures gain a significant new ability or access to a once restricted area. The products to the series are thus essential to organizing the trajectory of the series narrative. Many of these toys, such as Cure Decors, are collectible, while others, like the cute mascot Candy, are endlessly customizable. This is a hallmark of girls' toys that Seiter claims distinguishes them from boys' toys, where "color and design features (style) are the realm of diversification among objects that are essentially similar."⁴⁶⁶ With the Cure Decors, each writer is told to integrate a Cure Decor into the week's episode. Sometimes, this results in an object or ability that is crucial to defeating the villain of the week, while in other cases, the Decor is simply a token reward for victory.

What's required from staff is that Decors be integrated into the plot and visually displayed within the anime. To take a more concrete example, the show's cute fairy mascot, Candy, is literally shaped for narrative integration. Candy is the Pretty Cures' guardian and support, but she is also a stuffed animal commodity and is thus featured alongside the Pretty Cures in nearly every episode. A set of diagrams is passed out during a meeting, detailing a dozen different hairstyles for Candy. Her stuffed animal has a pair of ears which can be shaped and molded like a hairstyle according to the tastes or whims of the child who owns it. Various hairstyles are displayed in the diagram where Candy's ears are up, down, off to one side, in ponytails, pigtails, bobs, or weaves. These concepts will appear on

⁴⁶⁶ Seiter, 155.

Candy at various points in the first several episodes, not simply to encourage children to beg their parents for Candy, but to continually provide them with ideas on how to play with her or design her (see figure 23). Candy is, in fact, a Trojan horse designed to get children to constantly upgrade her with the latest fashions and accessories from the television show. Another diagram is passed out which shows a special hairdryer and brush that helps with styling her hair in all of the cumbersome designs featured in the show; Miyuki shows how to use the hairdryer to mold her friend's fuzzy ears. Concept art for necklaces, dresses, and mini-tiaras are also passed out, all of which will be incorporated at some point into the design of the characters. As the show progresses, Candy's role in it becomes deeper, tied to the characters through various goods that are utilized in the anime episodes. Eventually, Candy becomes integral to the plot as a sort of sixth Pretty Cure and princess of the magical Marchenland.⁴⁶⁷



Figure 23: Candy, shaped to play

While the team of writers might use some of these objects in the story, their visual incorporation is up to series director Otsuka to make all of these products fit seamlessly into the anime's world and alongside its characters. When I first meet Otsuka, he appears

⁴⁶⁷ In a possible attempt to enable success by association, she is even voiced by the same actress as Pikachu, the star critter for the global smash hit anime and video game franchise, *Pokémon*.

too young to be in charge of such an important series for Toei. But Otsuka had already been at Toei Animation for nine years before finally getting his series directorial debut, working continuously on nearly every previous *Pretty Cure* series. He also directed three *Pretty Cure* feature-length animated films, and knew the previous characters and premises of *Pretty Cure* better than just about any director who had previously helmed the show. His experience would be helpful in knowing what had and hadn't worked in the past both creatively and commercially. He has a restless and humorous personality that stemmed, he claims, from his upbringing in Osaka, a city where brashness and comedy among people are more commonplace than in Tokyo. His energy was fitting for a position that involved such a countless number of tasks. When I ask him about how he handles the various interests in the show's production, he says that remaining objective is what keeps him leveled:

It's not really about what I want, to be honest, it's about what I feel is right for the anime. When I draw animation for *One Piece*, I might put in some drawings that reflect my style, but for the most part, I'm keeping to the source material. It's not my job to alter the manga to what I think is better. It's the same for *Pretty Cure*. *Pretty Cure* is an anime for children as young as kindergarten, and it has its own traditions. It would be selfish of me to impose something from anime that only I like. I love horror, and if I put in horror stories all the time, I might love it and think, 'Wow, this is so great!' But the anime's fans won't like it, and the show won't sell any toys. Individuality has its place, but that doesn't mean that it's a virtue in and of itself in every anime.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁸ Otsuka Takashi, interview by the author, February 2014.

Otsuka hits on the commercial aspect of “successful” anime: total individuality is not necessarily a good thing. His early exposure to *Pretty Cure* in many ways conditioned him to see the anime as a combined advertisement from an early age. Sasaki Reiko, the representative for ad agency ADK and one of the producers of the series, tells me Otsuka is rare in this respect. “Many directors become obsessed with telling their own story for the show and forget about their responsibility to the sponsor. Otsuka’s talent lies in his ability to express himself while also incorporating the sponsor in interesting ways. He’s very mature for a young director.”⁴⁶⁹

During a break in the meeting, Otsuka and Sasaki get together to look at the early concept art for a toy clock that is still in development. The clock will be released around the middle of September, but the details of its design need to be ironed out months in advance. It will be an expensive toy, equipped with an LED display that shows the time, and playable mini-games when a particular Cure Decor is placed in a recess. How the clock will be incorporated into the show is still undecided, though it will likely be an item that provides the Pretty Cures with a new ability or enhanced transformation. Its design will be important going forward, particularly in order to find a balance between how the clock’s aesthetic design will satisfy the goals of both the toy company and the animation department. Otsuka and the producer look over the clock’s blueprint. It has wings on the side, but Otsuka says these should be trimmed. “These will be difficult to show when the clock is sideways,” he says. He sketches onto the design to show how he best thinks the clock can be changed, though this is just a suggestion; ultimately, the decision lies with toy company Bandai, but the designers understand that in order for their product to be best displayed, the animators’ opinions are important. Otsuka turns to Yonemura, the head

⁴⁶⁹ Sasaki Reiko, interview by the author, March 2012.

writer for the show. “How are we going to use this again?” Yonemura looks intently at the concept art. “It could be a way to attack the opponents. Maybe once they put a special Cure Decor in there, the clock creates a massive energy wave.” Otsuka, Yonemura, and the producer from ADK brainstorm different ideas for the clock’s use. Ultimately, it is decided that the clock will channel the spiritual energy of the Pretty Cure warriors into creating a more powerful attack, where the LED display becomes a sort of control panel for the clock’s power. After the meeting is over, Otsuka will go back to the studio to relay these decisions to the directors, animators, and artists who will work on putting these products into future episodes of the show.

Despite the care put into placing the toys and mascots tastefully within the arc of the story, the same subtlety does not apply to the visual style of the products within the anime itself. The products are displayed in ostentatious detail using special digital effects, high frame counts, and sweeping camerawork. They are most prominently showcased in transformation sequences for the Pretty Cures, lengthy scenes that are repeated in virtually every episode and comprise what is traditionally called the anime’s “bank system,” where entire sequences of animation are reused from episode to episode in order to trim costs and reduce the material and human resources needed to make new animation. By using the bank system every episode for the scenes of metamorphosis, the same product can also be featured week in and week out. The space of the metamorphoses are abstracted, focusing attention on the transforming body as it is fragmented in ways similar to transformation scenes in robot anime such as *Mobile Suit Gundam*, where man-powered robots shifted shapes into various military vehicles and aircraft.

The first shot in *Pretty Cure*'s transformation sequences are not of the girls, but of the transformation device itself, the Smile Pact. The girls open the Pact and place a Cure Decor into the Pact's recess, transforming it into a magic device which the girls use to transform each segment of their body. The subsequent shots in the sequence all revolve around the Pact and its transforming powers, as each shot showcases a limb being transformed through the Pact's powers. The visual treatment of the Pact differs from the rest of the episode's animation in its use of computer-generated animation to render the contours and movement of the Pact as close to the real toy Pact as possible. The Pact's sound effects in the transformation sequence, such as the clicking sound when the Pact opens or the fairy voice that projects from the Pact when a Cure Decor is placed in the recess, are also identical to the sounds that the toy Pact makes in real life. This fidelity to the original product goes beyond product placement and into the realm of product glorification, making the gadget-toys stand out in appearance, as well as shot number and length, from the rest of the episode. For these sequences, the products manage to eclipse the characters and are yet framed by their reaction to them. The toys become product-portals on two levels: they transport characters into the space of transformation, and they transport the anime's world into viewer's social environment by incorporating the toy's visual and aural design.

The transformation sequence's "bank" featuring these product-portal transformations has steadily increased its duration throughout the years, but also its quality and detail, to the point that the transformation sequences for the complete team of Pretty Cures in *Smile Precure!* lasts just over two minutes. This increased detail evinces the idea that the transformation sequences – and by extension, the products – are the most important

segments in the *Pretty Cure* series, given their visual and technical prominence in every single episode. The bank itself has become something of a point of obsession for fans, and a point of pride for creators.⁴⁷⁰ Ever since *Minky Momo*, scenes of character metamorphosis in magical girl anime have grown longer and longer, featuring the product and its transformative effects in exquisite detail. The sequences are given to veteran animators, who typically draw the layouts and key frames entirely on their own, and the scenes are opportunities for such animators to display their skills and create vivid animation unfettered from the rest of the episode's narrative. Where a typical anime episode is between 2500 and 3500 drawings, the complete bank for the collective members of *Smile Precure!* uses over ten thousand drawings.

Narratively, the transformation bank also comes at a pivotal moment in each episode. Anime typically divides its episodes into two segments – A parts, which comes before the commercial break, and B parts, which come after it. With *Smile Precure!*, the A part is devoted to drama and relationships between characters, while the B part revolves action-oriented climaxes that resolves these dramatic incidents. Thus, the transformation bank comes at the narrative moment in the episode that signifies action and resolution. Its repetition is designed to condition viewers to appreciate and associate these products with instant pleasure that signal the beginning of relief and release. As numerous historians have documented, the business model of anime changed during the 1980s to account for sales of personal videos and, eventually, digital video discs that were sold to fans of particular anime. Okada Toshio has posited that the obsessive attraction to specific characters

⁴⁷⁰ The construction of an attractive transformation bank can be framed in the form of Bourdieu's concept of "cultural capital," where animators gain industrial value through their authorship of such sequences. Though the sponsor does not require the bank to be a certain length, animators have viewed this segment as an area to display their technical skills. The amount of drawings becomes an area of bragging rights, with some bank animators tweeting their final drawing count to their followers.

emerged during this period, when fans could watch their favorite series repeatedly and, most importantly, pause the image to linger over details that had theretofore been ignored through television consumption.⁴⁷¹ Thus, in economic, narrative, and emotionally satisfying terms, the bank transformation sequence is the “money shot” of the entire episode.

The product-portals in *Pretty Cure* – the Smile Pacts, Decors, and Candy mascots – are used to connect characters to audiences on multiple registers. While the series is marketed and targeted to pre-pubescent girls, the incorporation of genre tropes from robot and battle anime allowed magical girl series to appeal to a greater degree to older male audiences. These lengthy sequences are dreamlike, allowing young girls to envision the potential of fantasy and identity transformation, but are also repeatedly watched and consumed by older male fans who labor over the animated details of the fragmented female body. Many of the animators are aware of this older audience, and some of the animators themselves likely comprise this audience to a certain degree. However, every animator I spoke to claimed that they were animating the show for young female viewers. While male fans might incidentally find themselves attracted to the various pleasures of *Pretty Cure*, the anime is marketed towards and is extraordinarily popular with young girls who purchase the products that finance its production. In their portrayal and employment in the text of the anime episode, product-portals and their transformation sequences in *Pretty Cure* are a reminder of this dual fandom, where pleasure is gained in multiple forms beyond the consumption of the product itself.

Uchiawase: Anime’s Writer’s Room

When the schedules are put away and the toy details ironed out, the staff begin going over scripts for episodes. Using the raw materials provided by the characters and

⁴⁷¹ Okada, 8.

licensed merchandise, the writers find ways to combine these two important elements in order to create stories that have value and meaning for their audiences. While the lead writer pens the first two or three episodes of a given series, the rest of the episodes are distributed to a team of writers on standby. Typically, each writer will take turns writing an episode over a period of about three to four weeks. The meetings are set up to determine the direction of the episode, check on the writer's progress, make revisions and edits to scripts, and approve a final script for storyboarding by the episode's director. Otsuka, Yonemura, and the producers all weigh in on the script and suggest or demand changes when each version has been completed. Among the meetings I observed, there was never a perfect script upon the first submission. While some scripts need fewer revisions than others, scripts normally go through three to five versions before being finally approved by the director, lead writer, and producers, all of whom have contributed in some way to the shape of the final draft. The crafting of a script is thus a laborious undertaking, created in isolation but perfected in collaborative discussion. These meetings are called *uchiawase*, which literally translates to “knock around and exchange.” In these spaces, episodes are constructed from ideas that are kicked around and swapped between all participants.

Writers for original anime meet in *uchiawase* to create stories together every week for upwards of a year or more. Such a long production schedule means that while animation production processes might be standardized, the creativity of idea generation can come from the diversity of the participants involved. These teams work through problems that might arise, while also placing limits on each other's creative work through the demands of their respective audiences. Script meetings can show us that the creation of anime is an ongoing collaborative project, wherein the value of ideas is more important

than the particular status or authority any participant might possess. There are certainly differences in hierarchical power or status *uchiawase*. For example, while the creative decisions were mostly left to Otsuka, this does not necessarily mean that he has final say with any particular decision. This is usually left to the two producers of sponsors ABC and ADK, whose concerns regarding ratings or products are less suggestions than instructions. Gender, also, does not matter as much as experience; while the lead writer, Yonemura Shoji, has the most authority on the scripts, Narita Yoshimi commands the most respect in the room for her experience working on every single *Pretty Cure* series since its inception. The drafts for her scripts rarely go through extensive revision.

Before every meeting begins, scripts are circulated to the other staff members so that everyone is on the same page when the meeting begins. Because of this team-centered approach, all writers are encouraged to come every week, even if they don't have a script that they will be presenting or revising. Not everyone can stay on top of the reading assignments every week, but the expectation is that anyone should be able to contribute to help improve the script. When the meetings begin, each writer waits his or her turn until the director pulls up the writer's script and begins a dialogue. For *Smile Precure!*, Otsuka and Yonemura first give their impressions and concerns with the episode's premises, and then the individual writer gives their own impressions. Most of the time, the writers will just agree any suggestions, but if a suggestion is not clear, then the writers will follow up with questions of their own.

Where products and items guide the series' larger structure, individual episodes nearly always revolves around characters. A key question that is always asked is if the story is consistent with how the particular character behaves. When the characters interact,

their actions must present their personalities as efficiently as possible. One script, for example, revolves around a summer festival and the characters Nao (Cure March) and Yayoi (Cure Peace). Otsuka takes issue with a point in the script, emphasizing how the tomboyish Nao is someone who helps out in physical ways, as opposed to the more fragile Cure Peace. “Let’s come up with some more natural scenes, some fun scenes, to convey their personalities here,” he says. The writer suggests that Nao could bang a *taiko* drum, a role traditionally given to men at Japanese summer festivals, to convey her physical strength. Yayoi, on the other hand, has been established as a sort of *otaku*-type character who loves manga and drawing cartoons. The writer suggests Yayoi could draw up posters and flyers promoting the summer event. Otsuka, Yonemura, and the producers are satisfied with the ideas, though Otsuka also prods the writer to come up with something more original. “We need to figure out *interesting* ways of showing how they participate,” Otsuka reminds her.

While Otsuka and Yonemura generally have the most control over creative decisions involving characters, what makes *uchiawase* significant is the relative democracy of how ideas are generated within its space. Unlike the American television model of creative brainstorming called the “writer’s room” – which is a highly private space for the writing team of a television series – directors, producers, and occasionally animators are present in the *uchiawase*, and they all can participate in the process of generating ideas for any given episode (see figure 25). The lead director or writer might best understand the characters personalities, behaviors, and relationships, but they are still interpreted in different ways by the particular creators involved. Debates occasionally break out over a specific line a character uttered, and some writers spend a full hour asking questions about

the character's background in order to write the resolution to an episode. Otsuka generally catches vague or unclear script narration or descriptions, but if the episode directors feel something is ambiguous or vague in the script – such as a character's emotions at a particular moment, the design of a new enemy, or a new location in the show's world – then they will attend the beginning of the meeting to hash out any creative ambiguities with the scriptwriter. Often, the directors bring their unfinished storyboards and ask for additional details from the writer of the script until they feel satisfied enough to continue with the rest of the episode's storyboards.



Figure 24: Creators examine the episode's *settei* in the *uchiawase*

In practice, there is a negotiation process that happens in the *uchiawase*, as ideas come from different places and for different priorities. Koichi Iwabuchi has diagrammed how Japanese producers seek to make their works “culturally odorless” for global export, referring to how Japanese media circulates transnationally through the elision of cultural signs.⁴⁷² Surprisingly, most ideas in the meeting come with the Japanese audience particularly in mind. The series' *uchiawase* functions as a calculating machine, endlessly replicating with each episode offering variations on cultural themes and domestic tie-ins.

⁴⁷² Iwabuchi, 27.

One way in which *Smile Precure!* is constantly tied to Japan is through a near-obsessive linkage of episodes to holidays and events celebrated in Japan. Themes for episodes are frequently made out of traditional Japanese holidays such as *seijin no hi*, or “coming of age day,” the school festival period, and even Western holidays popular in Japan such as Father’s Day and Christmas. Once a particular holiday is decided upon for an episode, a character is matched who is most appropriate to parse its meaning. For example, Yayoi, who has been raised by a single mother, is paired with the “Father’s Day episode” to bring out the backstory of her deceased father. Similarly, products would appear in episodes and release in stores during high shopping periods such as the spring and summer back-to-school seasons, as well as the fall season before Christmas and New Year’s Day. The aforementioned magic clock, for example, is timed to release for the Christmas shopping season as the most expensive toy in the series to date. *Smile Precure!*, set in a world that is strikingly similar to contemporary Japan, is adept at attaching itself to both the product and seasonal calendars of the year in order to best direct audience flows and interest, though this simultaneously limits the series’ exposure and effectiveness to a strict Japanese broadcast schedule.

Another way in which *Smile Precure!* negotiates its various corporate interests is through the incorporation of media or celebrity tie-ins. Producers from ADK are consistently concerned with the appearance and integration of merchandise, but other producers attempt to contribute to stories through personal or business connections. In one situation, ABC producer Matsushita has a personal relationship with many famous comedians due to the corporation’s Osaka-based operations and affiliations with comedy talent agencies, so he offers to have two well-known comedians guest appear in an episode

and even voice act their own characters. The comedians are popular with children, especially in the Osaka area where ratings for *Pretty Cure* are at an all-time high. The decision is enthusiastically welcomed since the celebrities can organically be incorporated into an episode about the school festival, where Japanese comedians frequently make surprise appearances. In another situation, one of the Toei producers proposes a plug for the Kyoto Uzumasa Eiga Mura, a theme park produced and operated by Toei based on the mythology and architecture of its films of feudal era Japan. If an episode mentions the Eiga Mura by name and even includes backgrounds of the park itself, then the Eiga Mura can promote the show in its parks as well. Obviously, the benefit here lies with Toei's cross-promotional strategies, so the other producers must sign off on the agreement. The writers, however, view it as a creative opportunity to set an episode entirely in the confines of the Eiga Mura and feature an episode about filmmaking and within a historical period setting.

Episodes are always written with an imaginary audience of diverse parents and their children in mind. Writers must be incredibly open-minded about taking suggestions, as pleasing the requests of corporate superiors does not necessarily translate to creating interesting stories (one might think they are mutually exclusive!). Most suggestions by producers and directors are met with little resistance by staff, and writers with "stubborn" reputations are less likely to be invited back on future series. Any moments of creative tension are typically related to issues of self-censorship. Since *Smile Precure!* is a show targeted at children and broadcast on Sunday mornings, content that could potentially lead to claims from angry parents is heavily regulated. In one script, ADK producer Sasaki takes exception to an episode built around ghosts, arguing the show's story is too scary for children. Yonemura, the episode's writer, disagrees, and the two have a lengthy debate

about what is not only appropriate, but healthy for children to watch. In the end, the producer's requests are heeded and Yonemura must change his story. Content is frequently parsed for its psychologically damaging effects on children. In another instance, ABC producer Matsushita objects to an episode that revolves around the game of *suica wari*, a popular summer activity where children wear blindfolds and take turns attempting to smash a watermelon with a bat. The producer says that parents of blind children will call in to complain that the show is being insensitive to their families. Otsuka strongly objects to this idea, saying, "We can't do anything if we're always worried about complaints from angry parents." In the end, however, *suica wari* is written out of the plot and the writers must come up with another game for the characters to play. The same type of control applied to dialogue as well, with producers on all sides wary of any lines that suggest negativity, such as death or bullying. In both instances, producers viewed themselves as gatekeepers of sensitive content for children with physical or mental handicaps.

Such self-censorship is ultimately not conducive to producing series that realistically portray a range of themes and issues, but the producers argue that such regulation is necessary so that the shows do not attract negative media attention. "We have a responsibility to the art," Hasegawa tells me, "but also a responsibility to the company and the employees who work on the show. If our show is cancelled because of some perceived offense, then that's a lot of people out of a job because we were too stubborn or insensitive."⁴⁷³ Producers can act as content watchdogs, ensuring that the series is clean and accessible to the biggest potential audience, while offending as few as possible. If the staff is firmly behind the decision and a claim arises regardless, then it is up to the producer to fight for the integrity of the series on the staff's behalf. When something is too crucial to

⁴⁷³ Hasegawa Masaya, interview by the author, July 2012.

the plot and can't be written out? Sometimes, a subtitle will scroll across the screen telling children not to mimic these actions at home. More often, the moral lessons will be written into the scripts, with the wholesome characters themselves turning towards the camera or each other, expressing the wrongness of the action, and condemning the person doing it.

Such deference varies according to the episode, and who is deemed to have the requisite experience to possess authority in the room. When the writer or director doesn't know how to proceed with a story development, everyone in the room gets a shot at attempting to solve the problem so that the writer can go home and develop the script. Such deliberations show the collaborative nature of the brainstorming process, where anyone "stuck" or suffering from writer's block can be provided with ideas from a bevy of sources. Some of these deliberations go on for well over an hour, where finding the right plot twist or resolution can take considerable time and thought from everyone in the room.

The show's creators, while ostensibly protecting their assets from claims and lawsuits, attempt to show sensitivity towards diversity within the Japanese audience, eschewing content that might hurt children with physical or social disabilities, and even children from different regions of Japan. There are two examples where *Smile Precure!* breaks from the *Pretty Cure* lineage to show domestic and foreign difference within the series' world. While *Pretty Cure* typically sets its world in a facsimile of a typical Japanese suburb of Tokyo, *Smile Precure!* is the first *Pretty Cure* series to set its story in a version of contemporary Japan that incorporates different regions. The series takes an active interest in more local Japanese cultures, and attempts to display difference at the local and global levels through episodes themed around exploring and learning from different cultures. The crafting of such episodes reveals a different process of negotiation in the staff hierarchy,

where everyone in the room can be tapped for new ideas based on different backgrounds and experiences.

In the first example, *Smile Precure!* makes the culture of the western Kansai region visible in the world of the anime. There are two episodes set in Osaka prefecture, largely due to sponsor ABC's roots in the area and its heavy promotion of *Smile Precure!* on regional network programming.⁴⁷⁴ The setting extends to the representation of characters as well; one of the five Pretty Cures is Hino Akane, aka Cure Sunny, the first Pretty Cure from the Osaka region whose parents run an *okonomiyaki* (Japanese pancake) shop, a regional specialty. A model and voice actress from the Kansai prefecture plays Cure Sunny for added authenticity, frequently ad-libbing or altering lines when she feels them appropriate to her character's personality. Series director Otsuka is also from Osaka, and staff members frequently point to his restless personality and offhand jokes as being characteristic of Osakans. *Smile Precure!* makes many concessions to the Osaka audience, and Otsuka ensured that the Osaka dialect, vocabulary, and culinary habits were represented through the characters in the seminal episodes set the region.

Having such a heavy Osakan presence in the staff is beneficial for the show and its approach to incorporating and representing different cultures within Japan, though its incorporation into the show simultaneously highlights the idea of a homogenous Japanese national body. The inclusion of Osakans in the show stands in contrast to forms of cultural "erasure" in media, what Chiara Ferrari has described as "domestication" through, for example, Italian dubbings of *The Simpsons* or *The Sopranos* that seek to erase multicultural

⁴⁷⁴ The largest *Pretty Cure* store in the country happens to be in Osaka, where the series has been hugely popular for years.

identities or ethnic markings when such foreignness becomes problematic.⁴⁷⁵ Issues with portraying stereotypes, however, do arise. Osakans in the series are typically portrayed as comedians, as happy-go-lucky figures, and as straight shooters who are more blunt and direct with their speech than their more refined Tokyo rivals. To limit such stereotypes, staff members defer to the Osaka-born authorities who can deliver what they believe to be the most accurate portrayal of their lives. This can result in more sensitive depictions of Osakans, and the stereotypes described are considered positive, but regional stereotypes are nonetheless written in to mark such characters as “others” in comparison to the rest of the *Pretty Cures*, who are not ascribed any particular birthplace or voiced with any recognizable dialect. Thus, while the inclusion of an Osakan in the cast and trips to Osaka and Kyoto serve to portray Japan’s regional and cultural variation, the other episodes reemphasize a Japanese center that smooths over such differences.

In the second example, my own involvement in the construction of such an episode on “foreigners” reveals how ideas about difference are indeed drawn from sources with experience, but also how they are then managed, nurtured, and contained. The *uchiawase* is at a standstill; nearly an hour has passed, and no one can come up with an idea for the central conflict for the script. The premise for the episode in question is for a “summer romance,” a rarity in the world of the asexual *Pretty Cure*. Akane, aka the Osakan Cure Sunny, must develop a crush on a boy at her school, but her affections will go unrequited. Through her experience, however, she learns (and teach young children) the lasting value of falling in love and experiencing the pangs of separation. The staff, though, has considerable difficulty coming up with a love interest for Akane, as the character must be

⁴⁷⁵ See Chiara Ferrari, *Since When is Fran Drescher Jewish? Dubbing Stereotypes in The Nanny, The Simpsons, and The Sopranos* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011).

Akane's age and a good match for her somewhat headstrong personality. Eventually, director Otsuka asks me for my opinion. I say the character should be someone from outside the school and a little different from the other students, particularly since Akane herself is from Osaka. As soon as I finish my thought, ABC producer Matsushita yells out, "A foreigner!" (*Gaijin da!*). The room exclaims and then laughs, realizing they had found a perfect solution to their dilemma: Akane would fall in love with a foreign exchange student.

The completed story, written by Narita Yoshimi, is about the relationship that develops between Akane and Brian Taylor, a smiley foreign exchange student from England who is obsessed with Japanese culture. Brian visits the school of the Pretty Cure students and Akane becomes responsible for showing him around the campus. She takes him to various campus clubs, and later, her family's restaurant, where she feeds him her family's homemade *okonomiyaki*. She teaches him words in the Osakan dialect, and he also shares words with her in English. Brian and Akane become closer as they share more experiences, but she becomes dismayed when he says he'll need to return to his country the next day. Feeling betrayed, she avoids him until Pierrot's henchman attacks her in an attempt to absorb the energy of lovestruck humans. She defeats the henchman and realizes that her time with Brian was memorable and valuable, even if their budding relationship ended prematurely. With the assistance of her friends, she rushes to the airport to see him off. The episode ends in the airport terminal, with Brian and Akane sharing a teary farewell.

The script goes through few revisions, but I am repeatedly asked for my input on the accuracy of Brian's dialogue. I proofread the script and hand back my corrections for any phrases or words that are grammatically incorrect or sound awkward. The writer feels that England would be a better native country for the gentlemanly Brian, so my

nationalistic insistence that he be American is refused. Otsuka has me pose for several pictures for the design of Brian, as the character designer models the character based on my basic features. In the end, Brian retains my glasses and tousled hair, but is given freckles, blue eyes, and blonder hair to make him look more “foreign” than my less exotic countenance (see figure 25). To show his enthusiasm for Japan, moreover, he is given a t-shirt that had the words “no problem” (*daijoubu*) scribbled in large-type font on the front, a shirt that I neither own nor would wear in public.



Figure 25: Bryan Hartzheim vs. *Smile Precure*’s Brian Taylor

My assistance in creating Brian also extended to the voice acting sessions, where I work with Brian’s voice actor to get the timing and delivery of his dialogue correct, both in English and in Japanese. The voice actor for Brian, Kakiyama Tetsuya, grew up in Germany and spoke some English, so he possesses some knowledge about different English accents. While we fail miserably to give Brian a proper English accent, we do find a good balance in the delivery of his imperfect level of Japanese so that it does not sound like a total mockery of foreigners speaking non-native Japanese, a problem common to other anime

productions. We also change some of his dialogue to include more English colloquialisms and phrases when the situation is appropriate.⁴⁷⁶

As Ian Condry has documented in his own brief participation as a voice actor in an anime-recording session, the process of creation provides a mysterious energy that fuels people to work for reasons beyond monetary gain.⁴⁷⁷ This energy is what fuels the collaboration of anime, where ideas can take preference over roles in the production hierarchy. The assembled construction of Brian shows the dynamism behind the creation of characters in anime, where a story about a student love-interest can change into a lesson in international relations. At the same time, the construction of Brian also provides an example of how global communication can be both embraced and managed in a Japanese production environment. Brian is created through a collaborative environment of foreigners and Japanese. His introduction into the series fosters cultural exchange and encourages communication with non-Japanese. On the other hand, his foreign features are manufactured and exaggerated, and his status as a romantic partner (and a permanent citizen) is subdued and ultimately disqualified. This transnational production at the local level would suggest that the episode is neither for Japan or the West, but something in between, as what Koichi Iwabuchi describes as “a symptom of the shifting nature of transnational cultural power in a context in which intensified global cultural flows have decentered the power structure *and* vitalized local practices of appropriation and consumption of foreign cultural products and meanings.”⁴⁷⁸ In the end, difference is made more manageable and consistent within the nation’s population. The simultaneous

⁴⁷⁶ There are several examples I noted when I went over the script with the voice actors and directors. The frequent use of the word “delicious,” for example, was changed to “brilliant.”

⁴⁷⁷ See Condry, 161-184.

⁴⁷⁸ Iwabuchi, 35.

representation and containment of Brian displays the production team's desire to have it both ways, with cultural contradictions emerging as a result.

One of the ironies behind the creation of Brian is that, as a half-Japanese American, I am hardly an example of the typical foreign-born exchange student. But because of this position of having consumed Japanese media in the United States while growing up, I can speak with some experience on the notion of a bi-cultural spectatorship. My assistance and suggestions are enlisted at several stages of the creation process, from approving the English dialogue of the script to helping voice actors with their English-language lines. Part of this motivation might be economically motivated, as I am asked for my opinions at various points during my observation about English-language titles for new special abilities for the Pretty Cure fighters, the attractiveness of new products introduced in the fall, and subtitles for the *Smile Precure!* feature-length animated film's international release. Another part of this, however, is an attempt to manufacture foreignness in as accurate a way as the animation is drawn or the backgrounds are rendered. A cynical view might take this construction as simply another way to avoid claims from foreign parents, and the episode at times ends up reinforcing the cultural expectations and stereotypes of the Japanese audience, such as the supposed chivalry of Western men. But such fissures are at least opened from collaborative work and the exposure to alternative viewpoints, cultural differences, and the possibilities of their portrayal.

Experiencing *Pretty Cure*

How does this collaboration – between animators, writers, producers, sponsors, and even participant-observers – affect the construction of the episode itself? What does the viewer ultimately experience when watching an episode of *Pretty Cure*? On its surface,

each episode of *Smile Precure!* tells the story of the Pretty Cures as they bond, grow, and realize their full potential in order to defeat the evil lord Pierrot. However, visually and thematically this is only part of the presentation. Every episode of *Smile Precure!* ties into an extensive branch of media that is designed to extend the experience of *Pretty Cure* past its broadcast slot, and to incorporate itself into the organization of its audience's lives. This is, in essence, how the media mix works with an anime that has at its base a corporate sponsor with a product every bit as important as the animated show itself.

Smile Precure! creates several alternate venues that invite active participation of the young girls who comprise its audience. These facets are incorporated into each *Smile Precure!* television episode, subtly and nefariously encouraging children and their parents to continue the *Pretty Cure* experience when the episode's broadcast has finished. This program-commodity connection is designed to fit into an all-day, everyday *Pretty Cure* loop of constant programming and alternative texts that pick up and supply its audience with details of its world. Producers at Toei constantly asked me why *Pretty Cure* has failed to catch on with an American audience in the way that *Dragon Ball* or *Pokemon* have. One large reason is that the creators of the show underestimate the success they have had designing an anime so well for a particular local market. As previous sections on *Pretty Cure* product integration and script construction display, the franchise's transmedia is constructed to maximize its effectiveness for a domestic, tuned-in audience. Watching a *Pretty Cure* episode will only partly make sense to a viewer who is not familiar with or exposed to these alternative texts and how they work in tandem with the anime episode and its interruptions to create a more active *Pretty Cure* experience for the typical fan.

First, products tie fans to the world of the show through their placement inside the television episode and are reinforced through advertisements that screen during the episode. Viewing the television program as both unified in its text and paratexts relates to what Nick Browne has called studying the “supertext” of television. Browne argues that each television program is a segment that includes the program and its introductory and interstitial material, chiefly announcements and advertisements. In Browne’s view, these segments are then organized into a schedule of “day parts” that form the programming schedule. This programming schedule, in its entirety, is what forms the supertext of television and “determines the form of a particular television program and conditions its relations to the audience.”⁴⁷⁹ The supertext, in the most pessimistic estimations, can organize itself around its viewers’ daily schedule, attack them with ads, and drain them of will or resistance to consumerism.

Japanese programming similarly organizes itself according to broadcast content, and segments geared towards children such as *Pretty Cure* air on weekend mornings or early on weekday evenings. However, looking at anime via its television supertext misses the organized, meticulous, and targeted collective work that is going on within the television anime segment. The individual segments of a typical Japanese television program can achieve a particular unity since, unlike countries with strict regulation regarding advertising towards children, such as Europe’s EU Audiovisual Media Services Directive, Japan has very little restriction when it comes to advertising products to children.⁴⁸⁰ One reason for the lack of government regulation on advertising to children is

⁴⁷⁹ Browne, 588.

⁴⁸⁰ Carol Gaumer and Amit Shah, “Television Advertising and Child Consumer: Different Strategies for U.S. and Japanese Marketers,” *The Coastal Business Journal* 3:1 (Spring 2004): 30-31. Also see John

that parents in Japan more often watch shows together with their children. Hence, the commercials in general are less pushy and have lower degrees of “pester” power. Commercials, then, are able to tie in to the program in more integrated ways that are less overt than the “hard sell.” The close relationship between program and advertisements results in a less disrupted experience of the program, coming closer to what Ross Melnick, in the context of theatrical film exhibition in the silent era, has termed the “unitary text” to describe how various ancillary media experiences were integrated into the viewing of films at theatrical venues. According to Melnick, the unitary text is “programmed by an exhibitor, not an advertising sales department, and was routinely but not always narratively or aesthetically linked.”⁴⁸¹

However, even the idea of a “unitary text” is imprecise when describing how the anime broadcast segment works through its collective integration of media text, paratexts, and product portals. The anime broadcast aims for an even more integrated or unified experience based on merchandise that connect the text and its interruptions, coming closer to a definition of a text that subsumes all media into its thirty-minute broadcast. One might call this type of program a “convergence text,” as such programs typically subsume the text and its interruptions under the same aesthetic designs, as a part of the same narrative thread, and in service of ancillary media that is designed to extend the experience of the program into alternative social spaces beyond a single theatrical venue. All media – toys, films, events, and the anime episode itself – converge in the text of the broadcast itself, singularly designed to display the fruits of its various sponsors and creators.

Sherry, Bradley Greenberg, and Hiroshi Tokinoya, “Orientations to TV Advertising Among Adolescents and Children in the US and Japan,” *International Journal of Advertising* 18 (1999): 233-250.

⁴⁸¹ Ross Melnick, *American Showman: Samuel “Roxy” Rothafel and the Birth of the Entertainment Industry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 15.

Unlike the unitary text, the anime's convergence text incorporates the advertisement into the text itself through products. As if integrating products into the show wasn't advertisement for the product enough, anime programs flood the commercial breaks with products that feature the characters of their own series. For series with a heavy sponsor footprint such as *Pretty Cure*, this usually means that the commercial breaks at the beginning, middle, and end of the episode features various merchandise associated with Bandai Namco and other smaller sponsors. When and where these commercials air during the series broadcast is usually left up to the sponsor, but since the sponsor is so heavily incorporated into the planning and production of *Smile Precure!*, the broadcast of commercials are specifically timed to air during product release periods. The experience of watching the convergence text, then, is largely one that masks interruptions, smoothing over breaks in the program through aesthetic designs that incorporate the particular style, themes, and motifs of the program, its characters, and the matching product-portals.

One way that commercials mask interruptions during *Smile Precure!* is by filling in narrative and visual gaps in order to smoothly guide fans to the toys once an episode is complete. A good example of this is the thirtieth episode of the television series.⁴⁸² This episode aired during the middle of the series third *cour*, which makes it just over halfway through the series entire run. In this episode, the Pretty Cure girls take a trip around the world through a mysterious library that is able to transport them anywhere they like. During their travels, they collect the final Cure Décor. Upon completing the Decor Décor collection, a magical clock materializes. The girls look at the clock in puzzlement before the episode concludes, the answer to the clock's riddle to continue in the story the

⁴⁸² "A Voyage Around the World Through the Door of Books! (*Honno tobira de sekai isshuudairyokou*), *Smile Precure!*, TV Asahi (Tokyo: ANB, September 9, 2012).

following week. Little do the girls know, the timepiece is the Royal Rainbow Clock, a device that will revive the Royale Queen of Marchenland. It is also the most expensive product that has been created for *Smile Precure!* and an electronic toy that will integrate the Cure Decors that fans have been collecting in their own Decor Décors.

The episode concludes without any sense of narrative closure, leaving viewers without an answer to the mystery of the clock, but the narrative resolves itself in the advertisements for the program. When the episode ends on a medium shot of the clock, the scene is immediately followed by a close-up shot of the toy version of the Royal Rainbow Clock. The camera pans out, revealing a near-identical clock that was featured at the end of the anime episode. The commercial essentially picks up where the episode leaves off, with the unexplained function of the Rainbow Clock becoming the topic of the advertisement. Child actors, dressed in the garb of the Pretty Cures, show how to use the Royal Clock by embedding a special Cure Decor in its receptacle. Once the clock is “activated,” the Pretty Cures appear with new costumes and wands, indicating the clock has given them powered-up special abilities. The commercial concludes by telling children that the clock can be used to transmit signals to the Smile Pact of their friends, effectively connecting it to other product-portals that have appeared in similar advertisements, and which continue to be employed within the anime’s narrative (see figure 26).



Figure 26: Transport/transform – from anime to ad to reality

Commercials for *Smile Precure!* reference back to the series while simultaneously incorporating the viewer into the space of the text. If the anime uses near identical rotoscoped models of toys in order to better reference the products, then the commercials use the same audiovisual language of the television anime in order to more closely tie the products to the characters. The activation of the clock, for example, recalls the transformation sequences of the Pretty Cures, where the clock is suspended in a rainbow-colored space in order to better emphasize the product's features. The digital effects that surround the clock – sparkles once the Cure Decor is placed, trails of light that follow the child's movements – also call back to the anime's enhanced digital effects processing and compositing that makes up the transformation bank. Once activated, the clock emits a recording of the Pretty Cure warriors incanting a magical enchantment, though the spell has yet to appear in the show since the clock itself is yet to be activated. The use of child actors,

rather than animation here, is notable. The commercial spurs fans to purchase the toy for themselves in order to take over for the retired “first shift” of the program, actively extending the characters’ lives through the product-portal’s bridging of the program and the living rooms of child viewers. The act of play becomes deeper as a result; through plugging in their own Decors, the commercials suggest children take an active role in figuring out the mystery of the Royal Clock and enacting the Pretty Cures’ adventure when the broadcast has concluded.

The interruptions of *Smile Precure!*’s convergence text are not limited to commercials. In order to prod children into continuing the experience of the television broadcast, announcements provide notice to children for various events external to the anime. For most television anime broadcasts with product-portals, these announcements come at the beginning and end of the program in the form of opening and ending credits. These title sequences are usually places that provide animators with some breathing room, trimming three to four minutes off an episode’s running time with elaborate musical intro and ending montages. Such intros and ending themes are typically used to introduce the characters of the anime, while also showing who worked on the show in the staff credits. While these could be considered the flashy equivalent of a book’s dust jacket and bibliography, with *Smile Precure!*, opening and ending themes become areas that provide entry points into alternative texts such as movies and shows. The *Pretty Cure* franchise has two animated feature films a year, one featuring the characters from the new series, and another featuring assorted characters from all the previous *Pretty Cure* series. The opening of *Smile Precure!* cuts in scenes from these films when their release date approaches in

order to encourage children to see the films, all without having to purchase advertising space during the commercial breaks.⁴⁸³

The films themselves tell stories about the characters set in alternate universes, and while they share the same producer, head writer, and voice actors, they otherwise have separate casts of directors and animators. What the films have become famous for is using the *Pretty Cure* characters to create event-based theatre, where fans attend to watch the film, but also to receive a gift called a Miracle Light that will figuratively shine help on the characters in the film. Theater staff pass out Miracle Lights – colorful, handheld plastic flashlights – to the audience when they enter the theater. At the beginning of the film, a clip of Candy screens before the film begins, breaking the fourth wall and cautioning the audience to turn on their lights when the Pretty Cures “need the audience’s strength.” When the pivotal moment in the film arrives, the Pretty Cures call out to their “friends” to turn on their lights and lend the girls their strength (see figure 27). This invitation to help the girls is reinforced within the film’s *mise en scene*, as countless people and creatures around the world are suddenly empowered with identical lights that transfer their energy to the heroine of the film, Miyuki. When all the energy from the lights of the audience and characters is “collected,” Miyuki transforms into her ultimate powerful form – an enlightened figure whose energy eradicates the villain instantly and restores life to the desiccated earth around her. Using the lights in this way helps child fans believe they are part of the *Pretty Cure* universe, imagining their powers are contributing to the outcome of the story and the fates of their favorite characters. It also has the added benefit of helping parents keep unruly kids attentive and quiet while they wait for their opportunity to use the gadget.

⁴⁸³ This is important for Toei, since the films don’t push products and involve the sponsors far less than the television series. The revenues for the films are important to Toei’s bottom line.



Figure 27: Miracle light movie bonuses – incorporating/incentiving play

While the opening theme to the series plugs the movies, the ending theme is tied closely into live shows that feature actors who perform in the costumes of the Pretty Cures. The ending to all *Pretty Cure* television anime episodes features a two-minute song and dance sequence performed by the Pretty Cures. The sequence is fully rotoscoped, meaning that animators trace and color over the recorded movements of motion-captured actresses. The result is a mimetic realism similar to the computer-generated detail in the ornate transformation bank sequences, only in this case applied to the movements of the characters rather than product-portals. Though the decision leads to an uncanny element where the characters large animated heads eerily protrude from the more realistic proportions of their bodies, the rotoscoping is intentionally employed in order to let actors and children perform the dance themselves in preparation for the *Pretty Cure* live shows that tour the country. In these shows, the costumed characters perform a thirty-minute skit that is akin to a live version of an anime episode. Their voices for the characters are supplied by the voice actors and actresses of the actual anime, so that the show can be performed anywhere in the country. At the beginning of the show, the performers teach the audience members a special chant that will help the Pretty Cure performers when they need “energy” from the audience. At periodic moments, the performers call out to the audience

to cheer them on in order to defeat the villains in the show. At the end of the show, the performers dance the anime's ending theme alongside the audience members.

Through the shows, the characters undergo their final transformation: that of idols who not only sing and dance, but leave the screen to enter the physical reality of the viewers. The shows highlight the ability of the characters to go beyond the confines of the anime through their designs and voices, transporting them around the country through scripted routines, manufactured costumes, pre-recorded performances, and any available open stage convenient for parents, typically in and around department stores. Within the text's announcements, the shows (and movies) acknowledge the spectator, referencing the audience at the beginning of the event and asking for their direct participation at specific cues. By inserting themselves obliquely into the anime itself through its ending theme, moreover, they cycle back into the world of the anime, reinforcing their indexical relationship to the world of the *Pretty Cures* and the Japanese social environment. The convergence text of the anime plays this pivotal role of referencing the anime's various ancillary textual appendages to the everyday environment of its viewers, conditioning them for potential future media and product consumption.

Conclusion

As the *Pretty Cure* franchise has continued and the world of the anime has expanded upon its original series, the films now display dozens of *Pretty Cures* who seemingly co-exist within the same world. These "All Star" movies feature the newest cast of *Pretty Cures*, but all come together to lend their powers to battle against the forces of evil. Viewers are constantly reminded of the previous troupes of magical girls, who might fade from the spotlight of a national broadcast but nevertheless find an annual venue to

perform as a background dancer. For young viewers, the Pretty Cures are ostensibly all around us, taking pictures, shaking hands, striking poses, and communicating directly with fans in scheduled meet and greets. Like mascots at Disneyland, they serve to bridge the gap between the show and reality for the young audience in a way that literally holds their hands, but one does not need a ticket to enter a fantasyland to greet them. They are part of a transmedia environment that puts them into quotidian spaces such as parks, zoos, culture centers, department stores, malls, town halls, and hotels. Such is the ordinary, everyday quality of the media mix in Japan, where characters are conceived in boardrooms, expanded in production meetings, screened in broadcasts, and finally move into the spaces of our social environment.

The multiple ways in which *Smile Precure!* is able to tap into these various spaces not simply to communicate, but to *guide* fans towards participation is unique to the medium of anime, with its broad cross-media flows, heavily integrated sponsorship, and, most importantly, its malleable and migrating characters. The presence of such televisual participation applies to television broadcasting in Japan more generally, as television shows have various ways of directly acknowledging the spectator through textual “help.” For example, Japanese television overflows with *telop*, or titles onscreen that headline or summarize topics under discussion. Their use in Japanese variety shows can be a clarifying device, making clear any speech that is difficult to decipher for older or foreign viewers, but also as an interpreting or commentating dialogue, emphasizing certain parts of speech or quotes through different sizes, colors, and animations of fonts. As Aaron Gerow points out, rather than aiming for criticality, *telop* are there mostly to make sense of material for

the audience in order to draw and keep viewer attention for the sake of advertisers.⁴⁸⁴ *Telop* are one ubiquitous way that television acknowledges viewer participation, only to corral it and organize it for the sake of focusing eyeballs. The anime's media mix is, similarly, a commodifying strategy that demands participation not just for the sake of continued ratings, but for purchasing and participating in *any* of the ancillary media of its manga and anime.

In the case of *Smile Precure!*, since this commodification is built directly into the text and branches out into alternate media forms, sustained attention can result in more than just high ratings.⁴⁸⁵ Unlike the transmedia of *Toriko*, which spreads as a media form linearly from the manga into the hands of anime creators and *dojinshi* fan artists, the media mix of *Pretty Cure* is centered in the hands of the anime studio and its sponsors.⁴⁸⁶ The process of *Pretty Cure*'s creation is heavily planned and worked through by teams of creators so that its eventual centrifugal explosion will spawn various appendages. But in contrast to Henry Jenkins' conception of "transmedia storytelling," where the alternative media texts reference a main story and create an additive experience, or "spreadable media," where a text gains its audience through networks (whether they are professional or fan networks), the media mix of *Pretty Cure* and similar product-portal anime series references all other media from the *seisaku iinkai* within its central text. This text harkens back to everything in the *settei*: the characters, premises, and products.

⁴⁸⁴ See Aaron Gerow, "Kind Participation: Postmodern Consumption and Capital with Japan's *Telop* TV," in *Television, Japan, and Globalization*, eds. Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, et al. (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan Press, 2010), 117-150.

⁴⁸⁵ Toei, for example, has increased its revenues from licensed merchandise, live events, and films in the past several years despite falling birthrates in Japan since the early 2000s. In 2010, for example, live events accounted for nearly three percent of all revenues. See Masuda, *Motto wakara anime business* (Understand the Anime Business More) (Tokyo: NTT Shuppan, 2011): 213-215.

⁴⁸⁶ There are indeed *dojinshi* of *Pretty Cure* written by fan artists, though their presence is marginal and their works and ideas rarely get incorporated back into the anime in any form.

As Will Brooker states, it is “worth asking whether these narratives of digital mastery are, at their most obvious, little more than advertising; and, at their most insidious, a training for the contemporary subject’s role within 21st-century capitalism.”⁴⁸⁷ But beyond commoficiation, the elements of the media mix can branch out of the narrative and create entirely new experiences through the force of the characters and the originality of the products. The media mix – through the organization of elements by a collaborative group of creators – is able to commodify this viewer involvement within the experience of the text, but its ancillary media is playful and participatory in the form of toys and events. This creates a different relationship to the commodity, where characters are ever-present and existing in the background of daily life.

⁴⁸⁷ Will Brooker, “Now You’re Thinking With Portals: Media Training for a Digital World,” *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 13:6 (2010): 571.

Chapter 6: Conclusion – Anime/Manga Transmedia Futures

What are the processes that undergird creative media production in Japan? This dissertation has attempted to provide an answer to this question through ethnographic fieldwork into Japan's manga and anime industries and close analyses of concomitant transmedia texts. Together, this analysis maps the collective authorship that surrounds the production of contemporary media in these industries today. By focusing on the production of *shōnen* and *shōjo* texts in commercial outlets such as Shueisha's *Weekly Shōnen Jump* and Toei Animation Studies, this study shows how two different media franchises in Japanese production can be organized, managed, and distributed through social networks of mangaka, assistants, editors, and readers, as well as institutional networks of professionals including animators, directors, scriptwriters, voice actors, and producers. These networks produce texts that are then open to "multiple use," dispersed into the hands of other producers through databases of elements, or converge in a "media mix," centralized through production committees and spun through product-portals. The resulting transmedia reflects the similar creative preoccupations within manga and anime: an ability to construct media worlds through the production and management of compelling characters.

This concept of character-based multiplatform media stands in contrast to Hollywood conceptions of transmedia, which tend to emphasize the additive nature of multiple media to the overall narrative of the original property, be it a movie, video game, or comic book. This emphasis on narrative and "storytelling" tends to reflect a preoccupation with film production in America, where individuals and their texts are valued for the stories they are able to tell, whether they be part of a festival Q&A or a closed pitch session. The value of storytelling has become part of industry lore, where

workers both above and below the line tell stories and assess storytelling ability in order to evaluate the abilities of peers. This point was driven home during my first quarter at UCLA as a graduate student, when I took a class with superproducer Peter Guber titled, “Studios vs. Independents.” Expecting to hear explanations for production distinctions between studio-based film production and independently-financed filmmaking, classes instead consisted of Guber inviting respected professionals from a variety of fields to tell industry war stories. The various guests talked about how their ability to charismatically regale their subjects got deals, signed stars, and influenced audiences. The class was eventually retitled to “Navigating a Narrative World,” more closely aligned with what Guber believed and reiterated to be the key component for success in the media world from which he drew his considerable experience.

But such was rarely the case in Japanese media, based on my observations and discussions with various media professionals. While mangaka were and continue to be praised for their clever story construction, and scriptwriters from especially popular series are in demand for the next hit script, stories were merely one important element within a larger organization of media based on characters. Virtually every aspect of the animation process revolved around how characters would affect or be affected by the rest of the series. Even manga, which is raided by media producers for its masterful stories and not necessarily for its art or direction, had compellingly designed or emotionally unique characters at the center of their narratives and worlds. Characters became the platform that tied transmedia artifacts together, and the close, individual contact with a stream of talented authors is what gave them their particular drives and personalities when those same authors were interested in the project.

Of course, not all manga or anime has characters that are compelling, just like not all films have well-told stories. The mechanics of mass industrial production – as well as the plain fact that talent and time is not equitably distributed in any industry – means there is more bad than good, and a project that gets everyone interested or involved to the same degree is as rare in anime or manga as it is in Hollywood. This was a large reason for my focusing so intently on two established, successful industrial examples in *Weekly Shōnen Jump* and Toei Animation, which have decades of experience honing specific models of transmedia creation and strong reputations for good working environments. This was especially the case with regards to the latter, where a number of workers told me that the studio, for all of its frustrating budgetary and sponsorship issues, went to considerable lengths to provide workers with a living wage both in Japan and in the Philippines.

This cannot be said for the rest of the manga industry, and especially for the anime industry. Japan's print industries for years resisted the incursion of digital reading formats for traditional print media such as newspapers and magazines. But with increasing adoption of digital consumption practices in Japan, this has rapidly reversed, with the publishing industry and most manga magazines, aside from *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, losing readership from dwindling circulations.⁴⁸⁸ On the other side, with improvements in digital animation technology has come increased expectations for animation quality. While the barriers to making animation are lower than ever, the expectations placed on workers' skills and schedules has become higher and higher. It is not a rare occurrence for animators and project coordinators to collapse or suffer health problems from consecutive weeks of

⁴⁸⁸ According to the Research Institute for Publications, All Japan Magazine, Book Publisher's, and Editor's Association, this decline has been gradual, though the drop accelerated in 2008, when total annual sales dropped below 2 trillion yen in comparison to a peak of 2.65 trillion in 1996. See Japan Foundation, *Practical Guide to Publishing in Japan* (Tokyo: Japan Foundation, 2014), 8-9.

overwork.⁴⁸⁹ Job security is also no less stable, with virtually the entire production staff is employed through long or short-term contracts, managed by a group of slightly more stable, but similarly underpaid salaried producers and project coordinators. As workers who are continually employed on contracts, but also seeking to climb the ranks professionally, both young mangaka and animation workers are part of both a precariat and aspirational culture. Thus, while the conditions at Toei suggest an working environment at its potentially must constructive, other studios in more perilous shape have workers who cannot afford such luxuries, and working environments that remind them of this very fact. With the industry reeling from the collapse of the home video market in 2007, studios are scrambling to find new models of commodification that can sustain a workforce for future generations.

This pressure to keep with the times has unsurprisingly affected the production of *Weekly Shōnen Jump* and Toei Animation's staff and content. *Shōnen Jump* has responded by gradually incorporating more digital social media into the fabric of the social network of its magazine and increasing the pace of available content. While the *ankēto* system remains, works are accepted through digital submission and published in digital-only formats, such as the *Young Jump Web Comics*. Submissions to the regular manga magazine that do not go on to collect prizes in the magazine's contests are published online, where they can at least be displayed. Other formats, such as *Jump+*, choose notable chapters from classic or popular manga every week and allow readers to access them online for free. The entire *Weekly Shōnen Jump* magazine, moreover, is now simultaneously published in North American in an English-translated digital format, the first weekly manga magazine of its

⁴⁸⁹ In fairness to the anime industry, work-life balance is a problem in society in general, to the point that there is a Japanese word, *karōshi*, which translates to "death from overwork." This seems to affect the creative arts more severely. In one mobile games company, I personally witnessed people collapse out of their chairs from exhaustion.

kind in the English language. Editors are now slowly taking into account the verdicts of both Japanese and English language audience reception when deciding whether to continue with the serialization of a given manga.

Editors also now conceive of ways to more directly and frequently connect readers to creators. Oda Eiichiro's *One Piece* features the *Shitsumon wo boshu suru* (Taking Questions Now), or SBS Corner. The SBS Corner is a question solicitation forum where readers send in questions through mail or online, to which Oda answers by revealing various facts about the story that are not apparent through the manga chapters. Readers are even invited to contribute with facts about the world of their own; for example, fans were able to determine the birthdays of certain characters in the manga, with Oda's blessing. *One Piece* also now has a Twitter handle operated by the editing or publicity department, occasionally engaging with fans as representatives of Oda and placing the SBS function in a more interactive forum.

Toei Animation, ever the innovators, have responded to changing digital viewing platforms by increasing their exposure to different markets through various partnerships. They have contracted with the anime cable broadcast station Animax to showcase their classic series on the network. This exposes new viewers to their massive library of television anime, which is continuously being remastered and re-released in expensive, collectable Blu-Ray boxsets. They have also begun broadcasting new anime on the web-streaming platform Nico Nico Dōga, choosing to air the 20th anniversary edition of *Sailor Moon* online every other week, rather than the typical magical girl's morning slot reserved for *Pretty Cure*. Other partnerships include one with Marvel Studios and the Japanese anime version of *The Avengers*. The co-production is equally beneficial for the American

comics studio, since it increases its exposure in the Japanese market through a production that appeals more to Japanese children conditioned on anime designs and narratives.

Producers have continued to try and find innovate media mix models for anime and commodity tie-ins. *Majin Bone* (2014-15), a media mix created with Bandai Namco and Shueisha, refashions the card-battling system of *Digimon* for gaming arcades. Toei produces the television anime, while a manga based off of the series runs in Shueisha's brother publication, *Saikyo Jump*. Murata Yusuke, who has serialized several series in both *Shōnen Jump* and *Young Jump Web Comics*, provides the character designs for the anime, while Bandai Namco designs the card game that is played out in both arcades and the series itself. Meanwhile, many of the staff members from the series are taken straight from the production of *Toriko*, which ended its broadcast in April of 2014. While the network of Toei is not as stable as the sort of family environment crafted by Studio Ghibli and its permanent staff of animators, many of Toei's directors, writers, and animators who finish on one production at the studio frequently find themselves on the next one. Conditions for such contracted animation workers are expected to significantly improve in the next several years at Toei, as the studio (and its wonderful animation gallery) where decades of animators trained their workers and honed their craft, and the site where I conducted much of my observation, is being torn down for the construction of a brand new, state-of-the-art facility to be opened by 2017. The new studio will likely be the largest and most technologically advanced animation studio in East Asia.

Both Shueisha and Toei have responded to not only changes in digital technology, but also changing strategies and trends within Japanese KF transmedia that are even more democratic and participant-based. Idol-based media mix, such as that of *IDOLMASTER*

(2005-ongoing) and *Love Live* (2012-ongoing), are one form of media mix where the initial creative decisions are placed in users' hands. Fans vote for the characteristics that they want in animated idols, who then go on to star in television anime series and live-concert performances featuring either the voice actresses for the characters, or a massive stage with a hologram performer mimicking the movements of a dancer backstage. This sort of live, event-based theatre is something that both manga and anime production companies have strived for in their transmedia, though now find themselves having to play catch up due to rapidly evolving audience tastes and production models.

Nevertheless, the older models remain, updated to take advantage of recycled content. *Yokai Watch* (2013-ongoing), for example, is a new media mix created by the manga publisher Shogakukan (*Doraémon*), the animation studio OLM (*Pokémon*), and game producer and publisher Level-5. While the manga and video game for the series was released in 2013, it was not until the following year, where the television anime began its broadcast, when sales for the series' other media spiked. The series used the triangle of media to ultimately help the entire franchise float. The games have sold over four million copies now in Japan alone, marking the franchise as the biggest game-related media mix since *Pokémon*, with the potential for Western saturation if all media are exported and localized simultaneously. *Yokai Watch* combined the strategies of multi-use manga transmedia, using the anime to drive the manga and games' sales, and anime's media mix, using the anime broadcast for product portals that showcase the game's qualities. And it did all this with the content of *yokai*, traditional Japanese monsters that have not warranted popular media attention since Mizuki Shigeru's 1960s manga and anime, *Gegege no Kitaro*.

As producers scramble to find or recycle ideas, even the industry itself has begun to provide fodder for manga and anime narratives. Readers have increasingly wanted to know not only the daily lives of mangaka, but also the entire chain of production, and this has created a demand for insider knowledge that has often been supplied by mangaka themselves. Fujio F. Fujiko's autobiographical *Manga Michi* (1970) was the first such manga to chronicle the manga duo's careers to adulthood, but new manga go into painstaking detail with regards to these production environments. Ohba Tsugumi and Obata Takeshi's *Bakuman* (2008-12), about two high school students who decide to become mangaka together, diagrams the inner workings of Shueisha, using the real names, job statuses, and even likenesses of the *Weekly Shōnen Jump* editorial board as characters in the manga. The series was adapted by J.C. Staff and broadcast on NHK as a sort of educational series about working life in the manga industry. Anime production has also gone under the microscope with *Shirobako* (2014-15), an anime that chronicles a fictional anime production company in Mushashino City, an area known for its cluster of animation companies. The series lampoons and pays homage to several well-known figures in the industry. The show exaggerates the chaos of anime production for dramatic effect, but also takes time to detail the processes of anime production as the characters embark on their careers in the anime industry. Animators also followed each episode closely, frequently commenting on Twitter on the reality or fantasy of the series, and starting several debates about the salaries and conditions of anime workers. The series initial DVD and Blu-Ray sales set records for the year, indicating that there is a market for the media mix to not only commodify its audiences, but also its creators.

Despite this salient fact that the media mix exists to commodify its audience, these same audiences undoubtedly derive benefits from engaging and identifying with characters. Creators make characters who continue to resonate with the lives and reflect the experiences of a domestic audience. Characters, even divorced from the anime, can provide guidance to children in times of confusion, or comfort to children who have experienced trauma. In the final episode of the *Smile Precure!*, the Pretty Cures have been emotionally and physically exhausted by the strength of Pierrot. Their homes have been devastated and the landscape is dry and barren, devoid of the life that once populated it. Refusing to accept that their friends and family are gone, the girls begin to weep uncontrollably. Within their tears, they find an additional reservoir of strength, banding together to defeat Pierrot with a final, powerful attack. Upon victory, the landscape is restored to its fertile state and their homes and families are revived. However, the Pretty Cures must part with Candy, who will return to her fairy kingdom of Marchenland. Waving farewell to Candy, the girls let forth with another torrent of tears, revealing that whatever they have regained cannot replace what they have lost. The episode subtly evokes the tragedy of the March 11 earthquake, where countless families lost their loved ones in an event that, to the survivors who experienced it, surely seemed like the end of the world. *Smile Precure!* was made, and concluded, with a sentiment of healing in mind.⁴⁹⁰

As illustrated in the introduction to this dissertation, publishers and studios mobilized dozens of characters shortly after the devastating earthquake and tsunami of

⁴⁹⁰ Producer Umezawa remarked: “After the Great East Japan Earthquake, we thought that this is a time to band together, rather than go it alone. That’s why we thought of having five Precures this year. We wanted to have as many as possible so we could do it ‘with everyone.’” See Yoshioka Yu, *Smile Precure! Complete Fan Book* (Tokyo: Gakken Mook, 2013), 94. In another interview he also stated, “The year 2011 was a very sad and trying year for Japan. To leave this sad and trying time and go towards a brighter future, we need to band together, sweat together, don’t forget to smile, and try our best. Hence: *Smile Precure!*”

2011 to send messages of hope and encouragement to victims of disaster-hit areas. During the course of the production of *Smile Precure!*, the voice actresses of the *Smile Precure!* heroines were themselves mobilized and asked to give their support to survivors in order to mark the one-year anniversary of the event. The actresses gave messages of encouragement to children in the radiation-plagued area of Fukushima, telling them to “never give up” and to “always smile.” Their voices were used to give life to short animated messages of the Pretty Cures, expressing solidarity with victims still living in shelters months after the initial waves. Toei sees no return on these comforting messages, which take time and money to animate and voice, but every producer and animator I talked to viewed this sort of volunteer work as their duty. In their multi-authored and collectively sutured forms, the characters of the media mix can’t exist if they don’t speak to anyone.

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