Women Writing Manga
Production of BL in the professional and amateur industries of Japan

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Abstract

This thesis explores *manga* in two kinds of production system in Japan. It examines similarities and differences between the professional *manga* industry and the amateur *dōjinshi* world in relation to the *boys' love* genre in three different perspectives: production, genre, and markets. First, I explore employment opportunities for women in the professional *manga* industry and develop a comparison with women in the amateur world. I then shift to the *boys' love* genre itself. The analysis of the emergence of this form of expression in the amateur world and its move into the professional *manga* industry allows a better understanding of basic characteristics of such narratives and exposes whether or not it may be considered a real genre based on Rick Altman's theory of genre. Finally, the readers and fans of *boys' love manga*, also referred to as *fujoshi*, are studied in relation to the economic systems associated with these two kinds of *manga* production. The goal of these three chapters is to understand the interactions between the two industries as well as with their readers as a coherent system where professional *mangaka*, amateurs and fans all play an important role in the production of *manga* in Japan.

Résumé

Cette thèse traite des *manga* dans deux systèmes de production au Japon. Elle présente des ressemblances et disparités entre l'industrie du *manga* professionnel et le secteur amateur, connu pour ces *dōjinshi*, en lien avec le genre *boys' love* dans trois différentes perspectives : la production, le genre et les marchés. Le premier aspect abordé concerne les possibilités d'emploi pour les femmes dans l'industrie du *manga* professionnel et les compare avec les femmes engagées dans le monde amateur. Le second aspect abordé dans cette thèse concerne le *boys' love* comme forme d'expression dont l'émergence au sein du secteur amateur suivi de son transfert dans l'industrie professionnelle permet une meilleure compréhension des caractéristiques fondamentales de ces récits. Il s'agira de démontrer si l'on peut considérer le genre *boys' love* comme étant un genre au sens où l'entend Rick Altman dans sa théorie des genres. Cette thèse abordera finalement le lectorat des *manga*, principalement du genre *boys' love*, les *fujoshi*, en relation avec les systèmes économiques ayant cours dans l'industrie professionnelle et dans le monde amateur. La visée de ces trois chapitres est de démontrer les liens entre ces deux différentes facettes du *manga* en plus du rôle du lectorat dans cette équation pour mettre en évidence la cohérence de ce système au sein duquel les *mangaka* professionnels, les amateurs et les fans jouent tous un rôle important dans la production de *manga* au Japon.

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On a last note, I would like to express my great appreciation to all of my friends, in Montreal and abroad, who took time to read and review this thesis for the final proofreading. I would also like to thank my family and boyfriend for supporting me during the last two years. This would not have been possible without your help. I truly treasure your support and help.

Notes

Japanese names will follow the traditional Japanese system in which the family name appears first followed by given name.

All Japanese words in this thesis follow the Hepburn Romanization System. Chinese characters or kanji will only be written to refer to the individual character meanings and for reference purposes. Also, in the case of direct quotes, the original spelling will be respected even if the Romanization writing system is different than the one previously mentioned.

Introduction

Manga, originally a Japanese word, is now generally used around the world to refer to any comic books from Japan. The global popularity depends largely on relations to readers. The involvement of readers, both consuming and sharing their passion, is integral to the success of *manga*. Fans drive the publishing industry. Consequently, *manga* proliferate and transform rapidly. *Manga* today cover broad range of themes, styles and genres. They also constitute a significant share of the book market. It is estimated that 40% of all books and magazines sold in Japan are related to *manga*.[1] Clearly, *manga* are not simply comics for children. They appeal to readers of all ages and diverse backgrounds. As such, *manga* are ubiquitous. In 2000, Sharon Kinsella described Japanese comics as follows:

> One of the most common synonyms used to describe manga is 'air', something that has permeated every crevice of the contemporary environment. Manga can be purchased from train platform kiosks, in books shops near railway stations and on shopping malls and streets, as well as in art book shops and luxury department stores; it can be bought from any 24-hour convenience store, a snack bar in a car park at a tourist resort, at a grocery store serving the needs of a remote village, or from a vending machine chained to the corner of a street. It can also be bought from second-hand manga superstores and specialist book shops, or from homeless men vending already discarded manga, arranged on blankets in underground pedestrian passes. It can also be discovered left behind on seats in trains, or borrowed from collections made available for browsing in love hotel bedrooms, manga cafe (*manga kissaten*) or diners.[2]

The ubiquity of *manga* initially caught my interest. I wanted to understand the production of *manga* in Japan. Yet, I did not want to focus exclusively on professional production. Previously, while living in Japan, I had had opportunities to attend a number of *dōjinshi* conventions. I was thus aware that manga production comprises at least two kind of production: the professional industry and the amateur world. Thus I came to focus attention on those two kinds of production. I also wanted to contribute to the emerging field of *manga* studies by addressing both kinds of production at the same time. The two are connected in so

[1] Frederick L. Schodt, *DreamLand Japan: Writings on Modern Manga* (Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 1996), 19.
[2] Sharon Kinsella, *Adult Manga: Culture and Power in Contemporary Japanese Society* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 4.

many ways that ignoring either would be misleading. The amateur world, although often referred to as underground production, has a profound impact on the production of professional *manga*.

I decided to focus on a particular genre, *yaoi* or s*hōnen-ai*, often translated as *boys' love*. This genre is defined by narratives portraying male homosexual romance. *Boys' love* affords a perfect case for considering links between professional and amateur productions. It began in the amateur world, subsequently to be taken up by publishing companies due to its popularity with female readers. Thus I came to center my study on the production of *boys' love manga* by women, while exploring connections between two kinds of *manga* production.

I began by looking at research on the *boys' love* genre. I read a considerable number of essays and books on the subject in various languages. The literature on *boys' love* generally agrees that such *manga* present fantasies for women. This is not surprising since the primary purpose of *manga* is to entertain, to offer readers distraction. *Boys' love manga* show no concern for motherhood or marriage. They allow female readers to explore alternative relationships and lifestyles, very different from the realities of daily life. Japanese society is often regarded as rigid and patriarchal. While opinions differ, commentators generally agree that such rigidity pushes women to explore alternatives in *manga*. *Manga* present a world not only where gender is fluid, but also where gender relations are flexible. Such manga allow fantasies about a life not defined by marriage and motherhood as is commonly the rule for women in Japan. Research on women's *manga* often stresses these facts, as does writing on *boys' love manga*. Some researchers have examined *shōjo manga*, intended for young girls, while others have focused on *manga* for older women, which may be pornographic. In fact, *manga* genres targeted to female readers have become more diversified over the years, to address women of different ages and backgrounds. Yet escapism remains a common feature.

Through this review of prior work on *boys' love manga*, I discovered that the emphasis has fallen primarily on the meaning of the genre for readers. There is only limited information on the genre itself and its context. Thus I realized that I would need to turn to other theoretical approaches to analyze connections between the professional industry and the amateur world, as well as connections between readers and *mangaka*, creators of *manga*. In this thesis, I propose a new approach to the *boys' love* genre by considering it from three different perspectives: production, genre, and markets. This combination of perspectives is intended to complement prior research by taking into account both kinds of production from these three angles. Scholars have usually dealt primarily with one kind of production without addressing the relationship between the two. Yet, because *boys' love* started in the amateur world, it is important to consider how this mode of expression actually became a genre, which really happened when it was taken over by the professional manga industry. It is also important to look at women not only as readers, as prior studies have tended to do, but also as creators.

To understand the connections between the two sites of production of *boys' love manga*, I had first to consider their differences, to look at them separately. In the first chapter, I decided to examine employment opportunities for women in the professional *manga* industry, to develop a comparison with women in the amateur world. Women in the amateur world created *boys' love manga*, and only later did the publishing industry hire female *mangaka* to produce professional *boys' love*. The first chapter thus focuses on female creators of *manga* and their positions in both sites of production. Because information on the Japanese publishing industry is limited, I draw on the extensive research on women in the workplace in Japan, making connections with available information on the publishing industry. The key study of the *manga* publishing industry is Sharon Kinsella's *Adult Manga: Culture & Power in Contemporary Japan*. While written over a decade ago, it remains the best source on the functioning of a publishing company through participant observation. It includes data collected by the author

from interviews conducted with editors, publishers, artists and managers. In the introduction, Kinsella mentions that it would be impossible to do this kind of research today, since publishing companies are no longer keen to have foreigners or even non-employees observe the daily operations of their company. Competition is important in this industry, and thus the work flow is considered a trade secret. This is one of the reasons why there is so little participant observation available after this date. Although Kinsella's book tends to focus on the production of adult's *manga* for men, its presentation of the publishing industry and its workers proved integral to my account.

Jennifer S. Prough's *Straight from the Heart* also proved very useful. Prough wanted to follow in Kinsella's footstep and work in a publishing company in order to study the *shōjo* genre. She soon realized, however, that Kinsella's prediction was accurate: no publishing company was willing to let her study their *manga* division from within. She succeeded nonetheless in building a network of contacts that allowed her to gain a broad view of the *shōjo* departments in major Japanese publishing companies and of their employees. Her research offers another point of view on publishing companies while providing information on the *shōjo* departments specifically. Additionally, her research focused on Japanese women in relation to their work in the *shōjo* department of publishing firms. Moreover, her research focused on the relation of Japanese women to their environment within the *shōjo* department of publishing firms.

In the second chapter, I felt it necessary to concentrate on the *boys' love* genre itself. When I began my research, I read essays from blogs dedicated to *boys' love*, hoping to better understand what had been written on this genre. Despite their great number, commentaries tended to address similar questions, thus reaching similar conclusions, namely that the male characters in *boys' love* should be constructed as genderless. The general conclusion was that *manga* with only male characters allow female readers to identify with either partner. They do

not feel compelled to see themselves through the female characters. Although this conclusion is interesting, my goal for this thesis was not to repeat existing paradigms, but to take a new perspective on the *boys' love* genre. I thus decided to focus on the *boys' love* genre using a genre theory. My point of departure was to ask, is this kind of *manga*, usually referred to as a genre, actually a genre? I began with Rick Altman' theory of genre because it seemed consonant with *manga*, and selected six professional *boys' love manga* for analysis. I began with professional *manga* instead of amateur *dōjinshi* because the genre only became stable once adopted by the professional world. It was necessary to focus on the production of *boys' love manga* in a fixed industry in order to consider its distinctive features. Following the analysis of professional *manga*, I then consider how the professional industry adopted and adapted forms of expression associated with *boys' love manga* in *dōjinshi* circles and transformed them into a genre.

Although prior studies of *boys' love* mention its salient features, they have avoided a fuller analysis of genre. Indeed, only a few studies have paid much attention to the distinct characteristics of *boys' love* or even considered its syntax.

In the final chapter, I turn to markets and consumers of the *boys' love manga*. Because the professional *manga* industry and the amateur world present distinct economies or markets, I drew on an anthropological approach to studying economies offered in Gibson-Graham's work. Considering the different economic models implicit in these two kinds of production, I hope to shed light on *manga* fans' relations with the professional industry and the amateur market. Crucial here is the impact of readers on *manga* production. Fans are vital in both economies, and *manga* publishers in particular must constantly adapt their products to transformations in readership. I focus primarily on female fans of this genre, referred to as *fujoshi*, and their purchasing power. This focus allows me to highlight the close relationship between producers and readers and to understand it as an integrated system in which all parties play important roles.

In sum, this thesis aims to contribute to existing research on the *boys' love* genre by adopting three distinct perspectives – production, genre, and economy, which together also afford a new approach to *manga* studies. The goal of this thesis is not to reach a final conclusion on the subject. Instead, it builds on existing research in different fields to develop a broader and deeper analysis. Thus I hope to contribute to the emerging and rapidly changing field of *manga* studies by establishing new ways of exploring the interactions between production and creation, genre and readership, markets and economies.

Chapter 1

The Creation of Manga in a Gendered Industry

Recent years have seen a marked increase in interest in research on *manga*. Such research often centers on the *manga* form itself and its multiple genres and characteristics, largely neglecting the *manga* publishing industry. At the same time, while there are many studies of women in the Japanese workplace, only a few of them consider the publishing industry. As such, even though *manga* studies and gender studies in Japan are both important fields of research, it is rare to find research linking both of them. The main goal of this chapter is to contribute to the limited literature on this subject by focusing on the women working in the *manga* publishing industry.

This chapter will draw comparisons between the place of women in *manga* publishing firms and in the amateur *manga* world. It will be argued that women who either do not want to enter the professional *manga* industry or are unable to enter it, gravitate toward the *dōjinshi* world, an avenue which allows them to participate freely in the creation of *manga*.

Comparison between the professional *manga* world and the amateur world will be used in order to understand the differences between the two work environments. Beginning with an analysis of the employment system in place in major companies in Japan will make possible an understanding of the unfavorable position women hold in most companies in Japan. This discussion makes it possible to see how the amateur world presents an alternative for female *mangaka* to take part in the creation of *manga* without joining the professional *manga* industry.

It must be stressed, however, that information on working women in *manga* publishing companies is extremely rare. Moreover, *manga* are usually created in publishing houses that publish not only *manga* but a variety of books and magazines. Studies focusing exclusively on the *manga* department of those industries are even rarer.

This chapter proceeds by taking general information about women in the workplace and making connections based on information gathered on the publishing industry. It strives to synthesize information currently available in English and in French. The first part of this chapter will focus on the publishing industry itself and how it transformed over the last decades. This focus will lead to a discussion of the place of women in this industry. The latter part of this chapter will discuss the world of amateur *manga* in Japan in relation to professional publishing firms. The interrelationship between those two industries is quite strong. Indeed, both sides have influenced each other over the years in terms of modifying and altering themes and artwork in the *manga* form. The relation between them is a crucial feature of *manga* production. Existing studies of the amateur world tend to focus on legal considerations, mainly copyright matters, rather than on the amateur *manga* form itself and its participants. Anthropological and sociological research remains rather limited. In recent years, the amateur world has received more attention due to its continued growth of consumer appeal. In contrast, the professional *manga* industry is losing readers. Researchers are trying to understand this new trend by focusing on the amateur world. This chapter tries to arrive at a reasonable explanation as to why so many women in Japan have adopted the *dōjinshi* medium to create and share stories instead of trying to enter the professional *manga* world.

The manga industry

It would be pointless to be critical of the publishing industry in Japan without first presenting some of the historical changes that have taken place in this industry over the last several decades. The take-over of *akahon* publishers, which started in the 1950s by companies located in Tokyo, is possibly the most significant event in forming the modern *manga* publishing world. *Akahon*, meaning literally red book, because of the red ink used on the cover, were originally picture books telling common folk tales and targeting an audience of young children. From around 1947 to approximately 1956, or during the post-war period, their

production was centered in Matsuyachō, Osaka's wholesale district.[1] Production and publication were highly variable, due to the absence of deadlines. Furthermore, books did not include the author's names, the publishing houses and even the date of publication. Consequently, the most famous red books, like the ones created by the now renowned Tezuka Osamu, were often plagiarized by different authors and publishing houses.[2] Between 1948 and 1950, *akahon* reached their peak in popularity. Children could buy them in candy stands during festivals or rent them in shops for relatively low prices. *Kamishibai*, which had started a few decades before, remained very popular among children of all ages as they remained popular through the 1950s. *Kamishibai* is a form of street theater in which a storyteller tells a story with the help of illustrated cards. The cost to watch the performance was generally very low or sometimes completely free, and stories usually contained some sort of moral lessons for viewers. Because of their accessibility, this art form sometimes served for propaganda, especially during the war.[3]

Unfortunately, inflation in Japan after the war increased the prices of red books. Consequently, children could not afford them anymore and had to turn to libraries for rental books, or *kashihon.*[4] While the first *akahon* were seeking a readership of children frequenting pre-school or elementary school, *kashihon* began to attract an audience composed of older children and teenagers, who were often frequenting libraries. This change in audiences encouraged publishing houses starting in the 1960s to develop new material and more sophisticated genres in order to satisfy older readers. In fact, the generation born between 1947 and 1949, which corresponds to a high peak in births, was getting older and was looking for

[1] Jennifer S. Prough, *Straight from the Heart: Gender, Intimacy, and the Cultural Production of Shōjo Manga* (University of Hawaii Press, 2011), 32, and Isao Shimizu, "Red Comic Books: The Origins of Modern Japanese Manga," in *Illustrating Asia*, ed. John A. Lent (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 141.
[2] Shimizu, "Red Comic Books," 141.
[3] Emily Horner, "Kamishibai as Propaganda in Wartime Japan," *Storytelling, Self, Society: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Storytelling Studies* 2:1 (2005): 24, accessed January 2, 2013, doi:10.1080/15505340509490272.
[4] Shimizu, "Red Comic Books," 144-45.

manga that would suit its tastes. This generation, also referred to as the *dankai* generation[5], had an enormous impact on the *manga* industry because it pressured it to develop and create magazines with stories that would fit an older audience.

The *akahon* and *kashihon* industries before 1960 were not systematically managed, and artists usually had total freedom over their work. They could write stories and express personal opinions without having to deal with guidelines. Plagiarism was a common practice. The industry had become better structured by the time major companies in Tokyo absorbed all of Osaka's smaller *manga* publishing houses and their authors, by the end of the 1960's. It transformed illustration books into a mainstream *manga* medium essentially produced within the framework of the publishing industry. This new mainstream industry system gained in popularity and did not consider any other form of *manga* publication. The proliferation of *manga* weeklies by major publishers became the official way to distribute *manga*. While some authors from the old system tried to continue creating stories by developing small production companies in order to maintain autonomy over their work, the rapid development of the *manga* publishing industry eventually stamped out competition from smaller independent studios.[6] Their existence was not tolerated by the professional *manga* firms. The consolidation of *manga* publishing houses contributed to the transformation of the medium, producing a new distinctive visual style and gaining recognition as a major institution in the publishing industry.[7] At the end of the 1960s, as the first postwar generation of readers grew older, comic magazines produced stories with more mature themes, which eventually became known as the *gekiga* style. The style became popular with college students and even young adults, which helped to increase the sales of magazines based on such genres and, consequently making the *manga* medium a medium of

[5] The *dankai* generation refers to the first baby boomers generation born after World War II between 1947 and 1949. This generation was at the origin of new habits in consumption, employment, and cultural practices in Japan due to its massive size.
[6] Sharon Kinsella, *Adult Manga*: *Culture and Power in Contemporary Japanese Society* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 51-52.
[7] Prough, *Straight from the Heart*, 31.

the masses in Japan. The *gekiga* style boosted the sales of *manga* magazines that added this genre into their weekly circulation.[8] The concept of all-*manga* magazines was thus born.[9] Publishing houses like Shūeisha, a division of Shōgakukan, one of the most famous publishing firms in Tokyo, gained readership with this new concept. While major publishing companies like Kōdansha and Shōgakukan, established in 1909 and 1922 respectively, focused on the creation of magazines for young children composed of short stories and illustrations, their acquisition of smaller publishing houses allowed them to diversify their production and focus on *manga* as a mainstream medium.[10]

With this consolidation of the publishing industry in Japan and the emergence of weeklies, a new system based on fast production and strong relationships between artists and editors came into effect. The new rapid production process entailed a new labor division that allowed for the creation of a weekly *manga* system as opposed to the monthly system previously in place. With the arrival of television in the late 1950s, publishing companies started to give more attention to visual techniques used in television programs and translated them in their *manga* production. The competition induced by television also encouraged printing industries to create *manga* not only for children, but also for an adult audience, covering a wide range of genres. Once again, the *dankai* generation, who grew up reading *akahon*, played an important part in this mutation encouraging the publishing industry to create magazines for all ages. This allowed this generation to continue reading *manga* as they aged. More importantly, the television calendar based on a weekly schedule also put pressure on the *manga* publishing industry to follow the same pattern in order to stay competitive. The two industries eventually developed strong ties as stories from popular *manga* were adapted into anime and aired on television.[11] But the need to follow this strict schedule meant companies

[8] Shimizu, "Red Comic Books," 148-49.
[9] Prough, *Straight from the Heart*, 29.
[10] Ibid., 28-29.
[11] Kinsella, *Adult Manga*, 31.

were constantly recruiting and training new artists while editors took charge of managing and monitoring artists to ensure quality work. Editors played a vital role in this new system. They were responsible overseeing every step of production and for making sure there would be no delay in the process. Such changes made *manga* a mainstream medium that, in the magazine format, had to be "produced cheaply, read quickly, and discarded easily."[12]

This new system, although allowing a faster production, also had its downside. Artists now had to work closely with editors and follow a tight weekly schedule.[13] They also had to create work that would appeal to specific yet wide audience of readers. For example, *shōnen* magazines addressed younger boys while magazines containing *gekiga manga* targeted young men. The mode of address slowly became an important element of the *manga* magazine production as companies diversified their production. While wages were as much as ten times higher than in the old system, some artists felt they had lost their freedom in many ways. Not surprisingly, many of them were simply not able to adapt to the new system and gave up creating *manga*, feeling their freedom to develop stories and share ideas as artists had diminished considerably under this new imposed system.[14]

The formula proved to be successful. This production system prevails today, and publishing companies are still giving worth to the *manga* medium creating magazines for all types of audiences. In 2011, it was estimated that there were 3,815 publishing houses in Japan, 2,920 or 80% of them located in Tokyo.[15] *Manga* magazines are putting emphasis on longer stories divided in episodes that can run for years if popular enough. Professional artists, even the most famous, still have to work closely with editors who monitor every step of the creation process.

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[12] Prough, *Straight from the Heart*, 35.
[13] Kinsella, *Adult Manga*, 50-51.
[14] Ibid., 103.
[15] Takao Nakajin, Akira Kashima, Masaaki Shindoh, Tanio Yokote, and Kanae Satō, *Practical Guide to Publishing in Japan 2012-2013*, trans. Jenkins Maurice E. et al. (Tokyo: Publishers Association for Cultural Exchange and The Japan Foundation, 2012), 6.

Women in the publishing industry

Since the 1960s, publishing companies have become large and powerful and require a number of employees, from the creation process all the way to weekly distribution. It is then not surprising to find that such companies are influential and offer high quality jobs to their permanent employees. Before 1985, permanent positions were available in the biggest publishing firms in keeping with the so-called the "lifetime system" or *nenkō-seido*. In this system, the worker's income is based on his age and years of service in the company. The company offers work and ensures pay increases with several special benefits to its employees whereas they give their loyalty to work until retirement. This traditional structure of permanent employment found in many Japanese firms was first limited to men who were hired right after graduation.[16] Women had difficulty being recognized as valuable employees by hiring managers, even when they had the same educational background as male candidates. This practice has to do with the *ryōsai kenbo kyōiku* slogan often translated as "good wife and wise mother" that was promoted by the Japanese government during the early Meiji period. It reinforced the difference between genders, stressing certain social scripts women were expected to fulfill once married. Indeed, this gender division put great stress on women to take care of the house and raise children therefore not encouraging them to find work outside the home. This bias was greatly accentuated during that period since Japan was trying to modernize in order to catch up with European countries. The "good wives and wise mothers" model was promoted until the end of the Second World War (1939-1945) to push conservative and nationalist values, and more importantly, to bring forward a capitalistic economy which was starting to develop and needed women to raise children and men to work outside the home.[17] Today, although this slogan is not directly promoted, its influence remains and, sometimes, still

[16] Robert J. Smith, "Gender Inequality in Contemporary Japan," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 13 (1987): 15, accessed August 10, 2012, http:www.jstor.org/stable/132584.
[17] Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow, "The Japanese Ideology of 'Good Wives and Wise Mothers': Trends in Contemporary Research," *Gender & History* 3 (1991): 345, accessed August 14, 2012, doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0424.1991.tb00136.x.

pressures women to become housewives. However, younger generations are starting to challenge this gender division and demand more equal recognition in the household and workplace.

After World War II, the American Occupation pressured the Japanese Diet to make important changes in regard to gender and legal equality. The right to vote for both sexes was one of those changes. In 1947, a new Constitution was enacted which addressed gender equality: "All the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic, or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status, or family origin."[18] Reforms and changes made during the Occupation were multiple, but the ones that need to be underscored here concern access to education and employment for Japanese women. Reforms allowed equal access for both sexes to higher education and, more importantly, coeducation at all levels. This means that females could now study in universities which were previously exclusive for boys. This major transformation can also be understood by looking at numbers: in 1960 only 5.5% of girls entered colleges or universities, in 1994 this number increased to 45.9%, a dramatic change considering the female attendance in universities surpasses that of male since 1989.[19] But, these numbers hide something very important. While the doors were open to women in good colleges and universities, almost all of them were studying home economics, education, and humanities. Subjects studied were thus very limited, and women remained underrepresented in fields like science, engineering, law, and economics. A lot of women still considered their education to be a necessary step to prepare for marriage and not to enter the workforce in search of a long-term career. This bias became a norm over time, and it remains strong even today. Nationwide public opinions in surveys over the past several years still reveal that, even if the level of education of girls has increased in recent years,

[18] Smith, "Gender Inequality," 11.
[19] Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow, "College Women Today: Options and Dilemmas," in *Japanese Women: New Feminist Perspectives on the past, present and future*, ed. Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow et al. (New York: The Feminist Press at The City University of New York, 1995), 126-27.

parents continue to give higher priority to their sons in regards to education. They are more likely to enroll sons in cram schools or to pay for a tutor at home even in primary or high school to ensure their success in entrance exams for universities. These surveys also reveal that parents are also more willing to allow their sons to spend a few years focusing only on studying in order to succeed in the entrance exams if they fail the first time. These assumptions vary in socioeconomic terms. Parents in urban areas are more likely to push their daughters to obtain higher education than are those from rural areas. Yet the assumption that women will marry and bear children after their studies still remains strong, which explains why many parents push their sons into higher education rather than their daughters.[20] Even if the *ryōsai kenbo kyōiku* model belongs to the past, Kathleen S. Uno argues that it still remains influential in Japanese state policies today.[21] It has had a great impact on women, making it extremely difficult for them to be recognized as valuable employees when they aspire to join the workforce.

As Fujiwara-Fanselow explains, most women look for work after graduation, but the assumption is they will only work until marriage. Employers thus prefer to hire men because they suit the lifetime work system. Large companies hire women as *OL* or office ladies who serve tea or perform simple tasks in the office. Employers hire young women for easy tasks because they do not expect them to stay in the office after marriage. In fact, many companies recruit women in hopes that they would marry men working for them. They rarely recruit women on the basis of their abilities but attach great importance to their appearance: the more "suitably ornamental" in the office the better.[22] Employment opportunities for university-educated women are extremely rare and limited; companies favor high school and college graduates to work as *OL* since they are less expensive to hire and have more years ahead to

[20] Ibid., 130.
[21] Kathleen S. Uno, "The Death of "Good Wife, Wise Mother"?" in *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon (Oxford: University of California Press, 1993), 294-95.
[22] Smith, "Gender Inequality," 17.

work.[23] While laws and legislation were created to avoid discrimination in the workplace, women are clearly at a disadvantage. Employers do not expect them to work after marriage or even to come back to work after their children are grown. Thus, women are never included in the lifetime system. Furthermore, if a woman has not married before the age of thirty, strong pressure from coworkers and employers will eventually force her to quit her job. This dominant attitude discourages women from seeking work requiring high responsibilities or long-term commitment.[24] Companies are not interested in providing women with careers and instead see them as a pool of temporary workers. As temporary workers, they do not have to show loyalty to the company and can be fired at any time. Consequently, men are hired into the lifetime system, also called the "managerial track," while women are included in the "clerical track." Employees in the "managerial track" experience greater mobility within the company, often moving between departments or even between different branches within Japan or around the world to try out new positions and develop new skills. On the other hand, employees in the "clerical track" do repetitive work and are often condemned to a routine. They are expected to stay in the same department or division. More importantly, employees in the "clerical track" cannot receive promotions. Such a situation also prevails in the publishing world. Female employees, who are not hired as artists or *mangaka,* but rather as office staff, are included in the "clerical track" and are assigned simple tasks without opportunity for promotion. Men, however, are automatically hired into the "managerial track" and can eventually enter jobs such as editor or manager with high chance of promotions. This situation prevailed until May, 1985.

In May 1995, the Japanese government passed the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Law which officially took effect in April of 1986. Although women's movements and their demands for equality in the workplace had grown stronger, the passage of the law

[23] Fujimura-Fanselow, "College Women Today," 133.
[24] Ibid., 142-43.

happened just as much due to international and foreign pressure.[25] The EEO law was weak in many respects. It imposed few legal obligations on employers and created few new rights for women. In addition, the law was not strictly enforced against employers as long as they fulfilled their moral obligation and made changes in company' rules to ensure equal opportunities for women.[26] One key stipulation of the law was:

> The firm shall "endeavor" to treat women equally to men regarding recruitment, hiring, placement (job assignment), and promotion; and the firm shall not discriminate against women regarding training and education, employee welfare and benefits (housing benefit, loans and a variety of allowances), retirement, age limit, and dismissal.[27]

Significantly there was no penalty for violation of the law, and compliance to it was left entirely to the goodwill of the companies. Many firms did make some changes in their hiring practices. Gains for women were observable in recruitment practices, starting wages, and training for new employees. Firms started to adopt a "sex-blind" recruitment practice.[28] While it was common practice to mention the preferred sex of the employee in recruitment ads before the passage of the EEO law, some companies no longer mentioned it in conformance to the new law. A survey conducted by the Ministry of Labor in 1981 revealed that: "71 percent of the firms restricted their recruitment of graduates to men only, 83 percent of the firms had positions that were not open to women and 43 per cent gave women no opportunity for promotion."[29] Changes in hiring practices allowed women to apply for certain jobs that might have been reserved exclusively for male candidates previously. Improvements were minimal, however, following employment. With the enactment of the law, many companies moved to a merit-

[25] Yoko Kawashima, "Female Workers: An Overview of Past and Current Trends," in *Japanese Women: New Feminist Perspectives on the past, present and future*, ed. Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow et al. (New York: The Feminist Press at The City University of New York, 1995), 283.
[26] Ministry of Labour (MOL) *Danjo Koyō Kitai Kintō Hō Kaisei Rodō Kijun Hō no Jitsumu Kaisetsu* [A Practical Guide and Explanation of the Equal Opportunity Law and the Amended Labour Standards Law], Rōdōshō Fujin-kyoku (Women's Bureau, Ministry of Labour), Tokyo, Rōmu Gyōsei Kenkyū-sho, 1986, 44, quoted in Alice Lam, "Equal Employment Opportunities for Japanese Women: Changing Company Practice," in *Japanese Women Workin*g, ed. Janet Hunter (Routledge: London and New York, 1993), 209.
[27] Kawashima, "Female Workers," 284.
[28] Rodosho (Ministry of Labor), *Joshi Koyo Kanri Kihon Chosa* [Basic Survey on Employment and Management of Female Workers], Tokyo: Rodosho, 1993, quoted in Kawashima, "Female Workers," 284.
[29] Lam, "Equal Employment," 206.

based system as opposed to a seniority-based system. It seemed that women would finally have access to promotion. Unfortunately, this change had little or no effect on the structure already in place. Since men were always given more opportunities to work in different fields and departments within the company, they could climb the job ladder more quickly because they were gaining experience in different areas such as organizational skill and human relations, in addition to knowledge about the overall work system. As women were often assigned to the same department and had few opportunities to hold new positions, they could not get an equivalent experience and were thus in an unfavorable position for promotion.[30]

Although companies were changing their policies in accordance to the new law or at least seemed to be making changes, they still found ways to maintain their prior patterns. For example, some firms decided upon the number of men and women to be hired even before beginning the hiring process. Others interviewed and hired men before even starting the process of interviewing women. Such strategies were legal since they were not perceived as giving less opportunity for women during the hiring process.[31] To be fair, many elements of the law were not defined sufficiently well and could be interpreted in many ways. According to the interpretation of the Ministry of Labor "to give women equal opportunity" meant "not to exclude women and not to treat women unfavorably." Also "to exclude women" only meant "not offering them any opportunities." Ultimately, "not to exclude women only meant offering them some opportunities."[32] Since definitions remained ambiguous, interpretations varied and firms used variation to their own advantage.

The EEO law also introduced a new track system. Employees could now join either the *ippanshoku* track or "general track" or the *sogoshoku* track or "career-track" when they entered a company as a new recruit. This system was called the "career-tracking system" or *kōsubetsu koyō-seido* in Japanese. Even though employees were given the option to choose their track,

[30] Kawashima, "Female Workers," 285.
[31] Lam, "Equal Employment Opportunities," 209-10.
[32] Ibid., 91.

men would almost automatically be assigned to the *sogoshoku* track without even asking for it, while only a very small number of women would manifest their interest in entering this track.[33] The pressure towards females to enter the *ippanshoku* track was so strong that many women choose to enter this track simply because it seemed like the right thing to do.

It is reasonable to assume that the same pattern, the *kaisha seido* system, was also in effect in the publishing sector. Even if women had the right to demonstrate their interest in joining the *sogoshoku* track, their chances of actually entering it remained quite low. Publishing firms developed with a strong male-oriented work system where men had occupied the best permanent positions for decades. Men currently working in those companies did not want to share their work environment with women employed within the track that had been exclusively reserved for men. The new law was difficult to accept for many male employers, and this is probably why major changes were not rapidly observable. In 1986, The Kantō Management Association validated the new system because it met the requirements of the new law on the basis that it truly gave opportunities for women as well as men to choose which track they wanted to enter upon employment and gave promotions based on merit and not gender.[34]

It is important to note that this law does not address the problem of "indirect discrimination" as Lam points out in her contribution to *Japanese Women Working*.[35] Different forms of "indirect discrimination" were common in firms. While males were systematically placed in the "career-track," potential female candidates who wanted to join often had to answer a variety of questions about the potential sacrifices vis-à-vis family life. Women were carefully screened for this special path. A survey by the Japan Institute of Women's Employment revealed that of forty firms in finance, insurance and banking that had adopted the new employment system, only 1.3% of women were directed to the managerial track in

[33] Maki Ōmori, "Gender and the Labor Market," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 19 (1993): 91-92, accessed October 25, 2012, http://www.jstor.org/stable/132865.
[34] Lam, "Equal Employment Opportunities," 212.
[35] Ibid., 207-08.

comparison to 99.0% of males. The "clerical track" remained, even after the law, an almost exclusively female track.[36] Similarly, Tokyo Marine and Fire Insurance Company, which ranked at the top for hiring female university graduates, hired only 14 women out of 284 employees in the "managerial track" and hired 422 women in the "general track". All Nippon Airways, a company that started recruiting women in the "comprehensive track" in 1987, had only 12 women working in it in 1990.[37] Although no statistics are available on women hired in publishing companies under the *ippanshoku* and *sogoshoku* tracks, it is likely that the situation was similar in this industry. Research by Prough reveals that between 30% and 40% of employees hired by the major publishing industries every year are women. Nonetheless, Prough found that, in the *shōjo manga* division of major publishing firms like Kōdansha, Shōgakukan, Shūeisha and Hakusensha, the ratio of female editors was closer to 20% and all of those women were fairly young in their twenties.[38] Significantly, all the women editors who spoke with Prough had been hired under the "clerical track."[39] This qualification is crucial since the *shōjo* division is responsible for creating *manga* for girls, and one might think women would dominate the employee roster. The fact that women editors are a minority says a good deal about the place of women in this industry. Furthermore, it is also important to note that these women, although doing the same work as male editors, were hired under the "non-managerial track" and did not have the same benefits as employees hired under the "managerial track." This is precisely how the lifetime system worked for such a long time. Female workers hired in the "clerical track," who worked only a short period of time cost little to the firms, which allowed them to sustain the wages of the permanent male workers. Changing this system and giving women promotions based on seniority would have been too costly because they were expected to leave the company to raise a family.

[36] Ibid., 214.
[37] Fujimura-Fanselow, "College Women Today," 145.
[38] Prough, *Straight from the Heart*,100.
[39] Ibid., 92.

Faced with this dilemma, many firms today favor hiring a large number of part-time or contract workers, usually females, because the EEO law does not apply to them.[40] They can hire them for a short period of time or as regular labor force without having to deal with the requirements of planning for their career, or giving them promotions or higher wages. Additionally, when their services are no longer needed, they can be fired without notice. Kinsella observed part-time and contract workers are an important part of the working force in the publishing industry. The entire process and realization of a *manga* magazine requires the work of many workers in order to review very small details to make sure everything is perfect. This labor force is composed of designers, contract workers, and more importantly part-time employees whose roles are to measure speech bubbles and make adjustments, revise texts and dialogues for mistakes in Chinese characters, and fix any other similar imperfections.[41] While those employees work sometimes more than forty hours a week, they are all considered temporary workers and do not have any benefits or compensations for working overtime. Prough observed that those part-time workers are generally female. They are, in effect, doing the same job that women hired under the "clerical track" would do but do not hold the same status and cost less to the companies. As for *mangaka*, they are usually hired as contract workers. None of them, even the most famous, have a permanent position in the company.[42]

On the other side, Japanese publishing companies tend to be large and to offer relatively well paid employment opportunities for recent graduates, which allows them to recruit the best graduates from the most renowned universities. Recent graduates from famous universities like Waseda, Tokyo, Keiō, Chūo, Meiji, and Kyoto Universities often hold the best chances of obtaining good employment in publishing companies.

> Despite changes to the rigid structure of the professional labour market during the 1980s, and the increased popularity of working for small flexible companies, employment in large publisher, such as Kodansha or Shogakukan, is still regarded, by university

[40] Lam, "Equal Employment Opportunities," 218.
[41] Kinsella, *Adult Manga*, 58-59.
[42] Prough, *Straight from the Heart*, 92.

> graduates, as highly desirable. These are large, well-established companies which provided a range of welfare programmes and perks for employees, as well as the security of life-time employment, accompanied by wage rises guaranteed with ability, if not seniority (*nenkō-seido)*. Employees also enjoy the high social status, personal confidence and power bestowed on them by becoming an employee of a prestigious and all but indestructible company.[43]

It is also crucial to note that students attending the best-rated universities often come from privileged social background. For example, in July 1995, Kōdansha, a famous publishing company, had 1,171 employees including 894 men and 277 women. Most of them had graduated from the universities previously mentioned.[44] Those numbers show that even after the EEO law, companies still wanted to hire the best male graduates first and were reluctant to hire women, which would reduce the ratio of new male employees. The numbers of permanent women employees in the publishing industry are far lower those that of men, which is in keeping of general corporate practice.

To this day, the major publishing firms will favor hiring candidates who recently graduated from the leading universities. It is estimated that around 8 to 25 employees will be hired by major publishing companies every year. Surprisingly, fewer than 5 of those newly hired employees will be assigned to the *manga* division which nonetheless represents a significant part of this industry. As is typical of Japanese companies, potential candidates apply for a job within a company but usually cannot choose the department in which they will work in. The application process only asks candidates to do interviews and several exams. When hired, employees are successively assigned to multiple departments before being appointed permanently to a certain division.[45]

What happens to women who succeed in being employed in the "managerial track"? Many will ultimately resign in frustration because their male coworkers make them feel they do not belong in this track that has always been dominated by males. Under the new employment

[43] Kinsella, *Adult Manga*, 166-67.
[44] Ibid., 167.
[45] Prough, *Straight from the Heart*, 90.

system, women can now express interest in entering the male dominated track. The *sogoshoku* stream, like the old "managerial" or "comprehensive" track, requires its employees to work long hours in order to develop abilities to conduct business negotiations, develop personal management experience, and built different skills. Moreover, it demanded many transfers, often connected with promotions.[46] This was precisely the reason why so many women could not commit to enter this track.

Interviews conducted by Prough with different female *manga* editors from well-known publishing companies show that, despite the fact that most of these women were serious about their profession at the moment, the majority were not planning to hold their position forever. While the author does not provide a clear answer as to why those women did not want to continue to pursue their current career path, she does mention that the *ippanshoku* track still pushes women to quit work after marriage. One possible conclusion is that these female editors felt the pressure of the social expectations on them to leave the workplace at a certain period of their lives.[47] Although they all work hard and seem, to a certain extent, to love their jobs, they had to accept leaving the workplace in order to marry and raise children. Even with new laws and better opportunities to enter the workforce, women are still expected to do all of the tasks required in the domestic sphere.[48] This may explain in part why today, even in the *shōjo manga* department of major publishing companies, 75% of *manga* editors are men whereas 99% of artists are young women in their teens to late twenties.[49] Apparently, young women who entered the workforce did not stay long enough in the company to have access to promotions and advancements. Once married, women often have too many responsibilities at home to manage both work and household tasks. Many Japanese women seem to accept sacrificing their

[46] Lam, "Equal Employment Opportunities," 212.
[47] Prough, *Straight from the Heart*, 105.
[48] Kawashima, "Female Workers," 286-88.
[49] Prough, *Straight from the Heart*, 96.

work life in order to raise a family, and this seems to be the case with the young female editors interviewed by Prough insofar as most of them were thinking of eventually leaving their job.

The collapse of the Japanese Bubble Economy in the 1990s brought changes once again to employment practices in firms, reversing many of the gains made by female university graduates since the 1980s. While the employment rate for women in 1991 had reached 86%, it quickly fell to 80% in 1992, and in 1993 went down to 76%. Some companies returned to their old ways and simply did not hire any new female graduate employees.[50] Minor changes have subsequently occurred in Japan to improve women's positions in the workplace, but women still face discrimination and have only limited access to high ranks in companies.

Alice Lam introduced another important factor that needs to be addressed regarding the low number of women employed under the "career-track." She argues that, it is important to consider women's aspirations both before and after the EEO law was passed. Lam reveals that women's expectations have not risen considerably after the law came into effect. Most women, notably young graduates, are still uncertain about their career and future. The new system puts greater pressure on them at the early stages in their careers. The majority of women today grew up in the old system; they saw their father working long hours and coming home late every night. This may be why some women do not wish to work like men and turn instead to the other option available to them. If equal opportunity means working like their father, most of them would rather not enter the workforce permanently.[51]

Even as new laws were implanted over the years to help women to enter the workforce, they still face expectations that they will eventually leave their career to raise children. Changes still need to take place in order for women to finally be considered on an equal stance with men. In Japan, women are getting better at balancing work and family, but a large proportion of Japanese men have not kept pace with the attitudes and behavior of contemporary Japanese

[50] "Daisotsu Saiyo Konharu Gekigen" [A sharp decrease in hiring of university graduates this spring], *Asahi Shimbun* [Asahi Newspaper], March 13, 1994: 1, quoted in Fujimura-Fanselow, "College Women Today," 144.
[51] Lam, "Equal Employment Opportunities," 216.

women. Many Japanese women find it difficult to find a man that will understand their desire to have a career and participate in the economic aspect of their life.[52] Conversely some women see their role as wife and mother as extremely important because it is still highly valued in Japan: "Japanese women perceive their work as wives and mothers as important because it is socially valued."[53] It is in this reality that women have to make important choices regarding their career and future.

The manga amateur world

The rapid ascension of the modern *manga* production system since the 1960s encouraged many artists who did not want to conform to the new industry to create and publish their works outside what had become the professional *manga* industry. Previously we saw that some authors tried to establish small companies in order to maintain some autonomy over their works. Other artists, who could not or would not enter the professional *manga* world, found other ways of distributing their stories, launching independent *manga* magazines, for example. Their objective was to provide an alternative space for *manga* publication not controlled by editors and publishing companies. In 1967, Tezuka Osamu established a monthly magazine called *COM* devoted to supporting free expression among artists:

> It is said that now is the golden age of *manga*. So shouldn't works of outstanding quality be published? Or isn't the real situation one in which many *manga* artists are being worked to death, while they are forced into submission, servitude and cooperation with cruel requirements of commercialism? With his magazine I thought I would show you what real *story manga* is. *COM* is a magazine for comrades who love *manga*.[54]

There is no doubt that Tezuka is referring to the professional *manga* industry that appeared after smaller independent publishing houses were absorbed by bigger firms in Tokyo. The creation of mainstream *manga* encouraged fast production cycles and creative criteria over which artists

[52] Kyoko Yoshizumi, "Marriage and Family: Past and Present," in *Japanese Women: New Feminist Perspectives on the past, present and future*, ed. Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow et al. (New York: The Feminist Press at The City University of New York, 1995), 196.
[53] Merry White, "The Virtue of Japanese Mothers: Cultural Definitions of Women's Lives," *Daedalus* 116 (1987): 153, accessed September 13, 2012, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20025112.
[54] Osamu Tezuka, "Kansō no Kotoba" [A Word from the Creator], *COM*, Issue 1, 1967, quoted in Kinsella, *Adult Manga*, 103.

had no control. *Manga* had become a mainstream medium that did not require artists to explore and develop independent styles. The creation of magazines like *COM* was one answer to the constraints of the industry. *COM* eventually shut its doors in 1972 but what is important about this magazine and similar one like *GARO* (founded in 1964) is that they were the only major non-commercial options for publishing *manga* outside weekly magazines at the time.[55] Alternative venues such as independent *manga* magazines, were largely ignored by publishing firms, but their emergence marked a clear division between what was and still is seen as "professional or mainstream *manga*" and "underground or experimental *manga.*"[56]

Even if such venues developed by artists to retain their creative rights over their works did not always meet with success, technological transformations would help artists to continue to publish independent work in the underground world. In the beginning of the 1970s, for instance, cheap portable printing and photocopying machines became widely available. Such machines allowed for easy reproduction of any kind of literature, *manga* included, inexpensively, which also allowed participation of a variety of people into an unregistered form of cultural production. The new technology became so popular that some individuals set up small independent publishing companies specialized in professional quality small batch runs for amateur *manga* artists. The emergence of small printing shops presented a major shift, one that greatly affected the modern publishing companies. Now anyone could go to small shops and print work without having to deal with editors and professional publishing houses.[57] This form of distribution became known as "mini communication" in contrast to the mass communication model of the professional publishing industry. This "mini communication" world made possible *dōjinshi* creation. *Dōjinshi* is a Japanese word that refers to self-published work, usually by amateur artists but sometimes by professional artists seeking creative freedom. Although

[55] Kinsella, *Adult Manga*, 104.
[56] Ibid., 102.
[57] Sharon Kinsella, "Subculture in the 1990s: Otaku and the Amateur Manga Movement," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 24 (1998): 294, accessed October 2, 2012. http://www.jstor.org/discover /10.2307/133236?uid=3739464&uid=2&uid=3737720&uid=4&sid=21101702811357.

dōjinshi can refer to either *manga*, novels, or any other kind of books created outside the scope of the professional publishing industry, the production of *manga* came to occupy the biggest share. *Mangaka* interested in developing the medium and experimenting with new styles or forms of expression turned to *dōjinshi* as an alternative format for publication too innovative or without mass appeal.[58]

In 1975, a group of young *manga* critics including Aniwa Jun, Harada Teruo and Yonezawa Yoshihiro decided to create an event to encourage the development of unpublished amateur *manga*. This event became *Comic Market*, commonly referred to as *Comiket*. Although the photocopy machine had allowed creators to make numerous copies of their work, they continued to share it via regular mail or within their group of friends, because there were no other venues that allowed for sharing. This convention, now held twice a year, was expressly created to make amateur *manga* available to a wider audience. Yonezawa, president of Comic Market explains: "…in the early seventies there were far fewer *manga* magazines in Japan and it was much harder to get anything other than very mainstream works published…"[59] In the early years of Comic Market, when the event was still relatively small, quite a few of the amateur artists were quickly recruited by professional agencies to work in the professional publishing industry that was still growing and needed more artists. Female artists like Takahashi Rumiko and Saimon Fumi were among them.[60] The event gradually expanded during the 1980s, which resulted in fewer artists being recruited into the professional world.[61] The *dōjinshi* medium allowed many young adults, who were not professional and had no link with the publishing industry, to participate in the creation of *manga*. By the 1980s, all *dōjinshi* were created by amateurs and no longer by professionals seeking an alternative for their work in the underground world. Since amateur *mangaka* were not as highly skilled as they had been

[58] Kinsella, "Subculture in the 1990s," 295.
[59] Frederick L. Schodt, *DreamLand Japan: Writings on Modern Manga* (Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 1996), 40.
[60] Yonezawa, "Komikku māketto," 78, quoted in Kinsella, "Subculture in the 1990s," 298.
[61] Kinsella, "Subculture in the 1990s," 298.

previously, publishing houses ceased recruiting participants in Comiket, turning to contests to recruit new artists.

Contests have always played an important role in recruiting new artists for the professional *manga* industry. At the same time of the consolidation of the *manga* industry, publishing houses strove to hire the best *mangaka*, especially *gekiga* artists, from the old system and to ensure they would work for them and not for their competitors. After this first wave of recruitment, however, new companies looking for artists had to turn to contests in order to locate new *mangaka*. This shift occurred with *Shōnen Jump* magazine (published by Shūeisha from 1968), because most artists had been recruited a few years before.[62] This magazine had to recruit artists through contests and train them in the magazine style. Contests were commonly announced in the magazine, and people interested in participating were asked to send a short *manga* following certain guidelines. Winners received cash prizes and often saw their work published in the magazine. If their work attracted favorable reader reviews, magazine editors would eventually recruit them as artists.

While both the professional and amateur circuits sustained close ties at the onset, connections between the two weakened after 1980 as amateur *manga* became the province of non-professional artists who did not necessarily want to become professionals. Since amateur *manga* are not sent to publishers, they do not go through any editorial process. The artists create, print, and sell their work during conventions or special events at their own expense.[63] Yonezawa also explains the popularity of this medium by the fact that *dōjinshi* are something everyone can do: "…they don't require much in the way of professional technique. It's maybe like rock and roll in the United States, because it doesn't require education and it's something young people can easily do on their own with just paper and pens…"[64]

[62] Kinsella, *Adult Manga*, 52-54.
[63] Kinsella, "Subculture in the 1990s," 290.
[64] Schodt, *DreamLand Japan*, 41.

Such autonomy made *dōjinshi* different from professional *manga*. Although both professional *manga* and amateur *manga* use the same medium, *dōjinshi* are not supervised and remain free of restrictions. Authors may create anything. They may produce *manga* deemed transgressive or not in compliance with laws, mainly censorship laws.[65] Without ties to the publishing industry, amateurs were able to create independent works and new forms of expression not available in mainstream *manga*. One of these forms of expression is called parody and is based on modified versions of characters and stories from popular *manga* published in the professional world. Usually, parodies draw on leading boys' *manga* from famous magazines like *Shōnen Jump*. The parody form of expression quickly gained popularity in the amateur world. By 1989, 45.9% of all *manga* sold at Comiket were parodies, while only 21.1% were original stories.[66] Parody, although very popular, received a lot of criticism. Professional artists, such as veteran artist Nagashima Shinji, were accusing amateurs of only producing *dōjinshi* because they were unable to create anything worth publishing professionally.[67] Creators of parody rapidly became to be seen as less talented than artists creating material from scratch. Kinsella argues that the presence of amateur *manga* allowed a large proportion of less-talented individuals to produce *manga*, lowering the standards of amateur *manga* and giving rise to the parody form.[68] Moreover, the concept of "originality" in *manga* is often associated with the exploitation of current social and political events. The parody form is also seen as of lower quality because it often does not refer to the outside world but instead focuses on more personal themes.[69] Kinsella furthermore explains that the parody form allows readers and fans to make fun of the male characters of leading boys' *manga* consequently making them closer to the readers:

[65] Censorship laws in Japan are prohibiting the representation of genitals and of public hair. To counter those laws, many artists are instead focusing on suggestive imagery or imaginary phallus to represent genitals. Some artists also airbrush their drawings to make them less visible.
[66] Kinsella, "Subculture in the 1990s," 301.
[67] Kinsella, *Adult Manga*, 117.
[68] Ibid., 120.
[69] Ibid., 119.

> *Parody* manga often makes light fun of the seriousness of the masculine heroes in commercial boys and adult manga series. While on the one hand favourite manga characters are positively celebrated, on the other hand, their authority and aloofness is punctured, by inserting scatological humour or embarrassing jokes about their physical desires and distresses. The overall effect of this type of naughtiness in *parody* manga is to make popular manga characters in serialized manga magazines more fallible, allowing readers to feel more intimate towards them."[70]

The parody form offers stories where personal themes are more central than social or political topics. The amateur world demonstrated that *manga* did not have to focus on large and current social themes. Readers responded positively to this new idea and this explains the popularity of the parody form. As the commercial *manga* industry grew, the number of artists involved in the creation of amateur *manga* slowly increased in the 1970s and then quickly expanded in the 1980s.[71] Women engaged in underground forms of creation, in this case *dōjinshi*, are far larger in number than men not only in Japan but in English speaking countries as well.[72] *Dōjinshi* creation is often compared with *slash*[73] a similar phenomena in America, also dominated by female independent authors.

What explains the prevalence of women in the amateur *manga* world versus the professional publishing industry? Yonezawa argues that one of the reasons why so many people are drawn into this amateur world is related to the strong pressure of the environment of modern Japan founded mostly in the academic world and centered around entrance exams: "Manga, are one of the few things young people aren't forced to do by their teachers, so it's a genre of expression they actively want to participate in."[74] While this might explain the reason for the popularity of this underground form of expression it does not explain why women represent the majority of amateur artists and fans. Yonezawa replies with an observation he made based on the people attending Comic Market: "Most of the males tend to be older and are college

[70] Ibid., 120.
[71] Ibid., 105.
[72] Roger Sabin, *Adult Comics: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 230, quoted in Brian Ruh, "The Function of Woman-Authored Manga in Japanese Society," *AnimeResearch*, May, 2001, accessed January 16, 2013, http://www.animeresearch.com/Articles/WomenInManga/index.htm.
[73] Slash is a form of fan fiction usually depicting sexual relationships between homosexual characters from famous television shows or other forms of mass media. A high proportion of writers are women.
[74] Schodt, *DreamLand Japan*, 41.

students, because in the Japanese system, after being under extraordinary pressure for years to study for their entrance exams, this is when they finally have some free time."[75] Yonezawa argues that females do not face the same pressures as their male counterparts. For this reason, they can start creating *dōjinshi* as teens in junior high school and high school. During those years, young Japanese girls have the time to participate in the underground world and feel less pressure from society to excel in school. Until 1989, around 80% of amateur artists present at Comiket were female, as compared to only 20% male attendants. Since 1990, the male involvement has only increased to about 35% but female participation still remains higher.[76] The increase in male attendance is probably due to the development of new forms of expression, such as the *lolicon* form, which centers on cute underage girls and directly targets an audience of young boys.

In addition, even if women had had greater opportunities to enter the professional network of artists, the commercial world of *manga* remained dominated by boys and adult *manga* until the nineties.[77] In 1996, it was estimated that adult *manga* for men occupied 38.5% of the total production of professional *manga*. Boys' *manga* constituted 40.6% while girls' *manga* comprised only 8.7% of all *manga* published via the professional publishing industry.[78] Since the production of *manga* centered on titles for a male audience, it was more difficult for females to enter this industry as artists. Female artists had to wait for the production of *manga* for an audience composed of women and young girls, principally *shōjo manga*, before being able to join this industry more easily.

Manga genres addressed specifically to young girls and women, published by professional companies, started to gain popularity only in the 1970s. The *shōjo* genre, a genre targeting young girls, is often associated with a *manga* called *Ribon no Kishi* (1953), an

[75] Ibid.
[76] Kinsella, "Subculture in the 1990s," 300.
[77] Kinsella, *Adult Manga*, 111.
[78] Ibid., 45.

adventure story portraying a female heroine written by the famous *mangaka* Tezuka Osamu. During the 1950s and 1960s, all artists, even those creating works for female audiences, were male. Once the publishing industry had greater control over *manga* production, it introduced a distinction between *manga* for young boys and *manga* targeting young girls, and slowly began hiring female artists. Prior to the 1960s, few female *mangaka* had been able to produce *manga*, often learning the ropes from husbands or friends. One of them, Ueda Toshiko, is one of the few women who have been able to make a living writing *manga*. Veteran editor Maruyama Akira who worked with Ueda in the postwar years recalls:

> At first only men drew *manga*. But when women artists started, you know Ueda Toshiko, Hasegawa Machiko, Maki Miyako, and the like, it was clear right away that girls were really drawn to the *manga* of women writers. Looking at the work I couldn't tell how it was different, but something was transmitted. By the time I left [early 1960s] most of the male authors were doing boy's stuff and almost all artists for *shōjo manga* were women. That's still true today[79]

At that time, it was believed women artists were best suited to *shōjo* style *manga*, and men concentrated on *manga* for men and young boys.[80]

In the mid 1970s, a group of women, the 24 *nengumi* (1949 cohort) were recruited from the amateur world by the professional industry. Those women all belonged to the *dankai* generation and had grown up reading *manga*. As they became older, they demanded more stories suited to their tastes from the *manga* industry. Focusing on the readers' feelings, those *mangaka* first started in the amateur world to create storylines that would interest female readers, which greatly enriched the *shōjo* genre.[81] Since this strategy had proved effective in the amateur world, the professional *manga* industry recruited them. Some authors even considered these years to be the golden years of the *shōjo* genre. These transformations allowed the genre to develop a distinctive style based on the representation of inner emotions, thoughts and feelings through an unusual use of frames. In any event, such forms of expression targeting

[79] Prough, *Straight from the Heart*, 47.
[80] Ibid., 100-01.
[81] Ibid., 94-95.

women and young girls emerged primarily in the world of amateur *manga* created by female amateur artists.

Although more female artists entered publishing firms, most of them had to work with male editors. The *manga* division of major publishing houses usually employs between three to fifteen editors, each of whom are in charge of between ten to twenty artists. (For an organizational chart, see appendix A.) Although artists and editors do not always work in the same location, they are both responsible for the creation of a *manga* chapter.[82] As previously mentioned, a high percentage of editors are men while most artists are female. In the context of *manga* production for young girls this is also true. This strict gender hierarchy combined with the strict production system of the professional *manga* industry meant the development of the amateur world provided a haven for female artists to create *manga* without such restrictions.

Conclusion

The above discussion makes clear that the *manga* production is "gendered not only in content but in personnel…"[83] While opportunities for equal access to the workplace for women have improved over the years, Japanese women often do not look for a long commitment when looking for employment. Most women tend to accept social pressures for them to leave the workplace to raise children. The goal of this chapter was to consider the differences between the work environments for women in the professional *manga* publishing industry and in the amateur world in order to indicate why so many women, interested in *manga* production, adopt the *dōjinshi* medium to create and share stories instead of trying to pursue a career in the professional *manga* world. As indicated, the professional industry not only is strongly gendered, but also allows only a limited number of women the opportunity to become editors or gain promotion. Commonly, male editors are in charge of editing *manga* that have to appeal to a

[82] Kinsella, *Adult Manga*, 55.
[83] Prough, *Straight from the Heart*, 93.

female audience. Although debates between editors and artists over the direction of the storyline occur, the male editor makes the final decisions.

The production system in place since the 1960s distinguishes "professional *manga*" as a medium of the masses. Within this system, artists must first and foremost create stories that will sell. They are not encouraged to explore forms or new styles. Instead, editors are looking for artists who will listen to them and work fast enough to follow the tight deadlines imposed each week. The goal is to create a *manga* story that will generate excitement and income.

Given the difficulties inherent in producing original works within the world of professional *manga*, it is not surprising that many artists turned to *dōjinshi* which emerged after the arrival of the photocopy machines and started the development of "mini communication" in Japan. Initially, *dōjinshi* provided professional *mangaka* the opportunity to create *manga* without having to deal with editors and heavy administration. A number of them joined the movement because it gave them a sense of freedom impossible to find in the publishing industry. The movement eventually gained in popularity, and people from different backgrounds started to create and share their works. Today, Comic Market is one of the biggest social and cultural events in Japan not controlled by the privileged or highly educated. Anyone can participate. In contrast, publishing companies are filled with employees from Japan's best universities. John Fiske describes a phenomenon he calls a "shadow cultural economy" which allows people with no educational background or lacking a certain social status a place where they can fully participate without being judged. The world of *dōjinshi* is indeed such an economy.[84] The amateur world may be seen as a distinctive cultural environment or as a marginalized mode of communication wherein individuals from different backgrounds can freely share material that would not be recognized by the publishing world.[85]

[84] John Fiske, "The Cultural Economy of Fandom," in *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*, ed. Lisa A. Lewis (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 30.
[85] Ruh, "Function of Woman-Authored Manga."

Mizuta Noriko provided another significant interpretation. In *Translation and Gender*, Mizuta states that in Japan "original creation" and "authorship" were constructed as "a masculine occupation."[86] Because of this, women's writings have, for a long time and even today, been considered less intellectual. Such assumptions, although less strong today, remain in effect and may explain why more Japanese women than men are involved in the amateur movement.

The *dōjinshi* world provides women who do not want to enter the professional *manga* industry or who simply are not able to enter it with a venue to create and express their ideas via the *manga* medium. Participation in this world allows them recognition as amateur *mangaka*. Within this world, they may experience freedom over their work without having to worry about deadlines and gendered relationships of the professional world. It allows women to publish or simply to participate in the creation of *manga* after the age of thirty, which is often impossible in the professional *manga* industry.

[86] Noriko Mizuta, "Translation and Gender: Trans/gender/lation," in *Woman Critiqued: Translated Essays on Japanese Women's Writing*, ed. Rebecca L. Copeland (Manoa: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 162.

Chapter 2

Dreams, fantasies and love: What truly is the boys' love genre?

The first chapter looked at gender inequality in the publishing industry in Japan both in terms of employment and the kinds of *manga* produced. Genre production plays an important role in *manga* publication. *Manga* are typically addressed to a specific audience, defined by its gender, age, employment, and sometimes hobby. It provides readers with a clear horizon of expectation. Needless to say, genre-oriented production is not unique to *manga*. Books, movies and *anime* frequently adopt genre paradigms. This chapter looks at *boys'love* from the perspective of genre. It will focus on delineating the main components of the *boys'love* genre.

Manga production in Japan tends to entail rapid turnover. It is estimated that in 2011, approximately 3.533 billion dollars were spent on *manga* in Japan.[1] This figure does not take into account the publication of *dōjinshi* in the amateur world whose sales reached 100 million dollars during the three days of the Comiket convention in 2005.[2] In comparison with the film industry, *manga* genres entail faster turnover due to their rapid production. Authors and editors, follow strict production deadlines, and constantly seek new avenues to modify and play with received genres in order to sustain the interest of readers and to produce the next big hit. Amateur *manga* artists also create *dōjinshi* at a fast pace, often developing new forms of expression by reworking elements of well-established genres. In fact, *boys'love manga* began with repurposing of industrial genres, to emerge as a distinct form of expression that gained the

[1] Oricon, "(2011 Nen Shoseki Shijyō) Sōriagegaku 1 Chō 1123.2 Okuen, Taizennenhi ha 99.3% de Yokobai" 【2011年 書籍市場】総売上額1兆1123.2億円、対前年比は99.3％で横ばい [(The book market of 2011) Total revenue of 1,112,320,000,000 yen, 99.3% stable compared with the year before], accessed January 12, 2013, http://www.oricon.co.jp/news/ranking/2006093/full/.

[2] Komiketto Junbikai, *Komikku Maaketto 30's Fairu: 1975-2005 Komikku Maaketto Sanjū Shūnen Kinen Shiryōshū Taisei* (Comiket 30's file: Commemorative Collection of Documents for Comiket's Thirtieth Anniversary, 1975-2005), (Tokyo: Komiketto, 2005), quoted in Kumiko Saitō, "Desire in Subtext: Gender, Fandom, and Women's Male-Male Homoerotic Parodies in Contemporary Japan," in *Mechademia* 6, ed. Lunning Frenchy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press Inc, 2011), 171.

attention of the large publishing horse. Major publishing companies further stabilized it, resulting in a consistent and recognizable genre.

Boys' love manga first appeared in the amateur *manga* world in the late 1970s. By the late 1980s it had moved in the professional industry. *Boys' love* started out as a form of parody *manga*, which came to center on male homosexual relationships. Although some authors and critics claim that *manga* created by Hagio Moto and Takemiya Keiko in the beginnings of the 1970s are pioneers of *boys' love*, these *manga* were first published and distributed as *shōjo manga*. They were only later re-categorized as *boys' love manga*, once the genre had gained recognition in the professional *manga* world and researchers began to look at them anew. For this reason, this study begins with *dōjinshi*. Nonetheless, although *boys' love* started in the amateur world, I will first explore the genre as it was subsequently stabilized by the *manga* industry. The *dōjinshi* world does not set the same kind of limits on forms of expression, which makes a close reading of them difficult. In the professional world, however, the mode of address became more stable, and the intended audience is generally determined in advance. I begin with the stabilized genre not to deny the potential complexity and openness of this genre (or of genre in general) but to introduce the analysis of genre while highlighting the importance of commercial concerns.

Genre analysis provides a way to examine the relationship between production and consumption of *boys' love manga* and to develop a comparison between amateur circles and the *manga* industry. The professional world mobilizes genre to make clear distinctions between themes and readerships. On the contrary, in the amateur world *manga* are not automatically divided by genre, or it might be said that *mangaka* and fans do not dwell on genre distinctions when creating *dōjinshi*. *Yaoi manga*, for instance, may simply mean *manga* portraying homosexual males rather than constituting a genre.

Thus I will begin with "industrially-stabilized *boys' love*," Rick Altman's theory of film genre as well as Moine's reconsideration of it. This approach will allow me to consider what makes for a genre, and how genres may evolve and transform over time. My analysis will center on professional *manga* that are widely considered belonging to the *boys' love* genre both inside and outside Japan. Looking at *boys' love* through the lens of Rick Altman's theory will also allow me to consider whether *boys' love* might better be seen as an anti-genre, a subgenre or even a meta-genre. Needless to say there are many approaches to define a genre. I have chosen a framework developed in film studies because it addresses a mode of cultural production that is at once highly diversified and that is based on rapid production and high turnover.

A short history of boys' love manga

Boys' love is known by different names. The most common rubrics in Japanese are *yaoi* and *shōnen-ai. Boys' love* is a loose English translation of *shōnen-ai*. Japanese's bookstores and libraries today tend to classify such works as *BL*, an abbreviation of *boys' love*. While some authors such as McLelland prefer to use *yaoi* only for fan-produced work, using *shōnen-ai* to refer to current marketing genre,[3] others like Wood characterize *yaoi* as sexually explicit and *shōnen-ai* as sexually suggestive.[4] The latter distinction is frequently used by both fans and researchers. Such a distinction is related to the fact that the first *boys' love manga* were generally parodies produced by amateurs, and were very explicit sexually. Still, *yaoi* and *shōnen-ai* both refer to *manga* about homoerotic attraction between males written by and for

[3] Mark McLelland, "Why are Japanese Girls' Comics full of Boys Bonking?," *Intensities: The Journal of Cult Media* (2001), accessed December 2, 2011, http://intensities.org/essays/mclelland.pdf.
[4]Andrea Wood, "'Straight' Women, Queer Texts: Boy-Love Manga and the Rise of a Global Counterpublic," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 32 (2006): 395, accessed December 1, 2012, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40004766.

women.[5] Here I use the term *boys' love* when dealing with the genre and will only make clear distinctions between *shōnen-ai* and *yaoi* when it is necessary.

Yaoi started in the late 1970s in the *dōjinshi* world. It was primarily distributed through Comiket. Fans of professionally published *manga* would take characters from popular *manga* and use them as a basis for new narratives for their own enjoyment. It was the beginning of parody *manga*. Parody *manga* quickly come to focus more attention on turning heterosexual male characters into homosexual men, placing them in situations in which emotional and physical relationships were depicted.[6] *Captain Tsubasa* is commonly deemed the first *manga* thought to have been transformed into homosexual parody. This *manga* focuses on a soccer team and its captain named Tsubasa. Relationships between the male players during training and competitions are probably what made it so easy to convert into homosexual parody. Later, the characters of the *Saint Seiya anime* also provided popular material for homosexual parody by amateur *mangaka*.[7] The trend gained in popularity, receiving a lot of attention from fans and other amateur *mangaka* who also began creating love stories between homosexual men inspired by *manga* and *anime* characters or even popular actors and other. This was the beginning of the *yaoi* form of expression. The aim was to create something entertaining that would not require readers to think about anything other than the love story.[8] The stories generally were short due to the demand to be simple and direct, consisting of a couple of pages and focusing on a brief encounter between the male characters.

Interesting enough, the *manga* used for parody are typically *manga* for young boys, that is, *shōnen manga*, which have pronounced genre traits. Sébastien Kimbergt argues that this is

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[5] Mark McLelland, "No Climax, No Point, No Meaning? Japanese Women's Boy-Love Sites on the Internet," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 24 (2000): 274, accessed October 6, 2011, doi:0.1177/019685990002400300 3.

[6] Uki Meyer, "Hidden in Straight Sight: Trans*gressing Gender and Sexuality via BL," in *Boys' Love Manga: Essays on the Sexual Ambiguity and Cross-Cultural Fandom of the Genre*, ed. Antonia Levi et al. (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2010), 233.

[7] Sébastien Kimbergt, "Ces mangas qui se servent du yaoi pour doper leurs ventes," in *Homosexualité et manga: le yaoi*, ed. Hervé Brient. (France: Éditions H, 2008), 113.

[8] Namtrac, "Pourquoi les filles aiment-elles le yaoi?," in *Homosexualité et manga: le yaoi*, ed. Hervé Brient. (France: Éditions H, 2008), 69.

because *shōnen manga* are exceedingly popular and widely available. *Shōnen* stories attract the largest number of readers because their simple stylistic conventions and clearly delineated narratives make them easy to read. Furthermore, popular *shōnen* series often receive *anime* adaptation and spawn spin-off products which reinforce their popularity.[9] A study by Saitō Kumiko reveals that *manga* from the popular *Weekly Shōnen Jump* from Shūeisha have been the most widely parodied works since the beginning of the parody movement.[10] (The results of this study appear in appendix B.)

Female readers apparently see something more in the basic stories of mainstream *shōnen manga*. Since these *manga* usually deal with the close friendship between two or more boys who share a common hobby or goal (as with Captain Tsubasa and the members of the soccer team), it is easy enough for female fans to take the relationship further and make homosexual parodies based on events or dialogues from the original *manga*. Another trend involves drawing enemies of the same story into a sexual relationship, for example Light and L, in *Death Note*. Evidently fans continue to read beyond these simple *shōnen* stories, developing alternative narratives. What proves attractive for female readers "is the main character's willingness to work hard and overcome obstacles, and an equal relationship between the hero and his opponent, which develops into a mutual sympathy as each tries to achieve the same goal by different means."[11] Amateur parodies usually present little by way of plot, focusing on depicting heterosexual male characters from well-known *manga* series in homosexual relationships. The term *yaoi* itself is an abbreviation *yama nashi, ochi nashi, imi nashi* which mean "no meaning, no climax, no point."[12] Amateur *manga* tend to be sexually explicit, even pornographic, with little or no emphasis on plot. The focus is largely on sexual acts.[13]

[9] Kimbergt, " Mangas qui se servent du yaoi," 117.
[10] Saitō, "Desire in Subtext," 178-79.
[11] Yumiko Watanabe, "Seishōnen Manga kara Miru Yaoi," [Looking at *yaoi* from the perspective of boys' and young men's manga], *Eureka* 39 (2007): 73-74, quoted in Saitō, "Desire in Subtext," 180.
[12] McLelland, "No Climax, No Point, No Meaning?," 274.
[13] Wood, "'Straight' Women," 395.

Eventually, *yaoi* became so popular in the amateur world that some publishing companies decided to publish professional *boys' love* stories. Shūeisha and Kōdansha are to date the only two publishers not offering magazines devoted to *boys' love*. Those companies have invested in other strategies to attract female readers.[14]

In the mid-1970s, there was an increase of births in Japan. Consequently, the number of young adults as potential readers of *manga* magazines rose significantly in the late 1980s. In 1995, one in two teenagers was reading *Shōnen Jump*. This number dropped to one in five by 2005.[15] The prosperity of the publishing world depends on numbers of readers. The population growth in the 1980s forced *manga* publishing companies to hire more *mangaka*, and as a result young women started to find work in magazines originally intended for boys of all ages. *Manga* magazines, principally *Shōnen Jump*, had to constantly hire new artists to follow the strong market demand. The shortage of labor allowed female artists to enter the professional industry. Takahashi Rumiko, author of such *manga* as *Inuyasha* and *Ramna ½*, and Takada Akemi, illustrator and characters designer for *shōnen* stories, both joined the professional *manga* workforce, creating works primarily intended for boys but which also included elements common in narratives for girls.[16] Although such female *mangaka* could not initially express themselves creatively and produce innovative *manga* stories, entering the professional world allowed them to introduce some changes into the received genres conventions of *shōnen manga*. Female authors had a profound effect on the publishing industry because they spurred a blending of different genres in order to appeal to a larger audience. Women hired by professional companies modified *manga* adapting them for an ever larger audience consisting of boys and girls. Their work went beyond the originally target audience, bringing in more females readers. By the same token, they increased the popularity of *yaoi* in the amateur world

[14] Kimbergt, "Mangas qui se servent du yaoi," 121.
[15] Ibid., 129.
[16] Élodie Lepelletier, "Mangas sous XX: ces femmes qui écrivent pour les hommes," in *Le manga au féminin: Articles, chroniques, entretient et mangas*, ed. Hervé Brient. (France: Éditions H, 2010), 128.

as more female readers felt inspired to read *Shōnen Jump*. The magazine gradually came to be seen as the model for other companies. It not only published the best *shōnen* series but also sold more than two million copies each week.[17]

During the same period, in the late 1980s, *bishōnen* characters started to appear in *shōnen manga* and boosted sales throughout the 1990s. *Bishōnen* or "beautiful boys" are male characters drawn to look beautifully to the point of androgyny. McLelland described them thus: "androgynous, tall, slim, elfin figure with big eyes, long hair, high cheekbones and pointed chins."[18] Another key feature is their youth: they are usually between ten to twenty-five years old. Some Japanese women claim that this is the perfect age for boys in terms of beauty, for they are not too masculine.[19] In any event, the beautiful boy character is very popular in *boys' love* and *shōjo manga*. In *boys' love manga*, the features of the *bishōnen* characters are pushed to the extreme. Artists de-emphasize masculine characteristics, and boys appear beautiful and almost behave in a feminine way. Women *mangaka* deploy characters with an ambiguous gender to allow readers to interpret them in various ways, since no clear gender expectations are established. Although it remains unclear whether *bishōnen* characters started in the *shōjo* world and then adopted by *yaoi* amateur *mangaka* or vice versa, it is clear that such characters attracted female readers to *shōjo* and *yaoi manga*. *Bishōnen* characters began to appear in *shōnen manga* after these magazines started to hire women *mangaka*. *Shōnen manga* publishers and editors recognized their popularity among female readers and decided to include them in *shōnen manga* too. In the *shōnen manga* industry today, greater numbers of male characters are drawn beautifully in the style of the typical *bishōnen* character. The combination of women *mangaka* with *bishōnen* characters transformed the received paradigm for male heroes in *shōnen manga* that is, invincible and strong male hero. A new trend emerged, which tended to

[17] Saitō, "Desire in Subtext," 180.
[18] McLelland, "No Climax, No Point, No Meaning?," 277.
[19] Wood, "'Straight' Women," 279.

place greater emphasis on the appearance of characters than on courage and perseverance. Both the readership and style of *shōnen manga* was thus transformed dramatically.[20]

Let me return to the publishing companies who opted to include *yaoi* narratives in their magazines. The movement of *yaoi manga* into the professional *manga* industry meant that they had to be adapted to a well established production system based on strict genre distinctions, conventions and expectations. In the amateur world, *yaoi manga* entail a mode of "parody" that prevents them from emerging as a stable genre. Once brought in the professional world, however, where genres distinctions are crucial, the industry began to introduce characteristics to distinguish them from other *manga* and their audience. *Yaoi mangaka* recruited from the amateur circuit had to adapt their art to comply with Japanese censorship laws, such as those prohibiting depiction of genitalia. They had to meet the standard of the publishing companies.[21] The new imagery gave readers the same paradigm yet left more to their imagination in terms of sexual depiction. *Mangaka* now also had to develop a plot and create original characters, since taking characters from other works violates copyright. As a result, as they moved into the publishing industry *yaoi* gradually became less explicit in terms of sexual depiction, thus creating *shōnen-ai*, that is, *boys' love.* While amateur *boys' love manga* focus largely on images and little on narrative, professional creators also had to create a solid storyline, to "balance" their work. Despite the apparent differences between *shōnen-ai* and *yaoi*, the core idea remains the same: depicting boys' love. Feedback between *shōnen-ai* and *yaoi* is continuous today, and some *shōnen-ai manga* have become as explicit as the *yaoi manga* found in the amateur market.[22] The necessity to comply with censorship laws and to create storylines in the manner conventional in *manga* magazines transformed *yaoi* into the *boys' love* genre as recognized today.

[20] Kimbergt, "Mangas qui se servent du yaoi," 119-20.
[21] Wood, "'Straight' Women," 401.
[22] Aleardo Zanghellini, "Underage Sex and Romance in Japanese Homoerotic Manga and Anime," *Social & Legal Studies* 18 (2009): 169, accessed April 16, 2011, doi:10.1177/0964663909103623.

The *boys' love* genre is today well established in the *manga* industry, and there are many *manga* magazines dedicated to this genre. In 1998, there were twelve *manga* magazines dedicated to the *boys' love* genre in Japan.[23] In contrast, production in the amateur world remains less defined by genre conventions. In effect, it is only possible to study *boys' love manga* in terms of genre in the commercial world. The difference between *yaoi* and *shōnen-ai* in some respects recalls Raphäelle Moine's distinction between "genre cinema" and "auteur cinema" in the context of the film industry. Genre cinema is defined by a strong commercial investment in production formula. It can be associated with the production of professional *manga*. Auteur cinema, on the other hand, allows greater freedom from economic and institutional restrictions. *Dōjinshi* is reminiscent of auteur cinema in that it allows greater freedom from certain established rules. Amateurs enjoy greater latitude to play, modify and even transgress genre conventions and even develop a sort of signature style.[24] Amateur artists, often working alone or in small groups, sometimes develop their distinctive style, aesthetically and syntactically. In contrast, in the professional *manga* world, artists who are recruited either by editors or via contests have to adhere to the magazines' distinctive style and have less opportunity to develop a signature style.[25] It is important to understand auteur cinema and *dōjinshi* as a body of work strongly influenced by the constraints of the commercial world, but that allows and encourages amateurs to develop a signature style and make some radical changes to the genre basic characteristics. Amateur *manga* artists or film producers take the formulas exploited in the commercial world and experiment with them in order to develop a signature style. There are other similarities between the film and the *manga* industries. Much as the *manga* industry seized on popular forms of expression in the amateur world and transformed them into industrial or professional genres, the professional film industry may be

[23] Mark McLelland, "The World of Yaoi: The Internet, Censorship and the Global "Boys' Love" Fandom" (paper from the Faculty of Arts of the University of Wollongong, 2005: 13), accessed October 25, 2011. http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1152&context=artspapers.
[24] Raphaëlle Moine, *Cinema Genre* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), xiii.
[25] Namtrac, "Pourquoi les filles aiment-elles le yaoi?,"68.

inspired by and adapt ideas from successful auteur films back into recognizable genres. *Film noir* would be a good example of this.[26]

Since genres in both the film and the *manga* industries have played a vital role in their development, we need to consider genres not as simple types but in terms of their internal dynamics. Authors dealing with the *boys' love* genre often sum it up in a single sentence: "as same-sex male romances or erotica written 'by women for women'"[27] or as "a narrative about the romantic or erotic relationship between two or more male characters that has been created with the intention of appealing to a female audience."[28] While such definitions are a useful point of departure, we need to look more closely at what makes *boys' love* a genre to begin with. In fact, "genres are always easier to recognize than to define."[29] Since *manga* are commonly classified in terms of genre, viewers and readers tend to feel it unnecessary to look into the production of a genre. This is also true in the film industry. Moreover, Moine points out no universal typology of genre exist:

> There is no known universal typology of genres capable of dividing up the cinematic landscape definitively into groups of films, given that such a typology would need to be built on distinctions accepted by all, and to be organized in terms of stable categories.[30]

In addition, since different people have different ways of categorizing, it is difficult to establish clear boundaries of genres that will be acceptable to everyone.[31] The first amateur *mangaka* who made parody using heterosexual characters from *shōnen manga* were able to see homosexual situations within those *manga*. For them, the *shōnen* narrative had already included elements of homosexual romance. In other words, genre boundaries depend on who is looking and at what. Thus the relationship between producers and consumers becomes very important.

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[26] Moine, *Cinema Genre*, 111.
[27] Meyer, "Hidden in Straight Sight," 232.
[28] Dru Pagliassotti, "Boys' Love vs. Yaoi: An Essay on Terminology," http://ashenwings.com/marks/2008 /07/17/boys-love-vs-yaoi-an-essay-on-terminology/, quoted in Neal K. Akatsuka, "Uttering the Absurd, Revaluing the Abject: Femininity and the Disavowal of Homosexuality in Transnational *Boys' Love Manga*," in *Boys' Love Manga: Essays on the Sexual Ambiguity and Cross-Cultural Fandom of the Genre*, ed. Antonia Levi et al. (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2010), 159.
[29] Moine, *Cinema Genre*, xv.
[30] Ibid., 12.
[31] Ibid., 109.

Even if the professional *manga* world makes clear distinctions between genres, consumers alter those boundaries. For female creators, mainstream *shōnen* narratives, previously described as simple and repetitive, proved easier to transform into *yaoi* storylines than other *manga* genres. Henry Jenkins' research on readers is interesting here. Using David Bleich's theory of reader response, Jenkins distinguished between male and female reading strategies, characterizing women as "concerned with emotional realism" and focusing on "'the elaboration of paradigmatic relationships' and 'characters psychology.'"[32] The same may be said of *yaoi* fans reading *shōnen manga*. *Yaoi* fans were reading *shōnen manga* differently than young boys were.

Genre analysis

The genre, as defined in the film industry, can give us a better understanding of its counterpart in the *manga* industry. Here I will turn to Altman's theory. His theory hinges on two variables. On the one hand, there are definition based on semantic elements such as traits, characters, attitudes, settings and technical features. Altman explains that this method of qualification of genres applies to a large number of miscellaneous films but has only a weak explanatory power since it focuses mainly on elements. On the other hand, it is possible to define genres in terms of syntax or structure. This approach has a strong explanatory potential but only applies to a limited number of films. Semantic and syntactic approaches have always been used independently, but Altman argues that they are in fact complementary and may be used together to make for a more complete analysis of genre. Indeed, focusing on only one aspect would amount to giving up a whole set of elements that are essential to genre study. Altman thus uses both approaches constructing a semantic-syntactic model of genre,[33] in which semantic analysis focuses on the content of the film while syntactic analysis deals with

[32] Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 112, quoted in Saitō, "Desire in Subtext," 174.
[33] Moine, *Cinema Genre*, 55.

narrative structure in which the content is organized.[34] Put another way, the semantic elements are like words in a sentence or a text, and the syntax is the textual signification of those words.[35]

Altman's approach strives for a fuller explanation of genre by allowing for dialogue between genres, which "single-minded approaches" normally rule out. Altman also allows us to understand how films may take the syntax of one genre and the semantics of another in order to create something new. In other words, genre mixing is given a central role instead of being studied independently. In context of the *boys' love* genre, it is thus possible to ask whether it entails stronger syntax and weak semantic, or vice versa. As Altman explains, a genre may emerge through stable semantic elements that develop a consistent syntax or, as it may be the case with the *boys' love* genre, a genre may start with a strong syntax into which different elements of semantic can be incorporated.[36]

From the truly daunting number of *boys' love manga*, I have chosen six *manga* ranging from the early 1990s to the present, selecting works that are evoked as paradigmatic examples by readers of scholars. They are as follows:

- *Fake* by Matō Sanami, Japanese edition published in 1994, 7 volumes
- *Gravitation* by Murakami Maki, Japanese edition published in 1995, 12 volumes
- *Fake Fur* by Yamagata Satomi, Japanese edition published in 2004, 1 volume
- *Affair* by Kano Shiuko, Japanese edition published in 2005, Short story collection
- *Ambiguous Relationship* by Minase Masara, Japanese edition published in 2008, Short story collection
- *Flutter* by Tenzen Momoko, Japanese edition published in 2011, 1 volume

Examining these *manga* through the lens of Altman's genre theory, I will focus on both semantic elements and syntax in order to determine if they indeed display genre-like coherence. This approach will allow me to pose questions about the distinctive features of this genre, for

[34] Rick Altman, "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre," *Cinema Journal*. 23 (1984): 11, accessed December 10, 2012, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1225093.
[35] Ibid., 16.
[36] Ibid., 12.

instance, does the *boys' love* genre rely more on syntax or on semantic elements? What are the implications of these different emphases?

Semantic elements

One of the striking features of *boys' love manga* is the prevalence of male characters. Frequently there are no female characters. Fans of the genre generally agree that female characters should not be depicted in *boys' love manga*, for they distract the readers who wish to concentrate on male characters.[37] While the age of the male characters varies, *boys' love manga* usually presents characters who are around eighteen years old that is, legally adult. Use of younger characters in emotional or sexual relationships belongs to another genre of *manga,* called *shotacon*. In the *boys' love* genre, sexual relations typically happen between mature adults or "new" adults, that is, turned eighteen. Some narratives present characters who look younger, but their age is clearly stated to avoid misunderstanding. When publishing in the professional *manga* industry, *mangaka* must comply with regulations about sex between adults that amateurs do not always respect. The age of the characters depends largely on the setting of the story. For example, a story set in a high school will tend to have more teenagers than one set in an office. Some relationships occur between characters close in ages, as in *Flutter* and in *Fake Fur,* while other *manga* entail significant age differences. In the short story "More than a child, not quite an adult" in *Ambiguous Relationship,* the two main characters are significantly different in age. One is a professional pediatrician, and the other is a young high school student. Similarity, the two main characters of the short story "Sweet Restraint" differ greatly in age: they first meet when one is still a child and the other already an adult.

Hierarchy is an essential element in *boys' love manga*. Hierarchy between male lovers is frequently based on age difference but may also be grounded in social position. In any case, the genre depends on a hierarchical distinction within sexual relations positing two positions: *seme*

[37] M.M. Blair "'She Should Just Die in a Ditch': Fan Reactions to Female Characters in Boys' Love Manga," in *Boys' Love Manga: Essays on the Sexual Ambiguity and Cross-Cultural Fandom of the Genre*, ed. Antonia Levi et al. (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2010), 112.

and *uke*, sometimes translated as "top" and "bottom." *Mangaka* explore the implications of *seme* and *uke* relations, but the positions are fixed. Looking at earlier *manga* written in the 1990s, such as *Gravitation* and *Fake*, the hierarchical rapport between *seme* and *uke* characters is emphasized and often reinforced by drawing on *sempai* and *kōhai* relations, that is, elder and younger social positions characteristic of Japanese society. For example, in *Fake*, Randy, also known as Ryo, is considered to be the *kōhai* of Dee because Dee has been working as a detective for longer. It is common in Japan for people to refer to one another as *sempai* (older cohort) and *kōhai* (subsequent cohort), for example, younger students are considered *kōhai* to the older students in Japanese schools. In the *boys' love* genre, *sempai* and *kōhai* are often added to *seme* and *uke*, enhancing a sense of maturity and immaturity in hierarchical terms. Readers and writers of *boys' love* tend to classify the main characters in such terms. The s*eme* is typically the older character in the relationship, and the *uke* younger, as in *Gravitation*. Yuki is clearly older than his companion Shūichi. *Seme* and *uke* are also used in martial arts; refer to who attacks and who responds. In fact, the term *seme* comes from the verb *semeru* meaning to attack, and *uke* comes from the verb *ukeru* which means to receive. They imply certain behaviors and expectations.[38] In the *boys' love* genre, the *seme* is usually the character who knows more about sex and initiates the sexual encounter, while the *uke* is more passive and vulnerable. The *seme* character is expected to protect his partner from harm, which is precisely what Yuki does for Shūichi. There are distant echoes of *samurai* culture, where *samurai* had to protect their inferiors.[39] The *seme*, being generally more mature, defends his partner. Also, older and taller, the *seme* is usually in the position of control and is expected to be on top during sexual intercourse. Conversely, the *uke* character is expected to be the bottom, receiving pleasure.[40]

[38] Mark McLelland, "Japanese Girls' Comics."
[39] William MacDuff, "Beautiful Boys in Nō Drama: The Idealization of Homoerotic Desire," *Asian Theatre Journal* 13 (1996): 252, accessed December 15, 2012, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1124529.
[40] Mark McLelland, "No Climax, No Point, No Meaning?," 279-80.

Although in recent years, there are some new tendencies, this set of behaviors is generally used in *boys' love manga*. In recent *manga*, for instance most stories included in the *Ambiguous Relationship* collection or in *Flutter* deploy *seme*/*uke* relations, but make the *uke* older and the *seme* younger. Still, they assure that the *seme* character remains dominant or extroverted in comparison to his companion. Such *manga* reverse the roles dictated by age, exploring a new dynamic. Others portray two characters with the same role or modify the expected behaviors, usually reversing expectations. These changes most likely come from the *dōjinshi* world where amateurs continue to experiment with characters. The relationship between the professional pediatrician and the young high school student in the short story "More than a child, not quite an adult" provided a good example. The age difference between the two characters gives the impression that the doctor would be the *seme* character, but, as the story unfolds, the reader discovers that the boy is actually the character with *seme* characteristics: he wants to be in control during sexual intercourse. Despite these *seme* characteristics, the young boy retains *uke* features as well: he lacks confidence and possesses no significant sexual experience. In sum, while it continues to transform, the *seme* and *uke* dynamic remains integral to these stories. Readers and writers are still committed to it. In the examples used here, authors often describe in the afterword how they intended to play with those roles, trying to create stories where both characters would be of the same type or would change roles. They stressed how enjoyable it was to see where such scenarios would take them.

In addition to characters, settings are another potential semantic element of *boys' love* stories. Like the *seme* and *uke* dynamic, settings have greatly evolved over time. When *boys' love* entered the professional publishing industry, the majority of *mangaka* attempted to create stories in which the action took place in another country or in which one of the characters came from abroad or even from another world. In Murakami Maki's *Gravitation*, the action occurs in modern Japan, but one of the characters looks foreign due to his blue eyes and blond hair. In

Fake, the action takes place entirely in the United States, and only one character is half-Japanese. As Frederic Schodt say, "Love between boys in another country is so completely distant from their own reality that it's not threatening, yet it still gives them [the readers] a vivacious experience…"[41] In the first entries in this genre, the actions occurred in an unknown or far off place, and the characters were often equally foreign. Authors began gradually to set their *manga* in modern Japan, creating characters who were Japanese in a Japanese environment. In more recent *manga*, that is, the four selections published after 2004, a Japanese setting seems to have become the norm.

Boys' love manga typically center on relationship between the male characters. It recalls *shōjo manga* in this respect. The blossoming of love between the characters can assume such importance that the setting pales in comparison, and often, once the setting is established, little attention is drawn to it in favor of characters and their emotions. Henry Jenkins suggests that, female readers tend to relate with "the emotional reality of characters, often ignoring the plausibility of settings or plots."[42] Kinsella adds that the "traditional plot" often does not hold an importance for female readers, as many focus almost exclusively on the characters' emotions.[43] The unfolding relations between the male characters is such important that may be considered integral to the syntax of such *manga*. Once the *manga* established the roles to two main characters, *seme* and *uke*, the setting loses its importance. This relation implies a narrative trajectory and thus serves to organize semantic elements, and indeed seems to take precedence over them.

Semantics elements thus diverge greatly. Although there are some common elements across groups of *manga*, there is no single common set of elements across *boys' love* in general. Actions take place in various parts of the world or in an imaginary world, and the characters,

[41] Frederik Schodt, *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1983), 137 quoted in McLelland, "No Climax, No Point, No Meaning?," 284-85.
[42] Saitō, "Desire in Subtext," 174.
[43] Sharon Kinsella, "Subculture in the 1990s: Otaku and the Amateur Manga Movement," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 24 (1998): 301, accessed October 2, 2012.

aside from being male, can take on attributes of various species, ranging from humans to animals and fantastic creatures. In other words, syntax is more integral to *boys' love* than any specific elements. Once the *manga* introduces two or more men, the setting may range from outer space to a Japanese all-boys school. Indeed, all six *manga* selections analyzed here take place in different locations.

There is, however, one semantic element that appears common to the genre: *Boys' love* resembles *shōjo manga* style in this respect. As in *shōjo manga*, in which the story closely follows the main protagonist and presents her thoughts and personal feelings, *boys' love* typically follows the *uke* character. This establishes the *uke* character as the main protagonist, making his thoughts and feelings available to readers. The *manga* layout is constructed to present his perspective to readers. Common layout strategies include speech bubbles presenting the character's thoughts, or words or sentences appearing in speech bubbles that are understood to be his thoughts. This was the case for most of the *manga* used for this analysis. The general emphasis on the *uke* character recalls the conventions of *shōjo manga* in which the *manga* adopts the perspective of the less mature or experienced character. In addition, the *uke* characters are generally withdrawn, relying on others, which reinforces the sense of closeness between readers and characters. Zanghellini's work, which centers on reading strategies of English speaking fans of *boys' love*, likewise reveals that readers generally relate to the *uke*, perceiving the *seme* character as "the object of their desire."[44]

Syntactic elements

The only strong semantic elements are the use of male characters and the tendency to focus on the *uke* characters. Thus, to understand the *boys' love* genre better, it is imperative to consider its syntax. As previously mentioned the syntax of *boys' love* story appears more

[44] Aleardo Zanghellini, "'Boys Love' in Anime and Manga: Japanese Subcultural Production and its End Users," *Continuum* 23 (2009): 285, accessed April 16, 2011. doi:10.1080/10304310902822886.

important than semantic elements. In terms of syntax, all six selections show a high degree of commonality. Indeed, all the *manga* read for this research share a common ground.

Boys' love manga center on romance between two or more men. Dru Pagliassotti argues that *boys' love* stories follow the conventions of romances in general: "slowly but consistently developing love between the couple".[45] Keith makes a similar observation: "Yaoi narratives always involve two men falling in love with each other, they almost invariably mimic the most conventionally heterosexual romance."[46] Romance is generally characterized by emotional attraction between two individuals. Pagliasotti thus situates the *boys' love* genre within the conventional romance genre, even arguing that *boys' love* should be considered a "discrete subgenre of popular romance."[47] Zanghellini also explains that the storylines of *boys' love manga* indeed have much in common with "well-established romance scripts."[48] The eight essential elements of western romance novels identified by Pamela Regis, to be discussed below, are found in most *boys' love* narratives. Nevertheless, there are exceptions to this pattern.

Creators of *boys' love manga* tend to use the one-volume format. Earlier *manga* like *Gravitation* and *Fake*, however, spanned numerous volumes. The common practice nonetheless tends to be a one-volume *manga* in which the story is divided into multiple chapters, as is the case with *Fake Fur* by Yamagata Satomi and *Flutter* by Tenzen Momoko. *Mangaka* may also produce a series of short stories in the form of short chapters, *Affair* by Kano Shiuko and *Ambiguous Relationship* by Minase Masara are good examples of this practice, which recalls the format common in the *dōjinshi* world. These different formats affect the narrative form in terms of length and detail. Nevertheless, despite such variations, the syntax remains the same.

[45] Dru Pagliassotti, "Better Than Romance? Japanese BL Manga and the Subgenre of Male/Male Romantic Fiction," in *Boys' Love Manga: Essays on the Sexual Ambiguity and Cross-Cultural Fandom of the Genre*, ed. Antonia Levi et al. (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2010), 59.
[46] Vincent Keith, "A Japanese Electra and Her Progeny," in *Mechademia Volume 2 Networks of Desire*, ed. Lunning Frenchy. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 73.
[47] Pagliassotti, "Better Than Romance?," 59.
[48] Zanghellini, "'Boys Love' in Anime," 284.

In fact, because *boys' love manga* do not require a distinct beginning, middle or end in narrative terms (unlike Hollywood movies and many novels), its syntax is rather indifferent to scale.

Pamela Regis defines the eight stages of the narrative of the romance genre as follows: the society defined, the meeting, the barrier, the attraction, the declaration, the point of ritual death, the recognition, and finally the betrothal.[49] *Boys' love* storylines commonly follow this pattern, but may begin or end at any point in the chain. *Fake Fur* and *Flutter* are good examples. Both works are single volume *manga* which allows a more complete storyline instead of shorter pieces. Shorter stories containing only a couple of pages do not as obviously follow the pattern because they move quickly through different stages. Often the first stages are absent, and the story will start directly with the declaration of love, jump to the scene of mutual recognition, and then end. Such a strategy is also common among amateurs in the *dōjinshi* world. Since most *dōjinshi* consist of only a few pages, creators usually jump immediately to the declaration and consummation of love without a clear introduction and ending. This also happens in the parody form, especially those portraying characters from well-known *manga*. *Mangaka* wish to focus on the encounter and relationship between male lovers. Readers already know the setting and personalities of the characters. They know the original *manga*. Since the goal is to have fun and play with the characters by placing them in outlandish situations, the authors often focus primarily on such aspect, setting aside the complementary elements. In the professional *manga* world, although many authors adopt the short story format, they provide more about the setting for the story and the personalities of the characters. A simple depiction of a romantic encounter between men is typical of the amateur world. It is not a common practice in the professional *manga* industry. To add depth to their stories, professional *mangaka* often include flashbacks or scenes of past events that afford a better understanding of the characters. Kano Shiuko adopts

[49] Pamela Regis, *A Natural History of the Romance Novel* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003): 30-38, quoted in Pagliassotti, "Better than Romance?," 63.

such a strategy in *Affair*. The inclusion of multiple stories in one volume makes it necessary to explain the background for the relationship between the characters via flashbacks.

Some of the eight stages identified by Regis need to be adapted in the context of homosexual romance. The first two steps, the society defined and the meeting, tend to remain the same. In the context of *manga*, the first pages usually depict the setting for the story. In *Flutter*, for example, the first two pages show a large city, probably in Japan, where the main character sees his future lover while waiting to cross at a traffic light on the way to work. The meeting happens shortly thereafter. Generally, the two first steps are the same in the *boys' love* genre, but the gender of the characters has changed. With the third phase, however, some modifications appear. As Pagliassotti explains, the barrier in *boys' love* stories often concerns social prohibitions discouraging same-sex romance. Falling outside norm, homosexual relationships are a source of apprehension or even denial for the characters. The barrier stage often entails the rejection of gay identity or doubts about the other man's feelings. Other barriers include rivalry between the potential lovers and the need for secrecy in light of social taboos.[50] The barriers eventually fade out one way or another, which allow the fourth stage, the attraction phase, where the characters become emotionally involved, and the fifth stage, the declaration of love, to follow. The sixth stage, point of ritual death, entails a moment in the story where the happy ending is in danger. Frequently the return of an old lover is a source of danger as in *Flutter* or *Fake Fur*. Sometimes, a previous commitment such as an arranged marriage is the problem as in *Gravitation*. It may also be provoked by a simple argument or misunderstanding, as in *Fake Fur*. The last two stages, the recognition and the betrothal, bring the love story back on track and leave open the possibility for a happy ending.

This last stage can widely vary in *boys' love manga*. The happy ending scenario is a foregone conclusion, and some *mangaka* close with dramatic scenario in which love between

[50] Pagliassotti, "Better than Romance?," 59.

the characters becomes impossible. Negative outcomes can occur at any stage in the story. Scenes of non-consensual sex are not uncommon in the *boys' love* genre. In fact, they seem more common than not. Stories frequently stages scenes of sexual assault or other forms of sexual violence. Dru Pagliassotti's study show that 50% of 391 respondents to a survey on *boys' love manga* saw sexual assault, explicit sex, torture and even cruelty as acceptable in the context of *boys' love manga*.[51] This emphasis is unique to *boys' love manga*. Such violence, sometimes explicitly depicted, does not generally focus on suffering. Rather violence appears as a way for one character to discover his love for the other. The story "Man on!" in *Ambiguous Relationship* begins with a rape scene. Often the *manga* softens the violence by suggesting the victim is unconsciously consent. Saitō also notes that rape is a popular strategy to assure narrative progress: for the sexual act forces the *uke* to recognize his true feelings for the man.[52] Although common, scenes of sexual assault are short, creating less burden on the characters during the rest of the story. This is true of *Gravitation* where the victim do not seem burdened with the trauma at all.

In sum, there are many similarities between the romance genre and the *boys' love* genre. While some adjustments are necessary to adapt Regis' model to *boys' love*, it helps to clarify the syntax of *boys' love manga*. The strong syntax of *boys' love manga* emphasizes an emotional and/or a sexual relationship between two or more men, and their relationship generally encounters obstacles before being consummated or unexpectedly ended. The narrative builds on specific behaviours typical of the *uke* or *seme* characters. Stories are commonly narrated by the *uke* character whose thoughts and worries are staged for readers. In contrast, semantic elements vary widely. Stories take place in a wide variety of settings. Some semantic elements, however, anticipate and reinforce the syntax. For instance, the relation of *seme* and *uke* as well as the tendency to adapt the *uke* perspective form a bridge between semantic and syntactic articulation.

[51] Ibid., 67.
[52] Saitō, "Desire in Subtext," 184.

A stable syntax allows *boys' love* to incorporate elements of other genre. Thus *boys' love* may adopt the settings from the science fiction genre or elements of vampire movies. Yet, the *boys' love* genre remains recognizable due to its syntactic consistency.

Thus we come to questions about the impurity or hybridity of genre. As Moine explains genres tend to be hybrid, they are not pure and impermeable. No genre is truly stable and stuck into "frozen categories", and dialogue between the elements of one genre and the syntax of another is always possible.[53] Altman' theory of genre is interesting because it addressed this capacity of genre. Because Altman allows for play between semantic elements and syntax, his approach makes it possible to understand the complexity of interweaving of genres. In fact, the *boys' love* genre allows hybridity. Its use of stronger syntax and weak semantic elements allows it to incorporate semantic elements from a wide range of other genres.[54]

In fact, the distinction between semantic elements and syntax is difficult to sustain.[55] Altman himself explains that a general consensus on the "exact frontier" dividing semantic elements from the syntax does not exist. This is why he proposes instead to differentiate generic definitions, and to look at how elements work together.[56] In the case of *boys' love manga*, the solid syntax allows for inclusion of a very wide range of semantic elements within the story. Altman considers such genres to be the most durable. He explains that the Hollywood genres that have persisted over time are the ones with a coherent syntax. On the contrary, the genres that disappear quickly are usually ones that depend on recurrent semantic elements without a stable syntax.[57] In light of the previous analysis of the *boys' love* genre, one would then conclude that it will remain strong. Although *boys' love* is relatively new, appearing only a couple decades ago, it has developed a strong syntax which may well allow it to endure over time.

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[53] Moine, *Cinema Genre*, 96.
[54] Ibid., 61.
[55] Barry Langford, *Film Genre: Hollywood and Beyond* (Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 16.
[56] Altman, "Semantic/Syntactic Approach," 10.
[57] Ibid., 16.

Dialogue between the professional world and the amateur world is also an important feature of this genre. Professional *mangaka* recruited from the amateur circuit generally maintain close relations with the amateur world, often continuing to create *dōjinshi*. Murakami Maki professionally published the *manga Gravitation* but continued to create *dōjinshi* works. She is not alone. A significant number of professional *boys' love mangaka* sustain close ties with the amateur world, because it remains closer to readers, and because some *mangaka* feel a certain loyalty to it, having been recruited there.[58] Because a genre exists only if it entails a method organizing links between semantics elements and syntax, it needs to be recognized by a community of readers. The link between readers and creators is essential to the equation[59]: "A cinematic genre only appears when it is named and designated as such, since its existence is tied to an awareness of it that is agreed upon and shared by a community."[60] The *boys' love* genre is published both in the amateur world and in the publishing industry, but more importantly, it is accepted by the fans and readers that buy, create and enjoy these stories.

Conclusion

Looking at *boys' love manga* via Altman's theory of genre shows that *boys' love* narratives share a good deal with the romance storyline yet differ in their focus on homosexual romance, which introduces specific complications into the romance related to social prohibitions and readers expectations. The focus on homosexual romance primarily affects the syntax. Consequently, the incorporation of semantic elements from other genres allows for mixing of genres, which are at the time integrated in the syntax of *boys' love* stories.

The hybridity of *boys' love* raises the question of what it means to call it a genre. It might instead be considered as a meta-genre or as a sub-genre of romance. *Boys' love* is now commonly recognized as a genre by a vast community, not only in Japan but in others countries

[58] Namtrac, "Pourquoi les filles aiment-elles le yaoi?," 68.
[59] Moine, *Cinema Genre*, 62-63.
[60] Ibid., 142.

where fans have access to such *manga*, either in print or in *scanlation.*[61] While genre should entail a successful fit between semantic elements and syntax, it is ultimately the reception that determines whether the fit is successful or not.[62] Insofar as audiences seem to have already accepted *boys' love* as a genre, it is not unreasonable to think of it as such.

In recent years, genre mixing and hybridization have become standard practice. As readers are segmented by age, sex, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, mixing genres promises to attract a bigger crowd. In *boys' love manga*, there is an increasing tendency to incorporate semantic elements from other genres. Also, the consumers, constantly solicited by the publishing industry, are segmented due to the arrival of new genres.[63] This is why new *manga* magazines, such as *Jump SQ*, include stories in different genres created by authors of both sexes. *Manga* publishers must decide whether they wish to create specialized magazines or hybridized magazines.[64] In either case, publishers and writers seek a balance between the demands of the market and those of readers. The *boys' love* genre continues to attract new readers, and amateur *mangaka* continue to explore it in *dōjinshi*. The genre is clearly still evolving. Indeed there have already been significant transformations, particularly in the interactions of *uke* and *seme*. Dialogue between the amateur and the publishing worlds is a major force driving such transformations. There is only a handful of genres that cross between those two worlds, allowing amateurs to have an impact on works published in the professional world. When fans respond positively to works in the amateur world, there is a good chance that the professional industry will introduce similar modifications, reinforcing the connections between those two worlds and their readers. The *boys' love* genre thus creates a sort of feedback loop between two sites of *manga* production.

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[61] *Scanlation* are mostly produced by amateurs who scan and translate *manga* or short novels without copyright and make them available online, usually for free, for other fans.
[62] Altman, "Semantic/Syntactic Approach," 1-15.
[63] Ibid., 9.
[64] Lepelletier, "Mangas sous XX," 129-30.

Chapter 3

Connections between the manga industry and its readers

This final chapter will deal with the relationships between readers, the professional *manga* industry and amateur world, using Gibson-Graham's anthropological approach to the analysis of economies. Their method delineates ways of analyzing alternative economics which in this context will serve to compare with contrast the economies of the professional and amateur worlds. The need to build a strong relationship with the readers, that is, purchasers, is crucial to both venues.

I will also address the emergence of Japanese women's purchasing power. Many businesses today strive to attract a female clientele. To do so, the publishing industry had to modify its *manga* without alienating its original audiences. The strategies adopted by *Shōnen Jump* magazine provide a prime example.

The topic of *fujoshi* or female fans of the *boys' love* genre will also be addressed. Although associated with the amateur world, their economic activities extend well beyond *dōjinshi*. They have an indirect but very significant impact on the professional *manga* world. Work focusing on *fujoshi* has only begun recently. Previous research on *manga* and *anime* fandom in Japan has focused on the *otaku* phenomena, primarily on male *otaku*. An overview of the *fujoshi* subculture is necessary in order to better understand the worlds and economies of fans more broadly. The focus on *fujoshi* introduces another aspect of the *boys' love* phenomenon not often dealt with. Sophisticated discussions of *yaoi* are available, but little is known about *fujoshi*. This lack of research explains why such women are often regarded as "rebelling against the assumed patriarchy of Japan."[1] Although some information on *fujoshi* is available in English and French, a fuller picture is only possible using Japanese sources.

[1] Patrick W. Galbraith, "Fujoshi: Fantasy Play and Transgressive Intimacy among "Rotten Girls" in Contemporary Japan," *Signs* 37 (2011): 215, accessed November 24, 2011, doi:10.1086/660182.

The final section of this chapter will present a general conclusion exploring the interconnectedness of the *dōjinshi* world and the professional *manga* industry pertaining at different levels.

The capitalist economy of the manga publishing firms

In *A Postcapitalist Politics*, J.K. Gibson-Graham explore how the capitalist model of analysis has become hegemonic and offer alternatives to this universal model of the economy.[2] Their thoughts on capitalism provide a new perspective on the professional *manga* industry. The professional publishing industry in Japan, as in most countries of the world, follows what Gibson-Graham refer to as a "formal market exchange" system, insofar as it adheres to certain rules to distribute and sell its products. The industry comprises different companies of various sizes publishing all sorts of books and magazines. (For a list of the most influential *manga* publishers, see appendix C.) They also hire employees who work in exchange for remuneration. This classic model of wage labor follows this idea:

> The usual image of wage labor is of workers who do not own any means of production but sell their labor power to a capitalist employer in return for a monetary wage set at a level that allows them and their dependents to buy the commodities necessary for subsistence.[3]

Publishing companies employ workers to create a product, in this case books or magazines, in exchange for a wage. New recruits either enter the "managerial track" or the "clerical track" or are hired as temporary or contract workers. All are remunerated for their work even if benefits and promotions may vary according to the position. Gibson-Graham highlight this distinction between workers:

> There are the highly paid professionals and other salaried workers who are able to exert power in the work-place and exact compensation for their labor that far exceeds the amount needed to cover the costs of a socially acceptable standard of living. There is the dwindling unionized workforce, whose ability to control entry to a labor market enables them to exact higher wages and benefits. There is the growing number of nonunionized,

[2] J.K. Gibson-Graham, *A Postcapitalist Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 55.
[3] Ibid., 64.

> part-time, temporary, and seasonal laborers, whose wage payments are more likely to be unregulated and low.[4]

The practice of hiring employees as wage labor fits perfectly with the capitalist model as presented by Gibson-Graham. To ensure employees an ongoing salary and also to sustain the business, it is necessary to maximize the sale of products following what is famously referred to as the laws of supply and demand. Companies thus have to create, in this case, *manga* magazines, that meet the demands of the public.

Developing popular *manga*, however, is often not enough. Capitalist industries survive and grow only if they make profits. *Manga* magazines seem initially to be an exception to this rule. Sales of *manga* magazines often do not generate any profit for the publishing companies: "…there was a period around 1985 when *Shōnen Jump* (the long-standing champion boys' manga magazine) was at its peak, that is actually was in the black, however briefly."[5] *Manga* magazines are published first and foremost to determine what will sell and what will lend to its adaptation into other media, such as *anime* and video games. Magazines are crucial for market research because they are cheap, easily available, and serve as advertisement. The publishing companies, own the franchise, and thus make profits from adaptations of highly popular *manga* series. Building a solid bond with readers is essential as a first link in the chain. It almost guarantees that readers will buy other related products, thus ensuring profits. This is why almost all *manga* developed in magazine, especially *Shōnen Jump*, are serial. Extended series produce a deeper relationship and generate long-term profits.

Clients, then, are essential to the publishing industry's success. The production of *manga* depends on readers who will not only buy the magazines but also related merchandise. The relation with the consumer is important. To establish this "personal" relationship with consumers, publishing companies use different strategies. Some magazines use popularity

[4] Ibid.
[5] Jennifer S. Prough, *Straight from the Heart: Gender, Intimacy, and the Cultural Production of Shōjo Manga* (University of Hawaii Press, 2011), 13.

surveys or add special sections or interviews with the *mangaka* about their personal interests. *Weekly Shōnen Jump* magazine carefully tracks reader's opinions and will stop series that do not receive sufficiently positive comments after only ten weeks of serialization. The use of weekly questionnaires is another way to create a bond between creators and readers. It makes the readers feel they play an important role in the development of their favorite series.[6] Such connections between professional *mangaka* and readers remain difficult nonetheless to build and maintain. Professional *mangaka* follow tight schedules, under close supervision by editors. Subsequently, with the release of the *tankōbon* format, which comprises multiple chapters of a serialized *manga* in book format, publishers often add a couple of pages where authors write about themselves. While authors often use those pages to complain about deadlines and their limited hours of sleep, they nevertheless allow the readers to feel closer to creators.

Modes of addresses are equally important. Each magazine targets a specific group of readers based on criteria such as gender and age. Unless readers feel drawn to the product, they will not buy it. Companies strive to understand the tastes of their clientele to develop appropriate products. There are of course limits to market segmentation, and *manga* must appeal to a market large enough to assure economic viability.

Japanese women's purchasing power

Women have had a significant purchasing power for generations in Japan. In recent years, however, they have gradually developed into a significant consumer base for the publishing industry due to the general growth of their purchasing power. Consequently, the amateur and the professional *manga* worlds have changed to meet this new opportunity. Consumer experts claim that "affluent female consumers can be linked to the rise in female

[6] Mio Bryce and Jason Davis, "*Manga/Anime*, Media Mix: Scholarship in a Post-Modern, Global Community" (paper presented at the CAESS Conference: Scholarship and Community, Bankstown, New South Wales, October 7-9, 2005).

employment and changing gender landscape in Japan…"[7] We have seen that policies regarding hiring have changed in the last three decades. Japanese women often seek work after graduation while living with their parents until marriage. In addition, women tend to marry later. In recent years, women in Japan marry as late as the age of thirty years, especially educated women.[8] Women seek personal satisfaction and find greater liberty before marriage. Part-time or full-time work in companies that expect them to leave upon marriage allow them sufficient income to live comfortably. Living with their parents with no rent or major bills, these young Japanese women have an income almost fully dedicated to leisure and personal entertainment. As for young Japanese men, they are expected to find a good job and start saving for their future family immediately after graduation. Young women are not expected to save money because their husband is expected to be the provider.

Consequently, a generation of young single females with disposable income has emerged, which has attracted the interest of the marketing world. Also, since the end of the Bubble Economy in the early 1990s, the Japanese economy entered into a prolonged recession. As a result, many women, single or married, seek work out of necessity. A few decades ago, unmarried women without children were seen as a lost cause by age thirty. Those who devoted themselves to a career as opposed to housewives were seen as losers (*makeinu*), and the housewives as winners (*kachiinu*). At the time, husbands could generally earn enough to allow their wives to stay home. As the economic situation changed, many women sought work to supplement their husband's income.[9] The traditional role of housewives thus changed.

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[7] Kakuchi Suvendrini, "JAPAN: Women's Increased Buying Power a Boost to Economy," *InterPress Service*, June, 2010, accessed November 21, 2012, http://www.ipsnews.net/2010/06/japan-womenrsquos-increased-buying-power-a-boost-to-economy/.

[8] Kyoko Yoshizumi, "Marriage and Family: Past and Present," in *Japanese Women: New Feminist Perspectives on the past, present and future*, ed. Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow et al. (New York: The Feminist Press at The City University of New York, 1995), 184.

[9] Yumiko Sugiura, "Fujoshi Kasuru Sekai: Ikebukuro no Otaku Shōjotachi" 腐女子化する世界：東池袋のオタク女子たち [*Fujoshi*-izing world: The *otaku* girls of East Ikebukuro], (Tokyo: Chūōkōron Shinsha, 2006), 148-49.

Natsuyama Akemi, senior researcher at Hakuhodo, reveals that even if Japanese are spending less than during the Bubble Economy, women are still spending more than men.[10] Natsuyama adds that while Japanese women were traditionally in charge of the family budget and their husband' income, the situation is slowly changing. More women are working and earning their own income, which they use for discretionary purchases. Kinsella writes that in the 1980s, women became more engaged with popular culture than men. They tend to take on temporary work or short-time career options, which allows them to invest more time in consumption. The idea of escapism is found in *shōjo manga* or *manga* dedicated to women of all ages. These conditions have affected the life of Japanese women today.[11] Women's consumption habits have a major impact on the Japanese economy. Any industry looking for more customers has to take them into consideration.

Professional publishing companies started to adapt their products to this clientele. Modes of addresses often speak to readers beyond the targeted demographic. Young girls read not only *shōjo* magazines, but the Oricon rankings show a high percentage also enjoy *Shōnen Jump*.[12] The implications were understood by this magazine. Editors adapted their stories and style to correspond not only to young boys' tastes, but also to those of girls.

Amateur *mangaka* often use *Shōnen Jump's* storylines and characters in the parody genre. Aware of such usage in the amateur world, *Shōnen Jump* editors used this "usage" to reach female readers. They focused on female readers' tastes, introducing subtle changes into the *manga* included in *Shōnen Jump*. *Shōnen Jump* thus adapted its stories, sometimes including more suggestive scenes between characters, which the targeted audience would not notice, but which would spark the imagination of female readers knowledgeable about the amateur market. *Shōnen Jump* magazine began promoting *manga* "that are detailed to a huge

[10] Suvendrini, "Women's Increased Buying Power."
[11] Sharon Kinsella, "Subculture in the 1990s: Otaku and the Amateur Manga Movement," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 24 (1998): 314, accessed October 2, 2012, http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/133236?uid=3739464&uid=2&uid=3737720&uid=4&sid=21101702811357.
[12] Sugiura, "Fujoshi Kasuru Sekai," 46.

degree," because they understood female readers were focusing on those details as much as the storyline.[13] By studying female readers, the magazine also discovered that many fans had a "favorite character type." Another successful marketing strategy entailed a larger set of characters with individual distinctions to ensure that each fan's "favorite character type" would be included as much as possible. In the *Shōnen Jump* series, the number of characters has clearly increased in recent years. In addition, since the late 1980s, *bishōnen* characters have begun to appear in *manga* and *anime* originally created for boys.[14]

Such transformations expanded the intended readership of this magazine. Significantly, editors drew on observations of the amateur world. Commercial *manga* operate on the basis of a mass audience segmented by modes of addresses and *manga* genres. Despite strategies to foster the sense of a close relationship between creators and readers, commercial *manga* cannot produce the atmosphere of exchange in the amateur world. Professional publishing companies thus look to the amateur world where interactions gauge what fans want in *manga*.

The amateur dōjinshi alternative economy

The first chapter discussed the birth of *dōjinshi* and the foundation of Comiket. People involved in the creation of amateur *manga* sought expression in a format free of editorial control. The founders strived to provide a place where artistic freedom would be promoted and where fans would be able to meet other enthusiasts. Gibson-Graham explain:

> However loosely and attractively depicted, building a community economy is not simply a process of ethical decision making among people who are creating something uncharted and unpredictable but rather the realization of an ideal – putting the cart of common substance, it would seem, before the ethical and political horse.[15]

Amateurs feel a need to share *dōjinshi*, often paying homage to their favorite series. Initially, fans distributed *dōjinshi* to complete strangers via regular post. The general

[13] Tony Yao, "The Great Power of the Fujoshi," *Manga Therapy: Where Psychology and Manga Meet*, January 5, 2012, accessed December 14, 2012. http://www.mangatherapy.com/post/15350149401/great-fujoshi-power.
[14] Sandra Buckley, "'Penguin in Bondage': A Graphic Tale of Japanese Comic Books," in *Technoculture*, ed. Constance Penley et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 177.
[15] Gibson-Graham, *Postcapitalist Politics*, 86.

understanding was that amateur works were to be shared, that there was no point of keeping anything to yourself.[16] Indeed, fans tend not to collect *dōjinshi*.[17] Moreover, the realm of sharing extends to amateurs seeking to interact with other amateur producers. *Dōjinshi* conventions were intended above all to allow amateurs to meet other amateurs and readers. Photocopy machines encouraged amateurs to produce professional quality copies to sell to others in an environment encouraging interaction.[18] This emphasis on community is what distinguishes the amateur *manga* world, making it an alternative economy. The statement on the official website shows that the aim of Comiket is to allow communication between people sharing a common passion:

> To encourage creative efforts that break the mold from what is established within the realms of commercial publishing and other forms of self-expression, and to support those that research and celebrate this unique branch of creative efforts, we provide a distinct venue upon which enthusiasts can congregate and intermingle, and hope that the venue will act as a catalyst to compel further creative achievement through interaction and discovery among their peers. The goal is maintain a social form in the shape of a doujinshi marketplace but also acts a gathering place for manga and anime enthusiast.

The goal was to create an event based on cooperation and owned and controlled by this community. Comiket and similar events allow fans to make new friends and discover new amateur *mangaka*. A variety of smaller events, referred to as *sokubaikai*, are held every other weekend in Japan. Smaller, more specialized conventions are advertised in magazines dedicated to amateurs or in *manga* shops.[19] Various events of different sizes are taking place continuously, yet the idea remains the same; such events are to allow exchanges between readers and writers. Social exchanges define this alternative cultural economy.

This idea is not only to permit encounters between fans and creators but also to reinforce connections among amateur *mangaka*. *Dōjinshi* creation is typically a group project. Amateurs usually form small groups, often referred to as circles, to share the work load and, more

[16] Sherries A. Innless, "Pornography or Therapy? Japanese girls creating the yaoi phenomenon," in *Millennium Girls: Today's Girls Around the World*, ed. Sherries A. Innless (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 245.
[17] Frederick L. Schodt, *DreamLand Japan: Writings on Modern Manga* (Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 1996), 37.
[18] Galbraith, "Fujoshi: Fantasy Play," 211.
[19] Kinsella, "Subculture in the 1990s," 297.

importantly ideas. Comiket encourages the formation of such circles. As of 2007, Comiket reported more than 35 000 circles participating in the event. The word *dōjinshi* (同人誌) itself is composed of the Chinese character *dōjin* (同人) literally meaning same person (in this case more particularly people sharing similar interest), and the character *shi* (誌) standing for magazine. The word thus evokes the idea of a community sharing a common excitement through amateur production.[20] Interactions between amateur *mangaka* and fans are possible not only at conventions where face-to-face communication is a priority, but also online. Storylines created by multiples authors are greatly promoted on websites, blogs and, among fans.[21] Internet has allowed fans unable to meet in person to participate in creation. Fans products rely on discussions between people with different approaches.[22] Internet has afforded new opportunities to share and connect.[23] Jenkins's model of participatory culture reinforces this idea. Fans activities depend on such social exchanges which encourage alternative readings and new interpretations of stories.[24]

Comiket and the amateur world present an example of an alternative economy. Even if money is involved at various stages in such events, it does not hold the same meaning as it does in the professional publishing industry. Comiket fans pay a nominal entrance fee and usually receive a catalog in exchange. The catalogue functions as a ticket to the convention halls and as a map. Amateur *mangaka* pay to reserve their table at the convention, and tables are often limited. Proceeds are used to pay the venue location. Personnel do not receive compensation for their work. The *mangaka* do not expect to make any profit through sales of their work. Only the

[20] Nele Noppe, "Dojinshi research as a site of opportunity for Manga Studies," in *Comics Worlds and the World of Comics: Toward Scholarship on a Global Scale*, ed. Jaqueline Berndt (Kyoto Seika University: International Manga Research Center, 2010), 135.
[21] Katherine N. Hayles, "The Transformation of Narrative and the Materiality of Hypertext," *Narrative* 9 (2001): 21, accessed March 2, 2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20107227.
[22] Jerald Hugues et al., "A Unified Interdisciplinary Theory of Open Source Culture and Entertainment" (SSRN Working Paper, July 20, 2007), 25. doi:10.2139/ssrn.1077909.
[23] Galbraith, "Fujoshi: Fantasy Play," 211.
[24] Mizuko Ito, "Japanese Media Mixes and Amateur Cultural Exchange," in *Digital Generations: Children, Young People, and the New Media*, ed. David Buckingham et al. (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 50-51.

most famous amateurs make a profit.[25] Material and printing costs often leave *mangaka* with a deficit, which serves as a reminder of the importance of community over the monetary. To cite Gibson-Graham, independent or self-employed producers, "set the distinction between their wage (the necessary labor payment) and a surplus and decide how the latter is to be distributed."[26] Amateur *mangaka* frequently sell their *dōjinshi* at a loss, focusing instead on sharing. Gibson-Graham comment such alternative systems:

> Individual self-employed workers are in the position of paying themselves a wage…. But often self-employed business people find that they cannot reward their labor at anywhere near the monetary rate it would be awarded in the general labor market.[27]

Such a situation is typical of the amateur world. Although amateur *mangaka* are not exactly self-employed workers (many have other jobs or are students), they invest many hours in creating a product they sell for little or no profit. The majority of them works long hours yet lose money. Instead of seeking to increase profits, amateur *mangaka* look instead for loyal readers who genuinely appreciate their work. Some amateur seek popularity and loyal readers. Others, however, want only to build strong relations with specific types of fans and do not necessarily want popularity.

Gibson-Graham explain that such transactions are "socially negotiated and agreed upon," which means that they are "very local and personalized agreements."[28] Alternative market transactions entail agreement on prices between producers and consumers. Conventions entail an implicit consensus on prices. All *dōjinshi*, even the most popular ones, are in the same price range. Profit is thus not a characteristic of this economy, since there is often no profit at all: "profit maximization is not the prime arbiter of viability."[29] The absence of profit is not a matter of small numbers of sales. In 2009, Comiket reported that over 12,160,000 *dōjinshi* had

[25] Matthew Thorn, "*Girls And Women Getting Out Of Hand: The Pleasure And Politics Of Japan's Amateur Comics Community*," in *Fanning the Flames: Fans and Consumer Culture in Contemporary Japan*, ed. William W. Kelly (New York: State University of New York Press, 2004), 180.
[26] Gibson-Graham, *Postcapitalist Politics*, 67.
[27] Ibid., 64.
[28] Ibid., 62.
[29] Ibid.

been brought to the convention. By the end of the event, more than 9, 440, 000 had been sold to fans and participants.

Devoted fans may spend hundreds of dollars at the largest events. They often have to pay to have their purchases delivered home. Others bring suitcases for transportation. *Dōjinshi* from renowned circles may sell in minutes. Fans may buy the catalogue in advance to locate their favorite *mangaka* and develop plans to buy as many *dōjinshi* as possible in the shortest time. Others work in groups to cover as much ground as possible. Fans do not only buy the books for themselves, they buy them to share with others. The practice of going in groups and with friends also reinforces the communal aspect of such events.[30] In this alternative economy, amateurs and fans seek to develop personal connections. Amateur authors welcome comments from their readers, and readers enjoy sharing their enthusiasm for a character or story.

Women are more engaged in the amateur world than men. According the Comiket official website, in 2007, 57% of the 560 000 participants were female. Numbers of males have increased over the years. Nonetheless, female attendees correspond to the audience targeted by the professional publishing industry. Their average age was around twenty-five years old.

Fujoshi, fans of boys' love manga

Fujoshi refers to heterosexual females engaged in a subculture and associated with a passion for the *boys' love* form.[31] It does not refer to all the fans of this form of expression. Many women enjoy reading such stories but do not consider themselves *fujoshi*. In contrast to *otaku*, a term originally associated with devoted male fans to *anime, manga* and video games, *fujoshi* is not the equivalent of "female *otaku.*" Their preference centers only on homosexual relationships between males. Such a distinction is rarely made in contemporary mass media: "…mass media, especially comical variety shows, have used the word *fujoshi* to describe the

[30] Schodt, *DreamLand Japan*, 42.
[31] Chizuruko Ueno, "Fujoshi to ha Dareka?" 腐女子とはだれか？[Who are *fujoshi*?], *Eureka* 39-37 (2007): 42.

female equivalent of otaku, *obsessive* fans of *anime, manga* and video games."[32] The word *fujoshi* seems to be misunderstood even in Japan.

A few years ago, images of a *fujoshi* were negatives. They were described as girls who didn't care about their appearance, usually chubby and wearing glasses. Such an image evokes stereotypes of male *otaku*. Yet it has become clear that women who consider themselves *fujoshi* are very different from this image. The owner of a *manga* cafe in Japan has noted a transformation since 2000. His clientele no longer resemble the recurrent stereotypes of *fujoshi*, but instead looked exactly as any other Japanese girls.[33] Instead of presenting themselves as *fujoshi*, these girls dressed and behaved like other young women.[34]

This idea of hiding who you are or adopting two personas is also reflected in the word they use to describe themselves. The term *fujoshi* derives from transforming the word *fujoshi* (婦女**子**) meaning "upper class lady" into its homonym *fujoshi* (腐女**子**) meaning "rotten girl."[35] By changing one Chinese character in the word, *fujoshi* were able to create this play on word, as if hiding behind a misunderstanding of the term itself. The idea of sharing two personas is common for almost all *fujoshi*. Indeed, the desire to be different from everyone else and yet be like everyone else is the key to understanding them. *Fujoshi* are aware of the negative connotations of their enjoying male homosexual relationships. Some consider their passion as: "'triple stigma': it is not simply pornographic and homosexual, but it also concerns women loving male-male homosexuality."[36] Others consider themselves to be a lost cause,

[32] Galbraith, "Fujoshi: Fantasy Play," 219-20.
[33] Sugiura, "Fujoshi Kasuru Sekai," 38.
[34] Daisuke Okabe, "Fujoshi no Aidentiti ・Gēmu: Aidentiti no Kashi/Fukashi wo Megutte" 腐女子のアイデンティティ・ゲーム：アイデンティティの可視/不可視をめぐって [The identities of Fujoshi・A Game between their Visible and Invisible Identities], *Cognitive Studies* 15 (2008): 671, accessed September 14, 2011, https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/jcss/15/4/15_4_671/_pdf.
[35] Ueno, "Fujoshi to ha Dareka?," 34.
[36] Shihomi Sakakibara, *Yaoi Genron: Yaoi kara Mieta Mono* [An Illusory Theory of Y*aoi*: What *Yaoi* Shows] (Tokyo: Natsume Shobō, 1998), 105, quoted in Kumiko Saitō, "Desire in Subtext: Gender, Fandom, and Women's Male-Male Homoerotic Parodies in Contemporary Japan," in *Mechademia* 6, ed. Lunning Frenchy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press Inc, 2011), 176.

makeinu, the stereotype of unmarried women in prior decades.[37] This explains why they choose the word "rotten" to describe themselves and also why they want to hide their interest in *boys' love* and *yaoi manga*. Many thus adopt a two-face profile, *betsunokao* in Japanese. This idea of hiding half of their real self is not seen as something dramatic or psychologically destructive. Instead, they consider it fun, like a game.[38] Interestingly, *fujoshi* will often refer to non-*fujoshi* as "normal" or *ippanjin* in Japanese. Since their fantasy world holds a great meaning for *fujoshi*, they refer to other women as "short on dreams and long on satisfaction" (*yame nashi, kanketsu ari*) meaning reality is enough for them, they do not seek excitement from fantasy. Or so one self-proclaimed *fujoshi* said to Galbraith during his research.[39] This aspect of their life also affects their relationships. *Fujoshi* have friends sharing their interest, but also have friends with no interest in *boys' love manga*. Accordingly, *fujoshi* will talk about their passion with other *fujoshi* but omit references to real life, school, work and family: "they often [*fujoshi*] 'do not want to know' one another outside of their shared experiences as *fujoshi*, which tends to focus discussions and interactions on *yaoi*."[40]

People who do not share their interest tend to be critical of *fujoshi*. Their interest of reading and writing stories about homosexual males may be considered abnormal. *Fujoshi* tend to hide their interest in romance between men because it exposes them to negative attention. One *fujoshi* interviewed by Okabe says that all of her *dōjinshi* are packed in a sealed box with her friend's address written on it. She explained that, if she were to die, her parents would probably just send the package to her friend and never look inside it.[41] This need to conceal your interest/hobby also characterized the slash movement in the United States. Until the internet became widely accessible, many slash fans were scared that family or friends would

[37] Ueno, "Fujoshi to ha Dareka?," 34.
[38] Sugiura, "Fujoshi Kasuru Sekai," 36.
[39] Galbraith, "Fujoshi: Fantasy Play," 221.
[40] Ibid., 214.
[41] Okabe, "Fujoshi no Aidentiti," 678.

discover what they were doing.[42] Internet has allowed both slash fans and *fujoshi* to share ideas and stories and to collaborate while remaining anonymous. They have become able to express themselves online without fear of judgment by those who do not understand their hobby.

In the introduction to *Girl Reading Girl in Japan*, the editors explain how reading has become a communal activity for Japanese women:

> …the tendency of many girls in Japan to read in group. Collective reading practices, as contributors to this collection repeatedly demonstrate, greatly enhance the pleasure of the text while also providing girls with the opportunity to consider more pragmatic issues of everyday life.[43]

Collective reading is particularly important for *fujoshi*. Sharing, an important component of the amateur world, holds great significance for female fans. *Fujoshi* exist by connecting with other. Sugiura suggests that Japanese girls have greater communication skills than their male counterparts. They are more likely to talk about their hobby, their interests and passions with their friends.[44] Research by Okabe also stresses the importance of sharing for *fujoshi*, because it gives them the opportunity to release some of the stress from always hiding their "rotten" side.[45]

Certainly, the interests of *fujoshi* lie outside reality. They position *boys' love manga* as a fantasy and not as something they want in real life. The dynamics of *moe* help to explain this impulse. Galbraith describes *moe* as: "a neologism used to describe a euphoric response to a fantasy characters or representation of them."[46] The term applies to *otaku*, *fujoshi* and all other dedicated fans of *anime, manga* or videogames. *Fujoshi* engage with *moe* in a specific way. They have created a distinctive *moe* vocabulary, *moekatari*, which they alone understand. This

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[42] Jessica Bauwens-Sugimoto, "Subverting Masculinity, Misogyny, and Reproductive Technology in SEX PISTOLS," *Image & Narrative* 12 (2011): 13, accessed November 6, 2012, http://www.imageandnarrative.be/index.php/imagenarrative/article/view/123.
[43] Tomoko Aoyama, and Barbara Hartley, Introduction to *Girl Reading Girl in Japan*, by Tomoko Aoyama et al. (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 5.
[44] Sugiura, "Fujoshi Kasuru Sekai," 50.
[45] Okabe, "Fujoshi no Aidentiti," 677.
[46] Patrick W. Galbraith, "Moe: Exploring Virtual Potential in Post-Millennial Japan," *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies* (2009), accessed October 12, 2012, http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/articles/2009/Galbraith.html.

moe dictionary, as Galbraith describes it, allows them to speak about their passion publicly without being immediately recognized as *fujoshi*. It is from this vocabulary that the term "coupling," which comprises *seme* and *uke* characters, became widely used among fans.[47] Today, most fans insert the names of the *seme* and *uke* characters into this schema "*seme* X *uke*" when referring to them.[48]

As Galbraith explains: "both *otaku* and *fujoshi* access *moe* in what they refer to as "pure fantasy" (*junsui na fantajī*), or characters and relationships removed from context, emptied of depth and positioned outside reality."[49] In the case of *fujoshi*, the experience of *moe* reinforces the idea that their love for homosexual male romances in not something they would consider in real life. It only holds meaning outside reality, in a fantasy world. As previously mentioned, the setting of *boys' love manga* tends to be less important than the relationships between the characters. The general tendency in *boys' love manga* is to present the setting schematically or to not depict it at all: "…placing a character in narrative stasis, reduces concerns of consequence related to reality (the narrative) and creates a sensual, liminal experience. The further away from reality and limitations on form, the greater the virtual potential and affect."[50] Evidently, *fujoshi* are drawing a strict line between their passion for *boys' love* and their real lives. Their interest in such scenarios stays in a fantasy world; they understand it is not real. Saitō Tamaki suggests that *otaku* sexuality should be regarded as "'asymmetrical desire' or 'a sexuality deliberately separated from everyday life.'"[51]

Clearly *fujoshi*'s passion for such stories is harmless. Yet they remain the subject to harsh criticism in Japan. Kinsella explains that, since the beginning of the amateur world, the preponderance of women in the movement has provoked "particular unease" in Japan. Such

[47] Galbraith, "Fujoshi: Fantasy Play," 221-22.
[48] Saito, "Desire in Subtext," 184.
[49] Galbraith, "Exploring Virtual Potential."
[50] Ibid.
[51] Tamaki Saitō, "Otaku Sexuality," in *Robot Ghost and Wired Dreams*, ed. Christopher Bolton et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 245.

anxiety emerged in the early 1970s. Intellectuals began accusing young Japanese involved in the amateur movement of refusing to contribute to society by fulfilling their obligations to work and build families. Many intellectuals saw the independence gained by the amateur world in terms of alienation from collective goals of society.[52] Like *fujoshi*, people involved in the amateur world were focusing on personal fantasies, apparently unconcerned about their future and that of their country.

As Meyer reminds us, the production and consumption of sex-related products by women remains difficult to understand today. People wish to believe that girls are innocent: "Girls are brought up with the expectation that they are somehow less sexual than boys….'everybody' knows that boys are sexually active, but 'everybody' still pretends that girls aren't."[53] Indeed, females in Japan are considered children for a longer period than males are. Girls remain children in the sense that they have a restricted zone of development. In contrast, Japanese men enjoy more freedom to experiment with their sexuality than women.[54] The *manga* industry echoes this reality. *Shōjo manga* are expressly addressed to young female readers. Teenagers and adult women have *manga* genres specifically targeted to them, *ladies comics* being one of them. Yet *shōnen manga*, although intended for young boys, are read by young and old of both genders.

Japan has an extensive sex industry that allows Japanese men to easily fulfill their sexual fantasies.[55] Japanese media also tend to cast a blind eye on such activities. It is taken for granted that men will go to sex clubs and that it is necessary for them to fulfill their fantasies. In contrast, women seeking sex outside of marriage are seen as "promiscuous" and the Japanese

[52] Sharon Kinsella, *Adult Manga: Culture and Power in Contemporary Japanese Society* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 137.
[53] Uki Meyer, "Hidden in Straight Sight: Trans*gressing Gender and Sexuality via BL," in *Boys' Love Manga: Essays on the Sexual Ambiguity and Cross-Cultural Fandom of the Genre*, ed. Antonia Levi et al. (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2010), 234.
[54] Mark McLelland, "Why are Japanese Girls' Comics full of Boys Bonking?," *Intensities: The Journal of Cult Media* (2001), accessed December 2, 2011, http://intensities.org/essays/mclelland.pdf.
[55] Mark McLelland, "The Love Between 'Beautiful Boys' in Japanese Women's Comics," *Journal of Gender Studies* 9 (2000): 14, accessed December 10, 2011.doi: 10.1080/095892300102425.

media have tended to systematically discredit them, blaming them for various social ills including the introduction and spread of AIDS in Japan.[56] The only acceptable expression of sexuality for Japanese women lies in marriage. Such attitudes reinforce a belief that women's bodies must remain pure and inviolate until marriage. Their purpose is procreation. Sexual relationships for women outside of marriage are thus a threat to the idea that women's sexuality should be confined to reproduction. Of course, none of this holds in practice.

Also, the *fujoshi* interest in male homosexual relationships also explains criticism of them, although, of course, the reality is more complex than this caricature. Japanese society remains patriarchal. In January of 2007, Japan's Health Minister referred to women between the ages of fifteen and thirty as "baby-making machines" and "people whose role is to give birth."[57] *Fujoshi* are perceived as revolting against socially approved roles for women, that is, giving birth to children.[58] *Boys' love manga* focus on the sexual act itself, putting emphasis on the "mechanics of penetration."[59] In addition, the relationship between the two partners is more important than the final outcome. McLelland attributes the negative perception of *fujoshi* to traditional Confucian-derived attributes toward female linking it to reproduction.[60] Such criticism remain common today, which may explain why *fujoshi* strive to hide their interest in the *boys' love* form.

The majority of *fujoshi,* at some point in their lives, will outgrow their *fujoshi* profile. Responsibilities at work or at home start to take too much of their time. This was the case with many interviewees in Galbraith's study. Many of them stop considering themselves *fujoshi* after graduating from university. At this point, many had boyfriends and were ready to take their

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[56] Ibid., 14-15.
[57] William Pesek, "Don't Shrink from the Test," *The Standard*, February 13, 2007, http://www.thestandard.com.hk/news_detail.asp?pp_cat=15&art_id=38176&sid=12187367&con_type=1, quoted in Galbraith, "Fujoshi: Fantasy Play," 212.
[58] Sugiura, "Fujoshi Kasuru Sekai."
[59] Mark McLelland, "No Climax, No Point, No Meaning? Japanese Women's Boy-Love Sites on the Internet," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 24 (2000): 282, accessed October 6, 2011, doi:0.1177/019685990002400300 3.
[60] McLelland, "Japanese Girls' Comics full of Boys Bonking."

place in the world as responsible adults. The fantasy of *boys' love* had allowed them to enjoy a world untouched by the constraint of reality: "This suggests that the play activity observed among *fujoshi* is accepted by most as part of a bounded, temporal stage, a childlike freedom that must at some point be reined in."[61] When a *fujoshi* loses interest in the world of *boys' love* stories, she said to have graduated, *sotsugyō shita*. Galbraith explains the word graduate holds a significant meaning in Japan. It implies a major shift in one's status. For *fujoshi*, graduation means jumping into reality and giving up their fantasies. Coming back to the word *fujoshi* itself, graduation may also mean they have graduated from "rotten girl" to "lady." But not all *fujoshi* graduate. Some women in their thirties or forties still consider themselves part of this group. Some famous *mangaka*, both in the amateur and professional worlds, are prime examples.[62] In fact, some commentators claim that the main clientele for *boys' love manga* are working women in their thirties, sometimes married.[63] Such difficulty in delimiting *fujoshi* may be attributable to their discretion. This also explains why statistics on the number of fans of *boys' love manga* in Japan are nearly impossible to collect. Although the market of *boys' love* and *yaoi manga* in 2010 believed to have generated revenue of approximately 213 million dollars,[64] it remains difficult to arrive at an accurate figure since figures on the sales of *dōjinshi* and other products at conventions are impossible to gather. Although this market is evidently expanding, it remains among "hidden lines of commerce."[65] Many fans of *boys' love* prefer to keep their interest secret, which makes the production of statistics a hard task.

Fujoshi are an important clientele for the *manga* industry. This industry track trends in the amateur world, adapting their *manga* in response. It needs to understand readers to engage them. Although a target of criticism in recent years, the *fujoshi* world is gaining acceptance, and publishing companies have decided to focus on them. Focusing on *fujoshi*, and not only on their

[61] Galbraith, "Fujoshi: Fantasy Play," 228.
[62] Ibid., 227-29.
[63] Sugiura, "Fujoshi Kasuru Sekai," 39.
[64] Yao, "The Great Power of the Fujoshi."
[65] Saito, "Desire in Subtext," 176.

interests, has become a successful marketing strategy. In recent years, a growing number of *manga* and *anime* have focused on fan culture, often on the amateur world and the *dōjinshi* creation process. The *manga Genshiken* is one example. Other *manga* now feature *fujoshi* characters. Famous examples include *Tonari no 801-chan, Fujoshi Kanojo*, and *Lucky Star*. These *manga* began serialization in the 2000s. Movies, *anime* and light novels show a similar trend, including *fujoshi* characters. Such *manga* generally present them as "'normal' women who have an extremely active imagination where beautiful boys in love are concerned."[66] Many of these *manga* and *anime* are written from a male perspective. For example, *Fujoshi Kanojo* is narrated by a young man who falls in love with a girl who turns out to be a *fujoshi*.[67] The two sides of the *fujoshi* are often central to such *manga*, and often a source of comedy.

Fujoshi remain elusive. Okabe had to immerse himself in *dōjinshi* culture before being able to interview *fujoshi*. Approaching them as a researcher studying *fujoshi* subculture made most of his prior interviews unsuccessful.[68] However, the growing popularity of *boys' love manga*, in Japan and internationally, has begun to make this subculture more visible. *Manga* portraying *fujoshi* characters and stories dedicated to them have become more common. Such popularity may be a good thing. It seems that *manga, anime* and related media forms strive to portray them accurately and sympathetically. *Fujoshi* characters usually appear as girls with an active imagination. Their real life is also an important part of these stories. They also make clear that *fujoshi* passions do not rule out heterosexual lives.

Interdependence of both industries

The professional *manga* industry and the amateur world, although not driven by the same economic imperatives, depend on readers. The strong relations between amateur *mangaka* and their fans evident in participation in such events as Comiket herald a new trend in Japan. Solitary production is losing ground to communal participation, both in the real and virtual

[66] Galbraith, "Fujoshi: Fantasy Play," 213.
[67] Ibid., 220.
[68] Okabe, "Fujoshi no Aidentiti," 676.

worlds.[69] Producing *manga* without consideration for the readers will not work. The amateur world has opted on this basic principle. Enjoying freedom over their work and direct interaction with fans, amateur *mangaka* are able to create *dōjinshi* for like-minded fans. Such communication, almost impossible to develop in the professional world, makes the amateur world indispensable for the professional industry. Publishing companies understand the importance of *dōjinshi* for the development of their markets. Even if amateur *mangaka* repurpose popular characters, they do not present a threat to the industry. In fact, such infringement of copyright does not diminish sales of professional *manga* but tends to increase them by boosting their popularity. Through *dōjinshi*, fans discover new characters and series, becoming interested in the original story. Ichikawa Kōichi, an organizer of *dōjinshi* conventions, explains that the amateur world serves as a cheap market research tool for professional publishing companies, providing them accurate information about what works and what does not.[70] In the early 1980s and 1990s, professional publishing companies complained about copyright infringement. As the amateur world grew rapidly, companies began to see the benefits of such events and abandoned their protests. Via *dōjinshi*, editors and employees from the professional *manga* industry see how fans take up characters. They gain insight into what fans like about characters and how they wish to see them evolve throughout the series.[71] Editors may adapt current series to better satisfy readers. The interrelation between these two markets is distinctive of Japanese *manga* production. It may be considered an "unspoken, implicit agreement," *anmokunoryokai*.[72] The professional *manga* industry thus allows amateurs to repurpose their characters in new *manga*. It observes these changes, modifying their *manga* to suit readers. Understanding *manga* production demands some account of both industries.

[69] Noppe, "Dojinshi research," 134.
[70] Daniel H. Pink, "Japan, Ink: Inside the Manga Industrial Complex," *Wired Magazine*, October 22, 2007, accessed April 15, 2012, http://www.wired.com/techbiz/media/magazine/15-11/ff_manga?currentPage=all.
[71] Mark McHarry, "(Un)gendering the Homoerotic Body: Imagining Subjects in Boys' Love and Yaoi," *Transformative Works and Cultures* 8 (2011), accessed October 2, 2012, http://journal.transformativeworks.org/ /index.php/twc/article/view/257/250.
[72] Pink, "Japan, Ink."

Although each functions in economic environment, they ultimately work together. Each industry produces different *manga* yet they evolve in tandem.

Diversification of media form is the norm today. Once a *manga* becomes popular among fans, companies are likely to expand the franchise into other media. This practice is called media mix. A common example is the adaptation of *manga* into *anime*, which may subsequently become video games as well as live action movies, drama, and even stage plays. Toy companies are a crucial component of this media mix practice.[73] Media mix is first and foremost a marketing strategy to sell more products. Since women have a significant purchasing power in Japan, companies produce derivative goods for women. Women who like a certain *manga* are more likely to buy the *anime* or movie once it is released. Price often does not matter; many official derivative products can be sold for very high prices but will still be bought by devoted fans.[74] The *Prince of Tennis manga* is an excellent example. The *manga* started in 1999, and amateur *mangaka* quickly produce *dōjinshi* with its characters. This boosted the original *manga*'s popularity. It surely played a role in subsequent adaptations, into *anime*, an animated film, a live action movie, and then a musical. Devoted fans fuelled this transformation of the initial *manga* into so many forms, remaining loyal to *Prince of Tennis* products years after its original *manga* run. *Manga* magazines targeting general audiences promote products related to their series. Such products generate profit.[75]

Conclusion

Connections between the professional *manga* industry and the amateur world have a profound impact on *manga*. On one hand, the professional publishing industry follows a strict capitalist economy model. On the other hand, the amateur world functions as an alternative economy based on a community of shared interests instead of revenue. Operating outside the

[73] Bryce and Davis, "*Manga/Anime*, Media Mix."
[74] Sugiura, "Fujoshi Kasuru Sekai," 45.
[75] Yoshihiro Yonezawa, "'*Shōnen Jump*' no Kenkyū: Sono Rekishi to System" [Study of *Shōnen Jump*: its History and System], in *Nihon Jidō Bungaku Gakkai, Media to Jidō Bungaku* (Tokyo: Tokyo Shoseki, 2003), quoted in Bryce and Davis, "*Manga/Anime*, Media Mix."

traditional capitalist model, this alternative economy remains hidden. Still, even though the amateur world remains rather unknown, it holds great importance for the professional world, because it is at this level that a certain kind of conversation between creators and readers is possible. While some commentators consider the *manga* production in the professional world to be an interactive process between artists, editors and readers,[76] previous discussion indicates that artists have little freedom. While it may be possible to create a relation with readers, the amateur world clearly permits more immediate and intimate relations.

The success of Comiket also depends on interactions with other industries following a capitalist model. During big conventions, printing companies and art supply shops offer on-site services and products. Delivery companies offer shipping services.[77] As such, amateur *mangaka* and fans do rely on services from capitalist companies. It is as if capitalist industries surround the distinctive sphere for personal exchanges between fans and amateur *mangaka*. Comiket and similar events are a separate world with different rules and goals to avoid the maximization of profit. Yet this distinct sphere has become essential to the development of the *manga* industry, providing publishing companies with feedback from real readers.

Fans engaged in the amateur world, including *otaku* and *fujoshi*, are not merely obsessive fans seeking interactions with others like them; they are "forerunners in this evolution of consumers."[78] They do not only consume professional *manga*, they also produce their own stories.[79] Their creativity has a profound impact into the professional *manga* world. Professional industries are aware of the benefit of paying attention to them. Clearly, the biggest spenders will have greater impact. Currently, young Japanese women seem to hold this position. Companies see them as prospective consumers and try to create products geared to them. This

[76] Bryce and Davis, "*Manga/Anime*, Media Mix."
[77] Schodt, *DreamLand Japan*, 38.
[78] Hiroki Azuma, *Otaku: Japan's Database Animals* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 25.
[79] Ito, "Japanese Media Mixes," 50.

strategy has thus proved successful. As a result, the professional *manga* industry will continue to observe the amateur world in order to develop new strategies to stay competitive.

Ultimately *fujoshi* are a new type of consumer, to which professional *manga* companies must adapt to. But their tendency to hide their interests makes this difficult. This anonymous side of *fujoshi*, given autonomy in the non-capitalist amateur world, has oddly enough served to fuel the professional *manga* industry.

In sum, the production of *manga*, professional or amateur, may be understood as a triangle wherein professional *manga* occupies the peak and readers the bottom. In the middle lies the *dōjinshi* created by amateurs.[80] Dialogues between the professional *manga* world and readers must pass through the amateur world, which operates on very different economic and ethical principles. It is precisely this arrangement that makes *manga* production in Japan so distinctive.

[80] Pink, "Japan, Ink."

Appendix A

Manga Division Organizational Chart

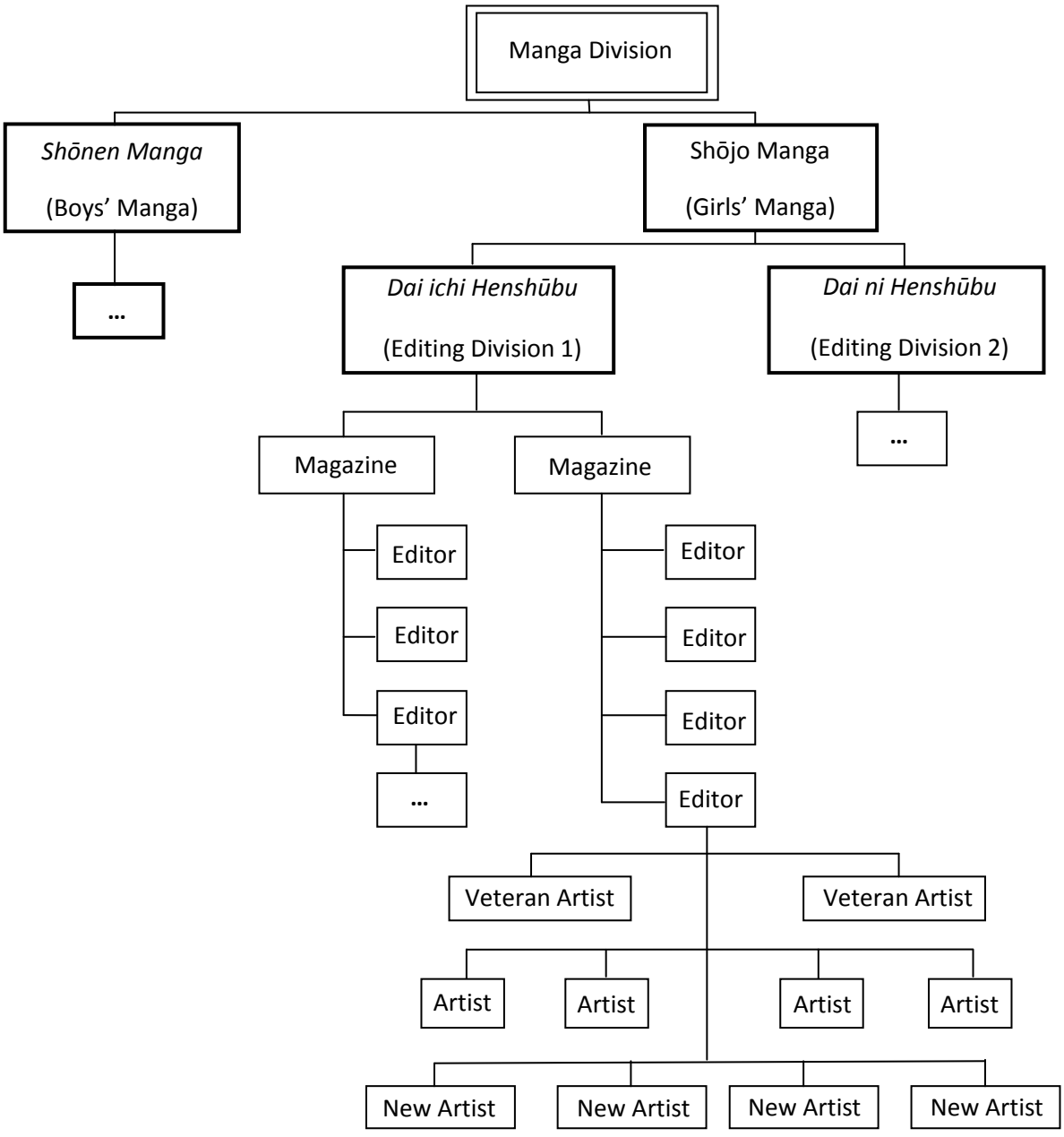

Figure 1: Jennifer Prough S, *Straight from the Heart: Gender, Intimacy, and the Cultural Production of Shōjo Manga* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011), 149.

Note from the author: This chart outlines the general organization of the publishing house *manga* divisions. The chart is truncated due to space constraints—for example, Editing Divisions 1 and 2 each have typically three to five magazines, and each magazine has five to fifteen editors. Finally, each editor is in charge of ten to twenty artists.

Appendix B

Genre names at Comiket (magazine title and period in which the original was serialized, and period of TV broadcast)	**Period when the genre code existed in Comiket**
Captain Tsubasa (*kyaputen Tsubasa)* (*Shōnen Jump* 1981-88; TV anime 1983-86)	1987-1999
Saint Seiya (*Seinto Seiya*) (*Shōnen Jump* 1985-1990; TV anime 1986-89)	1987-1995
Samurai Trooper (*Yoroiden samurai torūpā*) (TV anime 1988-89)	1989-1999
Takahashi Rumiko	1987-1994
Tanaka Yoshiki, Kikuchi Hideyuki	1988-1997
Yu Yu Hakusho and other Togashi Yoshihiro manga (Yu Yu Hakusho, *Shōnen Jump* 1990-94; TV anime 1992-95)	1993-2002
Slam Dunk (*Suramu danku*) (*Shōnen Jump* 1990-96; TV anime 1993-96)	1994-2002
Sailor Moon (*Bishōjo senshi Sērāmūn*) (*Nakayoshi* 1991-96; TV anime 1992-97)	1995-1998
Gundam Series (*Gundam Wing*, 1995 ; *Gundam Seed*, 2002-3 ; *Gundam Seed Destiny*, 2004-5, *Gundam 00*, 2007-9)	1995-
One Piece (*Shōnen Jump* 1997-present; TV anime 1999-prensent)	2000-
Naruto (*Shōnen Jump* 1999-present; TV anime 2002-present)	2001-
Prince of Tennis (*Tenisu no ōjisama*) (*Shōnen Jump* 1999-2008; TV anime 2001-05)	2002-
Full Metal Alchemist (*Hagane no renkinjutsushi*) (*Shōnen Gangan* 2001-present; TV anime 2003-04)	2004-

Figure 2: This is a shorter version of the table available in Kumiko Saitō, "Desire in Subtext: Gender, Fandom, and Women's Male-Male Homoerotic Parodies in Contemporary Japan," in *Mechademia* 6, ed. Lunning Frenchy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press Inc, 2011), 178.

Appendix C

Rank	Estimated copies sold in 2012	Titles	Genre	Publishers
1	23,464,866	One Piece (*Wan Pīsu*)	Shōnen	Shueisha
2	8,070,446	Kuroko's Basketball (*Kuroko no Baske*)	Shōnen	Shueisha
3	6,495,240	Naruto (*Naruto*)	Shōnen	Shueisha
4	5,413,899	Space Brothers (*Uchū Kyodai*)	Seinen	Kodansha
5	4,128,665	Fairy Tail (*Fearī Teiru*)	Shōnen	Kodansha
6	4,039,715	From me to you (*Kimi no Todoke*)	Shōjo	Shueisha
7	3,603,710	Silver Spoon (*Gin no Saji*)	Shōnen	Shogakukan
8	3,439,839	Hunter X Hunter (*Hantā Hantā*)	Shōnen	Shueisha
9	3,437,182	Magi: The Labyrinth of Magic (*Magi*)	Shōnen	Shogakukan
10	3,211,191	Bakuman (*Bakuman*)	Shōnen	Shueisha
11	3,005,339	Toriko (*Toriko*)	Shōnen	Shueisha
12	2,974,750	Bleach (*Burīchi*)	Shōnen	Shueisha
13	2,850,072	Gin Tama (*Gintama*)	Shōnen	Shueisha
14	2,786,109	Sket Dance (*Suketto Dansu*)	Shōnen	Shueisha
15	2,682,504	Attack on Titan (*Shingeki no Kyojin*)	Shōnen	Kodansha
16	2,481,385	Chihayafuru (*Chihayafuru*)	Josei	Kodansha
17	2,430,572	Detective Conan: Case Closed (*Meitantei Conan*)	Shōnen	Shogakukan
18	2,262,565	Blue Exorcist (*Ao no Ekusoshisuto*)	Shōnen	Shueisha
19	2,231,198	Thermae Romae (*Terumae Romae*)	Seinen	Enterbrain
20	2,153,552	Inu X Boku SS (*Inu Boku Shīkuretto Sābisu*)	Shōnen	Square Enix
21	2,008,593	Black Butler (*Kuroshitsuji*)	Shōnen	Square Enix
22	1,901,204	We Were There (*Bokura ga Ita*)	Shōjo	Shogakukan
23	1,879,120	Nura: Rise of the Yokai Clan (*Nurarihyon no Mago*)	Shōnen	Shueisha
24	1,844,824	Reborn! (*Katekyō Hittoman Ribōn!)*	Shōnen	Shueisha
25	*1,838,940*	Today, I'll Start Our Love (*Kyō, Koi o Hajimemasu*)	Shōjo	Shogakukan
26	*1,714,931*	Beelzebub (*Beruzebabu*)	Shōnen	Shueisha
27	*1,685,194*	Ace of Diamond (*Daiya no A*)	Shōnen	Kodansha

28	*1,625,233*	Natsume's Book of Friends (*Natsume Yūjin-chō*)	Shōjo	Hakusensha
29	*1,607,178*	I Like You, Suzuki-kun!! (*Suki Desu Suzuki-kun!!)*	Shōjo	Shogakukan
30	*1,607,121*	Giant Killing (*Jaiantokiringu*)	Seinen	Kodansha

Publishers	**Percentage of titles by publishing houses**
Shueisha	47%
Kodansha	20%
Shogakukan	20%
Square Enix	7%
Hakusensha	3%
Enterbrain	3%

Figure 3: This data was collected from the Oricon website and is here presented with some alterations.
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