Shōjo Jump: Women's Fan Discourse and its Transformative History with Gendered Youth Media

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Shōjo Jump: 
Women’s Fan Discourse and its Transformative History with Gendered Youth Media

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Supervisors: 
Professor Mark McLelland and Professor Vera Mackie

This thesis is presented as part of the requirements for the conferral of the degree:

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DECLARATION

I, Kristine Michelle L. Santos, declare that this thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the conferral of the degree PhD in Research, from the University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Kristine Michelle L. Santos
May 30, 2017
ABSTRACT

Japan’s gendered media extend to young audiences where shōjo media cater to girls while shōnen media entertain boys. This division of youth media stems from Japan’s modernisation in the late twentieth century where youth magazines were established to educate their target audiences with various literacies and practices that shaped their gendered culture. Weekly Shōnen jump emerges from this gendered media landscape as it inspires young men with heroic adventures that highlight virtues of victory, camaraderie, and perseverance. This thesis, however, highlights an audience that challenges these gendered boundaries in youth media as young women affectively transform various elements from Weekly Shōnen jump in order to create media spaces where they can exercise creative freedom. These young women are currently identified as fujoshi — rotten girls — who are notorious for transforming homosocial narratives into homoerotic fantasies through their self-published fan books called dōjinshi. In an effort to understand fujoshi’s affective engagement with Weekly Shōnen jump, this thesis looks at the history of these young women’s literacies and practices and examines the emergence and impact of fujoshi Discourse in Japan’s youth media culture.

Using approaches from New Literacy Studies, this thesis analyses the development of literacies and practices embedded in various media related to fujoshi Discourse — from shōjo and shōnen manga, to its media mix, and its related dōjinshi — and how these transformed shōnen media. This thesis looks explicitly at young women’s engagement with youth media since the 1900s in hopes of highlighting their intertextual consumption of texts, the different ways in which they establish affective ties with various narrative elements, and how they educate other fans to actively engage with media. Through the historical analysis of women’s affective fujoshi Discourse, this thesis aims to highlight the transformative potential of women’s dōjinshi as it impacts youth media industry, especially concerning representations of sexuality and masculinity as well as the increased production and consumption of affective media. This thesis also showcases dōjinshi culture as an informal educational space for nuanced literacies and practices. In examining women’s transformative engagement with shōnen media such as Weekly Shōnen jump, this thesis highlights how fujoshi Discourse helped bridge the severed worlds of shōjo and shōnen media.
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This thesis was prefigured in 2006 when I wrote a series of blog posts that examined the connection between some boys love authors, such as Yun Kōga to Fumi Yoshinaga, and the boys’ manga magazine, *Shūkan Shōnen Janpu* (Weekly Boys Jump or *Shōnen jump*). Those posts took inspiration from a Japanese fan blog entry that examined the complicated relationship between *Shōnen jump* and its fervent female fans who reimagine the homosocial relationships of their male heroes in romantic terms. In writing those posts, I learned about these young women called *fujoshi* (rotten girls) and their creative culture that transformed normative notions of gender relations and sexuality through *dōjinshi* (self-published fanzines). Back then, I thought it would be nice to study and explore these connections further. Years later, I am privileged to have had the opportunity to do so in this thesis. This thesis would not have been possible had it not been for the inspiration academia has given me, support that people have shown, and love that friends and family have provided.

Firstly, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my supervisors, Mark McLelland and Vera Mackie, whose works on gender, feminism, popular culture, and Japan, had been my inspiration long before I went under their tutelage. Never did I imagine that I would find myself under their supervision and I feel fortunate for having worked with these two scholars whom I greatly respect and admire. Mark has been so kind in guiding me when I found myself lost and buried under all my data, leading me towards new concepts and approaches that opened my world as a scholar. Vera’s guidance gave me focus as her comments shaped my skills as a historian and as a writer. I am eternally grateful for their encouragement, patience, kindness, and constructive advice.

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Lastly, I want to thank my parents. My father’s passion for movies helped develop my appreciation for popular culture. Had he not taken me to see Indiana Jones when I was young, I possibly would not have been interested in history. My mother has been my inspiration and source of strength. She has helped me become formidable, and her selflessness has allowed me to pursue my dreams in life. For all their sacrifices, hard work, love, and support, I dedicate this thesis to them.
NOTES ON JAPANESE NAMES, TITLES, COMICS, AND WORDS

This thesis features various Japanese names, titles, and concepts that have been transcribed using the Hepburn romanisation system. These Japanese words are first introduced in their romanised form followed by a literal translation. Subsequent uses of these words are italicised except for proper nouns and common Japanese words that have been incorporated in English dictionaries, such as Tokyo, anime, manga, otaku, and cosplay. The names of Japanese individuals are written in the Western order where their given names precede their surnames. Bibliographical entries, which follow the Chicago documentation style of notes and bibliography, also apply the Western order of these Japanese names.

Japanese titles throughout these texts are first mentioned by their romanised titles, followed by its direct translation, an abbreviation or acronym, and date of publication. Examples of these are Kaze to ki no uta (The song of wind and trees, 1976–1984) and Jojo no bimyō na bōken (Jojo’s Bizarre Adventure or JBA, 1987–present). Direct translations of these titles will be without italics and in sentence case, following the Chicago style guide for non-English titles. If these titles have been published in English, their English titles will be used rather than their direct translation. For example, Tetsuwan Atomu will be translated to Astro Boy. Should some of these romanised titles contain English words, the English spelling will be used after the first mention. For example, Shōnen bukku will be referred to after as Shōnen book. Subsequent mentions of these titles would either use their English-published titles (if available) or their Japanese titles and abbreviations.

Lastly, the various pages of Japanese comics and images featured in this thesis are unflipped pages of the original. As such, panels and texts are read from right to left, then from top to bottom. Page spreads featured in this thesis are also read from right to left.
INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In recent decades, the hopes and dreams of young people in Japan have been shaped by stories from manga (comic) magazines. Manga, and by extension its related media, have become a part of everyday Japanese life, particularly youth culture. Japan’s manga industry has devised a structure where publishers develop manga magazines that cater to the age, gender, and interests of their readers. Action-packed shōnen (boys) magazines are designed to capture the interests of young men while romantic shōjo (girls) manga magazines target young female readers. The most popular among these youth-oriented manga magazines is Shūkan shōnen Janpu (Weekly boys jump, henceforth, Shōnen jump, 1969–present) which has over 2.2 million copies in circulation per week.¹

Shōnen jump publishes around twenty serialised stories featuring young male protagonists on a quest for adventure. It is home to many best-selling titles, such as One Piece (1997–present)² and Dragon Ball (1984–1995),³ which have been expanded to other media such as anime (animated television shows and films), musicals, and associated products such as themed cafes, snacks, and even apparel. The diverse array of Shōnen jump media has made their titles accessible to all kinds of readers from various walks of life. As the title of their magazine suggests, Shōnen jump’s primary audience is young male readers. In recent years, however, it has become increasingly apparent that young female readers have become fervent fans of this boys’ magazine. This thesis explores the history of women’s engagement with Shōnen jump and their transformative impact on Japanese youth media culture.

Women’s engagement with the magazine can be seen through the various fan sokubaikai (conventions) and ibento (events) held almost every weekend in major cities all over Japan. Thousands of different fan clubs (FC), or sākuru (circle), mostly

composed of young female writers and artists, gather in large event halls to sell fan works based on series that run in *Shōnen jump*. In the largest fan gathering in the world, *Komikku Māketto* (Comic Market),4 two halls were dedicated to more than two thousand *Shōnen jump* FCs in one day.5 No other magazine for boys,6 or even for girls,7 has gathered the same attention from its female readers. Attendees at these events, most of whom are also female, number in the tens of thousands.8

The fervent support of these female fans for their favourite *Shōnen jump* series exceeds the expectations of Japanese media commentators9 and publishers10 who expect these women to direct their energies towards *shōjo* magazines. Instead, these women are more than eager to line up for hours under the hot summer sun, or withstand the cold winter air, just to produce, purchase, read, and enjoy the various *Shōnen jump* fan works on sale. These fan works mostly comprise of *dōjinshi* (self-published magazines or fanzines) that feature the male characters of these *Shōnen jump* series in romantic, sometimes sexual, relationships with each other.

*Dōjinshi* are independently published by a *dōjin*, a group of people who share the same interests and hobbies, such as fan clubs and circles.11 Other possible *dōjin* products are video games, toys, accessories, and apparel. The content of *dōjinshi* range across illustrations, essays, novels, cartoon strips, and comics on diverse topics that may

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5 As of August 2016, there were 2678 circles dedicated to *Shōnen Jump* titles in Comic Market 90. See Comic Market Preparation Committee, *Comic Market 90 Catalog* (Tokyo: Comiket, 2016), 223–301.
6 An example of this is *Yowamushi Pedal* (Weakling pedal, 2008–present), a series running in *Shūkan shōnen chanpion* (Weekly boys champion, henceforth, *Shōnen Champion*). As of July 2015, its largest fan event, Zenkai Keidensu (Full cadence), gathered over 919 circles. In August 2015, there were 430 circles for *Yowamushi Pedal* in Comic Market, the largest group for a non-*Shōnen Jump* title.
7 As of August 2016, *shōjo* manga fan clubs comprised of 122 circles in Comic Market. In the same event, there were 1790 circles dedicated to *shōnen* manga. See Comic Market Preparation Committee, *C90 Catalog*, 161–64, 302–47.
8 It is important to note that while Comic Market has noted that the male-female ratio since 2008 has been balanced, the attendance in smaller events, such as those organised by Studio You and Akaboo, are still dominated by female attendees.
consist of original stories or parodies of popular manga, anime, raito noberu (light novels), or gēmu (video game) series. These fan parodies are also referred to as aniparo (anime parody). Aniparo dōjinshi seem to escape lawsuits as these works are seen as nijisōsakubutsu (derivative works). A “derivative work,” as defined by Japan’s copyright law, is “a work created by translating, arranging musically, transforming, or dramatizing, cinematizing, or otherwise adapting a pre-existing work.” Respective Japanese copyright holders tolerate these derivative works, but they have been known to sue fan works that exploit the original.

Since dōjinshi are self-published, many of these works are independent of commercial editorial control in terms of topics and content. Some dōjin circles take advantage of this freedom by producing erotic dōjinshi. An example of erotic women’s dōjinshi are yaoi, an acronym that stands for Yamanashi, Ochinashi, Iminashi — no climax, no point, no meaning. These yaoi dōjinshi often feature sexually explicit boys love stories. Due to Article 175 of Japan’s Criminal Code which prohibits the sale of materials that contain waisetsu (obscenity), these erotic dōjinshi are still subject to obscenity laws in Japan. Creators and printers often exercise some form of censorship when creating erotic content, where the depiction of morbid sexual acts and children in sexual situations are prohibited, and genitals are either covered by a black bar, a mosaic

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11 If only one person produces a dōjin work, this person is considered a kojin sākuru (individual circle). See Nele Noppe, “Dōjinshi Research as a Site of Opportunity for Manga Studies,” Global Manga Studies 1 (2010): 115.


Covers of erotic dōjinshi are labelled with ratings such as R-18 or R-15 which help inform readers of their sexual content. These labels help readers of boys love dōjinshi to distinguish stories that feature sexual scenes between their favourite male characters.

A significant number of women’s dōjinshi sold in fan events are aniparo dōjinshi that explore the relationships between characters in a series. Prough argues that ningen kankei (human relationships) are a central component in shōjo manga and women’s dōjinshi have adapted this trait in their parodies of shōnen works. Instead of highlighting the masculine bravado of shōnen heroes, women’s dōjinshi explore the relationships between these male heroes — from their friendships, rivalries, to their potential romances.

The romantic relationships between male characters in these women’s dōjinshi may be contrary to the male homosocial relationships established in their original stories but they are connected to boizu rabu (boys love or BL) — a concept developed in shōjo manga that explores male-male romance. Initially introduced as shōnen’ai (boys love), it has been a part of shōjo comic culture since the late 1960s when young female artists featured bishōnen (beautiful boys) embroiled in tragic romances with other male characters. These stories eventually grew into a sub-genre in shōjo manga and has come to include self-published and commercial media that ranges from manga, video games, to live action films. Various bookstores and speciality shops openly display these works under joseimuke (female-oriented) media, establishing women’s continued engagement and fervent interest in these romances that challenge representations of masculinity and male sexuality.

Since boys love stories manoeuvre outside of heteronormative notions of masculinity and romance, women’s engagement with this kind of media has raised public concern. Japan’s homosexual community has critiqued these female fantasies of homosexual relationships. People have even campaigned to have BL books pulled


For examples of these guidelines, see “Seijin janru de katsudōsareru sakkasama e” [To authors who produce for the adult genre], Japan Dōjinshi Printing Group, accessed September 5, 2016, http://www.doujin.gr.jp/foradult.html; “Dōjinshi to seihyōgenhō chishiki” [Information on dōjinshi and sexual expression], Tom Shuppan, accessed September 12, 2016, http://www.tomshuppan.co.jp/sec.html.


from a public library. On online spaces, these young women are deprecated by calling them fujoshi (rotten girls), a homophone of a word that initially means “girls and women” transformed into a neologism that captures their passion for “rotten” romances. Despite these critiques, women have seen boys love as a critical space for women’s creative expression and have proudly claimed their “rotten” identity.

It is in this context that a Japanese fan blog called Moepure examined the complicated relationship between Shōnen jump and their fujoshi readers. The Moepure blog entry discusses the growing concern among some fans of Shōnen jump who feel that these fujoshi readers are “corrupting” Shōnen jump with their boys love reading of the magazine. This “corruption” can be seen through the overwhelming amount of women’s dōjinshi based on Shōnen jump titles sold in speciality bookshops and at fan events. These fans argue that various narrative elements seen in fujoshi dōjinshi — such as the bishōnen, their strong homosocial bonds, and their “pointless” narratives — are being incorporated into Shōnen jump to “bait” fujoshi interests. By blaming fujoshi for what they deem as Shōnen jump’s deterioration, these fans’ arguments underscore a resistance against women’s engagement with the magazine.

This Moepure article may have highlighted this growing tension against Shōnen jump’s fujoshi readers, but it also reflects the influence of women’s dōjinshi on shōnen comics. If anything, these critical fans are resisting Shōnen jump’s transformation into shōjo jump (girls’ jump) — a Shōnen jump that caters to girls’ fantasies rather than boys’ dreams.

The title of this thesis, shōjo jump, parodies the title Shōnen Jump in an effort to highlight girls’ affective response to the magazine. This affective response entails fans’ instinctual response devoid of logic. It also reflects the confluence between Shōnen

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23 Ibid.
24 The notion of affect will be discussed Chapter 1.5, and in Chapter 5.2.
and their highly participative fujoshi fans. Shōjo jump also refers to girls’ Shōnen jump dōjinshi where young women have affectively transformed many homosocial Shōnen jump relationships into homoerotic bonds between two male characters. This thesis explores the creation of shōjo jump by studying the various structures, concepts, and practices that have led fujoshi to engage with shōnen media in distinctive ways. What are the various factors that led some girls to realise the romantic potential between two male heroes in Shōnen jump? How did fujoshi learn that they could imagine alternate or fantastic realities for various Shōnen jump characters? How did fujoshi’s engagement with Shōnen jump transform the magazine?

These questions have made me realise that fujoshi appear to have a specific set of literacies that transform their engagement with shōnen media. The literacies I speak of follow Lankshear and Knobel’s definition of literacies as “socially recognised ways in which people generate, communicate, and negotiate meanings as members of Discourses through the medium of encoded texts.” Fujoshi’s literacies are evident in their dōjinshi culture where they generate, communicate, and negotiate nuanced meanings of masculinity, homosocial relationships, and sexuality. These fujoshi literacies and practices transform women’s engagement with Shōnen jump. This thesis studies the development of fujoshi literacies and practices and their impact on Shōnen jump and women’s youth culture over the last forty years.

NEW LITERACY AS A LENS FOR FUJOSHI LITERACIES

The literacy I speak of is beyond reading and writing texts. Instead, I use the term in its sociological sense where literacy encompasses a range of social, institutional, and cultural practices. These practices are routine physical, mental, and social activities guided by various social structures. James Gee defines these structures as Discourses (with a capital “D”) as “ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing that are accepted as instantiations of particular identities… by specific groups.” Literacies help people comprehend specific Discourses. At the same time, various literacy practices allow people to engage and

28 The term ‘discourse’ has specific meanings in mainstream linguistics, critical discourse analysis, and Foucauldian discourse analysis. I will be using the term as defined by Gee above. See James Paul Gee,
participate in these Discourses. I specifically apply this concept to understand the historical development of various literacies and literacy practices that comprise fujoshi Discourse and their impact on shōnen media.

While I use the term fujoshi to describe these girls and women, I acknowledge that this term is fairly recent and older fans might not necessarily identify themselves as fujoshi. Fans in Japan generally refer to themselves as a maniakku (maniac) or otaku (fan). Otaku began as a term of address which anime and manga fans used when they met at events. The word otaku is tied to male fan culture and initially had negative connotations. It has since been reclaimed by various fans and cultural scholars, but female fans sometimes distinguish themselves by using the label joshi otaku (female fan). It is important to note that while joshi otaku is a general term for female fans, not all joshi otaku necessarily identify themselves as fujoshi either. The term fujoshi also has its complexities, but this thesis uses the term liberally to address contemporary fans of boys love texts of all ages. Fujoshi may include older fans who continue to engage with boys love works, but the term does not include female fans who are not fans of the genre. As this thesis will highlight in Chapter Six, boys love is a crucial component of fujoshi Discourse and is central to many fujoshi literacy practices.

This thesis will pursue fujoshi literacies and literacy practices that operate beyond girls’ consumption of boys love texts and shōnen media. Consumption captures fans’ passive reception of media but fujoshi are also known to produce dōjinshi that showcase their active engagement with popular media. Women’s engagement with popular media is not limited to reading and interpreting these texts. Their engagement also involves the production of knowledge, whether through transforming shōnen media through dōjinshi or by sharing their nuanced understanding of texts through discussions in private and public spaces. Certainly, not all fujoshi will have the literacies to create their own dōjinshi, but all will certainly have the literacies to engage with the medium — from navigating the dense shelves of dōjinshi shops to deriving pleasures from another fan’s fantasies. The New Literacies approach gives opportunities to explore various fujoshi literacies and literacy practices embedded in women’s everyday lives. Studying the

30 Otaku had a negative image in the late 1980s due to murders committed by Tsutomu Miyazaki (1962–2008). This otaku panic is discussed in Chapters Five and Six.
history of these *fujoshi* literacies helps trace the development of these nuanced literacies that transform women’s engagement with *shōnen* media.

This thesis also explores the pedagogy of *fujoshi* literacies. *Fujoshi* have been accused of “corrupting” other readers with their “rotten” concepts, but this raises the question of how *fujoshi* even impart their “rotten” literacies to other readers. I aim to understand how *fujoshi* have been using various literacy practices to inform others about their “rotten” engagement with media. Tracing the history of *fujoshi* literacies can help reveal the literacy practices that shaped these women’s minds outside of classrooms. It highlights an informal education that teaches readers the transformative, if not liberating, power of *fujoshi* literacies.

Gee notes that literacies have the potential to be “liberating” when they can be used to critique other literacies. In this case, I see *fujoshi* literacies as “liberating” when girls use them to critique social and gender norms in Japanese youth media. This thesis looks at how young women have learned various literacies from different kinds of media over the last fifty years and how these literacies helped them produce multimodal works such as *dōjinshi* that allow them to openly critique boys’ media. I highlight *dōjinshi* as critical mediums where girls develop nuanced literacies that play with representations of masculinity in popular media. I also highlight how *dōjinshi* serve as educational platforms that teach readers nuanced literacies and practices which eventually serve as markers for their “rotten” identity.

My use of New Literacy as a theoretical approach in studying this dimension of girls’ culture is significant because it helps expand our understanding of women’s engagement with popular media, their education outside of classrooms, and the integration of these new literacies in their everyday lives. Studying *dōjinshi* culture supplements this approach because it highlights new spaces where girls informally learn various literacy practices. While my study solely focuses on *fujoshi* in Japan, I believe their literacies serve as a framework for other girls all over the globe who are realising their agency as critics and creators of media. New technologies such as the internet have been pivotal in globalising various literacy practices. I aim to understand *fujoshi* Discourse in hopes of understanding the transmission of their Discourse and its impact on other girls’ cultures in the future.

New Literacies is an approach that has not been thoroughly explored in the context of boys love studies. In recent decades, there have been studies on *fujoshi*
culture and commercial boys love media — its history, its ties with sexuality and gender, and its transformative and transnational potential. Prior approaches to studying fujoshi culture, particularly their fascination for boys love, have always centred on why girls are drawn to boys love. While it is interesting to see why girls are transforming the natures of male characters, I decided not to pursue this train of

31 Gee, Social Linguistics and Literacies, 177.
33 BL Studies; Boys’ Love on the Run; Mark McLelland et al., eds., Boys Love Manga and Beyond: History, Culture, and Community in Japan (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2015).
thought given that this has been thoroughly explored by previous scholars. Instead, I find it more significant to pursue the systems and practices that lead girls to “corrupt” depictions of masculinity in Shōnen Jump. As such, this thesis researches the historical development of fujoshi literacies and how these literacies are transforming shōnen media.

My approach to this thesis is inspired by Tomoko Aoyama’s study which has looked at girls’ intertextual literacy practices in reading texts. I find Aoyama’s work on girls’ literacies pivotal as it provides an understanding of how Japanese girls process media. She focuses mostly on girls’ reading of shōjo texts, and she briefly looks at how girls have developed a “corrupt” reading of texts by male authors such as Kokoro (Heart, 1914) by Sōseki Natsume (1867–1916). She uses the term “BL literacy” to describe girls’ intertextual reading of boys love texts. Her look at girls’ BL literacies offers insight into the intertextual literacies of female readers and how these literacies have the potential to transform conventional readings. While BL literacies highlight girls’ comprehension of boys love, it does not capture fujoshi’s multimodal literacies and practices.

I supplement Aoyama’s approach with other theories of media consumption in Japan which captures fans’ literacy practices. I specifically use Eiji Ōtsuka’s theory of narrative consumption and Hiroki Azuma’s database theory to understand fans’ fervent consumption of Japanese popular culture. These theories highlight critical literacies and practices that inspire fans to create intertextual texts such as dōjinshi. Dōjinshi reflect fans’ intertextual database, a critical fan literacy that serves as a virtual repository of various interconnected narrative elements, such as characters and scenarios, from all kinds of media. I use these theories to help understand girls’ engagement with media beyond shōjo and BL manga.


41 Aoyama, “BL (Boys’ Love) Literacy.”

42 Ibid.

43 Hiroki Azuma, Otaku: Japan’s Database Animals (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).
Azuma and Ōtsuka’s theories help expand Aoyama’s BL literacies to *fujoshi* literacies. This expansion is significant because it shifts the attention away from the literary genre and towards these women who are responsible for developing these nuanced literacy practices. In doing so, I explore literacies beyond *shōjo* texts and towards other forms of media that these fans use to create *dōjinshi*. The new literacies approach has helped me focus on these girls and the various media, literacies, and literacy practices they use to engage with *shōnen* media. I will further discuss this theoretical approach concerning girls’ intertextual engagement with media in Chapter One.

**Research Methods**

I initially wanted to approach this thesis as a textual analysis of various manga in *Shōnen Jump* and its corresponding *dōjinshi*. However, in shifting my theoretical perspective to New Literacies, I realised that I cannot overlook the other forms of media relevant to these girls’ literacy practices. Girls’ *dōjinshi* often refer not only to the original text but also its extended media such as anime, merchandise, musicals, and so on. At the same time, as technologies develop, *dōjinshi* culture is no longer limited to its physical printed form. Many of these girls have quickly adapted to technologies as they create their own websites, use new software to create illustrations and comics, and eventually communicate with fellow fans via social media. As such, I have taken a qualitative multimodal analysis of various media related to *fujoshi* literacies. This includes original *Shōnen Jump* media, the various *dōjinshi* and other fan works related to these *Shōnen Jump* media, books in English and Japanese about anime, manga, fandoms, *fujoshi*, and popular culture in Japan, and a select number of magazines which became discursive spaces for their literacies.

I also take into consideration *dōjinshi* as a form of new media. While *dōjinshi* are self-published media that provide minimal or no profit to most of their creators, their scale, which comprises fan events, analogue and online publications, and commercial republications, has amounted to ¥71.5 billion as of 2015. Hence, *dōjinshi* compete

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45 Kazuhiro Tsukui, “Otaku shijōchōsa ga happyō...dōjinshi ichiba wa 757okin, ‘Sabage’ būmu tōrai no kizashi, ‘Genzai mo kako mo koibitomu’ wa 31.2% nado (Yano Keizai Kenkyusho shirabe)” [Otaku Market Research Announced: Dōjinshi Market Is 75.7 Billion Yen, ‘Survival Game’ Boom Is Trending, ‘Without a Lover Then and Now’ Is at 31.2% (as Investigated by Yano Economics Research Centre)],
with products of other cultural industries. Some might even consider *dōjinshi* as traditional media since they are published in print. I argue, however, that *dōjinshi* qualify as a new media considering how fans utilise the medium to convey *fujoshi* literacies and practices.

New media are highly associated with new technologies, but as Flew argues, the notion of “new” easily antiquates other media technologies that were once new. As such, Lievrouw and Livingstone define new media as “infrastructures with three components: the artefacts or devices used to communicate or convey information; the activities and practices in which people engage to communicate or convey information; and the social arrangements or organizational forms that develop around those devices and practices.” In this thesis, I take into consideration these three elements when analysing *dōjinshi*. Throughout this thesis, I will be examining how *dōjinshi* disseminates information, their contribution to shaping their users’ practices, and the various organisations that rely on this medium. Viewing *dōjinshi* as new media allows me to analyse the social and cultural impact of *dōjinshi*.

For this thesis, I am using an archive that includes select *Shōnen jump* series popular among women in the last thirty years — from *Kyaputen Tsubasa* (Captain Tsubasa or *CTsubasa*, 1981–1986), *Seinto Seiya* (Saint Seiya, 1986–1990), *Jojo no bimyō na bōken* (Jojo’s Bizarre Adventure or *JBA*, 1986 – present), *Slam Dunk* (1990–1996), *Yūyū hakusho* (Poltergeist Report or *Yu Yu Hakusho*, 1990–1994), *One Piece* (1997–present), *Naruto* (1999–2014), *Tenisu no ojisama* (Prince of Tennis or *Tenipuri*, 1999–present), *Gintama* (Silver Soul, 2003–present), and *Kuroko no basuke* (Kuroko’s Basketball, 2008–2014). The *Shōnen jump* series I have analysed in this thesis include the manga, anime, musicals, related books, some marketing materials, and events related to the aforementioned series or to the magazine in which they appeared. Most of these comics and media were from my personal collection while the animated series were accessed through online anime streaming services such as Crunchyroll and Amazon Prime. The archive of *Shōnen jump* magazines and related books were accessed from the National Diet Library. I have conducted a qualitative analysis of these stories and their characters in order to grasp how these narratives

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inspired young women to produce complex texts which have become a part of *fujoshi* Discourse. The analysis of *Shōnen jump*’s “mediascape” allows me to understand the media environment in which these girls passionately participate.

This mediascape is reflected on the *dōjinshi* I have analysed for this thesis which amounts to 1168 self-published and commercially re-published *dōjinshi* from various artists related to the aforementioned series from *Shōnen jump*. These are primarily manga *dōjinshi*. Some of these were purchased from second-hand bookshops, *dōjinshi* shops such as K-books and Toranoana, and fan events during my research trips to Japan from 2014 to 2016. Others were accessed from the Yonezawa Memorial Library of Manga and Subcultures in Tokyo, Kyoto International Manga Museum, and the personal *dōjinshi* collection of James Welker at Kanagawa University. The rest are digital copies I have procured from various fan sites online.

The selection of these *dōjinshi* were based either on their timing — by this I mean the *dōjinshi* were published at a time when it was popular among female fans — or by their author’s or circle’s contributions, meaning the artist/s who drew the *dōjinshi* have provided significant contribution to the community and became influential in shaping the meanings of texts. This decision was guided by Mari Nishimura’s book *Aniparo to Yaoi* (*Aniparo and Yaoi*, 2001), various articles and roundtable interviews published in the fan-oriented magazine *Puff* (1979–2011) and the Comic Market Chronicles. Some of the authors and circles I have included in this thesis are professional manga artists such as CLAMP, Yun Kōga, Fumi Yoshinaga, Nariko Enomoto (1967–), and Yonezō Nekota. I conducted a textual and visual analysis of the content and paratexts of these fan comics. I also used these authors’ published interviews and correspondences with fans as windows onto *fujoshi* Discourse. In analysing their *dōjinshi*, I aim to understand the specific literacies and practices they used to critique *Shōnen jump* media. I also looked at the various elements that made their *dōjinshi* effective educational tools for *fujoshi* Discourse.

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49 Most of these *dōjinshi* have been shared in private online fan communities that are accessible only to its members. Out of respect for the privacy of these communities, I choose not to cite the websites where I have procured these digital copies.
To provide a holistic understanding of the discussions surrounding this emergent girls’ culture, I also analysed archival documents, including fan features, fan letters, and event reports in fan-oriented magazines such as *Puff* and *Comic Box* (1983—1992) and the Comic Market Chronicles and their catalogues. I accessed this archive of magazines at the National Diet Library’s Children’s Museum Library. These magazines give a glimpse of fans’ engagement with *shōnen* media and the fan community. When we draw closer to contemporary *fujoshi* culture, I also used relevant personal websites, blogs, PIXIV and twitter accounts by select fans and *dōjinshi* artists. My intention in using these texts is to analyse fan engagement and discern the development of *fujoshi* literacies, Discourse, and identity. Japanese journal articles and select Japanese books from the National Diet Library were also used to provide insight on *fujoshi* and fan culture. Other materials, including various *shōjo* and *shōnen* titles, memoirs of authors, and guidebooks, are from my personal collection.

I have also personally observed various *dōjinshi* gatherings such as Comic Market, Super Comic City, and Studio You events during the summers of 2014 to 2016. During this period, I also observed spaces and events managed by *Shōnen Jump* such as J-World Tokyo, *Shōnen Jump*’s indoor theme park in Ikebukuro, and Jump Shop, the official *Shōnen Jump* store. I also observed various companies tied to *fujoshi* fan culture such as specialty shops (Animate, Toranoana, Mandarake, Lashinbang), and specialised spaces (Animate Cafe, Sunshine City, Karaoke no Tetsujin). In these spaces, I observed the various practices of female fans as they engage in these fan-oriented and commercial spaces. I also noted the various literacies shared by fans and these spaces.

My observation of these spaces gave me an understanding of a convergent media environment where commercial companies use *fujoshi* Discourse to engage with female fans of *Shōnen Jump*. Examples of this engagement can be seen through the various official merchandise and spaces that feature *Shōnen Jump* characters outside of their story’s settings — from turning the various high school teams in *Kuroko’s Basketball* into butlers to making the hero of *Gintama* into a bear. Interactive spaces where fans can have a photo with their favourite character is another example of how these companies help bring *fujoshi* fantasies closer to reality. As much as *fujoshi* literacies transform *shōnen* media, these spaces are also transforming *fujoshi* practices.

My observation of these spaces proved critical as I personally saw the interaction between companies and their female consumers. As I was not doing a contemporary ethnographic study, it was unnecessary to conduct interviews of individuals in these
spaces. Instead, my experiences in these spaces inspired me to trace the historical connection between *fujoshi* and *Shônen Jump* and how they have come to share similar literacies.

**Thesis Outline**

In Chapter One, “A Girl’s Corruption: Theorising *fujoshi* literacies,” I introduce the theoretical framework of this thesis by thoroughly discussing how a New Literacy Studies approach can highlight *fujoshi*’s nuanced literacies and practices. This chapter discusses the various literature surrounding *shôjo, fujoshi*, and *otaku* culture and how New Literacy helps tie some of these ideas together. In this chapter, I will be looking at some concepts introduced by scholars, such as Aoyama’s use of intertextuality and Azuma’s *Database Animals*, as integral components of *fujoshi* literacies and practices. I will also examine the importance of *dōjinshi* and related fan events as critical spaces in the development of *fujoshi* literacies.

Chapter Two, “Formation of Gendered Youth Literacies in Early Youth Magazines,” is a historical overview of how Japanese media, particularly magazines, gendered media for youths. By looking at the construction of youth magazines from the Meiji period (1868—1912) until the early postwar years (1948-1959), I want to highlight the specific literacies that magazines developed, both intended and unintended, for their specific audiences. Examination of these magazines is crucial because they laid the foundations for comic magazines such as *Shônen Jump*. Many of these magazines taught their readers the visual, textual, and even social literacies involved when engaging with mass media. However, because of the divided nature of these magazines, these literacies became specific for boys and girls. I will also show some literacy practices that seem to cross both worlds. In doing so, I aim to show the establishment of a grey area, an ambiguity where girls’ imaginations crossed into boys’ worlds.

In Chapter Three, I further explore this ambiguity by looking at the literacy required to recognise the iconic *bishônen* in manga. This chapter examines the handsome boys created by male comic writers such as Shôтарo Ishinomori (1938–1998) and Tetsuya Chiba (1939–). Their representation of boys and men would have an

52 Aoyama, “Male Homosexuality as Treated by Japanese Women Writers”; Aoyama and Hartley, *Girl Reading Girl in Japan*, 4-6; Aoyama, “BL (Boys’ Love) Literacy.”
impact on the works of young female manga artists such as Keiko Takemiya (1950–) and Moto Hagio (1949–), who in turn reimagined them as young beautiful boys, the bishōnen. The concept of the bishōnen is integral to fujoshi literacies as the beautiful boy represents an ambiguity shared by both shonen and shojo worlds. In this chapter, I explore how artists such as Ishinomori and Chiba taught their young female readers the ambiguous qualities of boys, both visually and textually. I use the works of Takemiya and Hagio as examples of young women who embraced these visual and textual literacies in their works. The works of these artists proved pivotal in bridging the worlds of boys and girls media. At the same time, as I argue in this chapter, their works also expanded this grey area of creativity, a space where their fervent readers continued to experiment with the medium.

This new space is the world of fan dōjinshi and Chapter Four explores the construction of this space by studying the practices and literacies developed by readers of comic magazines and their related media. The development of mass media in Japan during the 1960s and 1970s was phenomenal. There was a strong demand for entertainment, especially when new technologies such as television emerged. The comic industry was at the heart of this demand and leaders of the industry pushed their content to other forms of media such as animation. This thirst for new content also pushed comic magazines to involve their readers in the creative process. Many of these magazines taught readers how to draw and write comics. Some even offered spaces where readers could openly critique comics. This highly participatory atmosphere became central to the development of various literacy practices among readers. This chapter focuses on the literacy practices of shojo manga readers who were inspired by the developments of the genre that they were encouraged to develop a new space where they could exercise creative freedom. In this chapter, I also look at how comic criticism among shojo manga enthusiasts paved the way for alternative perspectives through parody dōjinshi called aniparo. Dōjinshi based on titles such as Captain Tsubasa and Saint Seiya laid the foundation for these fan literacies in girls’ culture. I argue that during the early years of women’s fandom, parody became a critical tool in fan literacies as it gave them the opportunity to push the boundaries of texts they loved. This then led to a culture of questioning — one driven by the question “What if?”

The potential of texts and their possibilities are further explored in Chapter Five where I examine how girls honed their fan literacies in order to produce nuanced literacy practices that “corrupt” the image of male heroes in boys’ comic magazines.
such as Shônen jump. By looking at the various dōjinshi related to titles such as Jojo’s Bizarre Adventure, Slam Dunk, and Yu Yu Hakusho, I highlight girls’ dōjinshi culture in the 1990s where girls informally developed various literacies that facilitated the deconstruction of the masculinities, relationships, and sexualities of their favourite male characters. I examine the impact of media mix in the development of girls’ highly intertextual and multimodal literacies. I also look at how girls informally systematised their “corruption” of Shônen jump texts by examining the literacy practices that structured their deconstruction of masculinity in the magazine. I argue that this informal systematisation of their literacy practices proved to be crucial in the formation of their fujoshi identity.

The sixth chapter studies the birth of the fujoshi as their “rotten” literacies became recognised in the general media. This chapter shows how the systematisation of fujoshi literacy practices eventually led to the commercialisation of their interests and practices and the broader recognition of their culture. The formation of fujoshi identity highlights a social tension where some people refuse to normalise these girls’ fan practices. As such, rather than being recognised as normal, these girls with non-normative interests and practices were identified as “rotten girls.” This chapter examines the discussions surrounding the recognition of fujoshi and how these informed the public about these girls’ nuanced practices. I argue that while media recognition of fujoshi singled out and at times stigmatised this community of young women, the process also gave girls the opportunity to assess and claim this “rotten” identity for themselves. This chapter examines the role of media in the formation of fujoshi identity.

In the final chapter, I go full circle as I examine Shônen jump’s response to fujoshi’s consumption of their magazine. I look back at the question raised by the Moepure blog and examine whether fujoshi have indeed “corrupted” Shônen jump. In this chapter, I investigate Shônen jump titles such as Naruto, Prince of Tennis, Gintama, and Kuroko’s Basketball and look at how their story lines and related media incorporated fujoshi literacies and practices. The inclusion of fujoshi literacies and practices in Shônen jump served as “bait” for female fans and are examples of the magazine’s efforts in building a convergent culture with their female audience. While the Moepure blog highlights some aversion these changes, this chapter aims to highlight that these changes became an opportunity for shônen media to break the gendered barriers they had built. I argue that the inclusion of fujoshi “bait” can be viewed as a
bold and progressive move to expand the magazine’s gender base towards a demographic that encompasses all young people.

In the afterword, I reflect on the various literacies born from women’s engagement with popular media and the impact of these literacies on *shōnen* media. I also consider the future of *fujoshi* literacies as they spread globally through the increased accessibility of fan works in online spaces. As much as these literacies have changed girls’ fan culture in Japan, I think about their transformative potential in other media and fan cultures all over the world.

In sum, I intend to understand in this thesis how various literacies and practices, developed and learned by young women over the last fifty years, have helped build a bridge between *shōnen* and *shōjo* media. I aim to highlight how these literacies learned through consumption of popular media function beyond reading and writing as they contribute to transformative practices that have shaped youth culture. I also aim to demonstrate how new media such as fan *dōjinshi* have aided in the proliferation of these literacies thus giving birth to a new Discourse.
1. A GIRL’S “CORRUPTION”: THEORISING FUJOSHI LITERACIES

1.1. INTRODUCTION

At what point does a girl become a fujoshi? Given the complexity of human experience, one can only wonder how these young women strayed from normative readings of homosocial relationships in shōnen manga magazines. In Sachiko Takeuchi’s autobiographical comic, *Kusare joshi* (Rotten girl, 2009), she gives a glimpse of how her and her friends’ reading of *shōnen* media diverged.

According to Takeuchi and her friends, exposure to texts that highlight non-normative expressions of masculinity and male homosociality were pivotal in forming their “rotten” understanding of *shōnen* media. In the case of Takeuchi’s senior, Shiori, she became a fujoshi by reading various original boys love texts brought by her sister’s friend. As for Takeuchi and her classmate, Mai, their exposure to boys love *dōjinshi* of their favourite *shōnen* series in bookshops incited their fujoshi lives. Their stories are similar to other *yaoi* or boys love writers that I have encountered in my research whose notions of masculinity and sexuality were transformed upon reading various original or fan-made boys love media.

In these women’s exposure to these boys love texts, they have learned various concepts, images, and expressions that perceive these male relationships as romantic and occasionally sexual. One can view these experiences as their point of “corruption” — the specific moment in these girls’ lives when they were exposed to the fujoshi literacies that in turn made them into “rotten girls.” These eye-opening experiences highlight the critical importance of literacies in fujoshi culture. Considering the long history of boys love and its contributions to young women’s media culture, fujoshi literacies are beyond “corrupt” but are transformative. As such, these women’s experiences inspired me to further investigate the shape of fujoshi literacies.

This chapter examines the pedagogy of fujoshi literacies. What are the various social literacies and practices of fujoshi and how do these alter girls’ practices? What roles do boys love *dōjinshi* play in transforming a girl’s mind? To answer these questions, I propose to view these fujoshi literacies as an example of new literacies. The first part of this chapter looks at the different approaches in studying fujoshi culture. This literature review highlights the complexity of fujoshi culture as seen through the

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diverse approaches of various scholars. This literature review also reveals fujoshi culture’s ties with shōjo, fan, and popular culture, highlighting its multimodal and intertextual natures. Comprehension of these interconnections is crucial to understanding fujoshi literacies as it showcases how fujoshi culture extends beyond texts and is apparent in various practices.

The second part of this chapter examines these practices and the role they play in transfiguring women’s literacies. It is relevant to explore the development of these literacies as it reveals the pedagogy of fujoshi culture as experienced by young women such as Sachiko Takeuchi. I explore the complexity of fujoshi literacies and practices by using New Literacy Studies as a framework. New Literacy Studies highlight the impact of media on our social practices. This chapter introduces the various concepts used throughout this thesis that help understand the different factors involved in the development of fujoshi literacies. This section explores the relevance of this approach in the study of this “rotten” aspect of Japanese girls’ culture. This introduces the approach of this thesis in exploring the historical development of fujoshi literacies and how these literacies changed shōnen media.

1.2. LITERATURE REVIEW OF FUJOSHI CULTURE

When American chef Anthony Bourdain features Tokyo in a 2013 episode of Parts Unknown, he feels compelled to mention “legions of young girls and soccer moms” who enjoy reading about “sexually ambiguous boys who are getting very friendly with each other.”55 The show features various cover illustrations of boys in loving embraces as Bourdain adds that women’s interest in these texts is “a mystery for outsiders looking in, but there they are.”56 He alludes to the persistence of these boys love texts in Japanese popular culture despite their apparent perversity. While Anthony Bourdain is no expert on boys love manga, fujoshi, or even Japanese culture, his feature on boys love manga highlights the initial curiosity prompted in outsiders who notice these texts in bookshops and their eager female consumers. Early English books on manga shared Bourdain’s curiosity,57 often baffled as to why Japanese girls had taken an interest in “perverse” texts about boys being very friendly with each other.

56 Ibid.
Studying the origins of boys love was a gateway for scholars to understand the mystery behind the enduring nature of this genre in Japanese girls’ culture. Most histories of boys love texts look back at their emergence in *shōjo* manga in the 1970s, as seen in the works of the *Hana nijūyonen gumi* (The magnificent year-24 group), which was composed of female comic writers such as Keiko Takemiya (1950–), Hagio Moto (1949–), Yasuko Aoike (1948–), Ryōko Yamagishi (1947–), and Riyoko Ikeda (1948–) who were all born in or around Year 24 of the Emperor Showa’s reign (i.e. 1949). These artists were known for their various innovations in *shōjo* manga, ranging from visually flowing and highly emotive comic panels to unconventional romances featuring boys love. Histories also recognise boys love’s ties with female authors such as Mari Mori (1903–1987) who wrote fiction in the 1960s that featured beautiful boys in tragic love affairs with older men. Her works highlight the keen interest felt among female readers for male-male romances after the Pacific War (1941-1945). At the heart of these romances is the beautiful boy, the *bishōnen*, who has been romanticised in manga, literature, and beautifully illustrated magazines for youths since the turn of Japan’s modern age. This rich history highlights boys love’s strong ties with media and the evolution of women’s interests in representations of gender and sexuality in popular culture.


The evolution of boys love can be seen through the various labels the genre has embraced across its fifty-year history. The magnificent year-24 group labelled their boys love works as *shōnen'ai* (literally, boys love), a term taken from the title of Taruho Inagaki’s book *Shōnen'ai no bigaku* (The aesthetics of boys love, 1968) which contained essays on the erotic aesthetic of boys. *Yaoi* emerged a decade later to describe the countless parody *dōjinshi* written by young women that featured popular male characters in romantic or sexual relationships with men. Not long after, commercially published boys love media appeared under the umbrella of the monthly *Comic Jun/JUNE* first published in 1978. When *JUNE* folded in 1996, commercial boys love publications have flourished and have embraced the label *Boys Love* or *BL*.

These labels have become synonymous with each other as they all refer to male-male romances by and for women. To avoid any confusion between labels, scholars have made efforts to distinguish one from the other. In the late nineties, Azusa Nakajima coined the verb *yaou* to describe the process in which girls, in her terms, meaninglessly and pointlessly engage with boys love texts.64 Mizoguchi notes that *yaoi* is a more appropriate term for the phenomenon as it describes “the impulse of female producers and consumers of such works,”65 rather than boys love which simply highlights its non-normative content. There are attempts to further delineate these labels, either by placing them within their historical context66 or specifically identifying each label’s visual and literary aesthetic.67 These labels are still used interchangeably, however, by contemporary fans. For example, despite having its origins in girls’ *dōjin* culture, I noticed that the term *yaoi* is no longer used as a label for contemporary boys love *dōjinshi* in various *dōjin* events. Original boys love works in some fan events are not called BL but are labelled *JUNE*, where writers of original boys love comics can make a fan comic of their commercially-published BL works. To a degree, these labels have taken on a life of their own. This shows the mutable meanings of these labels, highlighting girls’ perpetual quest to find, challenge, and transform meanings within and beyond boys love. The diversity of boys love texts has lead cultural critics and scholars

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66 Welker, “History of Shōnen Ai, Yaoi, and Boys Love.”
to approach this subject from various perspectives. Approaches to boys love range from historical, literary, psychoanalytic, gender and queer studies, cultural and media studies.

1.2.1 LITERARY AND PSYCHOANALYTICAL APPROACHES

Literary studies on boys love focuses on the various textual and visual aesthetics of the genre. In her book *Bishōnengaku nyūmon* (*A Primer on the Beautiful Boy*, 1987), Azusa Nakajima, alongside other boys love writers and readers, examined a central element in boys love texts, the *bishōnen*. They discussed the *bishōnen*’s identity with great detail, from his name to what he should wear, and the logic behind these aesthetic decisions. The book explored the minds of these creators and readers and explained how they processed masculine images and reinterpreted them. In a later book, Nakajima uses this and her experience of writing boys love texts as a springboard to critique and analyse women’s interest in boys love.

Tomoko Aoyama argues that the textual and visual aesthetics of male homosexuals as created by female writers are creative escapes from patriarchal aesthetics of gender. These symbols also represent women’s negotiations with fantasy and reality. Scholars such as Yōko Nagakubo, who studied the traits of male characters in BL novels, Febriani Sihombing, who studied the iconography of male couples in boys love comics, and Sonoko Azuma, who studied the relationship dynamics of couples in boys love stories, understand that even specific elements in boys love bear important meaning to fans. Azuma argues in a later book that exploration


69 Nakajima, *A Primer on the Beautiful Boy*.


of these relationship dynamics is part of BL fans’ interpretative play. These semiotic studies exemplify the purposefulness of images and texts which are used by boys love creators to express their innermost desires. As such, some scholars have used psychoanalysis to explore the psyche of boys love fans.

The psychoanalytical approach is tied to the idea that because boys love texts are written by women, they are, in important ways, *écriture féminine*. Scholars of *shōjo* culture have used feminist theories from Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, and Hélenè Cixous in explaining the emotional, creative, and erotic outbursts in *shōjo* literature, and by association, boys love texts. Some scholars have used theories from Freud and Lacan to explain the sexual desires of writers and readers. Aoyama and Hartley see *shōjo* literature as intertextual, where girls freely experiment with texts knowing that they carry layers of meanings. Rio Otomo sees the creative outbursts in *shōjo* literature, where one of the results is boys love, as a pleasure beyond one’s body — a *jouissance*. Keith Vincent notes the underlying Electra complex found in Mari Mori’s novels where her young male characters often seek fatherly attention and affection, highlighting Mori’s desire to monopolise her father’s attentions.

Scholars have also explored the importance of desire in boys love media. Akiko Hori notes the various codes of desire embedded in boys love manga. The desire to view or project one’s sexuality onto sexual male bodies at their will is seen as a girl’s “gaze,” which is also known as a *fuirutaa* (rotten filter) or *fujoshime* (rotten girls’ lens). The physical differences between the creator’s bodies and the *bishōnen* heroes of

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80 Hori, *Codes of desire*.
81 Nagaike, “Perverse Sexualities, Pervasive Desires: Presentations of Female Fantasies and Yaoi Manga as Pornography Directed at Women,” 82.
boys love texts highlight how transformative expressions of sexuality displace and reject patriarchal female sexuality. In Nakajima’s books, she reasons that boys love was a way for female readers to escape from their gender roles. Yukari Fujimoto supports this claim when she analyses shōjo texts dating from the 1970s and 1980s and the gender transformations in their narratives. She argues that early shōjo narratives, including shōnen’ai, served as a creative refuge and escape from the sexual realities of Japanese girls and women. This gives an impression that readers of boys love are unable to cope with their roles as Japanese women.

While this may have been true for Nakajima, critics like Junko Kaneda and Shion Miura argue that this is not necessarily the case for other readers who view boys love media as a positive form of entertainment. Yukari Fujimoto, upon re-evaluating her position in her earlier book, reconsiders yaoi as a playground for girls to experiment with gender and sexuality, highlighting girls’ agency as readers as they express their sexual desires in their amateur comics. Patrick Galbraith’s examination of moebanashi (moe talk) shows the enjoyment fujoshi derive from affectionately playing with various male characters as they discuss their boys love fantasies with their friends.

These psychoanalytical approaches use girls’ sexual and emotional desires to understand women’s engagement with boys love texts. These approaches also situate fujoshi within a patriarchal heteronormative world where women are seen as passive compared to men. As the primary consumers and producers of boys love, women are the focus of these psychoanalytical approaches. While such an approach has its strengths in revealing women’s desires, it overlooks other communities that are also interested in boys love. As such, some scholars expanded this closed world, shifting their attention

85 Nakajima, Communication deficiency syndrome; Nakajima, The children of Thanatos.
86 Fujimoto, The shape of the heart in girls’ comics.
Towards the practices of these young women and the communities whose identities are reimagined and transformed in boys love — Japan’s gay and queer communities.

1.2.2. Feminist and Queer Approaches

At the heart of BL culture are the participative young women who eagerly engage with this media, the fujoshi. Scholars sought to understand their complex identity and their place in Japanese society. Critical to these are spaces shared by boys love fans and Japan’s queer communities where fans sought to find connections between their beloved bishōnen’s romances and Japan’s gay community.

Some girls turned towards publications for gay men such as Barazoku (The Rose Tribe, 1971–2004). To accommodate their female readers, Barazoku ran a column titled Yurizoku no Heya (Room of the Lily Tribe) where the editor answered inquiries from female readers, most of whom were fans of boys love texts. As James Welker points out, the column became a space for boys love fans to learn and explore queer identities and sexualities. Fans of the bishōnen and the otokoyaku, an androgynous male character played by a female actor in the all-female theatre troupe, Takarazuka, embraced fantasies of homosexuality. Welker argues that bishōnen represent the sexually liberated bodies of women who protest against heteronormativity. This situates women in queer spaces where they can explore queer identities and sexualities.

The experience of boys love reader and critic, Akiko Mizoguchi, also provides an example of how boys love helped her realise her lesbian sexual identity. She sees boys love texts as forums where readers and authors can generate and realise their queer interests. To a degree, this also extends to heterosexual men who enjoy reading boys love — the fudanshi (rotten men). As Nagaike notes, boys love provides a queer space

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93 Mizoguchi, “Reading and Living Yaoi”; Mizoguchi, Theorizing BL as a transformative genre.
for these male readers who relate to male boys love characters whose masculinities are seen to be effeminate or unconventional.95

Girls’ passion for boys love and curiosity for non-normative sexualities has been met with criticism by members of Japan’s gay community. This was first seen in a debate in 1992 called yaoi ronsō (yaoi debate) which showed some gay men’s discomfort over girls’ fantasies about male-male romances. Wim Lunsing examines the arguments in this debate between Masaki Satō, a gay activist critical of yaoi and shōnen’ai texts, and female fans of boys love. Satō notes that women objectify and commodify these unrealistic images of male gays for their entertainment. Lunsing notes that while these yaoi debates highlighted the differences between yaoi and gei (gay-oriented) comics, both texts share thematic and aesthetic parallels, especially in their representation of male homosexual fantasies.96

Years after, this debate continues as critics of boys love note the underlying homophobia in boys love texts. This is in reaction to boys love stories that contain narratives where male characters openly berate homosexuality. Akiko Mizoguchi notes that this homophobia in boys love is an expression of heteronormative fear of the queer.97 Ishida follows Mizoguchi’s observation and examines the responses of boys love fans to these criticisms of homophobia. He notices that fans take an apologetic and defensive stance over their desires, where these girls situate their boys love desires in a temporal space outside of heterosexual and homosexual realities, what Ishida calls “autonomy of desire.” Ishida sees this as the reality of boys love, but he argues that this “autonomy of desire” must be cognizant of the gay community which it appropriates in its texts.98

These strong critiques of fujoshi by the gay community have also been denounced by Nagaike and Aoyama who felt that these debates have not resolved the connection between boys love representations and the realities of concerned parties. Nagaike and

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Aoyama argue that more than the sexual identities of creators and their critics, the representations in boys love are most important. In recent years, BL authors have grown more cognizant of their representation of various male identities and sexualities in their works. In many ways, these debates have become integral to the growth of boys love and have contributed to its wider appeal to readers from various walks in life.

These studies have explored the significance and influence of boys love in women’s and queer culture. They highlight the impact of boys love in Japanese culture and society. After all, boys love texts are part of Japan’s cultural landscape and are widely accessible through bookstores and specialist shops found in every major city in Japan. Shops and streets are transformed by boys love media, showcasing its mark on Japan’s media landscape.

1.2.3. CULTURAL AND MEDIA STUDIES

Studies of boys love media focus not only on comics and novels although these two continue to dominate boys love culture. Kaoru Mori considers boys love as a form of women’s erotic media. Yumiko Sugiura notes that boys love media has been transformed due to *fujoshi*’s own boundless imagination and creativity. This has led to the development of spaces such as East Ikebukuro which hosts businesses that cater to *fujoshi* activities and interests. *Fujoshi* themselves have been featured in various media, making their literacy practices public.

Popular media often portray *fujoshi* as young women who struggle to control their fantasies and desires. Okabe and Ishida note that *fujoshi* continue to separate their *fujoshi* lifestyle from their personal/public lives, mostly because of their non-normative practices. *Fujoshi* only reveal themselves in the presence of people who share or understand their complex boys love interests. This complexity is primarily due to the genre’s diversity. Developments in media technologies and industries have diversified commercial BL media which now includes video games, drama CDs, animated televisions shows, live action straight-to-video movies, full-length animated films, fashion apparel and accessories, stationery and homewares. The personalisation of these technologies has also allowed fans to easily produce and distribute their own BL works, as seen through various *dōjin* works produced by fans. Kamm argues that

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100 Mori, *Women read porn.*
102 Hester, “Fujoshi Emergent.”
this variety of BL media has led to diverse patterns of use among fujoshi. Whether a fan immerses herself in commercial or fan-produced boys love media, Mari Nishimura argues that all these goods are bound by an ődő — distinct narrative patterns — that highlight romantic relationships between men. Despite their non-normative content, most boys love media are highly accessible as they can be bought at fan conventions, in stores and online. BL television shows and films are also released nationally. While some consider boys love a niche genre, I argue that its high visibility and accessibility has made BL a part of Japan’s mainstream popular culture.

With the export of Japan’s popular culture, boys love has also reached international audiences. Its initial exposure was seen online and Mark McLelland notes how fans inside and outside of Japan have used the internet as a new space to publish their fantasies of men and their homosexual romances. The localisation of BL titles has made boys love accessible to youth cultures in Asia, America, and Europe. The culmination of this is the development of boys love communities all over the globe.

103 Okabe and Ishida, “Making Fujoshi Identity Visible and Invisible.”
105 Nishimura, BL culture theory.
While most scholars claim there is nothing wrong with enjoying boys love, the popularity of its non-normative content, particularly its sexual representations of young-looking characters, has raised concern among conservative members of society. McLelland captures the developing interest in boys love globally as well as anxieties over its content both in Japan and abroad. While legislation is framed in Japan in such a way that it does not capture this fictional content, McLelland describes what happens when such content circulates on the global stage, especially in countries like Australia and Canada. These countries have strict legal codes governing child pornography. These laws can be interpreted to include boys love texts and pay scant attention to the original context of the material. Bauwens-Sugimoto gives another example of anxiety among girls living in what she describes as “religious countries,” such as Indonesia and the Philippines, who say that they feel religious guilt when they consume boys love texts. These studies on boys love have been integral in raising the argument that the circulation of these texts should not make criminals out of their primary producers and consumers — imaginative and expressive young women.

There are aspects of boys love that require further exploration and concepts that remain unclear. Kamm notes that previous studies have focused mostly on the female users and producers and have failed to capture the diversity of the genre. Mikako Hata argues that the term “boys love” has been particularly problematic as it has been loosely used and has led to hasty conclusions and generalisations about boys love works], in Josei manga kenkyū: Ōbei/nihon/ajia o tsunagu manga, ed. Fusami Ogi (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2015), 153–67.


manga, novels, texts, consumers, and their producers. She suggests two simple yet specific approaches towards boys love studies. One approach is studies of BL, *BL no kenkyū*, while the other is to study topics through BL, *BL de kenkyū*.114 These approaches lead to specific studies without losing the purpose and meaning of boys love in the study.

While I think previous studies have been successful in studying both approaches, I do agree with Hata and Kamm that the use of boys love (or even *yaoi*) as an umbrella term has over-simplified the diversity of the genre and its practices. Most studies have focused on commercial boys love texts and their female market. Tomoko Aoyama notes how girls develop literacies specific for boys love by reading boys love texts.115 She argues that boys love literacies have the power to colour girls’ readings of mainstream fiction. Aoyama notes that readers of boys love can sense the “scent” of boys love in mainstream novels and call them *nioi-kei* (literally “of the same scent,” alluding to the similarities between these stories and boys love texts).

While Aoyama uses commercially published novels and *BL* manga as examples, I wonder if such literacy practices apply to readers and authors who have not read *BL* or *shōjo manga* but are passionate fans of *shōnen* media and its boys love *dōjinshi*. In studying girls’ *dōjinshi* culture, I have realised that some conclusions do not fully apply to boys love fan *dōjinshi*. For example, the focus on boys love as *écriture féminine* has underplayed the contribution of men and *shōnen* texts in shaping *fujoshi* literacies. It has also overlooked readers who might not even be consumers of commercially published *BL* but are fans of boys love *dōjinshi* based on *shōnen* media.116 Are these women’s literacy practices any different? Is reading commercial *BL* a necessary step in learning boys love literacies? If most boys love *dōjinshi* rely on *shōnen* media, how much of it is purely *écriture féminine*?

In this thesis, I focus on the experiences of young women similar to Sachiko Takeuchi who have learned a variety of boys love concepts and other *fujoshi* literacies through fan *dōjinshi* of *shōnen* media, in this case, *dōjinshi* of *Shōnen Jump* manga. These fans exemplify literacy practices that intersect the worlds of *shōjo* and *shōnen* culture. Together, they have created various literacies that are eventually tied to *fujoshi*

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culture. I propose to explore how these female readers learn these literacy practices by conceptualising *fujoshi* literacies as forms of New Literacies.

1.3. FUJOSHI LITERACIES AS NEW LITERACIES

In *Kusare Joshi*, when Takeuchi’s senior, Shiori, sees her join their high school’s manga club, she immediately recognises that she and Takeuchi share the same “scent,” alluding to the fact that she immediately recognised Takeuchi as a *fujoshi*.

Shiori’s sharp recognition of a fellow *fujoshi* highlights the recognition of a *fujoshi* beyond their preference for certain texts. A girl does not need to hold a boys love book before another fan can recognise her as a *fujoshi*. As other manga have shown, *fujoshi* can recognise their own “kind” through a variety of signals.

The ability to recognise a *fujoshi* requires literacies for *fujoshi* practices. These literacies are no longer limited to a girl’s comprehension of reading and writing but now include knowledge of a variety of practices specific to the *fujoshi* community — from recognising boys love potential in *shōnen* texts to knowing the layout and organisation of *dōjinshi* events. Below, I will argue that the knowledge and understanding of these *fujoshi* literacies are the driving force behind the transformations in the *shōnen* media which now takes into consideration the interests of this “rotten” female audience. I consider these literacies concerning *fujoshi* culture as forms of new literacies.

New Literacy Studies developed as a response to the realisation that language is no longer limited to written or spoken texts but now involves a variety of literacies within multiple contexts. New Literacy Studies focus on the social aspects of literacy, where literacies are seen as social practices tied to social identities. This approach recognises that a person is part of many communities that have specific practices which requires specific literacies. To a degree, this perspective views human life in a manner similar to Pierre Bourdieu who also saw that various structures shape our lives,

116 Kamm, “Rotten Use Patterns.”
117 Takeuchi, Rotten girl!, 5.
particularly our mental and physical actions, both conscious and unconscious. As an individual, the social structures we encounter, or what Bourdieu called fields, define our relationships and roles in society. People engage in different fields or “lifeworlds” and learn various roles, theories, emotions, values, perspectives, and actions specific to these fields which are collectively referred to as practices. The culmination of this is a person’s *habitus*, the embodiment of all the practices a person has learned from his or her involvement in various fields.

Within the context of this thesis, a *fujoshi* is a part of various “lifeworlds” — ranging from various fields such as social institutions (such as family and school) to communities (such as friends, manga school club, and *dōjinshi* circle). By recognising literacy as a social practice, I can focus on specific literacy practices from particular lifeworlds. For this thesis, the New Literacy approach allows me to shift my attention away from the boys love texts and focus more on the literacy practices developed, learned, and disseminated in the *fujoshi* community.

Focusing on literacy practices reveals the various components involved in enacting specific social practices. Scribner and Cole note that a practice has three components: technology, knowledge, and skills. These three components are “inter-related, dynamically connected to one another, and mutually evolving in conjunction with people’s changing ideas about purposes and tasks.” As such, technologies are not limited to modern digital technologies but involve any tool used for any practice aimed at achieving varying tasks. Scribner and Cole also note that no practice is done without specific purpose or context.

James Paul Gee expands Cole and Scribner’s definition by noting that literacy, which is steeped in language, cannot be bound by texts or grammar. For Gee, language can only be properly communicated if a person speaks and acts within a specific context. He defines this extension of language as Discourse, with the intentional capital “D.”

Gee defines Discourses as:

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124 Ibid.
distinctive ways of speaking/listening and often, too, writing/reading
coupled with distinctive ways of acting, interacting, valuing, feeling,
dressing, thinking, believing, with other people with various objects,
tools, and technologies, so as to enact specific socially recognizable
identities engaged in specific socially recognizable activities.126

Gee’s definition expands our understanding of language, highlighting that words
and grammar are meaningless without the right actions, mindset, emotions, beliefs, and
contexts. People and the tools they use to communicate also serve as important aspects
of Discourse. Discourses also manifest through our behaviours. From the primary
Discourse we learned from our families to the secondary Discourses we learned from all
the social institutions we have encountered in our lives, we embody multitudes of
Discourses. These Discourses represent the various lifeworlds we engage with. To
distinguish particular Discourses demands understanding of practices beyond language.
Gee argues that it is only through the mastery of these secondary Discourses that we can
consider ourselves literate.127 Being literate involves knowing how to properly act and
what to say within a Discourse. Literacy allows us to communicate, both verbally and
non-verbally, with others about the Discourses we engage in. Literacy also becomes
powerful when a person uses one Discourse to critique another Discourse. Take for
example Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick who in her work *Between Men: English Literature
and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985) uses her literacy of queer culture to question the
meanings of male homosocial representations in nineteenth-century novels, by
suggesting the sexual tension between two male characters.128 By extension this can
also be seen in the various boys love dōjinshi of popular *Shōnen jump* titles which
interpret the homosocial relationships in these titles as romantic or sexual. These are
examples of how literacies can be used to challenge and shape meanings, making
literacies powerful and meanings mutable.129

The mediums in which these meanings are created, challenged, and exchanged
are seen as encoded texts. Encoded texts are important in Discourses and literacies
because texts may serve as semi-permanent manifestations of our literacies. The media
we use reflects our Discourses and literacies. Our engagement with media allows us to

125 Ibid.
127 Ibid., 161–176.
128 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York:
129 Ibid., 177.
use our literacies to produce or challenge meanings. In this thesis, I argue that *dōjinshi* serve as an encoded medium for *fujoshi* Discourse and literacies.

The concept of *fujoshi* literacies fits within this definition of literacies as many *fujoshi* literacy practices involve this constant generation and negotiation of meanings through mediums of encoded texts. I see *fujoshi* literacies as encompassing more than just reading and writing *boys love* texts but also including manifestations of the variety of Discourses they have embraced in their lives which are repurposed specifically for their enjoyment of popular culture. Looking specifically at *dōjinshi*, one medium that encodes *fujoshi* literacy practices, we can see the variety of Discourses layered and transfigured in this medium.

1.4. FUJOSHI LITERACIES IN DŌJINSHI

Understanding the various literacies embedded in *dōjinshi* involves dissecting the different components of the medium. This section examines parts of a fan manga *dōjinshi*, a medium used by the artists featured in this thesis. These kinds of *dōjinshi* are composed of three sections: the cover, comic, and its paratexts which include forewords, afterwords, footnotes, and publication information. These sections are further comprised of textual, visual, and conceptual layers that collectively convey different literacies to its readers. These layers highlight the authors’ mastery of diverse Discourses and their ability to repurpose its literacies to create *boys love* *dōjinshi*. I argue that the consonance of these layers in fans’ *boys love* *dōjinshi* have the power to educate their readers about *fujoshi* culture. Deconstructing the sections of a manga *dōjinshi* allows us to understand the layers that impart *fujoshi* literacies.

Much like any other book, *dōjinshi* covers are designed to catch the attention of the reader. Fan *dōjinshi* is unique in drawing the attention of fans of a particular series through the use of its characters on the cover. The visual impact of these characters requires the readers to have a media literacy concerning a specific series. Not only should a reader be adept in popular media but they must also have knowledge of the series in order to recognise the characters featured in the *dōjinshi*. For most *dōjinshi*, the images of the series’ protagonists draw the attention of fans.
The characters’ visual aesthetic also reflects the authors’ design and aesthetic literacies that have their roots in various media. Rather than depicting these characters in the exact likeness as the original series, more often than not, artists redraw these characters with their own visual aesthetics. One result of this is the transformation of *shōnen* heroes into beautiful young boys that are reminiscent of the *bishōnen* in *shōjo* manga. Manga’s *bishōnen*, or even the more mature *biseinen*, bear visual elements — ranging from large expressive eyes to lithe masculine frames — that reinforces the male character’s potential as a romantic lead. In the case of boys love fan *dōjinshi*, young creators use the *bishōnen* aesthetic as a visual premise for romance between two male characters. The *bishōnen*’s beautiful features are perceived as androgynous or

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gender-fluid\textsuperscript{131} which makes the character malleable for fans’ interpretative play in their dōjinshi.\textsuperscript{132}

The cover also reveals another detail about the contents of the book that may not be understood by a casual fan but may catch the attention of fujoshi readers — the couple featured in the dōjinshi. In Ayano Yamane’s Slam Dunk dojinshi, the author blatantly mentions the couple on the cover by mentioning “Rukawa x Hanamichi only.”\textsuperscript{133} This indicates that the dōjinshi will only feature this couple. This equation is a shorthand for a fujoshi literacy practice called kappuringu (coupling).

Coupling is a fujoshi literacy widely used in boys love fan works where fans “couple” two characters by determining their relationship dynamics. It is similar to the practice of shipping in fandoms related to Western media.\textsuperscript{134} Coupling relies on two character variables: the seme (attacker) and the uke (receiver). At its most basic, the seme is seen as the character who takes control of the relationship and in turn will be on “top” of his partner. The uke is the character who receives the seme’s affection and takes the “bottom” role in bed. The dynamics between who gets to be the uke and the seme among the characters in a shōnen series are negotiated by fujoshi through their dōjinshi.\textsuperscript{135} Dōjinshi covers provide visual cues about which character plays the seme and the uke role. The relationship between these characters are often connected by the operand ‘x’, making the most basic coupling formula of seme x uke. Sometimes this operator is omitted and includes the combinations of their names or other signifiers attached to the characters.\textsuperscript{136} The coupling label on the cover of a dōjinshi serves as a

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{131} Welker, “Beautiful, Borrowed, and Bent,” 865–66.
\textsuperscript{132} Azuma, Takara-zuka/yaoi: A rereading of love, 151–208; Fujimoto, “Evolution of BL.”
\textsuperscript{133} Ayano Yamane, No Kiss (Tokyo: Self-published, 1995)
\textsuperscript{134} The term shipping has its origins from the word relationship where fans of popular televisions shows such as X-files perceived romantic relationships between characters. Over time, the word has been reduced to ship. The act of imagining two characters in a relationship is called shipping. Fans who create these ships are called shippers. For more information, see Victoria M. Gonzalez, “Swan Queen, Shipping, and Boundary Regulation in Fandom,” Transformativ Works and Cultures 22, no. 0 (September 15, 2016), http://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/article/view/669; “Shipping,” Fanlore, accessed February 17, 2017, https://fanlore.org/wiki/Shipping.
\textsuperscript{135} Azuma, “Community of Delusions.”
\textsuperscript{136} Rukawa x Hanamichi is also called by fans as RuHana which combines the first kanji of their last names.
\textsuperscript{137} In the fandom of Shōnen Jump series Katekyō Hitman Reborn (My hitman tutor Reborn/Reborn!, 2004–2012), couplings are also identified through an alpha-numeric coding system created by fans. Using various readings of numbers, fans re-encoded characters names into numbers. For example, the main character’s name is Tsuna which fans have coded as 27, alluding to the English reading of two and the Japanese reading of seven. Mukuro, another character from the series, have been coded as 69 by fans based on the Japanese numeric readings in his name. Hence, a pairing that features Mukuro and Tsuna is written as 6927 where the first two numbers indicate the seme. Should a character not have a numeric reading of his name, fans used the first letter of his name. This was the case of Dino where fans used the letter D. Hence, when he is paired with Tsuna, their coupling is called D27.
textual code that immediately informs fujoshi of its boys love content as well as pique the curiosity of fans who are trying to decipher this coupling formula. The cover serves as a quick introduction to basic fujoshi literacies which would be further explored inside the dōjinshi.

The paratexts of a dōjinshi are also dense with fujoshi literacy practices. The publication information of current and forthcoming dōjinshi highlights various fan events fujoshi participate in. The foreword, afterword, and the occasional footnotes within the comic give voice to the author who uses these spaces to impart her mōsō (fantasy) to her readers. These fantasies reimagine shōnen manga heroes outside the contexts of their original stories and place them in new settings and experiences. In these paratexts, authors guide their readers through their fantasy by explaining the inspiration and rationale behind their dōjinshi’s coupling or neta (plot or scenario). These plots range from byōki-neta (sickness scenario), where a character takes care of another character, to kaisoku-neta (pirate plot) where the characters are placed in a pirate setting. Much like the discursive spaces in BL manga paratexts, authors use these spaces to engage in moebanashi with their readers. At times, authors also publish responses from readers who share the same enthusiasm for their fantasies. Paratexts in fan dōjinshi help frame the content as authors convey concepts such as coupling and neta to their readers.

The heart of these dōjinshi is its comic where artists use media-specific literacies to immerse their readers in their fantasies. Comics scholars argue that comics are multimodal since they feature images, texts, and sound (specifically onomatopoeia). Comics are often described as made up of sequential images. Scott McCloud defines them as “juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer.” Accordingly, comics and, by extension, manga demand a variety of literacies from readers. In order to understand the illustrations, readers must have a range of visual literacies. Textual literacies are required to understand and comprehend the dialogues and the written texts integrated with the illustrations. Sound effects written in the comic become textual representations of sound, adding depth to one’s reading of comics.


Collectively, these are the tangible literacies seen in manga. These literacies also work hand in hand to impart conceptual literacies that range from character tropes such as the *seme* and the *uke*, literary devices such as *neta*, and most importantly the genre’s *ōdō* of romance between men.

1.5. **Fujoshi Database**

This set of concepts (*bishōnen*, *seme*, *uke*, et cetera) are a part of what otaku critic Hiroki Azuma calls a *database*. This database constructed by fans includes locations, scenarios, literary tropes, character personalities and stereotypes, as well as visual aesthetics and elements which excite and stir fans’ emotions. More than just a collection of data, this database also includes the literacies that fans have learned from engaging with various Discourses in their lives. As I will highlight further in Chapter 5, these databases are highly intertextual as they store elements from various Discourses which trigger affect from fans.

Massumi defines affect as an intensity felt outside of one’s emotions, logic, and consciousness. Among fans, this intensity is expressed through an affectionate and passionate response called *moe* (pronounced as mo-eh), a Japanese word that can be written with one kanji that can mean “to burn” or another kanji that means “to sprout.” Hence, when a fan utters *moe*, it could either represent their burning passion or a budding affection for a character, situation, or relationship. The word *moe* was initially used by fans in Japanese online forums to describe their burning passion for a particular fictional character.

In Japanese popular culture, a character can be produced in two ways: first, as a *kyarakutā* (character) who lives a complex life in his original story, and second, as a *kyara* (“chara,” a truncation of character) who lives independently and is unattached to any narrative. *Kyara* are often associated with mascots but for *dōjinshi* writers, characters can be transformed into *kyara* when they are rewritten in fan works that divorces them from their original narratives. This is what happens when characters from *shōnen manga* become *kyara* in an *aniparo dōjinshi*. For example, a character like...

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141 See Hiroki Azuma, *Otaku: Japan’s Database Animals* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009)
Naruto, who is a ninja, can be rewritten as a regular high school student in an *aniparo dōjinshi*. To a degree, when a character realises his sexual desire for his male rival in a *yaoi dōjinshi*, this character also becomes a *kyara* who acts independently from his original narrative. The *kyara* is subject to the consumer’s fantasy and particularly for female fans, they are subjects to be played with in order to solicit *moe*. Alternately, a *kyara* does not necessarily need to be embedded in a narrative to exist but may be created solely for soliciting *moe* from its consumers. Hence, a *moe kyara* is a character without a narrative but who is designed with character traits and visual elements that come from the fans’ database of things that make them exclaim *moe*.¹⁴⁴

An example of this can be seen in a series of vacuum-packed instant curries called *Retoruto Kareshi* (*Vacuum-packed boyfriend*) where three different *bishōnen kyara* of varying personalities represent three flavours of curry. These *kyara* do not have an overarching narrative but their illustrations alongside their “flavour texts” — which includes their birthdays, hobbies, heights, zodiac signs — are enough to solicit an affectionate response from their consumers. For example, the beef curry’s *kyara* is a handsome *oresama* (narcissistic) *kyara* while the pork curry’s is an *oniisama* (older brother) *kyara*.

The *seme* and the *uke* are perceived as *kyara* types. Over the years, fans have developed detailed differentiations between these two poles. For example, there are the *kichiku* (ruthless) *seme*, *toshishita* (younger compared to his partner) *seme*, and *wanko* (puppy-like) *seme*. On the *uke* end there are *oyaji* (older man) *uke*, *yancha* (mischievous) *uke*, and *nakimushi* (crybaby) *uke*. On top of these are also visual elements that further elaborate these types. For example, eyeglasses (*megane*) signify intelligence and are often worn by *interi* (intelligent) *seme* or *uke*. Should a *kichiku* *seme* wear eyeglasses, he is seen as someone with a calculating personality.

Beyond the *kyara* are also the coupling equations which play on the relationship dynamics between *uke* and *seme*. For example, a *yancha uke* can be tamed by a *kichiku seme*. In another situation, a bespectacled *interi uke* may have a soft heart and loves to take care of his *hetare* (useless) *seme*. There are also scenarios where a *riba* (reverse) character plays both *seme* and *uke* roles. These relationship dynamics, as well as the semantics behind various *kyara*, are discussed by *fujoshi* in their *dōjinshi* or when they

get together both virtually and in reality. These *moebanashi* or *moegatari* (*moe* discussions)\(^{145}\) are integral in shaping the *fujoshi database*. These *moe* talks are reflections of fans’ complex and highly intertextual knowledge of literature and popular media. *Moe* talks highlight the importance of literacies in *fujoshi* culture, which adapts quickly to the pace of Japanese popular culture.

As Japanese youth media expands, the Japanese fans’ database develops accordingly. The enormity of this database is physically manifested through the various *dōjinshi* events in Japan. Smaller *dōjinshi* events, which cater roughly to between a hundred to a thousand circles, are held almost weekly in major cities in Japan. Depending on the popularity of a series or a character, these events sometimes dedicate that week to a specific series or a specific character or a specific coupling. Mid-sized and large *dōjinshi* events, which handles more than a thousand circles, are held quarterly and accommodate more series and more couplings. In these larger events, circles are organised by series or *jyanru* (genre) and the circles under this genre are further organised by coupling.\(^{146}\) Popular circles who write *dōjinshi* for specific couples are often placed in areas that accommodate higher traffic. This placement allows attendees to line up for hours in order to buy *dōjinshi* of their favourite couple from their favourite circles.

Events also organise these genres based on other characteristics. For example, in the *Slam Dunk* genre section of Comic Market, circles are first organised based on the school teams featured in the series. Within these school teams, circles are further organised based on the popularity of couplings and their characters. If couplings involve characters from two different schools, they are designated in a separate area. This organisation in *dōjinshi* events also highlights the literacies required to manage and navigate these spaces. It demands that event organisers have the literacy to efficiently construct these spaces in a way that they efficiently cater to fan’s interests and practices. This organisation is also present in various special stores all over Japan that have shelves dedicated to *dōjinshi*. This highlights how *fujoshi* literacies extend beyond written texts. In *dōjin* events and spaces, organisers rely on the *fujoshi* database in order to construct a coherent event space for female fans.

It is easy to imagine Azuma’s database as a lexicon or encyclopaedia of various concepts adapted by fans. Azuma’s database, however, is more complex. Azuma’s

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\(^{145}\) Okabe and Ishida, “Making Fujoshi Identity Visible and Invisible.”

\(^{146}\) To see a sample of genres in Comic Market, see Saito, “Desire in Subtext,” 178–179.
database begins with an understanding of otaku culture where Azuma saw otaku as a Japanese social movement that was responding to changes in postmodern Japan. According to Azuma, the otaku are characterised by two postmodern traits: their engagement with derivative works and the high value they place on these and fiction. Azuma described derivative works as “a largely eroticised rereading and reproduction of original manga, anime, and games sold in the form of fanzines, fan games, fan figures, and the like.”

Dōjinshi fall within this category. While Azuma admits that this was a general term, not all derivative works are erotic nor are they based solely on manga, anime, and games. What is apparent is that derivative works are the reproductions of various re-readings of various texts. They are not even a faithful copy of the original but rather a simulacrum of it. Azuma borrowed this term from Jean Baudrillard and he stressed that Japan’s otaku culture represents Baudrillard’s cultural industry where simulacra dominate rather than original works. This reliance on simulacra stems from the otaku’s disbelief in their reality. But how does Azuma see the otaku’s reality?

Azuma notes that the otaku phenomenon is a response to Japan’s postwar successes and pitfalls. He took note of a computer’s remark in an anime episode where the computer considers the 1980s to be the most peaceful era in Japan. Azuma felt that this remark, while true, was an illusion. This “peaceful” time represented a smugness born from Japan’s economic success which was at its peak in the mid-80s. This arrogance highlighted Japan’s economic prowess and for the otaku in particular, they saw this as an opportunity to divorce Japanese popular culture from foreign, particularly American, influence. For Azuma, this illusion was part and parcel of a generation of otaku who basked in this economic success only to see it burst as the decade ended. The end of this success meant the collapse of the illusion of Japan’s greatness and the start of otaku’s disappointment with reality. But at the same time, this also led to the creation of a contemporary “Pseudo-Japan” often seen in Japanese popular fiction, particularly in anime and manga. This act of simulating reality became integral to the identity of the otaku. Azuma stressed that the breakdown of Japan’s grand narrative as a modern and successful society and nation made otaku yearn

147 Azuma, Otaku: Database Animals, 25.
148 Ibid., 25.
149 Ibid., 25-6, 59-60.
150 Ibid., 18-19.
151 Ibid., 19–24.
for happier endings seen in alternative narratives such as those seen in anime, manga, and video games. Azuma turns to fellow *otaku* critic, Eiji Ōtsuka and his theory of narrative consumption to better understand *otaku’s* desire for smaller alternative narratives.

Eiji Ōtsuka argues that when *otaku* buy their manga or faithfully watch their favourite anime, they are consuming smaller narratives which eventually create grander narratives. He calls this the theory of narrative consumption. He uses the analogy of subprogram within a software but we can also look at it from the perspective of a serialised comic where a single volume constitutes but a small portion of the protagonist’s life. As the series progresses, these narratives accumulate, revealing more about the character’s life and his world, eventually forming a larger, or what Ōtsuka would call as *chitsujo* (order) or *grand narrative*. In consuming small narratives, readers discover the *grand narratives*. Some of these small narratives need not be part of the comic text. They can also include official guides, mooks, or even remarks made by the author or director in an interview about the said title. Ōtsuka notes how many postwar animated series such as *Kido Senshi Gandamu* (*Mobile Suit Gundam*, 1979) and *Saint Seiya* follow this kind of narrative setup.

Alternately, these smaller narratives can also be pulled from the grand narrative. Ōtsuka shares the practices of female fans of the *Shōnen jump* series, *Captain Tsubasa*. Apart from consuming the smaller episodic narratives of the grand narrative of Tsubasa’s life as a football player, *fujoshi* also pull characters or situations from the series — such as Tsubasa’s reunion with his best friend, Misaki — and create their own stories which they either write as a short story or draw as a comic and eventually publish as a *dōjinshi*. Ōtsuka argues that these *dōjin* practices highlight the next stage of narrative consumption where producers lose power over their narratives as consumers reimagine and recreate their narratives.

Azuma refers to Ōtsuka’s theory of narrative of consumption as a tree model where smaller narratives stem from a *grand narrative*. Azuma criticises Ōtsuka’s theory

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152 Ibid., 34-35.
153 Ibid. 26.
155 In Japan, *mūkku* (mook) is a portmanteau term for magazine and book. These are special magazines published with specialised content on one product or theme.
for being one dimensional.\footnote{Azuma, \textit{Otaku: Database Animals}, 30-31.} He argues that beyond consuming small narratives in order to create a grand narrative, \textit{otaku} also consume these small narratives as part of a \textit{grand non-narrative}. This \textit{grand non-narrative} stands opposed to the \textit{grand narrative}, where rather than connecting the small narratives to a grand narrative, people consume and dissect these small narratives into even smaller elements and connect them to a database. He calls this \textit{database consumption}. This database serves as a repository of various elements which Azuma refers to as \textit{moe yōsō} (\textit{moe elements}). These elements, either seen in a character’s aesthetic design or in a character’s situation, elicit \textit{moe} from audiences, making them feel attached to a character or a situation.\footnote{Ibid., 34-56.} Azuma argues some fans only consume the database of \textit{moe} elements.\footnote{Ibid., 59–63.} He asserts that while simulacra-like derivative works show no respect for the original work, they have much respect for what it represents, particularly the database it contains.\footnote{Ibid., 63.} While Azuma uses visual novels\footnote{Visual novels are Japanese video games where a player experience the story first-hand as he plays a character in the story. The stories are like “Choose Your Own Adventure” books where the player make} as a fitting example for \textit{database consumption} in action, the same can be said for \textit{dōjinshi}.

As noted above, more than appreciating characters in a series, producers and consumers of \textit{dōjinshi} also take note of the \textit{moe} elements of a character in order to appreciate them as a \textit{kyara}. For example, \textit{Prince of Tennis}’ grand narrative revolves around the athletic and personal development of Ryōma Echizen, a young boy who recently joined his middle school’s tennis club. The series also has smaller narratives about rivalries between players and their teams. Fans of \textit{Prince of Tennis}, however, are also drawn to the visual aesthetics and personalities of specific characters. For example, the captain of Echizen’s team, Kunimitsu Tezuka, wears eyeglasses. His glasses function as a \textit{moe} element, drawing the attention of readers who are enamoured by characters with glasses. By wearing eyeglasses, Tezuka also embodies a \textit{kyara} that exudes intelligence. This intelligent \textit{kyara} is derived from readers’ exposure to various texts that feature intelligent characters who wear eyeglasses.

This intelligent \textit{kyara} is just one of many elements stored in \textit{fujoshi}’s database. When artists use these \textit{moe} elements in their \textit{dōjinshi}, they take pleasure in playing with these various traits. For example, while Tezuka is seen as an intelligent character, he is
often portrayed as an idiot when he forgets to wear his eyeglasses. This situation is often used in Japanese gag comics. For a particular number of girls who are familiar with BL texts, intelligence is seen as a mark of superiority. This *moe* element raises Tezuka’s potential as a *seme* character. His position as his team’s captain also contributes to his *seme* potential. A fan’s analysis of a character’s traits leads to various readings of a character. These diverse readings rely on fans’ database which is deeply cross-referential, if not intertextual.

### 1.6. **Fujoshi’s Intertextual Literacy Practices**

Intertextuality is a trait seen by Tomoko Aoyama in boys love texts because of its ties with *shōjo* culture. Aoyama describes the *shōjo* herself as intertextual, alluding to the *shōjo*’s boundless reading and creation of new texts. As mentioned earlier, the notion of intertextuality was inspired by *écriture féminine*, particularly from Julia Kristeva. Julia Kristeva saw intertextuality as a synthesis, if not, critique of prevalent discourses on semiotics. In this case, she took Ferdinand de Saussure’s ideas of linguistic signs and the development of their meanings within texts and merged them with Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of the dialogic which emphasises that meanings are derived through dialogues. No word possesses a single meaning or logic because all words uttered are dialogic. This means that words potentially bear all their historical meanings and logics while their meanings are simultaneously under the scrutiny of the readers and are subject to their interpretations. Michel de Certeau would also describe this act of active reading as “poaching,” where a reader appropriates someone else’s text for their own enjoyment. Bahktin, on the other hand, would use the term “heteroglossia” to emphasise the ability of language to carry its own voice as well as others.

Cognizant of the multiplicity and historicity of meanings within a language, Kristeva argues that any given text is a result of an author’s exposure to this heteroglossia. An author creates a text based on previously written texts, embracing their complex textual and cultural history. At the same time, the same text evokes
additional meanings from its readers.\textsuperscript{166} This embraces the multiplicity of meanings as introduced by Saussure and expanded by Bahktin. However, it also suggests how the author loses himself or herself in his or her text. By recognising that texts are continuously processed and contextualised by their authors and readers, we begin to understand the different layers of history, culture, and society woven in and around a text.

For Kristeva, this can be seen through the two dimensions of a text: the horizontal and vertical dimensions. The vertical dimension of a text refers to its literal meanings within its synchronic content while the horizontal dimension refers to the ways in which a text calls upon a dialogue of meanings between the author and his or her audience\textsuperscript{167}. Intertextuality is the crossing of these dimensions, where texts are absorbed by ongoing discussions which then transform these texts into new texts. Intertextuality does not mean the literary influence of one author or another but rather the continuous challenging and transformation of meanings. I see intertextuality as a critical \textit{fujoshi} literacy that educates girls to challenge and transform the meanings of the media they consume.

Aoyama’s interest in intertextuality stems from girls’ “innovative use of intertextuality.”\textsuperscript{168} In her study of BL texts and literacy, Aoyama notes how BL fans challenge readings of popular non-BL Japanese texts, such as Sõseki Natsume’s \textit{Kokoro} (1914), by focusing on other aspects of the novel not highlighted in mainstream criticism. In this case, the female readers focused on the vertical male relationships in the novel and to a degree saw the potential of these relationships as a form of boys love. This “boys love reading” does not end with women’s reading of a text but as Aoyama notes later by looking at Fumi Yoshinaga’s works, these readings are transformed and reinforced through various BL texts created and published by women who wish to explore the potential of this reading.\textsuperscript{169} As Aoyama argues:

\begin{quote}
Preceding texts are incorporated and transformed freely and playfully into new texts in a variety of ways, ranging from respectful quotation and allusion to comic travesty and subversion. The intertextual relationships give pleasure not
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid., 66.
\textsuperscript{168} Aoyama, “BL (Boys’ Love) Literacy,” 66.
\textsuperscript{169} Ibid., 67–77.
\end{flushright}
only to the writer of the new text, who takes the liberty of appropriating, imitating, and transforming the old text, but also the members of this imagined community, who can share this textual “freedom and arrogance.”

Intertextuality is at the heart of New Literacies studies which understands the fluidity of meaning-making as Discourses interact. The interaction between literacies from different Discourses produces intertextual texts. Kristeva and Aoyama see intertextuality within the world of literature. I argue, as I have shown through the examples of moe talk and the organisation of dōjin events, that intertextuality, as used in the fujoshi database, is a literacy that extends to women’s fan practices. Viewing the fujoshi identity as an expression of a Discourse allows us to understand how intertextuality as a literacy practice has a life beyond texts. Intertextuality is ingrained in fujoshi practices and texts. As a multimodal medium, dōjinshi are one of many forms of encoded texts that serves as a medium for fujoshi’s intertextual literacy.

Fans’ rich intertextual literacy stems from the diversity of popular media in Japan. As a manga series becomes more popular and its publisher decides to expand into different media, enhanced literacies are demanded from a reader. One might think that this will be overwhelming for a reader but Richard Mayer argues that multimedia actually promote efficient learning practices since they utilise many of our brain’s cognitive processes. Multimedia such as comics, which simplify many concepts through the use of images and texts, minimises processing in the brain, allowing it to quickly learn and understand essential information.

Scholars are increasingly recognising the importance of manga, and by extension anime, as forms of new media that enable young people to learn new literacies outside of classrooms. For example, Wan Shun Eva Lam saw anime as a gateway for migrant youths in America to learn new languages. Rebecca Black

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170 Ibid., 66.
171 This is most known in Japanese media as media mix, as seen in Marc Steinberg, Anime’s Media Mix: Franchising Toys and Characters in Japan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).
regards anime and manga fan fiction\textsuperscript{175} websites as new spaces where young writers learn and improve their language skills online by writing and posting their fanfics of their favourite series.\textsuperscript{176} Mizuko Ito argues that new media, such as manga, have deeply embedded themselves in children’s everyday practices that their engagement has become increasingly personal.\textsuperscript{177} Children’s engagement with media relies on complex networks of information that Ito described as hypersocial. Ito describes hypersociality as “peer-to-peer ecologies of cultural production and exchange (of information, objects, and money) pursued among geographically-local peer groups, among dispersed populations mediated by the internet, and through organized gatherings such as conventions and tournaments.”\textsuperscript{178} In more ways than one, these scholars highlight the multimodal nature of popular media, the growth of participatory culture, and the increasing need for literacies to navigate this complex media landscape. Fujoshi represent a generation of young women who have embraced various literacies to engage with media, build a deeply intertextual database around them, and challenge their meanings through dōjinshi.

These scholars have highlighted manga’s potential as a learning tool for new literacies. To a degree, this also extends to manga dōjinshi, as seen through Sachiko Takeuchi’s experience when she first encountered fan dōjinshi. In Kusare Joshi, Takeuchi shares how she and her friends learned the homoerotic potential of their favourite shōnen characters and various boys love and fujoshi concepts through dōjinshi.\textsuperscript{179} Their experience highlights dōjinshi as an effective pedagogical medium which conveys fujoshi’s nuanced literacies of sexuality and masculinity. Through fujoshi’s efficient use of their literacies, these young women can use characters from their favourite shōnen titles in dōjinshi, break them down into kyara and their kyara elements, and freely manipulate them for their pleasure in order to explore new ideas and emotions. In return, these fujoshi teach their readers new ways to appreciate their

\textsuperscript{175} Fan fiction is a derivative fiction written by fans of an original work. It is a widely practiced by fans of Western and Japanese popular media. For more information, see Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse, \textit{Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet: New Essays} (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2006); Rebecca W. Black, \textit{Adolescents and Online Fan Fiction} (Peter Lang, 2008).


\textsuperscript{178} Ibid., 87.

\textsuperscript{179} Takeuchi, \textit{Rotten Girl!}, 12–15.
favourite texts. Not only are they teaching readers new literacies and practices but they are also teaching the pleasure of breaking texts and giving these new meanings. The result is a “corrupted” reader who has learned new enjoyable ways to represent and reimagine texts, thus experiencing a kind of *jouissance*.

Fiske defines *jouissance* as the pleasure taken from the breakdown of cultural meanings in order to find their instinctual pleasure.¹⁸⁰ The process of databasing characters to achieve *moe* can also be seen as a form of *jouissance*.¹⁸¹ Kristeva and Fiske regard the breakdown of dominant texts as the goal of intertextuality. Fiske believes that this is the reality of popular media, where popular culture seeks to produce meanings that are both functional and relevant. By relevance, he alludes to continuing resistance against hegemonic ideas. By functional, Fiske means that these pleasures can be useful in daily life and these subversions, while small, work towards a progressive change of meanings in society.¹⁸² Of all audiences, fans are most active in seeking these subversive pleasures. Jenkins described fans as “textual poachers,” alluding to their active poaching of texts for their personal entertainment.¹⁸³ For *fujoshi* culture, this involves the use of diverse literacy practices for the pleasure of transforming dominant heteronormative images and meanings of gender and sexuality. In this thesis, I examine the history of *fujoshi’s jouissance* and how their literacy practices diversified *shōnen* media.

1.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown the relevance that diverse literacy practices and media play in *fujoshi* culture, something which still remains unexplored in boys love studies. Viewing *fujoshi* culture within the context of New Literacy Studies allows us to see the various literacies involved in *fujoshi* culture and the efficiency of these literacies in spreading *fujoshi* Discourse. These literacies range from multimodal literacies used in a manga *dōjinshi* to conceptual literacies such as intertextuality, coupling, boys love, and various *moe* elements in fans’ databases. The consonance of these literacies is

exemplified in fujoshi’s dōjinshi where fans strive to express and share jouissance with their readers.

While this chapter has helped explain the nature of fujoshi literacies, over the next few chapters, I will explore the history of how these fujoshi literacies have been developed, honed, and dispersed throughout shōjo and shōnen fan culture. The historical development of these literacies helps us understand the various Discourses these fujoshi have embraced in order to create their own unique Discourse that challenges hegemonic notions of masculinity and sexuality. To start this historical study, in the next chapter, I explore the birth of shōnen and shōjo media in Japan. I examine the construction shōjo and shōnen manga magazines and how this gendered some of the literacies of Japanese youth. As I show in the next chapter, the literacies developed in Japan’s early youth media would have a great impact on boys’ and girls’ culture that is still discernible today.
2. FORMATION OF GENDERED YOUTH LITERACIES IN EARLY YOUTH MAGAZINES (1898-1950s)

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Manga’s complex and gendered structure can be easily apprehended in the daunting manga section of any major Japanese bookstore. Navigating the shelves to look for a specific comic is not as easy as searching for it in alphabetical order or by author. These shelves require buyers to have a knowledge of the many genres in Japan’s manga industry. In looking for a specific manga, it helps to know the publisher, the magazine where the manga is serialised and the author’s name. But when none of this information is available, the bookshelves might give a hint — is it a *shōnen* (boys), *shōjo* (girls), *josei* (women’s), or *seinen* (adult) manga?

Japan has developed a distinctive comic culture where an entire industry’s structure is based on its audience’s age, gender, and subculture. Japan’s National Publication Society Institute note that *shōjo*, *shōnen*, *josei*, and *seinen* are the four major publication categories (which the institute also refers to as “genres”) for comics in Japan. Females are expected to read *shōjo* manga. As they grow older, women have an array of *josei* manga to enjoy. The same can be said for boys, purportedly the main audience of *shōnen* manga, who also can enjoy various *seinen* manga as they age. While readers in bookstores seem to disregard these divisions, bookstores continue to feature these gendered displays.

In this chapter, I explore the development of these gendered walls, especially in the comic genres of *shōjo* and *shōnen*. I first trace their roots in Japan’s educational system and the youth magazines it inspired during the Meiji era (1868-1912) where I uncover the logic behind the separation of these two young audiences. I then explore the development of various textual and visual practices in *shōjo* and *shōnen* magazines. These distinct practices highlighted the beginning of separate literacies between girls and boys. I argue that the gendering of these literacies is not driven by boys’ and girls’ “biological” cognitive abilities but rather they were designed by adults who felt they

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184 While I categorised *seinen manga* as manga for men, its content is not exclusively for men. Manga under this category represent manga for adult men and women. This gendered categorisation of *seinen* as part of men’s manga is part of the publication industry’s categorisation of *seinen manga* under male-oriented (danseimuke) publications. I would also like to note that the *seinen* (青年) category I refer to is not the same *seinen* (成年) category used for pornographic manga.

needed to provide their young readers with the literacies to recognise their place in Japanese society. Hence, these youth magazines served as platforms for shaping youths for Japan’s modernising society. The division of *shōjo* and *shōnen* magazines led to various literacies and practices that became distinct characteristics of their genres. For *shōjo* magazines, in particular, I examine the development of one of the cornerstones of *fujoshi* literacy — intertextuality.

Next, I explore the impact of these literacies in the early comic magazines that emerged after the Asia-Pacific War (1938–1945). I examine how these literacies and practices were adapted by early *shōjo* and *shōnen* manga magazines. While these manga had textual and visual literacies similar to early *shōjo* and *shōnen* magazines, their multimodal form that combines textual, visual, aural, and temporal elements added another level to their audiences’ literacies. This lead to another set of storytelling practices that were each distinctive to both *shōjo* and *shōnen* manga which strengthened the wall between these two audiences.

This chapter provides a historical background to these gendered youth comic cultures which continues to influence contemporary comic media such as *Shōnen jump* and girl cultures such as *fujoshi*. By examining the content of various *shōjo* and *shōnen* magazines and the manga magazines that followed, I will highlight the various literacies that distinguish *shōjo* and *shōnen* manga.

### 2.2. Constructing Modern Youth

The story of *shōjo* and *shōnen* begins with Japan’s modernisation. Before the Meiji period, education was available mostly to boys from samurai and noble families. These boys studied in local schools organised by clans whose curriculum included Japanese culture and history, Shinto values, and Chinese, particularly Confucian classics.¹⁸⁶ Some daughters from noble or samurai families also received some form of education through texts such as *Onna daigaku* (Great education for girls). *Onna daigaku* was a textbook written in the seventeenth century by Ekken Kaibara (1630-1714). It was based on Chinese texts which taught feminine virtues and subservience to men.¹⁸⁷ This textbook reinforces a highly patriarchal structure in Japanese society, leaving little mobility for women. In more ways than one, this

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¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 97-98.
educational structure became the foundation of social division in Japanese society where educated men are more privileged than women and commoners.

Education in Japan transformed after the Tokugawa government (1600-1868) established the *Banshō Shirabesho* (Office for Foreign Investigations), an institution for foreign studies, in 1856. The office served as a gateway to the West as they translated various military documents and researched Western technologies. In 1877, this office became a part of the Imperial University which is the precursor of the University of Tokyo.  188 Outside of this institution, samurai from the *Sonnō Jōi* (Revere the Emperor, Expel the Barbarians) movement, such as Hirobumi Itō (1841-1909) and Arinori Mori (1847-1889), also sought out Western knowledge by breaking the Tokugawa policy of internal isolation to conduct covert study missions in England. They witnessed the Industrial Revolution as they rode trains, visited factories, and were enlightened as they learned various ideas and concepts from Western scholars. Other samurai followed Mori and Itō and their travels to Western countries helped shape Japan’s modernisation and education.  189

During the Meiji period (1868-1912), education became an essential tool to mobilise even the youngest members of Japanese society. Inspired by their travels abroad, Meiji leaders believed in the idea of *risshin shusse*, a concept that roughly translates as the idea that one’s personal success leads to the advancement of society in the world. If the individual is strong, then the community and the state will also be strong.  190

In 1872, the Meiji government issued *Gakusei*, an education plan that aimed to provide education for all Japanese youths from all social classes. This educational plan would revolutionise Japanese society, challenging many of its feudal practices and replacing it with Western knowledge and values. Western curriculum was prioritised over Confucian classics. Egalitarianism took precedence over social stratification.  191 By 1873, the Meiji government implemented a public education system which made primary education accessible to boys and girls of all social classes. Since parents had to shoulder school costs during the early years of the public schools, some parents invested

188 Ibid. 19-21.
189 Ibid. 28-46.
their money in their sons’ education. Many girls remained within the domestic realm, making enrolment for girls lower than boys.¹⁹²

Women’s education was one of the primary concerns of Arinori Mori who eventually became the Minister of Education. Upon his return from his travels abroad, Mori organised the Meirokusha (Meiji Six Society), a group of “liberal” intellectuals who published their discussions on various issues concerning Japan’s modern state. These men felt that women should receive an education so that they could better serve their families.¹⁹³ These men still viewed women within the frame of Confucian thought where a woman’s domain remained at home.¹⁹⁴ Texts for women, such as Kinsei onna daigaku (A great education for modern girls, 1873), reflected these values. Women’s liberties were recognised only if they contributed to the growth of the nation, such as raising families. For the nation to succeed, education must start from the home and mothers must be capable of teaching their children. This was the beginning of the ideology of ryōsai kenbo — good wife and wise mother. Since girls were the future mothers of the next generation, it was necessary to provide education to girls.¹⁹⁵

The early years of Japanese public education were not as egalitarian as the samurai had witnessed abroad, however, at the very least, it did provide a degree of equal opportunity for Japanese children. Despite the Meiji government’s aim to provide equal opportunity for all its citizens, boys were still privileged as they had access to secondary education while it took years of debate before girls were granted access to secondary and tertiary education.¹⁹⁶ As the government ironed out their education policies, debates on the role of boys and girls in modern Japan continued. Magazines for youths were at the heart of these debates.

2.3. Early Children’s Magazines in the Meiji Period

Eisai shinshi (The new journal for the gifted, 1877–1898) was one of the earliest and most widely distributed children’s magazines during the Meiji period. The editors of Eisai Shinshi designed the magazine to be accessible to children of both genders. The magazine contained literature, editorials, and articles for children. It also accepted

¹⁹³ Ibid., 17-18.
contributions from its readers who were in their last few years of elementary school or in their middle school. Contributors could identify themselves as danshi (boy) or joshi (girl). As Erika Imada notes in her monograph *Shōjo no shakaishi* (A social history of *shōjo*, 2007), until 1882, female contributors identified themselves as *shōnen*. At that time, the word *shōnen*, which meant “a few years/young,” was a common term for youths and was not exclusively associated with boys. Other forms of literature and subsequent children’s magazines such as *Shōnen en* (The youth’s garden, 1888) and *Shōnen sekai* (The youth’s world, 1895-1933) carried this same genderless notion of *shōnen*. This can be seen in the first issue of *Shōnen sekai* where the editors wrote an English translation of their title: *The Youth’s World*. Thus, the girls’ gesture in identifying themselves as *shōnen* contributors to *Eisai shinshi* was not seen as unusual.

1882 was a major turning point for *Eisai shinshi* as the magazine contributed to debates regarding gender relations, particularly with regards to children’s education. The idea of the *ryōsai kenbo* prevailed in these debates and was seen as the national ideal for women. While boys were seen as eventual national leaders, girls were mostly seen as future mothers who would be responsible for raising and educating these future leaders.

Women’s magazines, such as *Jogaku zasshi* (Women’s education magazine, 1885–1904), upheld this notion of *ryōsai kenbo*. Edited by Yoshiharu Iwamoto (1863–1942), a Christian educator who ran the prestigious Meiji Women’s School, *Jogaku zasshi* encouraged young women to obtain an education and become aware of their “liberties.” These “liberties” centred around Iwamoto and other Meiji statement’s notion of an “ideal woman” — the good wife and the wise and adequately educated mother. The magazine also served as a platform to raise women’s issues. Apart from publishing content from leading male intellectuals in Japan, the magazine also welcomed contributions from budding female writers such as Kaho Miyake (1868–1944) and Ichiyō Higuchi (1872–1896). The presence of these women in the same discursive space as men had an empowering impact on young female readers.

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200 Ibid., 16.
One of the earliest gendered distinctions concerning children in youth magazines appeared in 1895, among the later issues of *Shōnen sekai* — a children’s magazine published in the middle of the first Sino-Japanese war (1894–1895). The war pushed the magazine to impart nationalist values and images to Japanese youth. Apart from featuring strong Japanese images, such as the crown prince and Empress Jingū, *Shōnen sekai* featured content that showed children that they were a part of a great nation and that their development was crucial for the nation’s success. The magazine streamlined its content in hopes of inspiring children to contribute to the nation. In later issues of *Shōnen sekai* in 1895, the magazine introduced distinct sections for the *yōnen* (literally means “infant” but the term refers to younger children), *shōnen* (boy), and *shōjo* (girl), with content that specifically catered to the interests of these groups.

The presence of these categories in *Shōnen sekai* reinforced notions of gender among youths. Calsimsek’s analysis of the magazine shows how the boys’ section, which comprised half of the magazine, highlighted acts of heroism through tales of war heroes, impressing courage and patriotism on young male readers. The magazine’s *shōjo* section reinforced the national ideal of *ryōsai kenbo* as it highlighted domestic skills such as sewing and child care. Didactic stories, often intended for women, also affirmed social mores and values. Other youth-oriented magazines, such as *Eisai Shinshi*, followed this categorisation of content based on the age and gender of their readers.

Magazines such as *Shōnen sekai*, *Eisai shinshi*, and *Jogaku zasshi* were pivotal in creating the divide between boys and girls by the turn of the century. Other magazines began to produce content separately for these gendered audiences. *Shōnen sekai* continued well into the Showa Period (1926–1989) and was followed by other magazines for youths such as *Bōken sekai* (Adventure world, 1908–1914) and *Shōnen kurabu* (Boys’ Club, 1914–1962). A surge of girls’ magazines such as *Shōjo kai* (Girls’ world, 1902–1912) and *Shōjo no tomo* (Girls’ Friend, 1908–1955) also emerged during this period. These magazines would follow the groundwork laid by earlier children’s magazines by customising their content for their intended gendered audiences. These magazines became primers of adolescence, a period of youth that was unexplored.

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203 Ibid., 63.

204 Ibid., 65–67.

205 Ibid., 69–72.
during this period but was becoming increasingly relevant. The content of these magazines led to the development of nuanced literacies between girls and boys which eventually inspired gendered youth cultures.

2.4. Modern Boys

_Shōnen_ magazines during the late Meiji period aspired to create modern men for Japan’s modern age. As Japan built its international relations, leaders felt that boys should be trained to become leaders of the nation and of the world. Early _shōnen_ magazines hoped to build heroes out of boys and celebrated boys’ masculinity. This section explores the various literacies in _shōnen_ magazines until the end of the Pacific War which have helped shape representations of boyhood in Japan for decades.

The boy at the turn of the Meiji era was positioned between Edo-period and modern Japanese masculinity. While the masculine bravado of the heroic samurai was one of the most prominent images of masculinity during the Tokugawa period, this same samurai was also criticised during the Meiji period for his outdated and “feudal” ways. These practices include _shudō_ (the way of boys) and _nanshoku_ (male eroticism), two sexual expressions of male-male desire.

_Nanshoku_ was a practice long present in Japanese society and was said to have been learned from the Chinese who had a literature dealing with male-male sexual affairs since the sixth century. This practice involved intimate relations between an older man and a younger, at times beautiful, boy. This relationship may have been pedagogical, with the older man teaching the boy Buddhist virtues or swordsmanship. At the same time, this relationship may have had a sexual dimension, with the older man taking the active sexual role while the youth passively receives his partner. As Reichert notes on _nanshoku_ literature, this male-male sexuality was confined to anal intercourse and the sexual dynamics between the older man and the youth were “specific, and unchanging.”

Literature before the Tokugawa period concerning _nanshoku_ ranged from diaries of nobles in the Heian court to deployments of Buddhist monks and their young

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206 Imada, _A social history of shōjo_, 41.
209 Ibid., 25–27.
acolytes called chigo.\textsuperscript{210} During the Tokugawa period, however, \textit{nanshoku} was also seen in the world of \textit{kabuki}, between \textit{onnagata} (female role) or \textit{wakashū} (adolescent boy) actors and their patrons, and among samurai, between older adult warriors and their younger students.\textsuperscript{211} It was not seen as immoral as the Buddhist clergy’s practice of \textit{nanshoku} morally legitimised these acts.\textsuperscript{212} Men’s passion for these “handsome youths” were captured in books such as Saikaku Ihara’s \textit{Nanshoku oka ga mi} (\textit{The Great Mirror of Male Love}, 1687). Reichert notes how the late-Tokugawa writer Bakin Kyokutei (1767-1848) even used these youths as a narrative element to entice his predominantly male readers even when his texts did not contain any male-male sexual relationships.\textsuperscript{213}

The presence of these “handsome youths” in fictional texts during the Tokugawa period points to a public recognition of an effeminate masculinity, one that is also tied to male-male sexual desires. The popularity of these youths lead to a sex industry which prostituted handsome male actors to men and women,\textsuperscript{214} and the production of erotic prints called \textit{shunga} which featured these “handsome youths” in sexual or intimate positions.\textsuperscript{215} In most \textit{shunga}, the face and the physique of these “handsome youths” were similar to women, reinforcing their “effeminate” features.

These “beautiful youths” and their homosocial world laced with male-male sexuality were perceived as normal during the Tokugawa period. While Leupp argues that the popularity of teahouses that had male prostitutes waned during the later part of the Tokugawa period,\textsuperscript{217} Reichert notes that some samurai clans continued the \textit{nanshoku} tradition during the Meiji period to maintain samurai hierarchy, nobility, morality, and martial discipline.\textsuperscript{218} By the Meiji period, these “handsome youths” were known as \textit{bishōnen}, a contemporary term for the outdated \textit{wakashū} which held a nuanced meaning due to its association with \textit{kabuki} actors who played female roles. The


\textsuperscript{212} Leupp, \textit{Male Colors}, 62.

\textsuperscript{213} Reichert, \textit{In the Company of Men}, 3.

\textsuperscript{214} Leupp, \textit{Male Colors}, 68–78.

\textsuperscript{215} Ibid., 78–80.

\textsuperscript{217} Leupp, \textit{Male Colors}, 77–78.

\textsuperscript{218} Reichert, \textit{In the Company of Men}, 25–29.
bishōnen was seen as a beautiful boy who embodied feminine features.\textsuperscript{219} Like the “handsome youths” that preceded him, the bishōnen also inspired writers and artists.\textsuperscript{220} However, the longevity of nanshoku did not go unchallenged, especially after some samurai returned from their studies in the West and learned that their shudō and nanshoku practices were seen as uncivilised and immoral by Westerners.\textsuperscript{221}

In 1873, the Meiji government made efforts to demonstrate civility when they decreed Article 266 of the Reformed Legal Code which penalised any male who engaged in anal intercourse with another male — consensual or non-consensual, samurai or not — with imprisonment.\textsuperscript{223} This legislation was short-lived but it paved the way for public critique of nanshoku.\textsuperscript{224} Writers such as Shōyō Tsubouchi (1859-1935) and Bimyō Yamada (1868-1910) wrote texts that denigrated the practice and pushed heterosexual narratives in the name of literary progress.\textsuperscript{225} While they eventually succeeded in promoting heterosexual narratives, texts which featured some nanshoku elements — such as homosocial environments, samurai ethics, and beautiful boys — still, however, remained.

Men’s effort to appear civilised extended beyond literature as men showcased their modern sensibilities by dressing in Western fashion. The leaders of the Meiji era were the first to make this aesthetic transition in an effort to stand alongside their Western counterparts, symbolising Japan’s shift towards modernisation.\textsuperscript{226} These men referred to themselves as shinshi, the Japanese term for gentleman, more specifically, “an educated man of high society in public service who dedicates himself to the service of the state.”\textsuperscript{227} Many of these shinshi took great care of their appearances, wearing the appropriate Western fashion for every occasion as mastery of Western sensibilities became a ticket for many former samurai who wished to have a place in the new government.\textsuperscript{228} Whether these men truly embraced Western thought and values was a

\begin{small}
\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{221} Reichert, \textit{In the Company of Men}, 13–14.
\bibitem{222} Ibid., 14.; Mark McLelland, \textit{Male Homosexuality in Modern Japan: Cultural Myths and Social Realities} (Richmond: Curzon, 2000), 23.
\bibitem{223} McLelland, \textit{Male Homosexuality in Modern Japan}, 23–24.
\bibitem{224} Reichert, \textit{In the Company of Men}, 69-131.
\bibitem{227} Karlin, \textit{Gender and Nation in Meiji Japan}, 25.
\end{thebibliography}
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question raised by intellectuals outside of the government who only saw these shinshi as frivolous. Journalists such as Suehiro Tetchō (1848-1896) and Tokutomi Sohō (1863-1957) often lambasted the Meiji government for prioritising trivial matters such as clothing and socialising with foreigners over domestic political matters. This led to various groups that opposed the government, some of which held conservative values while others had more progressive ideas. One of these groups were young men known as sōshi (manly warriors), a group of violent political activists who were the direct opposites of the shinshi.

The sōshi consisted of young men from all walks of life, from former-low ranking samurai who failed to find success and fortune to hired goons and gamblers who engaged in violence for political gain. Contrary to the elegance of the shinshi, the sōshi wore tattered kimono or hakama and often strong-armed their political opinions. Even with their rough disposition, the sōshi were admired for their patriotism and integrity. Unlike the shinshi who appeared to have submitted to “civilised” foreign ways, the sōshi celebrated local culture, continuing traditions such as the martial arts and using local popular culture such as enka and plays to criticise the Meiji government. As Karlin argues, the sōshi considered their “hard” masculinity to be more authentic than the shinshi’s soft and frivolous masculinity. The sōshi and the shinshi became polarising examples of masculinity during the Meiji period.

Towards the late Meiji period, the values of the shinshi were embraced by other Japanese men who had the opportunity to study abroad and learn Western values. These men were referred to as haikara, referring to the high-collar of their Western suits. Unlike the shinshi, the haikara did not work for the government. They were mostly bourgeois citizens who had embraced modernity. The haikara were also criticised for their superficial and excessive consumption of Western goods and fashion. In his analysis of commentaries surrounding haikara, Karlin notes that journalists at that time often associated haikara culture not just with men but with modern Japanese women who also followed Western fashion trends. This gesture also equated men’s haikara identity with women, effeminating their masculinity in the same vein as the bishōnen.

229 Ibid., 40-41.
231 Karlin, Gender and Nation in Meiji Japan, 42-45.
232 Ibid., 46.
233 Ibid., 54.
Opposite to the *haikara* gentlemen were the *bankara* youths. The word literally means “rough,” however, a variation of its writing also suggests “savage-collar.” *Bankara* was an ideology that espoused barbarism against the “civilised” ways of the *haikara*. The *bankara* lifestyle of *sōshi* was also embraced by student hooligans called *kōha* who “concentrated on physical activities…, adopted a swaggering, aggressive style, and rejected contact with women out of fear of becoming weak and effeminate.”

At this point, consumption, grooming, and weakness were associated with women while men claimed that physical strength, barbarism, and violence defined their masculinity. The adventures of *tairiku rōnin* (continental adventurer) along with the success of the Japanese Imperial army in the Sino-Japanese war (1894-1895) and Russo-Japanese (1904-1905) war further justified *bankara* values, instilling in youths dreams of *risshin shusse* driven by barbarism. *Bankara* became a key characteristic of male youth culture, further polarising other masculinities and women.

### 2.5. Literacies in Early *Shōnen* Magazines

*Shōnen* magazines during the Meiji period until the early Shōwa period (1926–1989) made heroes out of these adventurers and *bankara*. Magazines such as *Bōken sekai* serialised adventure novels that featured these men who were out for adventure and engaged in feats of heroism. It was the most popular magazine among young men and inspired many leaders of the Pacific War. As mass produced stories, these serialised novels in *shōnen* magazines had a straightforward literary style that stuck to a formula, using recurring themes and narrative elements that readers eventually learned. Its heroes were like the *bankara*, social underdogs who came from low to middle-class families who strived to give their families better lives. Readers of *shōnen* magazines learned literacies for adventures that featured “symbolic violence toward women and the representation of masculine omnipotence.” As these adventurers victoriously fought against foreign powers and strange beasts, they “promoted chivalry and moral courage” against all odds. This infallible masculinity captured the imagination of young adolescent men who were swept by waves of nationalism and aspired to be heroes who showed no signs of weakness. These stories’

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237 Karlin, *Gender and Nation in Meiji Japan*, 84.
notion of romance entailed going on adventures and saving helpless beautiful women without ever falling for their allure. Karlin also notes that these adventure novels had strong misogynistic views which repudiated women and anything woman-like because it reminded them of the material and effeminate culture that the bankara detested.239

These adventure stories were also accompanied by visual aesthetics that romanticised masculinity and the male form. Heroes stood tall and often held their weapons bravely. Karlin describes some of the violent images as “sadist”240 as these images often feature men or women bound in ropes or viciously slaughtered. At times, heroes were drawn barely clothed to show their battle wounds. Hartley sees an underlying eroticism in the illustrations of one of the most popular illustrators of during the Taishō period (1912–1926) and early Shōwa period, Kashō Takabatake (1888–1966), in such journals such as Nihon shōnen (Japan’s Youth, 1906–1938).241

Takabatake’s illustrations often featured boys dressed like bankara who displayed their athleticism and bravely pursued all kinds of adventure. Takabatake drew these boys with lean muscular figures and with faces that modernised male ukiyo-e portraits which had smooth profiles, expressive eyes, and thin, almost rouged, lips. One may view Takabatake’s boys as handsome boys, if not bishōnen, who were fulfilling their destinies as young soldiers or fishermen at sea, all in hopes of capturing the spirit of adventure. Takabatake’s boys held an ambiguity that bridged old and new styles of masculinity for boys. During the Meiji period, the bishōnen of shōnen magazines became muses and were symbols of “egalitarian love” as seen in the young lives depicted in stories by Ranpo Edogawa (1894–1965) and Taruho Inagaki (1900–1977).242 The bishōnen was at the centre of boys’ developing literacies around “love” and masculinity. He was a symbol of youthful masculine prowess which most boys, and even some girls, desired to embody. The bishōnen became pivotal in building readers’ visual literacy of youthful masculinity.

Beyond these fictional stories, shōnen magazines also featured reports on victories in sports, biographies, war stories, and other kinds of literature. Shōnen magazines also laid the foundation for manga magazines. While some suggest that manga has its roots

238 Ibid., 87
239 Ibid., 97-102.
240 Ibid., 95.
242 Angles, Writing the Love of Boys, 16–20.
in old Buddhist prints called *Toba-e*, modern comics in Japan arose from magazines such as *Tokyo Puck* which published political cartoons. The popularity of foreign comics such as *Little Nemo in Slumberland* inspired Japanese artists to produce similar sequential comics such as Katsuichi Kabashima (1888-1965) and Shōsei Oda’s (1889-1967) *Shōchan no bōken* (Little Sho’s Adventures, 1923-1925) in *Asahi gurafu* (Asahi Graphic, 1923–2000) and eventually *Asahi shimbun*. *Shōchan no bōken* was a four-panel comic that featured Shō, a boy with a curious mind and a spirit for adventure. Shō’s aesthetic was simpler and more abstract, veering away from Takabatake’s *bishōnen* whose features were closer to reality. Shōchan was one of the earliest *shōnen* heroes in a manga. His abstract and cartoonish aesthetic was adapted by other early manga artists.

One notable artist who published in boys’ magazine *Shōnen kurabu* was Suihō Tagawa (1899–1989) whose *Norakuro* (1931–1981) was a story about a dog who was part of the Imperial army. Tagawa’s experience as a *rakugo* (Japanese comic storytelling) writer became an asset as his humour made his work appealing. He inspired other manga artists such as Machiko Hasegawa (1920–1992) who eventually drew her own comics. *Norakuro* became a standard in *shōnen* comics but much like *shōnen* stories, the narrative and style was straightforward and lacked dynamism. Natsume argues that while some comics were sequential, their temporal sequences were inconsistent and had no sense of movement. There were artists, such as Sakō Shishido (1888–1969), who managed to show dynamic multi-layered movements in his work *Supīdo Tarō* (Speed Tarō, 1930). Unfortunately, his work did not have the same impact as *Norakuro* which hindered the development of comic literacies until after the war. Nonetheless, there were many important comic literacies that children learned during this period: the iconographies in a comic, such as Shochan as an icon of a boy, and the perceptive syntax that that taught readers to make the connections between

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249 Ibid., 96–98.
sequential panels. These are fundamental comic literacies which serves as base for many innovations in the medium and established readers’ comic literacies.  

When Japan was caught up in preparations for the Pacific War in 1937, magazines were at the peak of their popularity with Shonen kurabu having one of the largest circulations with 750,000 copies per month. The freedom that many of these youth-oriented magazines exercised was curtailed when the state pushed stronger nationalist propaganda into education, and by extension, the media. Magazine content was geared towards building shokokumin — junior national subjects. This mandate did not affect shonen magazines so much since they already had a long history of educating their readers in the values of nationalism, heroism, and bravery. Boys’ magazines made minimal changes yet espoused what Kimio Ito describes as a military culture that “desires battle when there is no war or invites people to battle when there is one.” Comics such as Norakuro blended well into the culture of this period and only had to stop due to paper rationing imposed during the war. Many comic artists were also sent to various war zones to produce propaganda. Their stories were included in boys’ magazines which perpetuated Japan’s imperialist military culture. The new romance during this period was taking part in the war. It was not long before these junior citizens were encouraged to become junior warriors. However, when Japan lost the war, the romance was over, and these young heroes needed to find new dreams.

2.6. MODERN GIRLS

While men defined their modern masculinity with brute strength, women were also finding their modern femininity. During the early years of the Meiji period, men had shaped discussions surrounding women. Ryosai kenbo was a result of these deliberations and promoted education for women aimed at making them “wise

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250 McCloud, *Understanding Comics*.
The 1899 Girls High School Act required each prefecture to provide secondary education for girls. This meant that girls moved away from their homes and stayed in urban centres where they had opportunities to experience the world differently from home.

In these cityscapes, young women had access to the fruits of Japan’s modernisation. Apart from education, they gained access to a wealth of media and goods which would have been inaccessible to them in their homes. As soon as they arrived in these big cities, these jogakusei (school girls) were able to transform themselves into the modern women they read about in magazines. These school girls were self-aware that in moving to the city and receiving an education, they were progressing as individuals and were moving away from their past. This past entailed either a life of domesticity or a life of poverty which could lead to either servitude or abuse as a maid or a prostitute. As Rebecca Copeland notes, women represented “all that was backward and shameful in Japan.” Intellectuals sought to address this issue by encouraging these women to embrace modernity. Modernity promised social mobility for girls. As such, by the 1920s, these young women were called “modern girls.”

Like the shinshi and haikara, jogakusei transformed themselves using fashion. These girls wore hakama and kimono, similar to some male students. This choice was not made out of symbolic desire to stand equal to men but rather born out of practicality as traditional Japanese women’s fashion was impossible to manage on a daily basis. That said, jogakusei fashion obscured traditional gender roles. In 1883, women were banned from wearing men’s fashion and their hakama were redesigned to look closer to skirts in order to fit their needs better while still appearing gender appropriate. Jogakusei also included some Western clothing in their repertoire, from leather shoes to warm gloves. The redesigned hakama and kimono plus some Western accessories became the uniform of jogakusei.

258 Koyama, Ryōsai Kenbo, 31–35.
259 Mackie, Feminism in Modern Japan, 26.
263 Ibid., 16-18.
Their concern with fashion was still viewed with disdain by men who saw this transition as superficial. Copeland describes artists such as Toyohara Kunichika (1835-1900) belittling these jogakusei in his prints. They were seen as daraku jogakusei (degenerate schoolgirls) who appeared far from the motherly ideal Meiji society expected. As Karlin has argued, the jogakusei’s uniform troubled Meiji society for it further blurred the lines of gender in Japanese society. Stories featuring tomboyish girls called otenba also circulated before the turn of the century. These otenba narratives featured wild and unruly heroines who were often punished in the tale’s end for exercising their freedoms. In addition to this, the jogakusei were also criticised for their consumption of Western goods and the adoption of Western culture. Moreover, not only were their appearances considered degenerate, but their morals were also seen as corrupt. This denigration of the jogakusei was highly sensationalised, an indication of how girls’ newfound freedom was seen as a threat to patriarchal structures in Japanese society.

In her analysis of various stories depicting these jogakusei, Czarnecki notes different prejudices against school girls. While these young women were seen as educated, they were not seen as innocent. Some characters were accused of prostitution while some fell into ruin after becoming intimate with a man. In response, some writers criticised these texts themselves as morally corrupt. These texts were, however, designed to be didactic, showing that no jogakusei could get away with their bad deeds. The publishers, some of which were major newspapers, saw these daraku jogakusei narratives laced with racy sexual themes as an opportunity to attract more readers. It is interesting to note what it was that these texts considered to be morally corrupt and sexual. These daraku jogakusei stories often featured male-female romances with intimate scenes which involved kissing. It did not explicitly depict any copulation but implied that such things happened when a character became pregnant. Before the Meiji era, heterosexual relations centred on procreation and varied greatly on one’s social class, gender, and fertility. Infertility could be grounds for divorce or an opportunity to

265 Karlin, Gender and Nation in Meiji Japan, 197-198.
269 Ibid., 53–61.
accommodate a mistress or a concubine. While women in noble and samurai classes had little agency when choosing their sexual partners, poor women in rural areas had greater liberty to choose the partners they desired. It was only during the Meiji period that these sexual practices were criticised as feudal and immoral.

The idea of love and romance as seen in Western literature, where people freely chose partners with whom they built a strong spiritual bond, was non-existent in Japanese culture prior to the Meiji Reformation. Japanese literature before the Meiji period showed heterosexual relationships torn between giri (obligation) and ninjo (human feelings) but this did not mean that the couple shared an equal spiritual and emotional connection. Concepts such as iro (sexuality) and koi (physical love) were tied to erotic texts such as nanshoku or shinjū (love suicides). The closest manifestation of the Western concept of love and romance at that time was seen in the male-male relationships featured in nanshoku. As Reichert notes, nanshoku became a framework for writers such as Yamada Bimyō to help Meiji readers grasp the concept of heterosexual romance. Yamada started as a nanshoku writer but later switched to depicting heterosexual love. Yamada used nanshoku elements and patterns to build narratives where women took the place of the beloved male youths in nanshoku. While he initially presented these women as androgynous, Yamada eventually portrayed women as distinctly bijin (beautiful woman) in order to avoid further gender ambivalence. In doing so, Yamada overwrote nanshoku with heterosexual romance.

Meiji intellectuals found it difficult to comprehend the concept of Western romantic love, especially with regards to the mutual compatibility and equality between men and women in a romantic relationship. After various attempts to translate the concept, including the use of the transliteration rabu, the concept was eventually translated into ren’ai (romantic love). Magazines became discursive spaces that tried to define the parameters of romantic love. Jogaku zasshi, in particular, saw it fit to attach ren’ai with the institution of heterosexual marriage. Jogakusei saw these discussions unfold in their media. As the debates continued, girls’ notions of romance mixed

272 Ibid., 22-23.
Western, Christian, and Confucian values. These debates led to ideas of pure and chaste love which was then attached to the concept of an ideal virgin girl called *otome.* This pure love was seen as most beautiful and would have a strong impact on the kind of literature featured in many *shōjo* magazines consumed by these young women.

### 2.7. Literacies in Early *Shōjo* Magazines

*Shōjo* magazines sought to capture the complex burgeoning culture that struggled to balance social notions of young women and modern Japanese life. While the label *shōjo* emerged as the feminine counterpart to *shōnen,* the various magazines that carried the label — *Shōjo kai, Shōjo sekai* (Girls’ world, 1906-1912), *Shōjo no tomo* (Girls’ friend 1908–1955), *Shōjo gahō* (Girls’ periodical, 1912-1942), and *Shōjo kurabu* (Girls’ Club, 1923–1962) — were integral to young women’s culture. Every story, feature, and illustrations that ascribed to this label helped create the public’s imagination of the *shōjo* — a pure young educated woman who in the pages of the magazine was free from her social responsibility as a future mother. These *shōjo* magazines helped *shōjo* become a social construct during the late Meiji period until before the Asia-Pacific War. Their readers would also come to embrace this label once they learned various *shōjo* literacies and practices.

*Shōjo* magazines emerged as spaces that explored the look and feel of *shōjo* and imparted specific visual and textual narratives for these girls. Various artists and illustrators from different artistic disciplines were responsible for developing *shōjo*’s distinct visual grammar. The “look” of *shōjo* was hard to ignore as these beautiful girls with large eyes drew the attention of many to look at covers of *shōjo* magazines. At times, these girls were drawn wearing traditional kimono while other illustrators drew these girls wearing the latest Western fashion and hairstyles. Floral motifs often surround these girls that exuded beauty and grace.

The most notable *shōjo* illustrators of that period were Yumeji Takehisa (1884–1934), Kashō Takabatake, and Jun’ichi Nakahara (1913–1983) and they were influential in shaping *shōjo*’s visual aesthetic. Takehisa was responsible for images that evoked quiet sentimentality where girls quietly posed while surrounded by elaborate

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279 This magazine was a spin-off from *Shōnen sekai* and was also published by Hakubunkan.
flora and fauna. Takabatake was known for modernising this look so that it gave “a strong impression of Westernisation, while also conveying images of girls and women in traditional guise and in surrounds which feature long standing tropes from Japanese art.” Takabatake’s girls had many androgynous qualities that made them look similar to his depiction of the *bishōnen*. These qualities would be reinforced in Takabatake’s illustrations of girls in *shōjo* stories that featured passionate homosocial friendships. Taking the best practices of Takehisa and Takabatake, Nakahara Jun’ichi drew beautiful modern girls with large eyes and a hint of vulnerability. They were often dressed in the latest fashion and were surrounded by elaborate floral patterns. Of the three artists, Nakahara emphasised the largest and most expressive eyes, a visual aesthetic that aimed to capture girls’ emotions.

These expressive eyes became a central aesthetic in *shōjo* media. The illustrations by these men extended beyond the covers as their works were also used for various *furoku* (giveaways) attached to the magazine such as stationery, pencil cases, or postcards. The girls illustrated by these artists carried a pure, elaborate, and almost romantic aura, one that could be appreciated but not touched. It was as though the *shōjo* were in a world of their own. These ephemeral visual qualities were characteristic of early *shōjo* visual aesthetics. The *shōjo*’s ephemeral world was also seen in the language of the magazines.

Magazines such as *Shōjo no tomo* and *Shōjo gahō* were best known for publishing *shōjo* literature. This literature included *shōjo shōsetsu* (girls’ fiction) which Aoyama describes as a complex set of texts which are comprised mostly of prose fiction with a *shōjo* heroine intended for their *shōjo* readers. This literature ranged from translated North American classics such as *Little Women* (1868–1869) by Louisa May Alcott (1832–1888) and *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) by Lucy Maud Montgomery (1874–1942). These works introduced concepts such as happy homes, sisterhood,
sentimentalism, and romance. These concepts were also embraced by young Japanese female writers who experimented with these themes as they wrote for various shōjo magazines. Shōjo heroines comprised of jogakusei who were depicted as “orphans.” These stories were often set in dormitories and focused on girls’ encounters in school or the city. The most famous shōjo writer during the Taishō period and towards the early Shōwa period was Nobuko Yoshiya (1896-1973) who was known for writing a series of stories that became symbolic of early shōjo shōsetsu and culture, Hanamonogatari (Flower tales, 1916-1924).

Hanamonogatari was a series of short stories originally published in Shōjo gahō about the lives of girls in dormitory schools. Contrary to writing practices of that period, Yoshiya used the vernacular language of girls, making her writing familiar and intimate to her readers. Yoshiya’s narratives were deeply emotional as she used a flowery language called bibun (beautiful writing) that depicted vivid romantic images to convey the sentiments of her characters. Her writing style was the textual equivalent of the sentimental and ephemeral worlds drawn by Takabatake and Nakahara. From petals falling to fluttering ribbons, Yoshiya immersed girls in emotional and romantic escapades that captured their desire for something different. Dollase notes that it was important for girls to sympathise with Yoshiya’s heroines as they learned about purity and beauty from their sadness. At the same time, Yoshiya also subtly reminded girls of their impending social duties.

This ephemeral space between fantasy and reality is what Masuko Honda has described as hirahira, like the fluttering of ribbons in the air. Yoshiya’s “ribbons” symbolised girls’ youthful frivolity and freedom that beautifully coursed through the wind before gracefully falling to the ground. Shōjo’s hirahira captured the movement of girls’ lives, blurred between dreams and reality, a time of their lives where they were

287 Shōjo’s “orphaned” nature alludes either to its literal meaning where they lost their families due to unforeseen circumstances or due to their isolation from their families as they move to urban centres for their education. See Masuko, “The Genealogy of Hirahira,” 27; Aoyama, “Trangendering Shōjo Shōsetsu: Girls’ Inter-Text/Sex-Uality,” 51; Sarah Frederick, “Not That Innocent: Yoshiya Nobuko’s Good Girls,” in Bad Girls of Japan, ed. Jan Bardsley and Laura Miller (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 69; Shamoon, Passionate Friendship, 76–77.
289 Ibid., 729.
290 Ibid., 729.
neither children nor women, nor were they traditionally Japanese nor visibly Western. The complexity of Yoshiya’s works that redefines the material world with girls’ immaterial emotions highlighted an intertextuality that would become increasingly characteristic of shōjo media. For example, ribbons were not just girls’ hair accessories but were symbolic of their girlhood. To a degree, the pleasure readers derived from shōjo’s intertextual images and texts showcased jouissance. While intertextual texts have been written since the Tale of Genji, Yoshiya’s works, other shōjo shōsetsu, and even the lavish illustrations that accompanied these stories, would establish intertextuality as a key literacy in shōjo culture — a literacy that exemplified girls’ jouissance by making their emotions visible in a manner that some men and women would find trivial and frustrating.

Another form of literacy that was adapted in shōjo stories was the notion of female-female relationships. Images and texts within the magazines highlighted a highly homosocial world where girls developed intimate relationships with other girls. They would call this relationship Class S or S-kankei (S-relations) where “S” stood for “sister” and S-kankei entailed a deep relationship between two girls. Some scholars would argue that this was a purely normative homosocial reality among girls. Given that period’s strong push to transform these girls into mothers, these stories of S-kankei could also be seen as subtle protests against their impending adulthood which would rob them of their freedom.

Unlike masculine depictions of same-sex love which were becoming less apparent in Japanese popular media, shōjo’s S-kankei portrayed strong emotional connections between female characters while maintaining the very essence of their girlhood — their “purity.”

In many ways, Yoshiya felt that “purity” and “chastity” were positive qualities that girls’ desired. These values were cultivated through S-kankei which served as precursors for later heteronormative relationships. Similar to depictions of same-sex love among men, S-kankei also represented female relationships that highlighted power dynamics between females. These female-female relationships often involve a younger

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292 Ibid., 34–35.
298 Ibid., 76
vulnerable girl and an older well-composed “S.” This relationship dynamic, while born from separate circumstances and written for different purposes, highlights a common thread between the two worlds which would have an impact on later shōjo and shōnen texts.

Beyond establishing the image and the language of shōjo, these magazines also became discursive spaces for girls to define what it meant to be a shōjo. Editors of these magazines welcomed contributions, from stories to illustrations, from their fervent readers. In readers’ columns, readers shared their lives and openly debated matters that concerned their shōjo identity. Shōjo no Tomo hosted various meetings for its readers and gave readers the opportunity to meet editors, writers, illustrators, and especially, their fellow shōjo. These meetings also served as venues for girls to continue discussions with regards to their blooming culture. In many ways, these activities and events jumpstarted participatory practices in shōjo culture. Girls collectively contributed knowledge about their shōjo lives through these discursive spaces, turning them into one of the cornerstones of shōjo culture.

Comics also found their place in shōjo magazines but their stories and aesthetics were quite different compared to other shōjo stories. In 1934, Shōjo no Tomo featured a 16-page comic furoku by Katsuji Matsumoto (1904–1986) titled Nazo no kurobā (The mysterious clover). The story revolves around a young masked girl who liberates an impoverished village from cruel nobles. While this title had been lost until recently, its re-emergence in a Yayoi Museum exhibit in 2006 shed new light on shōjo manga history. According to Natsume, Matsumoto’s dynamic illustrations were reminiscent of early Disney images and were leaps ahead of his comic contemporaries. Holmberg notes that its storytelling techniques even trumps the early efforts of Osamu Tezuka (1928–1989), highlighting that artists like Matsumoto did not necessarily follow existing manga styles and techniques.

His follow-up four-panel comic Kurukuru kurumichan (The spinning Kurumi-chan, 1938), also published in Shōjo no tomo, featured the adventures of a very

299 Shamoon, Passionate Friendship, 75–76.
301 Shamoon, Passionate Friendship, 52–55.
young girl whose funny antics strayed from the melodrama of other shōjo heroines. Kurumi had a small round face with cartoonish features that made her more cute than beautiful. As such, Kurumi is seen as one of the earliest kawaii characters in shōjo media. Although Kurukuru Kurumichan was not as dynamic a text as Nazo no kurobā, it was successful in delighting many of its readers. Matsumoto’s comics provided shōjo readers with light-hearted fun during a difficult period in Japanese history.

The Pacific War was a difficult period for shōjo magazines as the government controlled their content. Magazines immersed in shōjo culture underwent radical changes during the war. Shōjo no tomo’s editor, Motoi Uchiyama challenged his readers to step out of their dreamy worlds and be mindful of their civic duties. Nakahara Jun’ichi was fired as an illustrator for the magazine because his girls looked too frail. The magazine had to let go of much shōjorashisa (shōjoesque) content. Throughout the war, the magazine would bash many established shōjo traits and practices. Gone were the ribbons and the sentimental heroines. Instead, the covers featured strong girls who were supporting their nation’s road to victory.

This radical change was partly due to the government’s control of paper supply which gave them control over print media. Submitting to the government’s demands was the only way for magazines such as Shōjo no tomo to stay afloat during the war. Even the voice of shōjo, Nobuko Yoshiya, drastically changed as she became a war correspondent for many women’s and girls’ magazines. Perhaps Yoshiya’s final resistance was the fact that she remained single and became a writer on the home front, and not a married woman who helped the nation through child-rearing and domestic work. Yoshiya was also honest with her work, depicting the lives of women as she saw them, using whatever sentimentalism she had left from her shōjo days. Perhaps

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306 Imada, A social history of shōjo, 171–176; Shamoon, Passionate Friendship, 56–57.
308 Imada, A social history of shōjo, 165.
309 Ibid., 174–175.
311 Sarah Frederick, Turning Pages: Reading and Writing Women’s Magazines in Interwar Japan (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 133.
the only light during this dreary period was the budding comic artist Machiko Hasegawa who wrote light-hearted didactic comics for *Shōjo kurabu* during the war.\(^{313}\)

The Pacific War distanced these girls from their ephemeral world filled with fluttering ribbons. Their intertextual literacies and practices were seen as frivolous, and many were forced to give up their ribbons for the nation’s victory. As the war came to an end, many of these girls lost their freedom as they had to meet the demands expected of adult women.

### 2.8. **OsaMu TeZuKa and Postwar Shōnen Manga Literacies**

The Pacific War took its toll on the Japanese who were devastated by the end of the war. Since media played a pivotal role in building the Japanese “empire” during the war they were heavily scrutinised by the Allied forces during the Allied occupation (1945–1952). Revolutionary, nationalistic, and militaristic stories were censored or banned altogether. Media efforts were redirected towards lifting the spirits of the Japanese so that they could rebuild the nation. Some magazines had to rebrand in order to dissociate their publications from the wartime period.\(^{314}\) Example of this trend were *Shōjo kurabu* and *Shōnen kurabu* who changed the Chinese characters for *kurabu* to katakana.\(^{315}\)

*Shōnen* media also underwent a rebirth at this time. Because of the Occupation’s media control, militaristic themes were not allowed. These were replaced with science fiction and heroic stories, some of which were imported from American comics. Some *shōnen* magazines tried to stage a comeback, but they were costly for young impoverished readers. Small publishers tapped this market through their publication of *akahon*, cheaply printed books that were known for their red ink on poor quality paper. Rather than retailing in bookstores, these *akahon* were sold in candy shops and street stalls for low prices. Some books were also available for rent at *kashihon* (rental book) stalls. These *akahon* and *kashihon*, which included comic books, were meant to provide cheap entertainment. Some *akahon* comics were pastiches of popular titles while some


\(^{315}\) From 倶楽部 to クラブ.
contributed to the development of manga. Akahon stories followed the same themes seen in shōnen magazines — personal growth and victories for young boys through never ending adventures. The most notable manga artist who had his roots in akahon was Osamu Tezuka (1928–1989), the man later dubbed as the “God of Manga.”

In 1947, Tezuka published a story titled Shin takarajima (New treasure island) which featured a boy who sets out to follow the treasure map he has inherited from his deceased father. Its story still carried the shōnen’s spirit for adventure and had similar aesthetic qualities as Shōchan. What set Shin takarajima apart from its predecessors was its visual story telling. Unlike the lifeless panels popularised by comics such as Norakuro, Tezuka was known for revolutionising the genre by using cinematic techniques that had a strong impact on his comics’ pace. Tezuka’s panels were like storyboards that were just frames away from becoming animated. Natsume argues that while Tezuka’s Shin takarajima panels were simple and unimpressive compared to Shishido’s Speed Tarō, Tezuka managed to make an impact because of the careful composition of his images. This composition included the subtle expressions of his characters which gave them a semblance of self-consciousness. These memorable faces left strong impressions on children, allowing Tezuka to even reuse many of his characters as part of his “star” system. He used his memorable characters like actors as if he were a director casting for a film. His engaging storytelling techniques and endearing characters eventually led to a new kind of comic called story manga where creators could pursue longer and more complex storylines. As he drew more comics using these techniques, Tezuka was teaching his readers new comic literacies that used layers of images and texts that showed temporalities that smoothly and dramatically moved stories forward. McCloud notes that Tezuka’s story-telling relies heavily on the sequential action of his characters, his ability to immerse the reader in the comic’s setting, and his readers’ ability to read between images.

Osamu Tezuka became the most in-demand artist of his time. He was published in both girls’, boys’, and children’s magazines. His akahon works were as successful as his serialised works published in various magazines. His memorable works include


319 Ibid., 100–102.

320 Ibid., 103.
Metropolis (Metropolis, 1949), Janguru Taieti (Kimba the White Lion, 1950–1954), and his iconic work, Tetsuwan Atomu (Astro Boy, 1952–1968). His dynamic comic style was adapted by many artists, and some even studied under his tutelage in his studio, Tokiwasō. The success of his works, particularly Astro Boy, led to the development of a multimedia consumption of the series — from television to toys and even lunch boxes.\textsuperscript{322}

The akahon industry did not last long due to inflation, and it was not long before shōnen magazines adopted talented akahon artists such as Tezuka. The popularity of akahon made magazines reconsider their content. Before long, comic magazines such as Manga shōnen (Boys’ comic, 1947–1955), and Omoshiroi bukku (Funny book, 1949–1959) became available.\textsuperscript{323} Japan’s changing mediascape, however, became a challenge for these emerging comic publishers.

By the 1950s, Japanese media diversified. Apart from newspapers and magazines, postwar Japanese mass media also included films, radio and television. Films, in particular, were very popular after the war and helped artists transform into national celebrities, as was the case of Hibari Misora (1937–1989).\textsuperscript{324} In 1953, NHK (Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai, Japan Broadcasting Company) and Nippon Television were launched, signalling the start of television broadcasting. Those who could afford televisions had one in their homes while those who could not afford a set watched shows in public places.

As radio and television programming developed, publishers of various shōnen manga magazines saw competition for children’s entertainment. During the early 1950s, manga magazines were published on a monthly or a biweekly basis. On the other hand, television shows were serialised on a weekly basis. According to Yonezawa, television’s weekly serials changed the weekly lives of children.\textsuperscript{325} While children used to have the patience to wait a month for new stories, magazines now had to deal with the shifting attention span of children who were caught up in television’s weekly programming. This pushed manga publishers to consider weekly publications. The first to do so were Kodansha with Shūkan shōnen magajin (Weekly boy’s magazine, henceforth, Shōnen

\textsuperscript{321}McCloud, \textit{Understanding Comics}, 77–79.
\textsuperscript{322}Steinberg, \textit{Anime’s Media Mix}.
\textsuperscript{323}Shimizu, \textit{Manga no Rekishi [History of Manga]}, 181–184.
magazine, 1959–present) and Shōgakukan with Shūkan shōnen sandē (Weekly Boy’s Sunday, henceforth, Shōnen Sunday, 1959–present).

*Shōnen magazine* targeted elementary to high school students. The magazine was thinner than its monthly *shōnen* magazine contemporaries, but it contained various serialised comics, sports news, illustrated short stories, and some giveaways. As for the magazine’s comic narratives, it leant towards historical pieces, science fiction (SF), and gags. Stories in the magazine were also complex, intended to appeal to older children. Visually, the magazine’s stories were dynamic and action-filled.\(^{326}\)

In 1960, *Shōnen magazine* published a serialised comic called Kaiketsu Harimao (The Amazing Harimao) loosely based on the life of Yutaka Tani who had been a Japanese spy in Malaya. Tani’s life had previously been featured in a 1943 film called Marai no Tora (The Tiger of Malaya). The 1960 manga was written by Katsurō Yamada (1910–1983) and drawn by Shōtarō Ishinomori (1938–1998).\(^{327}\) This manga was the comic version of the weekly television series of the same name which ran from 1960 to 1961 on Nippon Television, attracting young audiences not only to the television show but also to the comic magazine. This was a successful tie-in that helped cement the magazine as part of children’s culture. Apart from this, the magazine was also integral in promoting talented artists. Notable titles and artists that published in this magazine during the 1960s were Shigeru Mizuki’s Gegege no Kitarō (Kitaro’s cackle, 1959–1969), Shōtarō Ishinomori’s Saibōgu 009 (Cyborg 009, 1964–1981), Ikki Kajiwara (1936–1987) and Kawasaki Noboru’s (1941–) Kyōjin no hoshi (The Star among Giants, 1966-1971), Fujio Akatsuka’s (1935–2008) Tensai Bakabon (Bakabon the genius, 1967-1976), and Asao Takamori (alias of Ikki Kajiwara) and Tetsuya Chiba’s (1939–) Ashita no Jō (Tomorrow’s Joe, 1968–1973).

*Shōnen Sunday* began publication ten days after *Shōnen magazine*’s debut with a price set competitively lower.\(^{328}\) *Shōnen Sunday* featured comics similar in narrative themes to *Shōnen magazine* but were considerably light-hearted. As Yonezawa notes, even the features of the magazine strayed from *Shōnen magazine*’s journalistic approach as *Shōnen Sunday*’s features were more entertaining and youthful, evoking a more *shōnen*-like atmosphere.\(^{329}\) *Shōnen Sunday* also had a larger trump card over *Shōnen\]

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\(^{326}\) Ibid., 2:10.


\(^{328}\) The first issue of *Shōnen magazine* was sold for ¥40 while *Shōnen Sunday* sold theirs at ¥30.

magazine — they had exclusive rights to Osamu Tezuka’s works in the 1960s. This drew many of Tezuka’s fans towards the magazine which allowed them to see works by other artists, some of whom were a part of Tezuka’s Tokiwasō studio. Notable works published in Shōnen Sunday during the 1960s were Tezuka’s Dororo (1967–1968), Fujiko Fujio’s Obake Q-taro (The Monster named Q-taro, 1964–1973), and Sanpei Shirato’s Kamuiden (Legend of Kamui, 1965–1967).

The establishment of these weekly magazines pushed other publishers to consider publishing their own weekly magazines. In 1963, Shōnen Gahosha published Shūkan shōnen kingu (Weekly boys’ king, henceforth, Shōnen king, 1963—1988). In 1969, Shūeisha followed with their own weekly comic magazine, Shūkan shōnen jyanpu (Shōnen jump, 1969–present). Shūeisha’s entry into weekly comic entertainment may have come late but it was not without thought. Their magazines, Omoshiroi book and Shōnen bukku (Boys’ book, henceforth, Shōnen book, 1959–1968) received moderate success with their SF, spy, and racing stories but still found it challenging to compete with its contemporaries.330 At a loss, the editors of Shōnen book sent out a survey to their readers, who were mostly in elementary school, about the things they considered important. This survey postcard contained 50 words and three questions. The first question was “what is the word that warms your heart?” The children’s top answer was yūjō (friendship). The second question was “what do word do you think is most important?” The children answered dōryoku (hard work). The last question was, “what word makes you the happiest?” The children answered shōri (victory).331 These three words — friendship, hard work, and victory — became the cornerstones of Shūeisha’s newest boys’ magazine, Shōnen jump.

Shōnen jump was initially published as a semi-monthly magazine that specialised in one-shot stories featuring new authors. The magazine’s first cover had a subheading that said, “All manga, all one-shots!”332 The manga also took pride in featuring mostly new authors and this system allowed them to gauge the kind of content the readers found interesting. The first issue had various stories ranging from horror, samurai, young heroes, and baseball. It also contained a translated version of Dan Barry’s (1923–1977) Flash Gordon (1934). Along with all these stories are various advertisements from cowboy guns to planes and quizzes for kids to win prizes. What

was most interesting about the magazine, beyond its stories, was the postcard survey attached to the issue.

In its first issue, the survey postcard asked readers about their opinions on the content and cost of the magazine. It also had specific questions such as what kind of stories they wanted to read, whether if they read stories based on recommendations or not, and even the number of pages they found comfortable reading. For four months, these reader surveys continued to ask detailed questions about their readers. In every postcard, one question consistently asked their readers to identify the two stories that they found most interesting in the issue. The responses to this survey were never published but it gave the magazine information on their audience’s interests and consumption. The surveys became an integral part of the magazine that continues to this day. In January 1969, *Shōnen jump* relaunched as a weekly magazine with a line-up of artists and stories specifically catering to their *shōnen* audiences.

The early years of the magazine were met with much controversy thanks to Gō Nagai’s (1945–) serial *Harenchi gakuen* (Shameless School, 1968–1972). This comic featured a group of boys and their crazy antics in class which included stripping their teacher of his underpants and peeking into the girls’ locker room. *Harenchi gakuen* was said to have been inspired by Nagai’s assistant’s shameless activities during his youth and the popularisation of the word *harenchi* in adult magazines. The series became notorious for its brash heroes, which romanticised school delinquents, and its mild nudity, which entailed the naked backs and shoulders of girls. Various parent-teacher associations all over Japan campaigned for *Shōnen jump* to cease the publication of *Harenchi gakuen*. The magazine ignored these complaints given the popularity of the series among its readers. The series continued until 1972, inspired four live action films and a television series, and spearheaded delinquent and *ecchi* (lewd) narratives in manga. *Harenchi gakuen* would pave the way for the magazine’s popularity in the 1970s. *Shōnen jump*’s success continued with Gō Nagai’s *Mazinger Z* (1972–1973), Keiji Nakazawa’s *Hadashi no Gen* (*Barefoot Gen*, 1973–1974) and *Ringu ni kakero* (*Give it all in the ring*, 1977–1981) by Masami Kurumada.

Similar to the monthly magazines that preceded them, these weekly *shōnen* magazines featured *shōnen* characteristics: masculine prowess, bravery, youth, and

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adventure. The heroes seen in these magazines ranged from young athletes, adventurers, war heroes, spies, detectives, and cyborgs, to lewd schoolboys. While Takabatake’s delicate bishōnen disappeared from their pages and were replaced by cartoonish heroes who were more abstract symbols of boys’ culture, these shōnen heroes shared the same adventurous and courageous spirit as their predecessors. The comics also toned down the violence and sadism seen in pre-war shōnen stories. Instead, the magazines focused on providing their readers with engaging stories using dynamic story manga techniques that transformed comics into a multi-layered, if not multimodal, medium. These magazines were crucial in imparting to their readers textual and visual literacies concerning masculinity. Weekly access to shōnen magazines helped their readers develop their literacies concerning shōnen manga.

2.9. Macoto Takahashi and Postwar shōjo manga literacies

Similar to shōnen magazines, shōjo magazines also sought to find their place in girls’ lives after the war. Female comic writer, Machiko Hasegawa, began writing the comic strip Sazae-san (Sazae-san, 1946–1974) for the Asahi Shinbun. Anmitsu hime (Princess Anmitsu, 1949–1955) by Shosuke Kurakane (1914–1973), a comedy about a spunky princess, was a popular comic that ran in Shōjo (Girl, 1949-1963) magazine. There were others like Jun’ichi Nakahara who tried to restore prewar shōjo magazine culture through his magazines Soleil (1946) and Himawari (Sunflower, 1947-1952). However, these magazines failed because they lacked interaction with their readers.

Amidst Japan’s growing media landscape, shōjo magazines strived to continue the legacies of their predecessors. Monthly shōjo manga magazines such as Shōjo kurabu (Girls’ club, 1946–1963), Shōjo (1949–1963), Shōjo bukku (Girls’ book, 1951–1963), Nakayoshi (Friends,1955–present), and Ribon (Ribbon, 1951– present) rebuilt a rich shōjo culture. Various artists worked for these magazines, but it was a male artist who drew for akahon who would shape the visual culture of shōjo manga as we know it today.

Macoto Takahashi (1934–) was inspired by Jun’ichi Nakahara’s works when he started illustrating for various akahon stories during his teens. Takahashi’s akahon comic debut was Pari Tōkyo (Paris Tokyo, 1956), a story of a girl raised by a single mother who searches for her father. The comic shared visual similarities to Nakahara’s girls — with their large eyes, lithe bodies, and floral and lyrical motifs that highlighted

335 Shamoon, Passionate Friendship, 84.
The story also contained themes and tropes from *shōjo* stories—the “orphaned” girl, close homosocial relationships, and emotional intertextual language. Takahashi also managed to visually incorporate the girls’ narrative voice by using introspective panels, an adaptation of illustration styles in *shōjo* stories. Parī Tōkyo was Takahashi’s attempt to translate *shōjo’s* *jouissance* in comics.

Takahashi’s works also put the *shōjo* in the forefront, illustrating her full body portrait with her incredibly detailed attire while situating her story in the background through a series of panels. Yukari Fujimoto called this technique the *sandan buchinuki no sutairu-ga* (stylish picture with three-panel overlay). Sutairu-ga or stylish pictures were particularly popular in girls’ comics in the 1950s where readers were encouraged to trace these full body portraits and send them to the magazine. These portraits were not necessarily woven into the narrative, but Takahashi managed to include them in his stories. Critics such as Yoshihiro Yonezawa did not see any narrative value in these portraits. Mizuki Takahashi, however, argues that these full body portraits were familiar illustrations to girls who would look at them to keep track of fashion trends.

While Tezuka’s *Ribon no kishi* (*Princess Knight*, 1953–1956) preceded Takahashi’s *Parī Tōkyo*, it was Takahashi’s aesthetics that would have a lasting impact on *shōjo* culture because it deployed various familiar literacies from *shōjo* magazines and translated them to a comics format. This, of course, does not diminish the fact that Tezuka did have an impact on *shōjo* manga, but is more of a reminder that *Princess Knight* and his style did not manage to fully capture the *shōjo* that fluttered between reality and fantasy. Tezuka’s stories were straightforward and linear and were not concerned with *shōjo’s* deeply sentimental inner world. If anything, Tezuka’s contribution to the genre was his story manga technique. An artist that did capture these emotions in *shōjo* manga was Shōtarō Ishinomori whose contributions will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. While male artists and editors initially dominated

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337 Ibid., 4, 28.
339 For an example, see Macoto Takahashi, *Sakura namiki* [Cherry row], ed. Shōgakukan Creative, Ebook ed. (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1957), 122.
340 Ibid., 66–71.
shōjo comics, there were a handful of women, such as Masako Watanabe (1929–), Hideko Mizuno (1939–), and Toshiko Ueda (1917–2008), who were Takahashi’s contemporaries. Mizuki Takahashi notes that Takahashi’s style would leave a lasting legacy in shōjo manga and would eventually lead to the development of shōjo manga’s golden age.

2.10. CONCLUSION

The early years of youth magazines marked the creation and development of shōjo and shōnen Discourses. What started as a convenient label to distinguish boys from girls eventually became a wall that gave male and female children separate spaces to develop various literacies and practices that were relevant to their modern needs. Shōnen literacies were born from shōnen magazines that revelled in masculinity and reflected their power as young men. Boys learned literacies that visually and textually reinforced their liberties, their power over women, and their higher social standing in Japanese society. On the other hand, girls learned literacies that gave them refuge from their shackled realities. Fluttering ribbons symbolised their desires to remain in a youthful rose-coloured world where they were free to transform anything and everything into something personally meaningful. Boys learned to seek victories while girls developed literacies for jouissance. These distinct literacies and practices seen in shōjo and shōnen media highlight the polarities of shōjo and shōnen Discourses. These literacies support the walls that continue to divide youth media as seen in Japanese bookstores.

However, as I will explore in the next chapter, there were literacies that fissured the wall that divided shōjo and shōnen. These literacies were developed in the late 1950s by artists such as Shōtaro Ishinomori and Tetsuya Chiba who developed these practices in shōjo manga and later used them in their shōnen works. The adaptation of these shōjo practices in shōnen manga would have an impact on female readers who would find familiar elements in shōnen media. These fissures created new literacies that built intertextual ties between shōjo and shōnen media. Central to this process was the bishōnen who found renewed expression in manga.

3. INTERSECTING LITERACY PRACTICES BETWEEN SHŌJO AND SHŌNEN MANGA

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The end of the 1950s saw the establishment of a range of youth media where the worlds of boys and girls were separate. It appeared as though the floral motifs ubiquitous in shōjo romances had no place in shōnen adventures. Yet somehow, before the decade even ended, shōnen heroes began to appear with large sparkling eyes that manifested their emotions to their readers. For media cultures that had built strong aesthetics around masculinity and femininity, these big-eyed heroes traversed these worlds seamlessly, encouraging literacy practices that explored the ambiguities and the intertextual potential of young male bodies.

In this chapter, I explore how this deeply intertextual male, the bishōnen and biseinen (beautiful young man) in manga, came into existence, and how their existence helped bridge the closed worlds of shōjo and shōnen. It is important to explore this connection because the literacy practices behind the creation of bishōnen and biseinen paved the way for fan literacies that recognised the intertextual potential of shōnen heroes and texts which eventually became one of the major cornerstones of fujoshi literacies.

I begin this chapter by tracing the roots of the bishōnen and biseinen by examining the shōjo works of renowned shōnen manga artists — Shōtarō Ishinomori and Tetsuya Chiba. I argue that the aesthetic experiments of Ishinomori and Chiba in their shōjo and shōnen works were critical in developing the intertextual potential of the fictional male body and, by extension, shōnen comics. Their experiments led to the development of manga’s proto-bishōnen or even the proto-biseinen — the distinctly handsome male in manga. I then explore how their experiments taught young women reading practices that helped them distinguish some young men as “different,” if not beautiful.

Ishinomori and Chiba’s innovations in manga led to women’s experimentation with gender representations that led to the shōjo manga revolution and eventually the creation of shōjo’s bishōnen. I end this chapter by examining the results of these literacy practices surrounding the bishōnen by examining the shōnen works of
renowned shōjo artists, Keiko Takemiya and Moto Hagio. I argue that their works highlight the flexibility of both shōnen and shōjo literacy practices which can be learned by both male and female readers. I also argue that these artists’ quest for new bishōnen literacies also challenged notions of “true masculinity” in manga. In the process, these literacy practices in manga heightened readers’ affect for these stories. It helped build the emotional ties between readers and these beautiful boys.

In this chapter, I explore the various artists that contributed to the creation of a creative space that combined the worlds of shōjo and shōnen manga. Through their intertextual works, I argue that readers learned literacy practices that transformed their notions of masculinity and sexuality.

### 3.2. SHŌNEN IN SHŌJO: SHŌTARŌ ISHINOMORI AND TETSUYA CHIBA

While various publications after the Pacific War developed distinctions between shōjo and shōnen media, publishers had little control over how artists and readers slipped past these gender divisions. The growing manga industry needed artists and the popularity of comics after the war inspired youths to try and make their own stories. Thanks to the works of Osamu Tezuka and Macoto Takahashi, the literacy practices required to produce shōjo and shōnen comics became increasingly complex. For artists who aspired to draw shōnen comics, they needed to have the ability to be able to draw dynamic, if not cinematic, temporal sequences with expressive characters who were out to claim victories. For artists who aspired to draw shōjo comics, they needed various intertextual mechanisms to be able to express girls’ fleeting desires — from playful backgrounds, floral motifs, and emotive narratives. These mechanisms aimed to provide jouissance to their readers. Some artists, however, pushed these mechanisms further to increase affect from readers. This section explores the attempts of two men who tried to make this effort — Shōtarō Ishinomori and Tetsuya Chiba.

Shōnen manga magazines during this period were already packed with successful artists and they were not keen on accepting new blood. Shōjo magazines, on the contrary, welcomed emerging artists and became the early base for artists such as Ishinomori, Chiba, and Leiji (then Akira) Matsumoto (1938—). Ishinomori and Chiba were not the first nor were they the only male creators who drew for both shōnen and

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shōjo manga. There were many male artists, such as Macoto Takahashi and Osamu Tezuka, who were known to have made significant contributions to both genres. What uniquely delineates Ishinomori and Chiba from other male artists were their creative visual and story telling techniques that broke established visual and narrative rules that governed either shōnen or shōjo manga. These two men were versatile artists who used literacies from both shōjo and shōnen manga to befit their stories, regardless of whether these works were published as shōjo or shōnen titles. In doing so, the works of these men during the late 1950s and early 1960s built bridges that connected shōnen and shōjo and educated their readers concerning this potential.

Ishinomori and Chiba were critical in transforming shōjo manga and were influential on shōjo manga artists who were part of shōjo manga’s revolution. Yet, despite these innovations, the contributions of Ishinomori and Chiba to shōjo manga have been overlooked in shōjo manga studies. Given their influence in building this experimental space that uses literacies from both shōjo and shōnen media, a space that fujoshi would later also use, I find it relevant to examine the works of these two artists.

3.2.1. SHŌTARŌ ISHINOMORI’S INNOVATIONS IN SHŌJO MANGA

The first to debut was Shōtaro Ishinomori whose talent was largely influenced by Osamu Tezuka. Born in Tome, Miyagi Prefecture, Ishinomori became a fan of Tezuka after reading Shin takarajima and began to draw comic strips for his middle-school newspaper. Ishinomori eventually contributed some of the manga he wrote to Manga shōnen as soon as he entered high school. His contributions were so highly regarded by Tezuka that a year later, he hired Ishinomori as his assistant for Astro Boy and even managed his manga career under his production company. At the age of seventeen, long before his high school graduation, Manga shōnen published his debut work titled Nikyū tenshi (Second-class Angel) in 1955.

349 Yonezawa, History of Postwar Shōjo Manga, 78–82; Fujimoto, “The Origin of Shōjo Manga Style.”
350 Schodt, Manga! Manga!, 253.
351 Moto and Takemiya were big fans of their works. See Keiko Takemiya, Shōnen no na wa Jirubēru [The boy’s name is Gilbert] (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 2016), 22; and Moto Hagio, “Profile and Interview with Moto Hagio,” in International Perspectives on Shojo and Shojo Manga: The Influence of Girl Culture, ed. Masami Toku (London: Routledge, 2015), 211.
352 Ishinomori, A manga artist’s manual, 50–53.
353 Ibid., 54.
Nikyū tenshi is the story of a wingless angel named Pinto who dreams of owning his own pair of wings. God tells him that he has to earn his wings by going through a series of tests to pass as a first-class angel. The story follows Pinto’s tests which involve helping people all over the world. As a comic, Nikyū tenshi follows Tezuka’s cinematic panels but fails to pursue his long story narrative as Pinto’s tests are written in episodes that are not necessarily tied together.

What distinguishes Nikyū tenshi is Ishinomori’s illustration of Pinto who has large eyes drawn with a star. Pinto’s eyes are uncharacteristic of a shōnen hero at a time when large eyes were mostly used for heroines in shōjo manga. During this period, sparkling eyes were also uncharacteristic of shōjo characters. Yukari Fujimoto notes that Pinto’s eyes were the earliest depiction of starry eyes in manga. Fujimoto also argues that his eyes were not equivalent to the expressive eyes in shōjo illustrations as a later chapter notes that the sparkle in Pinto’s eyes gave him the power to see the perspectives of the characters he was assisting. That said, Ishinomori continued to use these starry eyes as a distinct trait of his early shōjo heroes.

In Ishinomori’s debut shōjo work for Shōjo club, Madara no himo (1956), a manga adaptation of Sherlock Holmes’ The Adventure of the Speckled Band (1892), Ishinomori depicted Sherlock Holmes with sparkling eyes. Unlike Pinto, whose sparkling eyes had narrative purpose, Sherlock’s sparkling eyes did not give him superpowers. Helen Stoner, the story’s heroine, also shares these sparkling eyes. Ishinomori used these sparkling eyes to distinguish some of his characters and served as a distinct characteristic of his shōjo works. Whether this implied that Holmes is handsome in the same way that Helen Stoner was beautiful is another story altogether.

Ishinomori’s The Adventure of the Speckled Band is also unique among Ishinomori’s works as it did not follow the dynamic storytelling introduced by Tezuka. Instead, Ishinomori used a vertical comic panel layout where each panel was numbered, leading readers to follow a sequence. Through this sequencing, Ishinomori was developing his young shōjo manga readers’ competency for comics.

Another visual technique developed by Ishinomori was the flowing and dynamic panels that captured the shōjo’s inner world. This technique was different from the

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355 Shōtarō Ishinomori, Second-class angel, 17.
lyrical and floral motifs used by Jun’ichi Nakahara and was also dissimilar to Macoto Takahashi’s overlay of the narrative voice in his comics. Instead, Ishinomori experimented with unconventional abstract panel layouts that flowed with the emotions of his characters. This allowed him to overlay illustrations, panels, and texts, capturing the surging emotions of his shōjo heroine. In doing so, readers were immersed in the psyche of his shōjo heroine.

Ishinomori calls this mechanism for displaying girls’ emotions shinri byōsha (psychological portrait), a technique he developed upon seeing how novels show a character’s inner psychic world without breaking the story. An example of this psychological portrait can be seen in his story Mizuiro no ribon (Light-blue ribbon, Shōjo club, 1957), where Ishinomori features his heroine, Rumiko, drowning in loneliness as she falls from a trapeze. Rather than using thought bubbles, Ishinomori overlaid her thoughts on the illustration. This fluid transition between Rumiko’s inner and outer worlds, as well as her resounding mental voice showcases Ishinomori’s ability to illustrate the shōjo’s complex interiority. Ishinomori found it necessary for shōjo characters to express their thoughts. He widely used this psychological portrait in his shōjo stories and subtly used it in his shōnen manga. His abstract panels and his psychological portraits became critical literacy practices for visual and narrative expression in shōjo manga.

From the late 1950s to the early 60s, Ishinomori actively wrote for both shōjo and shōnen magazines. While he focused on adventure and action stories in his shōnen stories, his shōjo titles helped diversify the stories in the genre. Beyond the kidnapped and orphaned girl, Ishinomori’s stories also dabbled in science fiction and magic realism. From toys coming to life to depicting the life of a vampire girl, Ishinomori played with various elements from science fiction and fantasy. His most notable shōjo work, Ryūjinuma (The dragon goddess’ marsh, 1957), deals with magic realism as he explores the folktale surrounding the mythical Dragon goddess who resided at a lake in Aomori.

357 See Chapter 2.9 on Macoto Takahashi.
358 Ishinomori, A manga artist’s manual, 161.
Ishinomori wrote *Ryūjinuma* to explore social satire and cinematic storytelling in manga.\(^{363}\) The result is a visually rich story that explores faith and sincerity. *Ryūjinuma* also exemplifies Ishinomori’s ability to use intertextual elements as he transformed this local myth into a social commentary on ostentatious rituals. He also used *hanakotoba*, the language of flowers, in a scene where the Dragon goddess leaves a lily to an artist. This scene invites *shōjo* readers, who were familiar with *hanakotoba*, to dissect the scene by examining the significance of the lily. Since lily symbolises purity in *hanakotoba*, the scene highlights the goddess’ desire to keep local festivities pure. Ishinomori educates his readers about the intertextual potential of texts through symbolism and metaphor in his comics.

### 3.2.2. Ishinomori’s Intertextual Works

Ishinomori pays homage to *shōjo* literature through his use of intertextual elements in his stories. In *Ryūjinuma*, Ishinomori transforms a local folktale but he also transformed Western literature and animated works familiar to his *shōjo* readers. These are exemplified in Ishinomori’s pastiches of *Sleeping Beauty*.

While *Sleeping Beauty* has its origins in works by Charles Perrault and the Brother’s Grimm, the 1959 Disney film helped place this fairy tale in popular culture. While the film was yet to be released in Japan, Ishinomori used the visual aesthetics of Disney’s *Sleeping Beauty* to create *Kuroi hitomi* (Dark eyes, 1959).\(^{364}\) *Kuroi hitomi*’s story involves a love triangle between Mina, Armando, and the queen’s daughter, Domonjo. Mina, Armando, and the queen bear visual similarities to Aurora, the Prince, and Maleficent from *Sleeping Beauty*, albeit the story itself has little similarity to Perrault’s and Grimm’s narratives other than the curse that can only be broken by true love. In this case, Domonjo curses Armando and turns him into a gem and Mina’s love breaks this curse. While this story attempts to brings Disney and fairy tales into *shōjo* manga, Ishinomori’s next pastiche of *Sleeping Beauty* challenges innocent notions of these characters.

In Ishinomori’s *Mizu no hana* (The water’s flower, 1959), Ishinomori’s sister visits his apartment at Tokiwasō and reads through some of his works for *Shōjo club* which includes a story titled *Majō Aurora* (Aurora the witch). This story features two

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lovers named Phillip and Aurora who were concerned over the vampire that plagued their village, only for Aurora to realise that she is the feared vampire and that her mother has been feeding her blood to satiate her thirst. This comic was unashamed about using characters taken from *Sleeping Beauty*, even down to their names.

While Ishinomori never explains why he uses these *Sleeping Beauty* characters, in *Mizu no hana*, he confesses that his stories have a larger purpose. Ishinomori shares with his sister that while his “thrillers” are difficult to read, he believes his readers are intelligent enough to understand the transformations in his texts. Ishinomori’s purpose is to encourage readers to use their intertextual literacy practices to find pleasure in his intertextual texts. Ishinomori’s intertextual work incorporates what Aoyama refers to as the absorption and transformation of texts. *Ryūjinuma, Mizu no hana*, and many of Ishinomori’s *shōjo* works highlight not only his ability to absorb the various visual and textual elements of narratives but also his creative ability to transform these texts into something intertextual. Ishinomori’s faith in his readers allowed him to create a complex yet versatile science fiction story for his *shōjo* and *shōnen* readers, *Cyborg 009*.

3.2.3. THE SHŌJO IN ISHINOMORI’S CYBORG 009

Ishinomori’s *Cyborg 009* is a story about a paramilitary organisation named “Black Ghost” which kidnapped a number of key scientists to turn a number of individuals into perfect soldiers. These soldiers were designed to be sold to various warring nations who would benefit from the capacities of these “upgraded” humans. The Black Ghost’s experimentation led to the creation of nine cyborgs from various countries. Once the ninth cyborg, a Japanese-American named Joe Shimamura, was completed, the cyborgs decided to revolt against Black Ghost as they refused to be instruments of war. *Cyborg 009* follows the group’s continued resistance against organisations and individuals who provoke war. The story captures the growing tensions and worries rising from the Cold War with memories of the Second World War.

The publication history of *Cyborg 009* proves to be just as interesting as its plot. From 1964 until its last issue in 1981, *Cyborg 009* was published in eight *shōnen* magazines and in *Shōjo comic*. This highlights the story’s popularity among boys and

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girls and its enduring narrative that lasted for generations. I argue that Cyborg 009’s success lies in Ishinomori’s ability to produce a manga that efficiently combines shōjo and shōnen literacies. Even though his story is an action adventure science fiction, his use of shōjo literacy practices means Cyborg 009 can also be regarded as a shōjo manga.

An example of this crossover can be seen in Cyborg 009 where Ishinomori uses the format of a shōjo’s sutairu-ga to illustrate the features of Joe Shimamura’s android body. Ishinomori also distinguishes Joe as the protagonist by giving him distinct eyes. Similar to Pinto, Joe’s eyes are not without purpose as they showcase his light-sensitive vision.

In terms of Cyborg 009’s narrative, Ishinomori continues to create intertextual stories where he incorporates various foreign myths — from Greek to Norse gods. One of the Cyborg 009 stories in Shōjo comic, Yuki no kanibaru (Snow carnival, 1976), even alludes to s-kankei as it features two “sisters” trapped in a castle in the German alps. Ishinomori was not even shy showing these “sisters” kiss and express affection for each other. The story ends in tragedy as the castle collapses on the sisters and their “father.”

Ishinomori’s versatility as an artist allowed him to move between the action-packed world of shōnen and the whimsical world of shōjo. Ishinomori used literacies from both shōjo and shōnen manga and created worlds that appealed to both audiences. Ishinomori was a prolific artist and held a Guinness World Record for the most comics published by one author in 2008. Just like his mentor Tezuka, he also mentored promising artists and made them his assistants. The most notable of them are Gō Nagai, who followed after Ishinomori in creating science fiction heroes, and Keiko

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367 The final arc, based on Ishinomori’s notes, was posthumously continued in Shōnen Sunday in 2012. This was illustrated by Masato Hayase.
372 “About Ishinomori Shōtarō,” Ishimori Pro Homepage, accessed August 4, 2015, http://ishimoripro.com/%e7%9f%b3%e3%83%8e%e6%a3%ae%e7%ab%a0%e5%a4%aa%e9%83%8e%e7%9f%b3%e3%83%8e%e6%a3%ae%e7%ab%a0%e5%a4%aa%e9%83%8e%e5%85%88%e7%94%9f%e3%81%ae%e5%b9%b4%e8%a1%a8/.
Takemiya, who continued Ishinomori’s legacy in shōjo manga by pushing the boundaries of its aesthetics and narratives.

### 3.2.4 The Shōjo Works of Tetsuya Chiba

Tetsuya Chiba is another artist who also moved between the world of shōjo and shōnen. As a child, his family moved to Korea and Manchuria during the early years of the Pacific War. When his family moved back to Japan, they lived in Chiba where he drew manga in school and established a manga club with his friends. At the age of 17, Chiba published comics in a local newspaper. In 1958, as soon as Chiba finished high school, he found himself publishing for shōjo manga magazines since shōnen manga were already saturated with artists. He had been so accustomed to drawing men with beautiful eyes that when he started drawing for shōnen manga, he naturally drew them in this manner (Figure 3.11).

Chiba deploys a linear manga narrative that uses cleanly delineated panels. It is a straightforward style more associated with shōnen manga yet Chiba manages to make it appeal to his shōjo readers by using various elements from shōjo manga — from stylish overlay panels to prominent male characters with sparkling eyes and long lashes. According to Chiba, he had been so accustomed to drawing men with beautiful eyes that when he started drawing for shōnen manga, he naturally drew them in this manner (Figure 3.11). Most of his main shōnen leads bear this distinct visual trait that has made his shōnen works appear familiar to his shōjo readers.

While Chiba does not create visual innovations like Ishinomori, his main contribution to shōjo manga is his realistic narratives. Chiba admitted that he entered the world of shōjo without knowing anything about girls. The lavish and fabulous lifestyles portrayed in shōjo manga were beyond him since he had not lived a privileged life. The closest woman he knew was his strong mother. Thus, Chiba drew inspiration from his reality and drew girls as he saw them.

An example of this can be seen in *Yuka o yobu umi* (Yuka who calls to the sea, 1959–1960) where Chiba uses a stylish overlay panel featuring his heroine in tattered clothes. Usually, this overlay features a full profile of a girl wearing the latest fashion.

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374 Ibid.

375 Ibid.

but, this is not the case for Yuka who is orphaned at a young age. Beyond her visual profile, Yuka’s personality is also distinct for a *shōjo* heroine as she is fiercely independent and courageous. Most *shōjo* heroines during this period live elegant lives or, if they were born in misfortune, they persevere through their suffering and wait for fate to make their lives better. Yuka, however, bravely faces adversity by standing up for herself. She is as dynamic and strong-willed as the young heroes in *shōnen* manga — so much so that Chiba’s editor asked him to change Yuka. Chiba did not have time to make the edit and they ran the story as is. The sight of Yuka fighting back appealed to readers such as Keiko Takemiya who felt that Yuka showed girls that they stood equal to boys.  

Chiba’s award winning *shōjo* work, *1・2・3・4・5・Roku* (1,2,3 and 4,5, Roku, 1962) was also unique as it was a *shōjo* manga that did not rely on a female lead but on an ensemble cast. Chiba’s story focuses on the life of a family of seven and their dog, Roku. Chiba uses this family to explore the difficulties and joys of familial relationships, friendships, and everyday life. Unlike Ishinomori who offered his *shōjo* readers *jouissance* through fantasies and science fiction, Chiba shows pleasure in the everyday.  

3.2.5. THE SHŌJO IN TETSUYA’S SHŌNEN WORKS

Chiba’s aptitude for depicting realism and strong characters was carried on to his *shōnen* works. After his success with *1・2・3・4・5・Roku*, Chiba wrote various stories for *Shōnen magazine*. His early work featured athletes and war heroes. He garnered relative success with *Harisu no kaze* (The wind in Harris, 1965–1967), the story of an athletic delinquent who is offered an opportunity to study in a prestigious school and participate in various sports. This series changed the direction of Chiba’s career as he began to focus on writing manga about athletes. Once *Harisu no kaze* ended, Chiba wrote *Ashita no Jō* (Tomorrow’s Joe, 1968–1973) with Asao Takamori. This story made Chiba a household name and Joe a national icon.

*Ashita no Jō* is the story of Joe Yabuki, an orphan who lives his life as a delinquent but decides to change his ways after meeting two talented boxers. While

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377 Ibid.
Chiba was not the primary writer of this story, *Ashita no Jō* did not stray from the reality Chiba often illustrated in his narratives. The first few pages of the comic set the tone of the manga where Chiba introduces Joe by showing him walk past Tokyo’s changing landscape — from its clean modern avenues to its impoverished alleys. The drama of *Ashita no Jō* lies in Joe’s struggle to survive and to rise above adversity. Like most of his works, Chiba was unashamed in depicting suffering and poverty.

Similar to most of his male protagonists, Joe had distinguishable large eyes with long lashes. This distinct *shōjo* trait coalesced with Joe’s athletic muscular build, creating a familiar yet different hero for *shōjo* readers. In some way, Joe alludes to the early *bishōnen* illustrated by Takabatake. He embodied the almost erotic heroes in prewar youth magazines who strived to achieve great victories. Joe, however, represented the new *shōnen* heroes of postwar Japan — the young athletes who found victories in their respective sports. By the time *Ashita no Jō* was published, sports manga had become a staple in *shōnen* manga.380 Chiba and Takamori strived to capture the hardships and glories of a boxer through Joe.

*Ashita no Jō* stands out from its *shōnen* sports manga contemporaries because of Chiba and Takamori’s ability to invoke readers’ affect through their harsh portrayal of boxing. In sports manga, artists attempt to capture the difficulties of athletic training in order to immerse their readers in their champion’s world. In *Ashita no Jō*, Takamori and Chiba are unafraid to show their athletes’ vulnerable moments. Chiba illustrates a version of Ishinomori’s psychological portrayed that uses dynamic perspectives that brutally depicted boxing. With teeth flying and blood spewing with every blow, it is difficult not to find admiration for the athletes in *Ashita no Jō* who continue to find strength to stand up after every bout. The series builds on readers’ affect with every bout until one of the fighters can no longer stand. This has been the case for Joe’s rival, Tōru Rikiishi.381

Chiba and Takamori have built up the rivalry between Joe and Rikiishi throughout the series. Fervent readers of the series know the sacrifices that Rikiishi and Joe have made to face each other. The match continues this emotional drama with Rikiishi dominating Joe and finally winning his hard-earned victory. Just before the two athletes make amends, Rikiishi collapses. The story takes a devastating turn when Joe finds out

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from reporters that Rikiishi died in the ring. At this point, Chiba captures Joe’s anguish with a scream that reverberates until the chapter ends.\(^3\)\(^8\)\(^2\)

The emotional impact of this scene drove more than 700 fans from all over Japan to gather to Tokyo in order to pay respects to Rikiishi.\(^3\)\(^8\)\(^3\) Kodansha, the publisher of *Shônen magazine*, hosted a funeral ceremony for the character — the first of its kind for a manga character.\(^3\)\(^8\)\(^4\) Chiba himself found the idea hilarious but once he had seen the reaction of his readers, both boys and girls, he saw first-hand manga’s power to capture its readers’ hearts.\(^3\)\(^8\)\(^5\) Rikiishi, after all, was the man who was responsible for making Joe a formidable boxer. At the same time, Rikiishi would not also have pushed himself to the point of his death had it not been for Joe.

The rivalry between Joe and Rikiishi is also worth noting. It is not the first rivalry in *shônen* manga\(^3\)\(^8\)\(^6\) but their obsession with each other is so emotionally charged that it is difficult not to notice the strong bond between these two men. Even when Yōko Shiraki, the female owner of Rikiishi’s boxing gym, catches Joe’s attention, his focus always goes back to Rikiishi. The series’ ending also shows a poetic connection between the two men as Joe, like Rikiishi, also dies in the ring. Taking into consideration Sedgwick’s argument, readers may potentially see this rivalry between Joe and Rikiishi contain homosexual overtones.\(^3\)\(^8\)\(^7\) While fans did not yet have the literacies to view this relationship other than in the terms of its intense rivalry, these emotional “special relationships” would eventually be subject to readers’ scrutiny.

Chiba’s most notable contributions to manga include finding a balance between representing fiction and reality, pushing the physical and emotional limits of characters, building strong emotional bonds between characters, and using all these elements to stimulate his readers’ affect. Much like Ishinomori, Chiba’s experience in *shôjo* manga

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7. It is interesting to note that another famous rivalry during this period was from Takamori’s other work, *Kyōjin no hoshi*. In this series, he featured the rivalry between the protagonist Hyûma Hoshi and the rich boy in their neighbourhood who happened is also passionate about baseball, Hanagata Mitsuru.
8. Sedgwick, *Between Men*. It might be thought that this homosocial relationship would prompt *yaoi* interpretations. While I was not able to find an *Ashita no Jō dōjinshi* written during its run, I did manage to find one written by Hinako Takanaga (author of boys love manga *The Tyrant Falls in Love*) in 1997. See Hinako Takanaga, *Meltdown* (Tokyo: Self-published, 1997).
allowed him to develop emotional stories that drew readers’ emotions so that they could empathise with his persevering characters.

Chiba and Ishinomori were two manga artists whose works were timely in establishing bridges between *shōjo* and *shōnen* manga. I say timely because they were writing at that point where *shōjo* and *shōnen* manga were redefining their boundaries. These two men were pivotal in breaking the rigid walls of *shōjo* and *shōnen* media by using aesthetic and narrative techniques they learned from both genres. Chiba and Ishinomori’s contributions to manga are highly regarded because they have been pivotal in leading a revolution in manga during the 1970s. Beyond his contribution to *shōjo* manga, Ishinomori is renowned for embedding science fiction super teams in *shōnen* media with *Cyborg 009*. As for Chiba, he gave more than just “youth” to *shōnen* sports manga by showing readers an athlete’s heart. More than these, both men gave all their readers literacies to derive meaning and read emotions from manga. Their works showed the potential of a world that moves between *shōjo* and *shōnen*, a media reality that does not separate girls from boys.

3.3. THE PROTO-BISHŌNEN IN MANGA

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the iconography of Japanese *manga* after the war — its round cartoonish bodies and expressions — divorced youth media from the young handsome men drawn by Kashō Takabatake. The postwar *shōnen* hero in manga has more ties with the cartoonish Shōchan than Takabatake’s *bishōnen*. The muscled athletic bodies of boxers like Joe are but silhouettes of Takabatake’s subtly erotic boys.388 Political cartoons aside, comics before the Pacific War used iconic illustrations rather than realistic images.389 As such, early postwar artists such as Tezuka used this iconic visual literacy in constructing their characters. Given the simplicity of iconic illustrations, there is a danger that valuable characters become forgettable because they lack distinguishing characteristics. Tezuka’s, and even Ishinomori’s, “star systems”390 are examples of how characters with simple visual features can be general enough to be repeatedly used much like character actors who easily slip into their new roles. Because of their iconic features, early *shōnen* heroes looked the same. There was a need to distinguish the hero’s face from the rest.

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Tezuka is credited for innovating expressive faces in manga by drawing dynamic eyes.\(^{391}\) At the start of his career, due to the limits of publishing, Tezuka could only draw simple eyes that managed to convey simple emotions. As technologies in publishing developed, Tezuka’s eyes became more detailed and expressive. Like shōjo illustrations, Tezuka gave some of his protagonists large solid round eyes. This allowed Tezuka to draw the movements of their eyelids and eyebrows, giving his characters an opportunity to express more emotions. Given that these features were common for most of his characters, Tezuka needed to develop distinct facial features for his shōnen heroes.

Most of Tezuka’s shōnen protagonists prior to Ishinomori’s presence in his team have large eyes and long lashes. Young male characters who are not necessarily the protagonist but come from a privileged position in society also have these large expressive eyes. By the mid-1950s, characters such as Astroboy would bear the distinct sparkling eyes introduced by Ishinomori through Pinto.

In the case of Princess Knight, Tezuka’s notable shōjo manga, his male protagonists, Franz Charming and Pirate Blood, also sport long lashes and have an occasional sparkle in their eyes. His heroine, Princess Sapphire, who occasionally dressed up as a boy, did not lose her distinct shōjo eyes. Nakamura argues that if Tezuka ever designed a bishōnen, Sapphire would be his first.\(^{392}\) In Princess Knight, Tezuka deliberately gives these visual traits to princes and love interests. In his shōnen stories, this would vary from character to character but at the very least, his young male protagonists have distinct large eyes. Nakajima adds that Tezuka’s other cross-dressing heroine, Ken from Kyaputen Ken (Captain Ken, 1960), also has bishōnen potential.\(^{393}\)

Ishinomori and Chiba would follow this distinction but Ishinomori’s use of “starry” eyes would have greater impact on these handsome boys in shōjo manga. In fact, both men did not use the style specifically for love interests alone but for any charming individual or for emotional moments in their story. For example, in Mizuiro no ribon, Ishinomori uses this feature to highlight the face of the first boy Rumiko sees after being rescued from a snow storm. Their starry eyes make it appear their gazes connect but as seen in Rumiko’s face, she is not particularly thrilled by the sight of this boy.\(^{394}\)

\(^{391}\) Ibid., 95.
\(^{392}\) Nakamura, Journal of beautiful boys from the Shōwa period, 100.
\(^{393}\) Nakajima, A primer on the beautiful boy, 69.
\(^{394}\) Ishinomori, Mizuiro no ribon, 59.
In Chiba’s case, he uses starry eyes when important characters express surprise, delight, or awe in his early *shōjo* and *shōnen* stories.\(^{395}\) He also distinguishes handsome men by giving them glistening eyes — large round eyes with a defined iris and some dots as highlights.

Nakamura argues that during this period, there were also other traits that distinguished handsome characters — round faces, sharp or cute noses, and distinctly clean profiles.\(^{396}\) She also notes that these features were given to characters she perceived as *bishōnen* — princes, love interests, and male characters who were considered handsome by their readers’ standards.\(^{397}\) Her argument implies that *shōjo* readers have developed an aesthetic for male beauty. However, upon reading through various *shōjo* manga before the works of the Magnificent Year 24 Group, Nakamura’s rules for *bishōnen* aesthetics were not consistent among authors. As seen in Chiba and Ishinomori’s works, even characters who do not fall under her categories of *bishōnen* can also share this trait. The inconsistencies in the representation of masculine beauty in comics during this period makes me consider these distinct male characters in manga as *proto-bishōnen*.

Rather than considering these characters to be the successors of Takabatake’s *bishōnen*, these *proto-bishōnen* are distinct men whose masculine beauty is yet to be defined in comics. The cartoonish iconography used in early manga made it challenging for these artists to represent a public notion of masculinity that highlights their “natural” biological dominance.\(^{398}\) These *proto-bishōnen* were aesthetic experiments by manga artists who were seeking to represent an outstanding masculinity within their medium. These men were trying to define the characteristics of the *shōnen* hero.

The *proto-bishōnen*’s large expressive eyes — whether they sparkle or glisten — distinguish them from other male characters and show readers that they are special men. The process of defining a “distinct” male character led these artists to use a defining visual trait shared with their heroines. This implies an underlying femininity in their image, alluding to the androgynous beauty of Takabatake’s boys. It reinforces the notion of men embodying feminine traits as an exception.\(^{399}\) In some way, these eyes highlight the androgynous potential of manga’s early male protagonists. This representation of the

\(^{395}\) Chiba, *Yuka who calls to the sea*, 1:167.


\(^{397}\) Ibid., 100.

proto-bishōnen is crucial because it sets the ground for a visual literacy that will become standard after their experimentation. It educated readers to distinguish distinct male characters in manga. These boys and men are not the bishōnen or biseinen who will later make their mark in manga but they certainly share similar eyes. In many ways, these handsome heroes will leave an impression on how masculinities will be drawn and transformed during the late 1960s and 1970s, when shōjo enters its golden age.

3.4. SHŌJO MANGA’S REVOLUTION

In an interview published in Hisoyaka na kyōiku (A secret education, 2008), Norie Masayama, writer and contributor to the boys love magazine JUNE (1978–1996), shared that as she was growing up, she wanted shōjo manga to be at the same level as shōnen manga. She discovered this desire when she realised that she had enjoyed shōnen manga so much that she wanted to write for shōnen magazines. However, female writers and artists were not accommodated by shōnen magazines. This conundrum inspired Masayama to rally her artist friends, from Keiko Takemiya to Moto Hagio, to educate themselves in various techniques so that they could create shōjo manga that equals shōnen manga.400

The shōjo magazines of Norie Masayama’s youth were growing at a slower pace compared with their shōnen contemporaries. Shōjo magazines were not as manga-oriented as they mixed fashion, entertainment news, features, and short stories with a handful of comics.401 During the 1950s, most shōjo magazines had this format. By the early 1960s, the popularity of weekly manga magazines inspired publishers to create weekly shōjo magazines such as Shōjo furen̄do (Girls’ friend, 1962–1996) and Māgaretto (Margaret, 1963–present) respectively. These magazines would begin to accommodate more comic content in hopes of competing not just with new media technologies (such as television and film), but also with their shōnen contemporaries. Access to foreign films also made foreign fashion and culture appealing to girls. As such, unlike the first issues of weekly shōnen manga magazines which featured local athletes alongside hopeful boys, the first covers of weekly magazines Margaret and Shōjo friend featured young blonde girls.

400 Ishida, A secret education, 295.
401 Yonezawa, History of postwar shōjo manga, 146–151.
These magazines showed keen interest in global trends, not just in fashion but also in foreign culture. Profiles on Britain’s new queen, Hollywood movies and its young actresses, ballet dancers and choral groups lined the pages of these magazines. At times, the magazines even organised trips abroad for their readers.\footnote{Masako Watanabe, “Profile and Interview with Masako Watanabe,” in International Perspectives on Shojo and Shojo Manga: The Influence of Girl Culture, ed. Masami Toku (London: Routledge, 2015), 149.} This keen interest in foreign culture also extended to some comics. For example, Hideko Mizuno published a story in Margaret titled Suteki na Cora (The lovely Cora, 1968) which was inspired by the movie Sabrina (1954) which stars Audrey Hepburn. Yoko Kitajima’s Nairu no ōkan (The crown of the Nile, 1963–1964) was inspired by Elizabeth Taylor’s character in Cleopatra (1963). This film and this manga set a trend in shōjo comics featuring Egyptian history,\footnote{Takemiya, The world of girls’ gomix: genga (dash)’s ten-year trajectory, 39.} which in turn inspired Keiko Takemiya’s Egyptian drama, Farao no haka (Pharaoh’s Tomb, 1974). Comic artists used foreign characters and settings that broadened girls’ imagination.\footnote{An example of this is Kuroi hitomi by Shōtarō Ishinomori.} In more ways than one, these shōjo comics were intertextual works where local authors took liberties and transformed various foreign narratives.

Foreign stories were not the only focus of shōjo manga, as seen through the works of artist like Chiba. Yonezawa notes that girls’ comic diaries and manga featuring the daily lives of girls were also popular.\footnote{An example of this is Kuroi hitomi by Shōtarō Ishinomori.} Early shōjo works rarely dealt with romance and often focused on the personal development and friendly bonds of their heroines. Romantic stories did not catch on until much later when artists began writing manga based on popular romantic movies. Hideko Mizuno experimented with romantic comedies with stories such as Hani Hani no suteki na bōken (The wonderful adventures of Honey Honey, 1968) and Konnichiwa, sensei (Hello, doc, 1968) which feature fashionable heroines who eventually find love.

Another interesting narrative development in shōjo manga was the introduction of magical girls. The earliest magical girl character in shōjo manga is Fujio Akatsuka’s Himitsu no Akko-chan (The secret of Akko-chan, 1962–1965), the story of a girl who was given a magical mirror which she could use to cast spells that allow her to transform into whatever she wants. Another popular magical girl was Mahōtsukai Sarī (Sally the witch, 1966–1967) by Mitsuteru Yokoyama (1934–2004). Mahōtsukai Sally is an intertextual take on the American sitcom Bewitched (1964–1972). Similar to
Samantha of *Bewitched*, Sally’s story follows her comedic struggles in balancing her mortal and magical lives. *Mahō Tsukai Sally*’s magical comedy proved to be so popular among readers that within months of its serialisation, the series was animated as a television show (1966–1968). It was the first *shōjo* manga that had its own anime.

Compared to the action-packed, diverse, and complex narratives seen in *shōnen* manga, most *shōjo* manga narratives during the 1960s were composed of either heart-wrenching tragedies or light-hearted romantic comedies. There were few, like Ishinomori, who used the medium to experiment with content. However, these experiments were often short. If an artist was unlucky, editors would lose or repurpose these manuscripts which made it difficult for one-shot stories to be republished in a compilation. At best, *shōjo* titles ran to five volumes per series. At that time, *shōjo* magazines did not give authors enough room to develop long narratives similar to those being written in *shōnen* manga magazines. As such, *shōjo* stories had a high turnover and a shorter shelf life. This pushed Chiba and Ishinomori to redirect energies towards *shōnen* manga where they could develop longer narratives by the end of the 1960s.

Their departure did not mean that their innovations in the genre disappeared. Ishinomori’s starry eyes were improved on by artists such as Masako Watanabe and Macoto Takahashi who transformed these starry-eyes to glass-like windows to the girls’ soul. His psychological panels were adapted by many artists while Chiba’s strong-willed heroines and emotional narratives have become mainstays in *shōjo* manga. Their absence, however, was felt by readers such as Masayama who noticed the lack of creativity in *shōjo* manga and the engaging works in *shōnen* manga. The loss of Chiba and Ishinomori in *shōjo* manga inspired a new generation of writers who would continue their legacy by using the visual and narrative literacy practices they have learned from these two men.

The early years of *shōjo* manga educated their readers on various visual and narrative literacy practices surrounding comics. Readers of Ishinomori and Chiba’s works would learn the benefits of combining literacy practices derived from *shōjo* and *shōnen* manga. By the 1970s, these young women, many of whom were still in high school, used manga to tackle political and social issues while experimenting with narratives, visual techniques, and expressions of gender and sexuality. They were, in

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many ways, the exemplary students of *shōjo* manga and the result of *shōjo* media’s ceaseless engagement with their readers. Much like Nobuko Yoshiya, these young women used *shōjo* magazines to express their *jouissance*. In the process, they revolutionised *shōjo* manga.

These young creators began to produce diverse works in many *shōjo* manga magazines. Yukari Ichijō (1949–) made Shūeisha’s *Ribbon* her home and wrote delightful romantic comedies, such as *Desainā* (*Designer*, 1974), and historical drama like *Suna no shiro* (*Sand castle*, 1977–1981). Hakusensha’s monthly *shōjo* manga magazine, *Hana to yume* (*Flowers and dreams*, 1974–present), was home to Suzue Miuchi’s (1951–) ongoing melodrama about aspiring actresses called *Garasu no kamen* (*Glass Mask*, 1979–present). Shūeisha’s *Margaret* was also home to sports stories such as Chikako Urano’s (1946–) volleyball drama *Atakku no 1* (*Attack no. 1*, 1968–1970), and Sumika Yamamoto’s tennis saga, *Ēsu o nerae* (*Aim for the ace*, 1973–1980). These sports narratives rivalled the intensity of their *shōnen* contemporaries and were often inspired by women’s success in athletics.⁴⁰⁷

Also from this generation of young women, a group of girls, known for the close proximity of their births to the twenty-fourth year of the Shōwa Period (1949), were also highly regarded by critics and scholars for their innovations in *shōjo* manga. This group of women came to be known as The Magnificent Year 24 group which comprised of Riyoko Ikeda (1947–), Yasuko Aoike (1948–), Keiko Takemiya (1950–), Moto Hagio (1949–), Ryoko Yamagishi (1947–), Toshie Kihara (1948–), and Yumiko Ōshima (1947–). One of the unique contributions of this group includes the *neko musume* (cat girl) character as seen through Yumiko Ōshima’s heroine, Chibi-neko, in *Wata no kuni hoshi* (*The star of cottonland*, 1978–1987). While there have been representations of female monsters in *shōjo* manga, Chibi-neko is the earliest example of a *kemonomimi* kyara, a character who has animal ears, which would eventually become a popular *moe* kyara element.⁴⁰⁸ This group is also highly regarded for their visual refinement of techniques developed by Shōtarō Ishinomori and Tetsuya Chiba.

Many works produced during this period were inspired by Ishinomori’s abstract spatial layering. Mizuno, who was part of Tezuka Osamu’s artist atelier Tokiwasō, remembered how Ishinomori developed these techniques in order to pack more story

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⁴⁰⁷ *Attack no. 1* took inspiration from Japan’s women’s volleyball team who won gold during the 1964 Olympics.

⁴⁰⁸ For more on *moe* kyara, see Chapter 1.5 and 5.2.
into their limited number of pages. Mizuno found these techniques useful and applied them in many of her works. Keiko Takemiya herself was a big fan of Ishinomori and learned how to make her own manga by reading Ishinomori’s *Mangaka nyūmon* (A manga artist’s manual, 1963). By using Ishinomori’s abstract spatial layering as their base, these female artists played with panel overlays in order to create a three-dimensional illusion that made specific elements in their comic “jump” out of their panels. This play on panel space also led to collage-like pages where characters, emotive backgrounds, and texts seamlessly combine to create an ephemeral image of a character’s emotions. At the same time, these women excessively illustrated their *shōjo* pages with lavish motifs (most of which were floral) to build the emotional atmosphere of their panels. Even the eyes of *shōjo* characters became larger as they tried to show more emotions. For example, a happy girl’s eyes would be excessively detailed as though they sparkled while the eyes of an angry *shōjo* heroine would be stark white with anger.

These rich visual developments in *shōjo* manga enhanced their readers’ emotional manga literacies. Readers who were unfamiliar with these *shōjo* manga literacies were confused by these elaborate visual techniques. Avid readers of *shōjo* have learned from Ishinomori that this was part of a visual grammar that captured women’s emotions and desires. *Shōjo* manga’s emotional visual literacy gave these young women the tools to explore complex psyches and deeply intertextual narratives.

Riyoko Ikeda published the title that became the icon of this manga revolution — *Berusaiyu no bara* (The Rose of Versailles, 1972–1973). Set just a few years before the French Revolution, this story features Oscar de Jarjeyes, the daughter of a French general who raised Oscar as a boy so that she could inherit her father’s prestigious position in French society. As part of Louis XVI’s court, Oscar witnessed nobles bask in luxury at Versailles while commoners became impoverished outside the gates. The story

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409 Mizuno, “Profile and Interview with Hideko Mizuno,” 166.
411 Takemiya, *The boy’s name is Gilbert*, 22.
follows her struggles as a woman, noble, and citizen of France that was on the cusp of a revolution.

Riyoko Ikeda’s depiction of a brewing French Revolution was richly complex for a shōjo comic. The lavish French court and the blossoming romance between Marie Antoinette, Oscar, and Axel von Fersen were familiar themes seen in shōjo manga, but her depiction of Oscar’s gender troubles and the politics of the French revolution were brand new. *The Rose of Versailles* was a political and social commentary not just on Louis XVI’s France but also on Japan as Riyoko Ikeda took inspiration from the women’s liberation movement for this story. In many ways, the works of these young women reflected their growing recognition of gender incongruence in Japanese society. Some may have viewed their lavish illustrations as frivolous but these young artists understood that these were necessary practices to draw empathy from their readers. As such, *The Rose of Versailles*, along with many other works during this golden period of shōjo manga, struck the hearts of both girls and boys alike. For readers such as Yukari Fujimoto, *The Rose of Versailles* also changed their perception of sex and romance as they saw, through Oscar, that it was possible to love someone as their equal.

*Shōjo* manga’s revolution in the 1970s was a testament to girls’ rich visual and textual culture that was long overlooked by Japanese society. It was the culmination of various literacies learned and developed within the pages of shōjo magazines by various artists who sought to express girls’ hopes and dreams. This manga revolution reflected women’s desire to own a culture that was equal to that of men. For Ikeda, Oscar was symbolic of that desire. For other writers, this entailed stepping inside the man’s world while using the bodies of young men to explore, play, live, and understand their potential.

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3.5. SHÔJO MANGA’S BISHÔNEN AND SHÔNEN’AI

Oscar de Jarjayes was one of the earliest heroines that blurred the lines between the heroine and her hero. Her gender ambiguity reflects visual literacy practices derived from Ishinomori’s technique of giving specific male characters the same large expressive eyes as women and Chiba’s construction of a strong female lead. As such, it was difficult to distinguish Oscar from her love interest, Andre. Nonetheless, Oscar symbolised the new shōjo heroine. It was at this point that other shōjo manga artists reflected on the heroes of shōjo manga — the bishōnen and biseinen.

While male heroes were common in youth media, Keiko Takemiya noted that it was difficult to convince publishers that it was time for shōjo manga to have its own heroes. While Ishinomori wrote a male protagonist for his shōjo short story Ryūjinuma, it would take time for other male protagonists to grace shōjo stories.

The first male protagonist in a serialised shōjo manga was Aaron Browning from Hideko Mizuno’s Faiyā! (Fire!, 1969–1971). The manga follows Aaron from his humble beginnings in Detroit to his rise and fall as a rock and roll musician in the 1960s. Aaron embodied the rock star idols that were popular among girls at that time and has been noted by scholars as the earliest bishōnen in shōjo manga. Mizuno introduces Aaron as an enthusiastic boy with wide sparkling eyes whose purpose in life is to support his mother. Aaron has a leaner body compared to Fire Wolf, the leader of the town’s gang and the man responsible for turning his life around. John, one of Aaron’s bandmates, also has these distinct sparkling eyes and long wispy hair reminiscent of rockstar hairstyles during the 1970s. Through these characters, Mizuno was trying to capture popular fashion among rockstars during that period which highlighted their androgynous boyish charms. Fire! is Mizuno’s attempt at depicting America’s rock culture as she sets Aaron towards his musical journey which begins with his friendship with Fire Wolf. This eventually places Aaron at the heart of America’s counterculture movement.

Fire! preceded Rose of Versailles in depicting political and social tensions in shōjo manga by showcasing the human drama surrounding the counterculture movement.

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America. Mizuno also drew one of the earliest sex scenes in a shōjo manga by indicating it through the embraces and kisses of a naked Aaron and his female partner. She also illustrates intimacy between men. On a page that highlights the developing bond between Fire Wolf and Aaron, Mizuno draws Aaron sitting in Fire Wolf’s arms as he listens to his music. Throughout the text, Mizuno shows the strong connection between the two men — a connection stronger than Aaron’s romantic affairs with women and one that would lead him to madness. The end of Fire! reflects Aaron’s homosocial desire as his obsession with Fire Wolf leads him home, hallucinating a peaceful life with his mother and Fire Wolf. Their relationship also reflects the disruption of male homosociality by homosexuality that Sedgwick points out in her book Between Men (1985). Aaron’s downfall is a melodramatic metaphor for homosexual panic where Mizuno shows her readers that intense connections between two men are unstable and can only lead to tragedy. At the same time, while Aaron is a young man, he is still a shōjo hero whose strong sentiments are not rewarded. Despite the promise of liberties given by the protagonist’s gender, Mizuno also shows that even a male body still has his limits. Aaron inspired others to experiment further with the bishōnen figure.

In 1970, Keiko Takemiya’s desire to write a story about a male protagonist was realised through her short story in Bessatsu shōjo komikku (Special shōjo comic, 1970–) titled Sanrūmu ni te (In the sunroom). Sanrūmu ni te features two male protagonists, Serge and Etoile, who were young and beautiful, with large sparkly eyes and androgynous physiques. In the sunroom of Etoile’s home, the two boys forge a friendship which eventually develops into romance. Despite being torn apart by Etoile’s mother, the two boys manage to reunite in the sunroom to share one last gesture of affection — a kiss — before Etoile forces Serge to stab him. Unlike Mizuno, Takemiya openly shows the transformation of these boys’ homosocial relationship into a homosexual one. Sanrūmu ni te was the first story that featured two boys in a romantic relationship, initiating what would become a subcategory in shōjo manga called

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424 Germaine Greer, Germaine Greer: The Beautiful Boy (New York: Rizzoli, 2003), 227.
426 Sedgwick, Between Men.
427 Reeser, Masculinities in Theory, 59.
shōnen’ai (boys love), a name which takes inspiration from Inagaki Taruho’s Shōnen’ai no bigaku (The aesthetics of loving boys, 1960).429

Takemiya’s depiction of these two boys in a homosexual relationship was mostly influenced by Norie Masayama. Masayama was Takemiya’s neighbour in her apartment complex and was pivotal in shaping Takemiya and Hagio’s shōnen’ai works. She shared her wide knowledge of literature and encouraged Takemiya and her roommate, Moto Hagio, to integrate various elements from these texts into their works. This was the beginning of their secret education that used their intertextual manga literacies in transforming the bildungsroman stories of Herman Hesse — Takemiya and Hagio’s literary inspiration.430 They were also inspired by European films,431 such as the French film Les amitiés particulières (These special friendships, 1964) which was Hagio’s inspiration for Jūichigatsu no gimunajiumu (November gymnasium, 1971).432 Their passionate interest in these homosocial environments led to the creation of pivotal shōnen’ai works — Hagio’s Tōma no shinzō (Heart of Thomas, 1974–75) and Takemiya’s Kaze to ki no uta (The song of wind and trees, 1976–1984).

The bishōnen aesthetic developed by Keiko Takemiya and Moto Hagio during this period subtly defined different kinds of bishōnen. At their base, their bishōnen shared distinct sparkly eyes which were necessary to convey the intense emotions of their characters. These artists, however, delineated subtle graphic differences that distinguished these characters’ erotic/affective appeal. These characteristic traits also highlighted the power dynamics of their homosocial and homosexual relationships.

I demonstrate the existence of these bishōnen categories by looking first at Thomas and Erich from Hagio’s Heart of Thomas. Erich bears a physical likeness to Thomas, a student who recently committed suicide after professing his love to their school prefect, Juli. Both boys have bright eyes, light-coloured curly hair and smaller physiques compared to other characters. Because of these features, Thomas was notoriously known as the school’s “fräulein” or young lady. Erich refuses to inherit this role and eventually earns the nickname “la bébé” — the baby. This child-like characteristic is reinforced in scenes involving Erich’s family where he is seen as very

429 Ishida, A secret education, 72; Takemiya, The boy’s name is Gilbert, 40–42.
430 Ishida, A secret education, 52–57.
431 Welker, “History of Shōnen Ai, Yaoi, and Boys Love,” 50.
affectionate to his mother and quite vulnerable. Both boys are portrayed as affectionate and emotionally fragile which adds to their “effeminate” characteristics.

The other set of bishōnen in Heart of Thomas are Juli and Oskar who are senior to both Thomas and Erich. These two boys stand taller than Erich, with Oskar as the tallest of the two. Juli has straight dark hair while Oskar has a short light-coloured hair. These two boys act in a more mature manner and are more reserved than either Thomas or Erich. What sets Oskar and Juli’s personalities apart are Oskar’s level-headedness and Juli’s pessimism. In the story, Juli is the centre of Oskar’s concern and affection.433

In Kaze to ki no uta, Takemiya illustrates the same set of distinct bishōnen characteristics. The sexually expressive Gilbert Cocteau looks small and frail within the arms of his lovers. Like Thomas and Erich, Gilbert also has light-coloured curls where, at times, his fringe hides his eyes, adding to his mysterious erotic charm. In his sexual exploits, Gilbert is shown to take the “feminine” role in bed when he receives his partners such as his roommate Serge. Serge is of the same age as Gilbert but in Takemiya’s depictions, Serge is taller than Gilbert.434 Serge is a straight-laced dark-haired boy who eventually falls for the mysterious Gilbert. Takemiya also depicts a biseinen through the series’ antagonist, Gilbert’s uncle, Auguste, who bears sharp facial features and has thin, yet expressive, eyes.

From these two stories, two kinds of bishōnen emerge. First is the “feminine” bishōnen as seen in Thomas, Erich, and Gilbert. They are distinguished by their shorter and more slender builds compared with their partners and they are more emotionally and sexually expressive. The second is the more “masculine” bishōnen, often easily identifiable by his greater height or his darker hair. This visual aesthetic was, to a degree, pioneered by Mizuno with Fire Wolf and Aaron. These conventions of bishōnen types will also emerge in other works with shōnen’ai themes such as Eroica and Major Klaus in Yasuko Aoike’s Eroika yori ai o komete (From Eroica with Love, 1976–present) and Mariach and Bancoran in Mineo Maya’s Patariro! (Patalliro!, 1978–present).

The visual and narrative traits these artists established educated readers’ in the literacies necessary for distinguishing bishōnen characters and their potential for homosocial or potentially homosexual relations. I argue that through these shōnen’ai works, readers learned to recognise the gender-fluid potential of these highly

433 For an example, see Moto Hagio, Tōma no shinzō [Heart of Thomas], Bunko ed. (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1995), 451.
434 For an example, see Keiko Takemiya, Kaze to ki no uta [The song of wind and trees], vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1977), 1.
androgynous boys.\textsuperscript{435} I consider this practice as part of \textit{bishōnen} literacies, a set of critical visual and narrative literacy practices used by artists and readers that distinguishes male characters as non-normative and gender-fluid. The development of \textit{bishōnen} literacies in \textit{shônen ’ai} would lay the foundation for many of the \textit{fujoshi} literacies outlined in later chapters.

Beyond these \textit{bishōnen} aesthetics, \textit{shônen ’ai} narratives also contributed to \textit{shôjo} artists’ pursuit of romantic love. Writers of \textit{shônen ’ai} attempted to illustrate romance by depicting strong spiritual and emotional connections between their two \textit{bishōnen} protagonists through montages, sentimental internal monologues, and small gestures of intimacy. Takemiya takes this further in \textit{Kaze to ki no uta} where she uses Gilbert’s sexual exploits to depict polarising sexual experiences — from the deeply emotional scenes with Serge to the darker violent relationship with his uncle, Auguste.\textsuperscript{436} Takemiya feels that it is important to depict sexual violence as it widens readers’ understanding of sex.\textsuperscript{437} \textit{Shônen ’ai} became a space to explore various gender and sexual issues which concerned women. The \textit{bishōnen} serve as conduits for women’s curiosities and desires. For McLelland, the \textit{bishōnen} provides a liberating fantasy body for women who feel encumbered by the negative constraints placed on female sexuality in a patriarcal society.\textsuperscript{439}

Not all \textit{shônen ’ai} stories, however, are written with the same intense romantic sentimentality that Hagio and Takemiya have pioneered. For instance, Yasuko Aoike’s \textit{From Eroica with Love} is an adventure love comedy between a world-class thief named Eroica and an uptight officer named Major Klaus Heinz von dem Eberbach. Eroica plays on various tenuous intertextual connections — from his real name that bears similarities with Dorian Gray to his long curly hair is reminiscent of rockstars like Robert Plant. Eroica embodies \textit{biseinen} features as a \textit{shôjo} hero of mature age — tall height, muscular build, thinner eyes, and sharp facial features. While Eroika can be emotional, Aoike portrays him as a cool collected character.

Another comedy series that has \textit{shônen ’ai} themes is \textit{Patariro!}, a gag manga featuring the misadventures of the young king of Malynera. While its protagonist, Patalliro, is not involved in any romantic affairs, his handsome \textit{bishōnen koroshi

\textsuperscript{435} Welker, “Beautiful, Borrowed, and Bent.”
\textsuperscript{436} For an example, see Keiko Takemiya, \textit{Kaze to ki no uta} [The song of wind and trees], vol. 7 (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1978), 73.
\textsuperscript{437} “Kono manga ga sugoi” Editors, “Keiko Takemiya Interview,” 25.
MI6 bodyguard, Jack Bancoran, is in a relationship with a former male assassin named Maraich. Maya confesses that the presence of this relationship was greatly inspired by Hagio and Takemiya’s works. Maya also adds that he chose to draw *bishōnen* because while he loved *shōjo* aesthetics, he felt he could not properly draw girls. Beyond Maya’s use of *shōnen* ‘ai, the manga also has various intertextual elements as it parodies various myths and legends, popular manga and anime, and other narrative and visual tropes in *shōjo* manga such as bildungsroman romances and lyrical panels.

*Patariro!* also explores the gender fluidity of *bishōnen* through Mariach’s pregnancy. While it is impossible for men like Mariach to actually bear children, Maya uses that fantastic plot to explore non-normative notions of romance and family. The end of the story leaves a poignant note as Patalliro’s assistant explains how two men in love even dream of having families. This story presents the paradox of the *bishōnen* — a figure intrinsically “masculine” yet transcends it in women’s fantasies. As Otomo argues, characters in boys love narratives are well within the realm of women’s fantasies. *Bishōnen* are female writers’ idealised masculine images and are subject to their imaginative minds. They also, however, serve as symbols of fluid masculinities and women’s desire for gender equality. These *bishōnen* embody women’s *jouissance* and would find new life in *shōnen* manga when *shōjo* artists such as Takemiya and Hagio drew them in their *shōnen* works.

### 3.6. *SHŌJO IN SHŌNEN*: TAKEMIYA KEIKO AND MOTO HAGIO

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442 Maya, *Spiritual manga artist*, 51.


448 As seen through the motivations of Takemiya, Mizuno, and Hagio. See
The success of *shōjo* manga’s revolution drew the attention of male readers who were fascinated by their innovations. While their visual, textual, and emotional grammar was initially confusing for readers such as Yonezawa,449 their captivating narratives managed to stir the hearts of readers. In 1975, despite being published in *Shōjo comic* (1968–) Hagio’s *Pō no ichizoku* (The Poe family, 1972–1976) and *Jūichinin iru!* (*They Were Eleven*, 1975) won the Shōgakukan Manga Award for the *shōnen* category.450 Hagio’s acclaim brought the *bishōnen*, who had now evolved beyond Ishinomori and Chiba’s initial designs, to the attention of male readers.

*They Were Eleven* is a mystery science fiction story involving a group of ten space university examinees who are sent to a decommissioned spaceship for a test where they all must survive for fifty-three days. When the group settles on the ship, they realise that they are one person extra. The students have to figure out how to survive the trip with their limited provisions while seeking for the extra person in their crew. The first arc of the series explores human relationships as the characters figure out who to trust while the second arc of the series touches on political intrigue.

Unlike the sentimental stories seen in *shōjo* manga, Hagio’s *They Were Eleven* is a straightforward science fiction tale of survival which was common in *shōnen* manga at that time.451 Hagio continued to use three-dimensional paneling techniques from *shōjo* manga but she sparingly used floral motifs, emotive panels, and sentimental monologues. The characters fit in the homosocial worlds of *shōnen* manga apart from one character, Frol, who was neither male nor female. In some ways, *They Were Eleven* was a watered down version of *shōnen ’ai*. It was also a realisation of Moto’s own interests — science fiction and psychologically complex narratives.

Moto Hagio is a fan of science fiction and widely read the science fiction works of Isaac Asimov (1919–1992), Tezuka, and Ishinomori.452 *They Were Eleven* pays homage to science fiction and the psychologically complex situations she enjoyed from

450 “Shogakukan Manga Award,” *Wikipedia*, October 27, 2016, https://ja.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=%E5%B0%8F%E5%AD%A6%E9%A4%A8%E6%BC%AB%E7%94%BB%E8%B3%9E&oldid=61697494.
Tezuka’s later works. While the story pulls a lot of inspiration from shōnen manga, Hagio also includes shōjo elements in the story.

An underlying narrative in They Were Eleven is the developing relationship between the protagonist, Tada, and Frol. Similar to the “effeminate” bishōnen type, Frol is initially thought to be a woman by his fellow examinees. He has curly light-coloured hair and is visibly smaller and more slender compared to the other examinees. Frol reveals later in the story that his race was born without sex but they may choose their gender when they come of age. While Frol was initially vehemently against being identified as a woman, Frol eventually desires to become one after professing love for Tada. At times, during fits of jealousy, Frol threatens Tada that he will never become a woman. Tada pays no mind to Frol’s jealousy and often reassures him with a kiss. Frol was a simpler version of the complex bishōnen in shōnen ’ai. Frol’s desire to transform into a woman also promises a heteronormative end for his relationship with Tada. This reflects a tendency noted by Fujimoto, that boys love narratives can represent and reinforce heteronormative relationships.

This heteronormative end is also seen in Keiko Takemiya’s notable contribution to shōnen manga, Tera e (To Terra, 1977–1980). Similar to Hagio’s work, To Terra is a science fiction narrative about a race of psychic humans called Mu who are in search of each other so that they can all return to their homeland. Unlike Hagio’s They Were Eleven, the narrative of To Terra is longer, allowing Takemiya to weave a deeply complex and philosophical plot that reflects on humanity’s agency at a time when they were tightly controlled. This plot left no room for Takemiya to explore a romantic relationship for her lead bishōnen, Jomy. Subsidiary characters, on the other hand, developed heteronormative relationships. Her story ends with her Mu characters destroying the supercomputer that controlled them at the cost of their lives. In the epilogue, two Mu children, a boy and a girl, manages to find each other and swears not to leave each other’s side.

While Takemiya’s bishōnen protagonists in To Terra strayed from romance, their ability to communicate with each other using telepathy is illustrated in the same way as internal monologues are depicted in shōjo manga. Some of the conversations exchanged between characters, particularly between Jomy and Soldier Blue are fairly

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453 Ibid.
sentimental. In a way, this imparted some *shōjo* sentimentality in a *shōnen* text. *To Terra* also features a rivalry between Jomy and Keith, mimicking popular rivalries in *shōnen* texts.

Takemiya and Hagio’s *shōnen* works contributed to the chipping away of manga’s gendered walls. Much like Ishinomori and Chiba, they used the best *shōjo* and *shōnen* manga practices to create works that connected these gendered Discourses. Their use of *bishōnen* in their *shōnen* work is symbolic because it raises the intertextual potential of *shōnen* heroes. As their *bishōnen* heroes challenge normative notions of masculinity and sexuality, their readers learn about their intertextual potential. Suddenly, young men are not just heroes in *shōnen* magazines but they are also erotic and sexual characters as seen in *shōjo* manga. By showing a *bishōnen* who freely moved between *shōjo* and *shōnen* worlds, Takemiya and Hagio showcased a gender-fluid *shōnen* hero who was open to readers’ differing interpretations. Their works are best described by Kotani Mari who argues that women’s science fiction “embraces deviance, finds in-between spaces, and seeks its place in the world.” The *bishōnen* in *shōnen* comics seeks to find women’s place in the masculine world by inviting readers to apply their intertextual literacies to *shōnen* media.

3.7. CONCLUSION

This chapter highlights an interesting collaboration between *shōnen* and *shōjo* artists that resulted in a set of literacies that had the power to transform the meanings of *shōnen* identity and texts. In Chiba and Ishinomori’s quest to find ways to capture girls’ emotions in manga, they developed various manga literacies that visualised emotions in strong and complex ways. In so doing, they educated young women like Takemiya and Hagio who were inspired to create works that elicit the same affect, if not greater. Their refinement of Chiba and Ishinomori’s techniques showcases their desire to have the tools that capture their *jouissance*. The result was *shōjo’s* *bishōnen*, *shōnen’ai*, and the Golden Age of *shōjo* manga that helped develop readers’ affective literacies that challenge heteronormative notions of gender and sexuality. In summary, this chapter starts to trace a developing collective intelligence among *shōjo* and *shōnen* readers.

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and creators. The story of Takemiya, Hagio, Chiba, and Ishinomori highlights how affective texts inspired new knowledge, literacies, and practices which would all contribute to a new Discourse that would connect shōjo and shōnen manga.

The next chapter tackles the impact of these intertextual works that invited readers to question, challenge, and play with their stories. The drive to inspire intertextual consumption and production of texts led to the creation of new media and spaces that immersed readers in these intertextual literacies and practices.
4. WOMEN’S NARRATIVE CONSUMPTION AND DŌJINSHI CULTURE IN THE 1970s AND 1980s

4.1. INTRODUCTION

By the 1970s, Japan’s comic industry was bursting with creativity as artists experimented with various techniques and narratives. As Japan’s youth media landscape became increasingly complex, manga magazines and their artists had to develop various multi-modal frames of reference to capture their readers’ interests. The literacies that manga artists encouraged to solicit affect from their readers combined various visual and textual elements from shōjo and shōnen manga. The result of their experiments led to the creation of passionate audiences who were emotionally invested in the stories. Manga during this period gave audiences opportunities to process various intertextual meanings in hopes of giving their readers a kind of jouissance. While they were successful in facilitating these pleasurable texts and experiences, these manga also left readers with a thirst for ever more intertextual connections.

This chapter considers readers’ explorations of the intertextual potential of various elements in manga. By the 1970s, readers were accustomed not only to a wealth of manga narratives but were also becoming increasingly literate in various intertextual practices. Audiences’ passion for manga facilitated a participatory culture steeped in intertextual literacies and practices. Manga fans or maniakku (maniacs) were born and their need for intertextual readings encouraged them to “poach” texts and play with their meanings. This led to the creation of manga dōjinshi — a genre of self-published amateur magazines that play with various elements from commercial manga. These dōjinshi include original stories, parodies and boys love themes. In this chapter, I focus on the development of young women’s fan literacies and practices which helped create various BL aniparo and yaoi dōjinshi which were inspired by intertextual narratives readers learned from commercial manga.

To understand the various literacies behind the development of women’s dōjinshi, this chapter first discusses some concepts underlying participatory culture and then goes on to explore how this mode of engagement developed in the context of early postwar manga culture. During this period, various magazines and creators produced materials that taught readers various manga literacy practices. These materials gave readers the tools to produce their own original works. This, in turn, lead to the creation of spaces
where the manga industry engaged with their audience, facilitated intertextual
discussions between readers and creators and encouraged readers to pursue various fan
practices.

These fan discussions and spaces lead to another cornerstone of *fujoshi* Discourse:
narrative consumption. Fan discussions of anime and manga taught readers to
compartmentalise stories and their elements which in turn lead to their production of
narrative “variations.” For young female fans, narrative consumption was a critical
practice that helped them recognise characters, their personalities, and explore their
intertextual potential outside of their “grand narratives” through *aniparo* and *yaoi
dōjinshi*. This section shows how fans broke texts down into “smaller narratives”
through the analysis of magazines such as *Comic JUN/June* (1978–1996), *Puff*
(1979–2011), catalogues from emerging fan events such as Comic Market, and *dōjinshi*
from some notable female artists during this period. Their fan works also highlight fans’
growing consumption of narratives and their intertextual literacies.

The last section of this chapter looks at how narrative consumption transformed
girls’ appreciation of *Shōnen jump* titles *Captain Tsubasa* and *Saint Seiya*. In tracing the
growth of girls’ fan literacies during the 1970s and 1980s, I aim to highlight the various
literacy practices that laid the foundation for girls’ “rotten” practices during the 1990s.

### 4.2. CULTIVATING MANGA’S PARTICIPATORY CULTURE AND COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE

Henry Jenkins defines participatory culture as, “a culture with relatively low
barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and
sharing creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby experienced
participants pass along knowledge to novices.”

Central to this participatory culture are the fans, the “textual poachers,” who poach various texts and meanings by
connecting and appropriating various media for their own desires and interests.

Jenkins’ description of fans and participatory culture is reminiscent of the culture
fostered by various *shōjo* and *shōnen* magazines and their audiences since the Meiji
period. It also reflects the amateur and professional relationships nurtured by artists and
their fervent readers. This section examines the mechanisms and spaces that helped
cultivate manga’s participatory culture.

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459 Henry Jenkins et al., “Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the
21st Century” (The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 2005), xi,
Beyond the adaptation of readers’ columns and fan clubs from pre-war youth magazines, most manga magazines also facilitated new ways to engage with their audiences. As noted previously, Shōnen Jump’s postcard surveys have been pivotal in directing the magazine’s content towards their readers’ interests. Magazines also held manga contests that encouraged fans to submit their works to the magazine. These contests were opportunities for magazines to scout for new talent and build their readers’ manga literacies and practices.

Manga’s growing popularity after the war entailed a high demand for comics that were not easy to produce. The high demand for comics meant that popular artists like Tezuka needed help to fill in the many menial details of their works. Yet even these tasks demanded assistants who had moderate drawing skills to depict graphic elements such as speedlines, backgrounds, and shading. As such, magazines asked their pool of artists to produce comic drawing and writing tutorials to educate their readers on various manga skills. For Manga shōnen, Osamu Tezuka wrote a column on drawing manga called Manga daigaku (Manga university). Shōjo manga magazines such as Shūeisha’s Margaret and Bessatsu Margaret (Special Margaret) also had regular columns that taught readers how to draw. Shōtarō Ishinomori’s Mangaka nyūmon (A manga artist’s manual) was also a critical manga guidebook for young artists such as Keiko Takemiya and Moto Hagio. Collectively, these texts detailed various

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461 An example of these are Margaret’s Margaret fan no hiroba (Margaret fan plaza) in 1968 and Shōnen jump’s Dokusha no kōna (Reader’s corner). See “Sakusha no kotoba to dokusha no kōna” [Author’s comments and reader’s corner], Shūkan shōnen janpu, August 29, 1968, 254.


463 See Chapter 2.8.

464 In 1953 alone, Tezuka was working on 6 manga titles from Tsumi to batsu (Crime and punishment, 1953) to Princess Knight.


466 Margaret ran a section called Mōgaretto manga daigaku (Margaret comic university) while Bessatsu Margaret ran Shōjo manga skāru (Girls’ manga school) from 1963. These still exist today and fans can go to seminars to learn about drawing manga. See “Manga semināru super” [Super manga seminar], Shūeisha māgaretto, accessed December 11, 2015, http://margaret.shueisha.co.jp/contribute/; “Betsuma manga skāru” [Special margaret manga school], Bessatsu Māgaretto, accessed October 11, 2015, http://betsuma.shueisha.co.jp/contribute.

467 Keiko Takemiya was so moved by Shōtarō Ishinomori’s Mangaka nyūmon that she sent a letter to Ishinomori asking him if he knew any artists in her area as she did not have friends to draw with. After Ishinomori connected her to other artists, she drew works to share to her friends and then Ishinomori. See “Dōga intabyū: Takemiya Keiko (Movie interview: Takemiya Keiko),” Ishinomori Shōtarō Complete Comic Works, April 15, 2008, http://web.archive.org/web/20080415012746/http://www.ishinomori.com/interview/12_01.html; Takemiya, The boy’s name is Gilbert, 22.

468 Hagio, “Profile and Interview with Moto Hagio,” 211.
drawing and storytelling techniques that educated readers such as Ishinomori, Mizuno and Takemiya, and helped them produce their own dōjinshi in schools before sending their works to their favourite artists and magazines.

This creativity was further encouraged through various manga competitions organised by these magazines. These competitions provided perfect opportunities for many aspiring artists to debut, for professional artists to find new assistants, and for magazines to find new blood. Since 1968, Shōnen magazine has held a competition called Shinjin mangashō (Newcomer’s award) held every March and September where aspiring manga artists can submit their work. Shōnen jump, a manga magazine which takes pride in hiring new talent, has held various competitions for aspiring manga artists. In 1971, the best story manga submissions were awarded the Tezuka-shō (Tezuka Award). The main judge of this award was Osamu Tezuka himself, until his death in 1989. In 1974, Shōnen jump launched the Akatsuka-shō (Akatasuka Award) for exemplary gag comics similar to those written by Fujio Akatsuka.

Shōjo manga also had their awards and competitions such as Bessatsu Margaret’s manga school and Hana to yume magazine’s Hana to yume mangaka kōsu (Flowers and dreams manga artist course or HMC). These competitions bred many aspiring comic artists who eventually found their way to the offices of publishers and even the ateliers of their favourite artists.

Mentorship in manga’s participatory culture is best exemplified by two popular artists’ ateliers: Tezuka’s Tokiwasō and the Magnificent Year 24 Group’s Ōizumi Salon. Tokiwasō was an apartment building that became Osamu Tezuka’s home when he first moved to Tokyo. As his popularity grew, he invited young artists such as Ishinomori, Mizuno, and Akatsuka to join him there and asked them to assist him in many of his works. In return, Tezuka helped them develop their manga skills and it was not long

469 An example of this can be seen in Ishinomori, A manga artist’s manual, 233.

470 This was the case for Ishinomori who sent his artwork to Osamu Tezuka. See Ishinomori, A manga artist’s manual, 50–53.

471 This was the case for Hideko Mizuno and Keiko Takemiya who made their debut by sending their works to magazines. See Mizuno, “Profile and Interview with Hideko Mizuno,” 161–62; Keiko Takemiya, “Profile and Interview with Keiko Takemiya,” in International Perspectives on Shojo and Shojo Manga: The Influence of Girl Culture, ed. Masami Toku (London: Routledge, 2015), 199.


474 To this day, Bessatsu Margaret manga school and HMC is continued by their respective magazines. In Bessatsu Margaret’s website, they even offer artists job as assistants.
before they moved into their own apartments in Tokiwasō and produced their own original works.

Ōizumi Salon also began in the same manner when Norie Masuyama invited Keiko Takemiya and Moto Hagio to move to the vacant apartment in her building. Takemiya and Hagio’s apartment became the meeting place for many members of the Magnificent Year 24 Group and, much like Tezuka, Takemiya and Hagio invited young artists as assistants and taught them valuable lessons on how to make their own manga. Collectively, Tokiwasō and Ōizumi Salon became important spaces for education and collaboration between manga artists and other creative individuals. These artistic spaces also became centres for manga discussion as artists and visiting readers often engaged in conversations about manga. These spaces may have been available to a privileged few but the works produced in these ateliers lead to new modes of expression and even a revolution, having a large impact on *shōjo* and *shōnen* manga culture.

As more readers acquired the various skills for creating manga, some artists pushed the boundaries of the medium which led to many experimental works. This led also to the creation of alternative manga magazines which did not adhere to the genre conventions seen in *shōjo* and *shōnen* manga. The most popular alternative manga magazine during this period was *Garo* (1964–2002). *Garo* hosted authors such as Sanpei Shirato (1932–) and Yoshihiro Tatsumi (1935–2015) who were responsible for developing a comic genre with realistic gritty images and dramatic narratives called *gekiga*.

Inspired by *Garo*, Tezuka launched *COM*, a manga magazine featuring avant garde manga narratives and techniques. *COM* became an experimental space for Tezuka and other artists under his tutelage. Tezuka published the first few chapters of *Hi no tori* (Phoenix, 1967–1988) in this magazine while Shōtarō Ishinomori published his Shogakukan Award winning title *Shōtarō no fantajī wārudo ō Jun* (Shōtarō’s fantasy world: Jun, 1967). While it appears that members of Tokiwasō benefitted most from

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475 Mizuno, “Profile and Interview with Hideko Mizuno,” 162, 166–67.
476 Takemiya, *The boy’s name is gilbert*, 45.
478 See Chapter 2.8 and Chapter 3.2.1.
479 See Chapter 3.4.
COM’s experimental space, it was actually their enthusiastic readers that made COM what Shun Ajima described as “The manga world’s opinion leader.”

_Gura•kon_, which stood for “grand companion,” was the readers’ section in _COM_ and it became a critical space for manga fans. Its origin stemmed from Chūbu Nihon Jidō Manga Kenkyūkai Mikansei Kurabu (Central Japan Children’s Manga Research Incomplete Club, est. 1955) where Hirō Terada (1931–1992), the “leader” of Tokiwasō, was an active member. As this group expanded and welcomed various manga enthusiasts from all over Japan, it became Zen Nihon Jidō Manga Renmei (All-Japan Children’s Manga League) who referred to themselves as Gurando Konpanion (Grand Companions). This group’s _dōjinshi_, titled _Gurando_ (Grand), contained manga criticism, reports, profiles of _dōjin_ circles, and research materials. _Gura•kon_ became an extension of _Gurando_ when it was included in _COM_ and showcased fans’ enthusiasm in a commercial magazine. Amateur manga artists advertised their forthcoming _dōjinshi_. Some of these _dōjinshi_ were published and given special awards.

Through _Gura•kon_, manga fans built networks with other fan circles all over Japan. In 1967, _Gura•kon_ divided the section by regions which pooled like-minded readers in closer proximity. This led to the establishment of regional branches and more intimate manga clubs, also known as _sākuru_ (circle). This helped turn the virtual community of _Gura•kon_ to a physical community. From Kansai to Kantō, these circles advertised their activities through _Gura•kon_.

The story of _Gura•kon_ highlights the growing agency of manga readers during the 1970s as their manga literacies flourished under the tutelage of various artists and magazines such as _COM_. The _Gura•kon_ community was the beginning of manga’s burgeoning participatory culture that learned to “poach” various manga techniques and texts and explore their diverse potential.

### 4.3. Fans’ Growing Appreciation for Narrative Variations

Manga criticism was one of the cornerstones of _Gura•kon_ and it helped build readers’ critical appreciation for manga. Once _COM_ folded, fans continued this practice in their _dōjinshi_. Between 1972 and 1975, various branches of _Gura•kon_ produced their own publications and organised events for fans in their respective areas. An example of

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this is the Osaka branch’s Appruko (Apple Corps) magazine and their fan event Manga Fesutibaru (Manga Festival). The Tokyo branch of Gura•kon published fan magazines such as Manpa (Comic Wave, 1974) and Manga shinhiyō taikei (New system of manga critique). These magazines would have a strong impact on fan culture as they became spaces where fans developed the literacy practice of breaking grand narratives into smaller narratives — narrative consumption.

Initially published as an untitled dōjinshi in 1974, Manpa underwent various iterations before becoming Dakksu (Dax), a manga news and criticism magazine in 1977. That same year, a publisher picked up Dax and distributed it nationwide. Two years later, the magazine was finally renamed as Pafu (Puff, 1979–2011), a magazine that documented the latest developments in manga and fans burgeoning passion for this medium. Not only did Puff feature manga artists and their works, but they also collected readers’ comments and published them as though they had the same weight as that of the manga critics. As such, Puff served as fans’ gateway to the world of manga where they could immerse themselves in a discursive space with fellow enthusiasts and dissect their favourite comics. Readers’ engagement with their favourite manga and their respective narrative elements were exemplified in various popularity and character rankings. These popularity rankings showcased readers’ attempts at deconstructing narratives.

Puff’s popularity rankings were introduced in the last issue of Dax and had been a regular feature of the magazine until it ceased publication in 2011. It initially ranked readers’ favourite manga and anime series before Puff introduced a poll called Manga kyarakutā besuto 100 (Manga’s best 100 characters) in 1979. This poll listed readers’ favourite characters based on a survey that compiled readers’ top three favourite characters and the reasons why they liked them. That year, Puff’s readers voted Oscar Reiser from Moto Hagio’s Heart of Thomas as their favourite character. He was one of many characters from the works of the Magnificent Year 24 Group who were included in the list. As a reader pointed out, “[O]ther people would probably vote Edgar or Thomas,” alluding to the popularity of Hagio’s characters. While this comment underlined the popularity of the Magnificent Year 24 Group, the rationale

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483 See Chapter One’s “Fujoshi database,” Chapter Two’s “The organisation of the intertextual database, and Ōtsuka, “Reproduction and Consumption of Narrative.”
484 “Manga kyarakutā best 100” [100 best manga characters], Puff, June 1979, 78–79.
485 “Puff’s 100 best manga characters,” 81.
behind readers’ choices was not dictated by the tastes of other readers but was personally motivated. Readers’ comments on their choices highlight their emotional attachments towards their favourite characters.

The character rankings reflect readers’ affective responses towards characters. For example, a fan of Gunga, a character from Hagio’s *They Were Eleven*, said, “No matter how many times I read it, I still cry when I read the line ‘I am the eleventh’,” referring to one of the turning points in the story. Another reader’s comment on choosing Kamui from Shirato Sanpei’s *Legend of Kamui* read, “Kamui is such a sad man,” referring to the protagonist’s difficult life. These reactions reveal the affective impact that narrative elements, such as characters, have on a reader. Their affective responses distinguish these elements and push readers to process their emotions via the text.

In 1983, *Puff* conducted and published two readers’ surveys in the hopes of stimulating in-depth character analysis while compartmentalising their affective responses. The magazine published the *Kawaii kyarakuta besuto ten* (Best ten cute characters) in January and the *Besuto akuyaku kyara* (Best villain characters) in December. These character polls were particularly different from previous surveys as they asked readers to associate characters with specific traits. While the magazine did not define these characteristics, the readers submitted their choices based on their own parameters. As such, while readers generally chose characters from shōjo manga series, the magazine received diverse responses based on their readers’ gender. For example, in the *Kawaii character* poll, an article noted that men’s choices were based on who they wanted to have as a girlfriend while the girls’ choices were based on youth, where *kawaii* (cuteness) was equated to a young girl’s personality and aesthetic. An exception to this youthful *kawaii* aesthetic is Major Klaus, an adult male character from Yasuko Aoike’s *From Eroica with Love*, who was selected as one of the top five cutest characters among women. This choice befuddled *Puff*’s editors that they wrote in an article that the inclusion of Major Klaus, who had *sadome* (sadistic eyes), made women’s definition of “cute” interesting. The *Besuto akuyaku* poll also reflected this

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486 Ibid., 86.
487 Ibid.
489 Ibid., 110.
490 Ibid., 111.
diverse selection of characters between male and female readers. The overall results leant towards women’s selected characters, highlighting female reader’s strong engagement with the magazine.

Alongside these special polls were supporting feature articles that further categorised these villains and cute characters by another type. Written by Puff’s contributors, these feature articles defined these sub-traits and listed several characters that fell under these types. For example, cute characters were further categorised into types such as onēsama (older sister), doko ni demo isō na onna no ko (girl next door), genson fukanō (out of this world), monkunashi ni kawaii (perfectly cute), shibuku kāru (quietly cool), and kawaii otoko no ko (cute boy). Villains were also categorised by their type — from bad women, rivals, anti-heroes, to hideous and beautiful orthodox villains. Puff referred to the beautiful orthodox villain as a bikei (beauty) type, alluding to these handsome yet sinister intellectual characters who had biseinen features.

Puff also introduced another method of categorising characters by discerning their blood type based on their personalities. In 1983, Puff ran a series called Ketsuekigata kōsatsu (Considerations of blood type personalities) which used the blood type personality theory in examining manga characters. Blood type personality theory argues that people’s temperaments are influenced by their blood type. It was based on the experiments of Takeji Furukawa in the 1920s and was popularised in the 1970s by journalist Masahiko Nomi. While this theory has not been scientifically proven, it has become a part of Japanese popular culture as a modern “scientific” counterpart to astrology. Based on this theory, particular blood types — A, B, AB, and O — have corresponding temperaments and personalities which influence a person’s behaviour. Similar to horoscopes, blood types serve as a basis for identifying personality types and romantic matches. These Puff features applied this theory to manga characters. The article noted that it was possible to apply this theory by analysing the temperaments of characters. Their featured showed characters who shared the same blood types and

492 “Puff’s best ten cute characters,” 112–17.
493 “Puff’s best villain characters,” 140–44.
494 For more on biseinen, see Chapter 3.5.
495 “Ketsuekigata kōsatsu shirīzu daini dan: Kyarakutā no ketsuekigata kōsatsu” [Considerations of blood type personalities series part two: Considering characters’ blood types], Puff, January 1983.
concluded that protagonists were likely B-type characters because of their passionate personalities.\textsuperscript{496}

Puff’s categorisation of characters helped readers visualise a subtle taxonomy for manga characters. By asking readers to isolate their favourite villains and cute characters, they could identify and categorise characters’ narrative traits. This showed readers that narrative elements, such as the personality of manga characters, could be treated as independent of the original texts and could be understood from different perspectives. This informal taxonomy of character traits was the beginning of readers’ recognition of Azuma’s grand non-narratives.\textsuperscript{497} Readers’ rationales behind their selections indicate the power of affect in fans’ recognition of these narrative elements. The diversity of readers’ responses towards their favourite characters also demonstrated the various levels of pleasures readers experience.\textsuperscript{498} Readers’ assignment of these traits to other characters, narratives, and theories was also an indication of fans’ developing intertextual practices. To a degree, these character polls were indicative of the existence of a growing intertextual database, a cornerstone of fujoshi Discourse.\textsuperscript{499} Puff aided in the development of fans’ narrative consumption through these surveys.

Other magazines also encouraged their readers’ consumption of narratives through fan contributions. Comic JUN (1978) was the first commercial magazine that showcased boys love content. It featured established artists, such as Keiko Takemiya and Yumiko Ōshima, who shared their boys love works through the magazine. The magazine was also home to \textit{tanbi} (aesthetic)\textsuperscript{500} boys love stories written by authors like Azusa Nakajima. At the heart of these works is the \textit{bishōnen} which the magazine tried to define through various features on \textit{bishōnen-esque} foreign actors, \textit{shōnen’ai} manga, and its readers’ column titled \textit{Bishōnen to nagasarete} (Swept away with bishōnen) where readers could join discussions regarding the \textit{bishōnen}.\textsuperscript{501}

The magazine also highlighted fans’ intertextual practice in features that viewed scenarios and characters through a different lens. An example of this can be seen in a later issue of Comic JUN, now renamed JUNE (pronounced as “ju-nay,” 1978–1981),

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\textsuperscript{496} Ibid., 160.
\textsuperscript{499} This will be discussed in Chapter 5.2.
\textsuperscript{500} \textit{Tanbi} are deeply aesthetic works of fiction that explores subtle eroticism. While it was adapted by boys love writers, it has also been used to describe the works of Japanese writers such as Jun’ichirō Tanizaki and Yukio Mishima. See Welker, “History of Shōnen’Ai, Yaoi, and Boys Love,” 52.
\textsuperscript{501} “Bishōnen to nagasarete” [Swept away with Bishōnen], Comic JUN, October 1978, 32.
which featured various heroes from shonen magazines in a homoerotic montage titled “Sodomian Rapusodi: shonen manga/anime kai sōkan sōkan-zu” (Sodomian Rhapsody: shonen manga/anime world’s adulterous spectacular view). This boys love parody of shonen manga’s homosocial relationships featured characters from Rupan sansei (Lupin III, 1967–1969), Kyōjin no hoshi, Harenchi gakuen, and Ashita no Jō.502 While the relationship dynamics in boys love parodies were still undefined, this spread showed readers’ increasing literacy in recognising boys love potential in non-shōjo texts. This montage highlights readers’ intertextual reading practices and reflects the variations of readers’ narrative consumption of shonen manga where, as Eiji Ōtsuka described, “different girls brought their own creativity to bear in making their own variations.”503

Another dōjinshi critical to the development of fans’ literacy practices was Manga shinhihyō taikei by a manga critique circle named Meikyū (Labyrinth, 1975). Meikyū consisted of members of Gura•kon who were then based in Tokyo. Its members consisted of Osaka’s Jun Aniwa (1950–2011) who wrote for Apple Corps, Teruo Harada, Yoshihiro Yonezawa (1953–2006) and other critics from other groups. Manga shinhihyō taikei was a manga critique magazine that used parody manga as a way of criticising texts. For example, the section that reviewed dōjinshi was called Poru no ichizoku (Pol’s Clan), a parody manga of Hagio’s work Poe no ichizoku. A section that analysed Moto Hagio’s work was called Moto no tomo (Moto’s Friends).504 Alongside these parody critiques were the in-depth analysis of postwar manga, some of which became the precursor of books on manga history.505

Manga shinhihyō taikei’s mix of playful and in-depth criticism reflected manga’s own versatility as a medium. While their in-depth analyses of manga showed the logic and intellect of the medium, their use of parody educated readers to a new method of analysing manga outside of formal literary criticism.506 Meikyū passed on a critical skill to their readers, “Manga de asobu,” which translates as “play with manga.”507 This

504 Comic Market Preparation Committee, Comic Market 30’s File, 28.
505 Yonezawa, History of postwar shōjo manga; Yonezawa, The world of boys’ comics, 1996; Yonezawa, The world of boys’ comics, 1996.
value invited readers to experiment and play with the medium in hopes of pushing manga towards a new direction.

Fans’ engagement in spaces such as Gura•kon, Puff, and Manga shinhiyō taikei indicated the growth of manga literacies and knowledge through fan networks. These spaces served as virtual sites for collective intelligence — “the capacity of human collectives to engage in intellectual cooperation in order to create, innovate, and invent.”\(^{508}\) In fans’ consumption of narratives, they gained knowledge of various narrative tropes and built intertextual connections with other texts. The publication of fans’ engagement with these texts helped readers learn various literacies and practices. This led to a creative cycle that fuelled artists, readers, and fans to contribute to this creative knowledge that plays with various components in manga. Meikyū, in particular, would expand on this playful “space” for fans when they organised Comic Market.

4.4. THE CONSTRUCTION OF A FAN’S “BA”

The fall of COM led to the birth of post-Gura•kon activities which brought manga fans together. The desire to connect with individuals who shared the same interests led to the formation of various circles, some of which published their own dōjinshi. This desire also led to the creation of fan events. As Tamagawa noted, conventions such as the Manga Festival, Shōjo Manga Taikai (Girls’ Comic Convention), Manga Communication, and Nihon Manga Taikai (Japan Manga Convention) were held all over Japan to foster this burgeoning community of manga fans.\(^{509}\) Prior to these developments, fan events such as Nihon SF Taikai (Japan Science Fiction Convention), were oriented towards science fiction works from the US, Britain, and Japan. These early conventions in Japan followed the structure of science fiction (SF) conventions established in the US.

Events such as Nihon Manga Taikai included debates, auctions, anime screenings and manga lectures.\(^{510}\) They also had a limited space for circles to promote and sell their dōjinshi. As these events prioritised interactions between creators and readers, the event had an unequal atmosphere as fans addressed creators as sensei (teacher).\(^{511}\) Some noted that the organisers of Nihon Manga Taikai were elitists who reinforced this


\(^{509}\) Tamagawa, “Comic Market as Space for Self-Expression,” 2315.

\(^{510}\) Ibid., 2302.

haughty atmosphere. Meikyū felt this elitism first hand when their application for a circle space at Nihon Manga Taikai was rejected. This pushed the circle to question the organisation of Nihon Manga Taikai while exploring the possibility of creating a new event where all kinds of dōjinshi could have their own ba (space). Meikyū’s critique captured fans’ need for a space where they could be themselves. This eventually led to the creation of Comic Market which was first held on 21 December 1975.

The first Comic Market (C1) was held in a meeting room in Toranomon’s Fire Station and ran from 10 am to 5 pm. It accommodated 32 circles who sold manga critique zines, rock/sports/movie/SF fan zines, and original comics. In the afternoon, they held a screening of the animated film version of Moto Hagio’s Jūichigatsu no gymnasium as a way to entertain attendees until the end of the event. The first Comic Market drew 700 attendees, 90 percent of whom were girls of middle to high-school age and were fans of shōjo manga. Since Comic Market’s organisers, Meikyū, were fans of the Magnificent Year 24 Group, their fan network, and by extension, the attendees of Comic Market, also had a strong preference for these artists. Comic Market had no qualms about tapping shōjo fans as they promoted the event in various shōjo manga magazines, specifically Shōjo comic where Hagio published her manga. As such, the event had an early reputation as a shōjō manga convention. This changed over the years after Comic Market advertised in more shōjo magazines such as Purinsesu (Princess, 1974–) and shōnen magazines such as Shōnen king and Shōnen Sunday. It was after this campaign that young male attendees increased and the content of the event further diversified.

Science fiction anime such as Uchū senkan yamato (Space Battleship Yamato, 1974–1975) and Kidō senshi gandamu (Mobile Suit Gundam, 1979) became popular among youths so that by the late 70s, anime fans also participated in fan events. Anime fans were initially connected to the SF community and events such as the Nihon SF Taikai. Since Nihon SF Taikai was held once a year and moved between cities all over

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512 Ibid., 28–30.
514 Comic Market labeled their events sequentially. They often abbreviated their event to CX where X represents the sequential number of that event. I will be using this denomination in subsequent mentions of specific Comic Market events.
515 Comic Market Preparation Committee, Comic Market 30’s File, 2005, 32–33.
516 Comic Market conducted a survey among its attendees. One of the questions in earlier survey includes favourite artists and during the first five years of Comic Market, this was dominated by Moto Hagio. See Ibid., 102-3.
517 Ibid., 36-38.
518 Ibid., 44.
Japan, anime fans participated in dōjinshi fairs such as Comic Market which was held more frequently and was based in Tokyo. During this period, Comic Market was held every spring (April), summer (July/August), and winter (December). Fans had more opportunities to meet other fans and sell their dōjinshi in Comic Market. By C11 (April 1979), 218 circles and 3000 people were participating in the event. The growth of Comic Market pushed organisers to divide circles based on their interests — anime, manga, and miscellaneous.519

During the first decade of Comic Market, despite the organiser’s attempts to diversify the event’s interests and audience, shōjo manga continued to have a strong clout among its attendees. In surveys conducted between C1 to C13 (1975–1979), Moto Hagio was still the favourite manga artist of most attendees. The most popular magazine among Comic Market attendees from C6 to C19 (1977–1981) was the shōjo magazine, Lala. Given the demographics of shōjo manga, this gives an impression that Comic Market caters primarily to female participants. Since the revolution in shōjo manga, however, men have also taken interest in shōjo manga, specifically its beautiful heroines — the bishōjo or beautiful girls. Since C11, dōjinshi featuring bishōjo characters were being sold by male artists.521 Their dōjinshi were referred to as rorikon (lolicon), a portmanteau for lolita complex which comes from Vladimir Nabokov’s novel Lolita where an adult man takes a sexual interest in a young girl.522

Towards the late 1970s, the interests of Comic Market attendees further diversified. Attendees voted for shōnen manga magazines and anime and manga news magazines such as Auto (Out, 1977–1995), Animējyu (Animage, 1978–present), and manga news magazines such as Puff.523 This was an indication of anime’s increasing popularity among fans and their reliance on commercial magazines for news and discussions.

519 The term used in the Comic Market catalog was sono iro (miscellaneous). This category composed of dōjinshi with content outside of anime and manga. Some of these include science fiction and rock music.
520 Ito, “When a ‘Male’ Reads Shōjo Manga.”
521 Comic Market Preparation Committee, Comic Market 30’s File, 2005, 64.
Boys love also occupied a space in fan culture through magazines such as *Puff*, *June*, and *Aran* (Allan, 1980–1984) which eventually became *Gekkō* (Moonlight, 1974–2005), where fans openly promoted their boys love *dōjinshi*. *June*, in particular, had such an impact on boys love fans that they began to label some *dōjin* works with *shōnen’ai* and *tanbi* aesthetics as *June-mono* (*June* stuff). Sagawa hired some of these *June*-esque *dōjinshi* artists to do work for the magazine in the absence of contributions by the Magnificent Year 24 group.\(^{524}\) However, this shocked some attendees of Comic Market who saw *June* artists disappear from the event.\(^{525}\) There were some artists that remained but the weak presence of *June* artists at fan events shifted the interests of fans as I will discuss in the next section.

As for *Puff*’s contribution to the creation of this *ba*, their features on *dōjinshi* and *dōjinshi* culture were pivotal in educating readers about emerging fan practices. Prior to the 1980s, *Puff* printed *dōjinshi* from amateur artists and strived to connect various *dōjinshi* creators and readers all over Japan. In December 1979, *Puff* released a special called *Kojinshū risuto* (*Individual circles list*) which profiled many *dōjinshi* artists. This feature had a map of Japan which indicated the locations of various *dōjinshi* circles and events.\(^{526}\) It also categorised *dōjinshi* circles by region, the *dōjinshi* these circles were publishing, and their mailing addresses. For highly recommended *dōjinshi* circles, such as Ishikawa-based boys love *dōjin* circle Ravuri (Lovely), the magazine also showed select pages from their *dōjinshi* which gave readers an idea of the kind of content they made.

*Puff* would continue these features on *dōjinshi* circles in subsequent issues. *Dōjinshi* artists were encouraged to submit information on their latest works and the magazine regularly listed the latest *dōjinshi* releases every month. During the 1980s, popular *dōjinshi* circles were given full pages to advertise their work (Figure 4.6).\(^{527}\) Through *Puff*, readers could find pertinent information on how to order these works via mail order. *Puff* also published information about various *dōjin* events held all over Japan. This gave readers an opportunity to plan the various events they wished to attend and it also gave circles valuable information to help them plan their next *dōjinshi*.

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\(^{526}\) “Kojinshū risuto” [Individual artist list], *Puff*, December 1979, 12–13.

\(^{527}\) For an example see “Circle page jack,” *Puff*, August 1987, 53.
By the 1980s, *dōjinshi* had become such a part of *manga* culture that *Puff* and manga magazines published special features and books on how to create *dōjinshi*. In many ways, these magazines were building their readers’ *dōjinshi* literacy by teaching them the skills behind making a *dōjinshi*. In 1983, *Shōnen Sunday* released a booklet called *Tsukurō dōjinshi* (Let’s make *dōjinshi*), a guidebook for aspiring *dōjinshi* artists. From finding a *dōjin* circle to deciding the size and kind of *dōjinshi* they intend to print, *Shōnen Sunday*’s *Tsukurō dōjinshi* did not just focus on the creative process of creating a *dōjinshi* but also instilled editorial and business values in its readers. The book included statistics based on the survey responses of participants in *Shōnen Sunday*’s *dōjinshi* competition. It showed that as of 1983, women were most engaged in *dōjinshi*, where 52.3 percent of *dōjinshi* creators were girls. Circles consisting of 1 to 5 members were most common.528 The most popular *dōjinshi* size was B5 and the most common price for *dōjinshi* was around ¥400.529 The magazine also featured interviews of popular *Shōnen Sunday* artists such as Rumiko Takahashi (1957–), best known then for her work *Urusei yatsura* (Those annoying aliens,530 1978–1987), and Mitsuru Adachi (1951–) who was known for *Tacchi* (Touch, 1981–1986). These two artists shared their experiences in creating *dōjinshi* and a few pages from their amateur works.

*Puff* also published special features called *How to dōjinshi* in 1987531 and 1994.532 Both features contained detailed information on how to produce their *dōjinshi* and what fans could expect at Comic Market. The 1987 feature even included a map and a guide that showed the location of popular *dōjinshi* artists. This map served as a special supplement to the Comic Market catalogue as it featured specific circles for specific fandoms for specific dates. *Puff*’s guide indicated Comic Market’s reorganisation during the mid-80s which accommodated the increasing number of participants for specific series — specifically *Captain Tsubasa* and *Saint Seiya*. As seen in *Puff*’s guide, the largest areas in Comic Market were dedicated solely to *Captain Tsubasa* and *Saint Seiya* *dōjin* circles. These circles were spread around during this two-day event and as seen in the *Puff* guide, some circles were accommodated in an area that catered to roughly 200 circles.533 *Puff*’s focus on these *dōjinshi* based on these series reflected

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528 *Tsukurō dōjinshi!: Sandē manga karejji* [Let’s make *dōjinshi!*: Sunday manga college] (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1983), 18.
529 Ibid., 24.
530 The title is a pun of *urusai yatsura* (those annoying people).
another shift in *dōjinshi* culture. At this point, fans found new pleasure in “playing with manga” by creating parodies of popular manga and anime series.

4.5. **Aniparo and yaoi literacies**

*Aniparo*, which is a portmanteau term for *anime* and *parody*, was a result of readers’ increasing literacy around manga, anime, and narrative consumption. While this label implied that these *dōjinshi* are based solely on animated shows, *aniparo* is a general label for *dōjinshi* that satires any manga or anime, especially at a time when most animated shows were based on popular manga.

*Aniparo dōjinshi* are reflections of fans’ affective responses and narrative consumption of animated shows of popular manga titles. In playing with various narrative elements, such as characters and settings, from various series, fans developed their intertextual practices through their *aniparo* works. Parody, after all, is one form of intertextuality.\(^{534}\) As parodies, these *aniparo* challenged the meanings of many narrative elements in anime and manga\(^{535}\) and revealed the “concealed or unacknowledged politics and evasions of aesthetic representations.”\(^{536}\) Through *aniparo*, fans revealed the intertextual potential of narrative elements from their favourite series as they transformed schools into palaces and team captains into kings. For some early *aniparo* creators, this meant subverting the male homosocial world of *shōnen* manga.

The roots of parody among fans began with their fascination for the *bildungsroman* worlds built by Keiko Takemiya and Moto Hagio. Early *dōjinshi* in Comic Market were comprised of original stories that imitated the sentimental and decadent aesthetics seen in Takemiya and Hagio’s works. Original *shōjo* manga *dōjinshi* during the early years of Comic Market were mostly *tanbi* texts which followed the highly literary and poetic narratives adapted by some members of the Year 24 Group in their manga. Yayoi Takeda is of the opinion that these amateur *tanbi* works gave an impression of an artist’s aspiration to become professional. These circles were not interested in anime as they did not see anime characters as beautiful.\(^{537}\) Their works only catered to an audience who had appreciated *tanbi*’s rich aesthetics.

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\(^{536}\) Ibid., 94.

\(^{537}\) Yonezawa et al., “Writers roundtable: shōjo manga/early parody” 224.
Fans were also fascinated with rock stars, a trend that had its roots in Hideko Mizuno’s *Fire*. Unlike Mizuno who used her appreciation of rock culture to impart liberal values and perspectives to her Japanese readers, the *dōjin* circles that created fanzines for rock musicians were more concerned about the aesthetics of rock than its music. These early rock music fanzines focused on handsome glam rock musicians such as David Bowie and T.Rex’s Marc Bolan whose appearance on stage was glamorous, glittery, and handsome. Rock musicians with long blond hair, such as Robert Plant from Led Zeppelin, were also appealing to these *shōjo* manga artists. As Yayoi Takeda remarks, these rock stars had an appeal as though they “came out from *shōjo* manga.”

Characters such as Oscar from *The Rose of Versailles* and Eroica from *From Eroica with Love* bear similar aesthetics to these rock stars. As such, Takeda points out that artists from the Year 24 group were fascinated with glam rock bands including Queen. Takeda adds that “it must be English [bands]” as these men were visually “cuter,” unlike punk artists.

A *dōjin* circle established in 1973 named QUEEN was inspired by the rock band. QUEEN was quite influential as a lot of its members became assistants to popular manga artists and eventually became professional artists. They were central in creating *dōjinshi* surrounding rock musicians and consistently had a space in Comic Market until C18 (August 1981).

The kind of rock *dōjinshi* these circles published were not full-length manga but were mostly compilations of photographs, illustrations, and notes from members of their circle. Welker described the illustrations as “somewhere in between the eroticization and homoeotropicization of male rock stars.” The *dōjinshi* he examined, *Island* (1979) by *dōjin* circle Abnorm, featured images of Robert Plant and Jimmy Page kissing and a spread where you could dress up David Bowie in a jockstrap like a paper doll with a uniform from *Space Battleship Yamato* or in fish-net stockings. These images were reflections of how Abnorm played with these people in their fantasies. This fanzine followed the informal male-male romance semantics as established by the Magnificent Year 24 Group. As seen in the kiss shared between Robert Plant and Jimmy Page, the shorter male, in this case Jimmy Page, was posed more effeminately as he drowned in Robert Plant’s kiss. This image adapted the *shōnen’ai* style of romance.

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538 Welker, “History of Shōnen Ai, Yaoi, and Boys Love,” 54.
539 Yonezawa et al., “Writers roundtable: shōjo manga/early parody” 224.
540 Ibid.
541 Ibid., 223.
542 Welker, “History of Shōnen Ai, Yaoi, and Boys Love,” 54.
to older bikei men, similar to Aoike’s exploration of male-male romance in *From Eroica with Love.*

This fascination for bikei men extended to the characters of Sunrise anime such as *Tōshō Daimos* (*Daimos*, 1978–1978) and *Chōdenji Mashīn Borutesu V* (*Voltes V*, 1977–1978) which featured bikei villains. Richter from *Daimos* and Heinell from *Voltes V* were blond-haired princes with long lashes. According to Takeda, it was at this point that *shōjo* manga fans began to pay attention to anime. These fans created aniparo dōjinshi that mixed anime and manga characters. For example, in *Bessatsu Oochi* (*Oochi Extra*, 1980) by the dōjin circle Oochi, they drew a parody manga where Gilbert from Takemiya’s *Kaze to ki no uta*, seduces Noa Bright, a character from *Mobile Suit Gundam*. Unlike in *shōjo* manga where a bishōnen’s affections are developed and his partner is established, these early aniparo have no set relationships in this mix of characters. In some way, these dōjinshi uproot these characters from their stories and play with them in their dōjinshi like a child playing with dolls.

As Mari Nishimura explains, this fascination for bikei men inspired fans to speculate on who these bikei characters would be “eating,” alluding to who these characters would potentially take as their partners. She notes that *Mobile Suit Gundam* was critical in inciting readers’ intertextual readings of its bikei characters, specifically the homoerotic potential of its villain, Char Aznable. Fans explored Char’s relationships with his rival, Ray Amuro, and his friend, Zabi Garma. These relationships were the early versions of kappuringu (coupling) where *shōjo* manga fans were now integrating their bishōnen and shōnen’ai literacies with anime characters in these early aniparo dōjinshi. Nishimura noted how fans used coupling to explore the homosexual potential of these homosocial relationships in their aniparo works. These coupling experiments, matched with the playfulness of parodies, lead to yaoi dōjinshi.

*Yaoi* circulated among *shōjo* manga fans in the late 1970s as it was popularised by the members of Ravuri (Lovely), a *shōjo* manga research circle based in Ishikawa prefecture (Figure 4.9). This research circle was spearheaded by Yasuko Sakata (1953–) who became a professional artist in 1975. She continued to participate with

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546 Sakuru Ōchi (Ōchi Circle), Oochi Extra, 8.
548 Ibid., 23–24.
549 “Puff’s Individual Artist List,” 86.
Ravuri which had over 500 members and around 30 artists. On August 1, 1979, Ravuri published their first self-titled *dōjinshi* which featured Sakata’s story, *Kin’iro no gogo* (Gold-colored afternoon). As Mari Nishimura recalls, this was the first story in a girls’ *dōjinshi* that featured a bed scene between two men. Sakata, along with other Ravuri members such as Akiko Hatsu (1959–), jokingly used the term *yaoi* to describe these parody *dōjinshi* that end in sex. Hatsu noted that even when these *yaoi* narratives lacked direction, at least there was something happening between two men. In some way, *yaoi* contributed to fans’ growing boys love literacy.

This kind of narrative eventually lead to the development of RAPPORI: *Yaoi tokushū gō* (RAPPORI: Special yaoi issue), a *dōjinshi* that specialised in *yaoi* stories. During this period, Ravuri regularly participated in Comic Market and was often featured in *Puff*. Their works became models of playful narratives that had little care for structure apart from getting men to their end goal — sex. The circle continued until 1982 but their works gained currency among Japanese boys love fans as they adapted these *yaoi* narratives in their *aniparo dōjinshi*.

By the end of the 1970s, girls’ *dōjinshi* was brimming with creativity as they combined literacies from *shōjo* and *shōnen* manga and anime to create new literacies and practices such as *aniparo* and *yaoi dōjinshi*. In their interactions in “spaces” such as Comic Market, *dōjinshi*, and magazines such as *June* and *Puff*, these girls were able to engage in creative discussions which explored the intertextual potential not only of *shōjo* texts but also of images and characters from other media. Their parodies revealed the inner *shōjo* qualities of *bikei* heroes and villains in mainstream media. Their “play” reached its peak in the early 1980s when girls produced *aniparo* and *yaoi* works for two *Shōnen Jump* series, *Captain Tsubasa* and *Saint Seiya*.

4.6. THE “CAPTAIN TSUBASA BOOM”

During the 1980s, *Shōnen Jump* was on the way to finding its success as a magazine. While it had a handful of hits, most of its works were overshadowed by its rivals — *Shōnen Magazine* and *Shōnen Sunday*. Throughout the decade, the magazine experimented with over 152 titles before finding the right balance of stories that

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553 Aoyama, “BL (Boys’ Love) Literacy.”
entertained its readers and competed well against its rivals. At the heart of this achievement was Akira Toriyama (1955–) who produced the iconic hit *Dragon Ball* (1984–1995) which has sold over 159 million copies. Titles such as *Captain Tsubasa* and *Saint Seiya* would also leave their mark on readers during the 1980s, especially among *Shōnen jump*’s female readers.

Yōichi Takahashi introduced *Captain Tsubasa*’s hero, Tsubasa Ōzora, to *Shōnen jump* readers in 1981. After having been saved from a truck accident with a soccer ball, Tsubasa considers the soccer ball to be his best friend. The series follows Tsubasa’s growth as an athlete as his family moves to a new town and he meets new friends. The first arc of the series follows Tsubasa as his elementary school team aims for the national soccer championships. The current instalment of the series called *Captain Tsubasa: Raishingu San* (*Captain Tsubasa: Rising Sun*, 2014–present), which runs in the adult-oriented *Grand jump*, features Tsubasa’s professional career as a player for the Japanese national team. The initial run of *Captain Tsubasa* garnered enough popularity among *Shōnen jump*’s readers that it had its own anime in October 1983, and was followed by four movies between 1985 and 1986.

According to *Comic Market 30s File*, *Captain Tsubasa*’s popularity started in C29 (December 1985) when the anime series was already halfway through. By C30 (August 1986), the Comic Market Committee received such an overwhelming number of *Captain Tsubasa* circles that it was difficult to accommodate all of them in the event. The Comic Market Committee described this development as the start of the *Captain Tsubasa* boom. The popularity of the series made Comic Market reorganise their events by implementing a division of spaces based on specific *jyanru* (genre), a category for circles under a specific series or type. By C32 (August 1987), *Captain Tsubasa* was one of the first manga/anime series that had its own genre. This popularity continued until C32 (August 1987) where Tsubasa was spread around seven

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555 Hiroyoshi Mitsunobu, “Captain Tsubasa” (TV Tokyo, 1983).
558 Ibid., 122.
559 Ibid., 384
halls for two days. The largest of these halls accommodated almost 600 circles which Captain Tsubasa shared with Saint Seiya. The fandom surrounding Captain Tsubasa was so big after 1985 that various Captain Tsubasa-only events were held all over Japan. While the Captain Tsubasa boom had such a strong impact on the fan community, the growth of Captain Tsubasa’s fandom is actually slower compared to fans’ quick and fervent response to the works of the Magnificent Year 24 Group. This slow start indicates the lack of immediacy in fans’ affective responses and how particular factors were needed to trigger fans’ interest.

Captain Tsubasa’s popularity among fans emerged years after the manga and anime started because of two factors — fans were still developing their literacy practices and Captain Tsubasa was yet to introduce its intertextual elements. The first factor alludes to fans’ ongoing experimentation with various narrative variations during the early 1980s. Since fans published various approaches and interpretations of popular texts in their dōjinshi, it took a while before patterns, such as coupling, became apparent. During the early 1980s, animated shows filled with male bikei characters, such as Rokushin gattai goddomāzu (Six-god combination god Mars, 1981–1982) and the J9 Series (1981–1984), inspired readers to “play” with more couples. By the mid-1980s, a handful of fans began to use the term seme and uke to indicate the roles of characters in these relationships. Nishimura noted that in the case of J9 series’ Galaxy Cyclone Braiger, Stevie Bowie was seen as the “good-looking seme” while Jotaro Kidō was seen as the “cute uke.” While coupling dynamics would not be established until the end of the decade, determining the “special relationships” in these series was becoming a literacy practice widely embraced by female fans. Emerging from J9 fandom were Kazumi Ōya and Minami Ozaki, two individual dōjinshi artists who would draw girls’ attention towards Captain Tsubasa.

The second factor behind fans’ late reception towards Captain Tsubasa involves the story’s initial lack of intertextual appeal. The story introduces the characters as primary school students who were cute yet too young for fans to play with. Takahashi’s

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561 Examples of these were CTsubasa Carnival and CTsubasa Festival.
562 The J9 series is comprised of three robot animated shows — namely Ginga senpū buraigā (Galaxy Cyclone Braiger, 1981–1982), Ginga reppū bakushingā (Galaxy gale baxinger, 1982—1983), and Ginga shippū sasuraigā (Galaxy whirlwind sasuraiger, 1983–1984) — which feature teams from different timelines called J9.
563 See Introduction and Chapter 1.4.
earlier designs looked cute as his protagonists had large round faces and glistening eyes. These features changed when Takahashi moved the story forward to Tsubasa’s final year in middle school. The boys’ faces sharpened, their physiques got leaner, and their eyes grew narrower. While they were still not the classic *bishōnen*, this growth was critical to fans who were reading and watching the series. These changes began in the manga during the last quarter of 1983 and continued until the last quarter of 1985. For those who watched the animated show, this change began late 1984. By the time it was 1985, the *Captain Tsubasa* anime was already featuring Tsubasa and his friends as fifteen-year-old kids who had reached puberty. A *June* reader once argued that *bishōnen* between the ages of fifteen to eighteen were most attractive. The boys of *Captain Tsubasa* were finally old enough to trigger fans’ intertextual fantasies.

Among the boys, Kojirō Hyūga, Tsubasa’s rival, would capture fans’ fervent attention. He was a brooding character with a melodramatic life, the enigmatic anti-hero of the series. While often seen as impatient and temperamental on the pitch, Hyūga’s private life is filled with kindness and sentimentality. Physically, Hyūga fits the “tall, dark, handsome” aesthetic. He also has a bad boy aura with his rugged looks and rolled sleeves which highlight his athletic muscles. If Tsubasa is portrayed as the shining prince of soccer, Hyūga is seen as the dark knight of the pitch. Hyūga’s complex character appealed to many fans and he became an important intertextual element for their playful imagination.

4.6.1. TRANSFORMING CAPTAIN TSUBASA’S HYŪGA

According to Nishimura, when Comic Market decided to create a separate genre for *Captain Tsubasa*, it was dominated by one couple, Wakashimazu and Hyūga. The prominence of this coupling reflected not just the popularity of these characters among fans but it was also an indication of fans’ increasing literacy for boys love and its application to mainstream media. This literacy was marked by the growth of coupling equations in fans’ *dōjinshi*. Yoichi Shiino notes that in the early1980s, *dōjinshi* creators increasingly used various symbols, such as ampersands, hearts, and stars, to indicate a combination of two characters in a *dōjinshi* (for example, W & H). These equations

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565 Nishimura, *Anime parody and yaoi*, 64.
567 “Swept away with bishōnen,” 32.
initially did not result in coupling nor did they imply male-male romance. However, by the end of the decade, half of Captain Tsubasa circles used these symbols to denote a coupling in their dōjinshi.\textsuperscript{570} Since there was no clear logic to these dynamics, fans had to read dōjinshi to understand the relationships that artists were trying to explore. In the case of Wakashimazu and Hyūga, fans had to learn about these coupling dynamics through artists such as Minami Ozaki and Kazumi Ōya who explored various aspects of these boys’ relationship.

Kazumi Ōya’s approach to coupling dynamics was more experimental compared to her contemporaries. Her 1986 Captain Tsubasa anthology titled Boy showcased Hyūga’s potential as a romantic lead as she imagined him with different partners. In her opening story, Kisu de koroshite (Kill me with a kiss), Ōya explored the potential relationship between Hyūga and his elegant rival, Hikaru Matsuyama, whom she saw as the “beauty to Hyūga’s cool appearance.”\textsuperscript{571} According to Ōya, their relationship was inspired by the semi-final match in Captain Tsubasa where Hyūga’s overwhelming power in the pitch injured Matsuyama.\textsuperscript{572} That scene highlighted Matsuyama’s weakness in relation to Hyūga, making him a potential uke to the striker. Driven by this dynamic, Kisu de koroshite slightly deviated from the canon’s depiction of Matsuyama as Ōya transformed Matsuyama into Hyūga’s partner. Ōya used the relationship dynamics she learned from shōnen’ai stories and portrayed Matsuyama as a character who was emotionally and physically overwhelmed by Hyūga’s presence. This intertextual play that transforms these characters from shōnen heroes into shōjo leads, would continue throughout the anthology.

In a story titled Ojisama nara koishicha ikenai (You must not fall in love if you are the prince), Ōya combined Captain Tsubasa with shōnen’ai romance and the fairy tale Rapunzel to create a fantasy world where Hyūga rescues his long-haired prince Wakashimazu. Ōya confesses she simply wanted to write a “yaoi comedy” featuring Hyūga in a fantasy world.\textsuperscript{573} The result was a highly intertextual narrative that liberally plays with all its elements. While the story features Hyūga and Wakashimazu falling in love, Ōya’s adaptation of Rapunzel slightly differs from the original as the peasant Hyūga saves the captive prince Wakashimazu. This reversal of roles rely on shōnen’ai dynamics where the kind Hyūga submits to the domineering Wakashimazu. Ōya’s

\textsuperscript{570} Ibid., 91.
\textsuperscript{572} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{573} Ibid., 66.
portrayal of Hyūga also differs from his depiction in *Captain Tsubasa*. Her stories highlight a fan’s creative independence from the original narratives as her “variations” transform narrative elements to express her *jouissance*. As seen through her book’s guest comments, her readers share her *jouissance* when they read her intertextual stories.574

Like Ōya, Minami Ozaki played on the intertextual potential of Hyūga when she explored the darker side of his personality. Ozaki wrote stories that intentionally broke Hyūga’s cool demeanour, akin to the deeply emotional narratives in *shōjo* manga. Ozaki uses Wakashimazu to tear Hyūga’s heart apart. Like Ōya, Ozaki’s depiction of these boys is different from the original narrative where Wakashimazu is kind to Hyūga and assists him in any way that he can. Instead, Ozaki interprets Wakashimazu like a cruel *bikēi* villain with whom he shares similar features. This intertextual depiction takes advantage of Wakashimazu’s features, his relationship with Hyūga, and *Captain Tsubasa*’s narrative gaps. Rather than attribute Hyūga’s aggressiveness as characteristic of his *seme* potential, she used this trait as an opportunity to establish a power play between Hyūga and Wakashimazu. Ozaki used Hyūga’s temperament as his weakness and showed how Wakashimazu was the only one who could “tame” his wild personality. Her interpretation of Hyūga was contrary to most fans’ intertextual reading of his character. Nishimura argues that Ozaki was pivotal in introducing to readers the possibility of reversing the sexual roles of characters.575 Ozaki’s works also reflect her intertextual literacies that explored beyond common narrative and visual aesthetics in girls’ *dōjinshi*.

Ozaki’s visual style is as far removed from elaborate *shōjo* manga aesthetics as it is minimal and wispy, with characters who have slim rather than large round eyes. In determining the *seme* and the *uke* roles between the two boys, she used the same visual cues as Ōya where Hyūga has a smaller build compared to Wakashimazu. Ozaki pushes these visual cues further by creating profiles of Wakashimazu and Hyūga which included their height, build, fashion tastes, and even their preferences in women.576 This profile reflects Ozaki’s strong intertextual narrative consumption as she analysed every element that went into these characters. Ozaki’s practice showed the fans’ in-depth analysis of narratives which allows fans like herself to produce and appreciate

574 Ibid., 123-130.
derivative works. In showing how she reads narratives and characters, Ozaki is passing on to her readers her own set of fan literacies and practices. This process is often explored in the paratext of a dōjinshi.

Beyond the stories themselves, Ōya and Ozaki also used the paratexts of their dōjinshi to communicate with their fans. Paratexts, from prefaces to appendices, became informal discursive spaces where a dōjinshi artist could express her thoughts, motivations, ideas, and emotions behind her story. If there are extra pages available, dōjinshi artists also use the space to publish their readers’ comments or notes. These sections also serve as forums where artists thank their readers, or for some, a space where they can reply to their readers’ questions. These sections engage dōjinshi authors and their readers in fan discussions. As particular authors reached popularity and their works gained some currency among fans, their meanings became dominant among fans. Thus, by 1987, readers were applying many fan-produced meanings to other texts. In this case, they embraced the idea of playing with particular character types and relationships with another Shōnen jump title — Saint Seiya by Masami Kurumada.

4.7. SAINT SEIYA AND THE GROWTH OF YAOI AND ANIPARO WORKS

Saint Seiya was first published as a manga series in 1986 with an anime that started in the same year. Saint Seiya follows a group of young warriors called “saints” whose duty is to protect Earth and the goddess Athena from the wrath of other Olympian gods. These saints are given mystical powers through sacred armours called “cloths” which are named after zodiac signs. The protagonist of the series is Seiya, a young orphan who was chosen against his will to fight as a saint. Together with other warriors — Shun, Shiryū, and Hyōga — Seiya sought to free himself from this oppressive system which meant that they had to beat these unjust Olympian Gods. Kurumada’s mythical world was appealing to female fans as it incorporated Greek and Roman myths, inviting readers’ intertextual reading. As a narrative, Saint Seiya is convoluted and complex, with plot twists unfolding left and right. Tragedies befall the protagonists in every chapter. In their emotional distress, the saints often relied on each other for hope and encouragement. It is from these relationships that girls developed their own permutations of their relationships.

577 Ibid.
578 In the “Guest Comment” section of Boy, Ōya published a correspondence between herself and Ozaki where both women shared their delight in each other’s work. See Ōya, Boy, 129.
Prior to *Saint Seiya*, Kurumada already had a following of female readers because of his work *Ringu ni kakero* (Give it your all in the ring, 1977–1981). Kurumada’s works appealed to most readers because of his dynamic visual style which followed the works of Ishinomori and Chiba which included a balanced mix of action-filled panels alongside characters with handsome *shōjo*-esque aesthetics. Kurumada’s protagonists have large expressive eyes, regardless of whether they are male or female. His handsome male characters appealed to fans who perceived them as *bikei*. Kurumada further played with these *bikei* aesthetics by adding long-haired characters, a feature already admired by female fans given the popularity of long-haired rock stars, Eroica, *bikei* villains, and Wakashimazou. This proved to be well-loved by readers who admired these beautiful men.

The animated version of *Saint Seiya* also added more *shōjo* elements as it showed transformation sequences when the saints activated their cloths. This kind of transformation sequence had previously been seen in magical girl series. While this is a clear indication of the saints’ magical qualities, it also showed viewers that the protagonists had some *shōjo*-esque qualities. While this is balanced by the violence and masculine bravado in the series, female fans honed in on these relationships and *shōjo*-esque qualities which they could play with in their *dōjinshi*. Thus, compared to *Captain Tsubasa*, *Saint Seiya* was not dominated by a specific couple. Instead, fans had many relationship permutations based on the various Saints in the series. The most notable artists that emerged from *Saint Seiya* fandom were Yun Kōga and the *dōjin* group CLAMP.

Yun Kōga had been a fan of Kurumada since *Ringu ni kakero*. She was still in middle school when she sent Kurumada fan letters until she finally met him in his office. Her visit to Kurumada was so life-changing that soon after, Kōga decided that she wanted to become a professional manga artist. In her second year of high school, she drew her first *dōjinshi* as an individual circle and sold 400 copies. During this period, she skipped school in order to produce *dōjinshi*. Kōga was already known among her

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579 For an example, see Masami Kurumada, *Ringu ni kakero* [Give it your all in the ring], Reprint ed., vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1977), 220.
580 “Seiya Daisuki zadankai” [Seiya Lovers Symposium], *Comic Box*, August 1987.
581 Ibid.
peers by the time *Captain Tsubasa* became popular but she was best known for her *Saint Seiya* works.

Her most notable *dōjin* work was *Mibunka keikō* (Unspecialised tendency, 1987) which explored Ikki and his relationship with his henchman, Black Swan. Ikki is the Phoenix Saint and the older brother of Shun. Ikki and his group, the Black Saints, are the series’ early antagonists. The Black Saints are driven by Ikki’s anger and despair after his difficult training in Death Island. Eventually, with the help of the Saints and especially his brother Shun, Ikki overcomes his anger and becomes the Saints’ strongest ally.

Kōga is a big fan of Ikki and in *Mibunka keikō*, she explores the emotional turmoil in Ikki’s heart as he deals with his anger against the world, his worries for his brother, and his affection for his comrade. While this part of Ikki’s life is explored in the main narrative, Kōga added her own reading of Ikki’s relationship with his most loyal henchman, Black Swan. In *Mibunka keikō*, she uses Black Swan to help Ikki transform his emotions from hatred to love.

Similar to Ozaki, Kōga’s work is minimalist with spatial panels that display the character’s internal emotions. Kōga’s works depart from lyrical and visual motifs widely used in *shōjo* manga as she uses blank spaces to capture the raw sentiments of her characters. Unlike Ōya, Kōga is the kind of fan who enjoys exploring the gaps in the original narrative. Kōga says that out of respect for the original work, she has a policy that she will strictly adhere to the canon in her derivative works. She adds that she tries not to stray from how the characters are written and simply explore the gaps in the narrative. Not all *dōjin* artists had the same policy as Kōga. There were others like Ōya who enjoyed taking characters and imagining them in alternative universes. For *Saint Seiya*, this was seen in the work of CLAMP.

CLAMP was a *dōjin* circle composed of eleven members. The most notable members of this circle were the artists Nanase Ōkawa, Mokona Papa, Tsubaki Nekoi, Satsuki Igarashi, and Tamayo Akiyama. Before becoming CLAMP, their circle was known was Club/Y and was a neighbour of Yun Kōga at one fan event. As a circle,
CLAMP started making *dōjinshi* for a novel series named *Mao den* (Legend of the demon king, 1986–1987) when they were in high school and continued with other series such as *Captain Tsubasa* before producing *dōjinshi* for *Saint Seiya*.\(^{586}\) Ōkawa confessed that she is a big fan of Yun Kōga.\(^{587}\) Their admiration for Kōga also led to them producing *dōjinshi* based on Kōga’s original work, *Earthian* (1988–1994).

CLAMP’s *dōjinshi* were known for their parodies which took characters from *Saint Seiya* and placed them in all kinds of universes and galaxies. Because CLAMP was composed of many artists, they could produce *dōjinshi* for many couplings with all kinds of narratives. This led to diverse interpretations of *Saint Seiya* which ranged from romantic comedies to tragedies. What sets CLAMP’s *dōjinshi* apart from Kōga and most artists during this period is their lack of depiction of sexual scenes. Instead, CLAMP devoted their time in producing *aniparo* with lush, at times hilarious, narratives that captured the complexity of *Saint Seiya*.\(^{588}\) This rich visual and narrative style would become CLAMP’s signature when they became professional artists.

These *dōjinshi* artists were representative of a burgeoning creative culture that utilised literacies they had accumulated from *shōjo* and *shōnen* manga magazines and its related media to produce intertextual “variations” of *shōnen* titles. The popularity of their intertextual “variations” highlighted how their works successfully elicited affect in their readers. In some ways, their “variations” also coloured girls’ consumption of the original texts by transforming their views of *shōnen* heroes’ homosocial relationships. Sometimes, girls consumed these *shōnen* texts only through popular *aniparo yaoi dōjinshi*.\(^{589}\) This became a point of tension among fans as some saw this as disrespectful to the original artists and their narratives.

*Puff* was at the heart of this tension as it received mail from readers who felt that *yaoi dōjinshi* were transforming people’s appreciation of texts. By 1987, the term *yaoi* had already become strongly identified as a form of boys love *aniparo dōjinshi*. In *Puff*’s August 1987 *Oshaberi kaidan* (Idle conversations) section, its readers expressed their concerns about the increase of *yaoi* texts in *Captain Tsubasa* fandom pointing out that there was hardly any interest in its characters or the sport it tried to represent.

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586 Ibid.
587 Ibid., 10.
Instead, these *yaoi* works focused mostly on the “beautiful” aspects of the narrative. This claim was quite true given that *dōjinshi*, such as those by Ōya and Ozaki, often strayed from the main narrative and took various liberties in reinterpreting characters for their own parodies. Visually, their works also strayed from the original and often only focused on characters’ distinct visual traits, such as their long hair or dark skin. This was different from the earlier practice where fans often directly copied the original aesthetic of the series. As such, for some readers, characters in *yaoi dōjinshi* appear out of character. It was rare to see the likes of Yun Kōga who had great respect for the original narratives. The magazine responded that there was more to *Captain Tsubasa dōjinshi* and that its *yaoi* works were also interesting. Since all involved were fans of *Captain Tsubasa*, fans should all just get along. At this point, the main texts were beginning to lose traction as commercial publishers started to pay attention to many of these *dōjinshi* and decided to publish them commercially.

Fusion Product was a company established in 1982 which published *Comic Box*, a fan magazine dedicated to male-oriented interests such as *bishōjo* and *lolicon*. In the mid-1980s, Fusion Product began publishing *dōjinshi* anthologies which compiled manga *dōjinshi* from *Captain Tsubasa*, *Saint Seiya*, and later for *Yoroiden samurai torūpā* (*Ronin Warriors*, 1988–1989), a Sunrise anime also popular among girls. These anthologies included manga *dōjinshi*, advertisements from other circles, and short artists’ profiles. The artist profiles were smaller versions of *dōjinshi* paratexts.

Despite having small and controlled spaces in *dōjinshi* anthologies, artists still managed to open communication with fellow fans. In Fusion Product’s *dōjinshi* anthology *Seiya kiki ippatsu! Abunai Seiya* (*Seiya’s risk by a hair’s breadth: Dangerous Seiya*, 1987), some artists wrote their comments on the borders of their comic panels, as though artists were showing their readers their live comments on these scenes. The artist profiles contained their basic details (age, sex, civil status, location, and so on) alongside their message to readers, their favourite *Saint Seiya* characters and why they liked them. The most interesting of these profiles included artists’ drawing of *ai-ai gasa* (love umbrellas).

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590 “Oshaberi Kaidan” [Idle Conversations], *Puff*, August 1987, 37-38
592 “Oshaberi Kaidan” [Idle Conversations], *Puff*, August 1987, 37-38
Ai-ai gasa derives from a Japanese cultural notion that it is romantic for two unrelated people to share an umbrella. Similar to the Euro-American gesture of writing two names inside a heart, Japanese teenagers use the symbol of ai-ai gasa to imply a relationship between two people. In this case, they drew umbrellas and wrote the name of the couple underneath. In Seiya Kiki Ippatsu, these artists used ai-ai gasa to represent their favourite couples. As mentioned above, the practice of coupling was still in its early stages and this was one of the methods that coded these relationships. They used the ai-ai gasa as a shorthand to show readers their favourite couple (or couples for those who had more permutations in their imagination). The stem of the umbrella serves as a divider and for most pairings written, the seme character is written on the left-hand side while the uke character is written on the right-hand side. For some artists, this might be reversed and some characters might change their position depending on their partner. While this highlights the diverse interpretation of readers, it also shows how the grammar for coupling was yet to take shape.

Most of these dōjinshi anthologies served as samplers for fans who were unable to attend various dōjinshi events. Beyond containing dōjinshi samples, these anthologies also included information and instructions on how fans could purchase the full dōjinshi from their favourite artists. Popular artists such as Ozaki, Kōga, and CLAMP did not have to go through these anthologies to disseminate their work as they had such a large readership that they managed their own fan clubs. These fan clubs organised subscriptions for their dōjinshi and distributed newsletters and other media. Their success as dōjinshi artists eventually gave them opportunities to pursue professional work where they continued to use the same intertextual semantics, albeit less openly, in their mainstream works.

4.8. Conclusion

The development of fans’ narrative consumption and aniparo and yaoi dōjinshi highlights the thriving participatory culture that relied on intertextual literacies learned from shōjo and shōnen manga and the collective knowledge picked up from fellow fans. These literacies and practices also indicated the development of a Discourse that was increasingly unique to female fans. This Discourse was inspired by the practices from

594 For an example, see Midi planning, ed., Dōjinshi collection for girls no. 1 (Tokyo: JIGEN, 1989), 234.
shōjo manga’s revolution that sought to combine intertextual literacies and practices from both shōjo and shōnen manga.

Fan culture during the 1970s and 1980s marked the beginning of fan practices and literacies that sought to find pleasures in intertextual “variations” of shōnen texts. Fan magazines, such as COM and Puff, and various dōjinshi served as critical virtual spaces that facilitated the intertextual consumption and production of texts. Comic Market and many other fan events provided the physical “spaces” for fans’ intertextual practices. In these spaces, fans developed their growing intertextual literacies which culminated in dōjinshi that stimulate readers’ emotions. This became a period of discovery and experimentation where fans exercised their liberties to play with characters and narratives and were more than eager to communicate these ideas to other readers. The result was a generation of fans communicating affect through dōjinshi. Female fans grew increasingly visible, although their intertextual practices were often seen as fickle and disrespectful — not that these kinds of comments ever discouraged girls’ creativity. Instead, these comments proved girls to refine their intertextual literacies even further.

The end of the 1980s marked a period in girls’ fan culture that defined the shape of its intertextual literacies and practices. The amateur and professional works of artists such as Minami Ozaki, Kazumi Ōya, Yun Kōga, and CLAMP served as guides for many fans on how to effectively use intertextual literacies to produce affective works. The next chapter looks more closely at how girls’ dōjinshi culture further refined these literacies by organising its grammar in such a way that readers easily understood the “variations” these girls were showing in their dōjinshi. The 1990s would be the time when these girls organised their intertextual knowledge into a database. Narrative elements and couplings would have tighter structure that enabled fans to easily share jouissance.
5. SHÔJO’S INTERTEXTUAL DATABASE LITERACIES MEET SHÔNEN’S HOMOSOCIAL WORLD

5.1. INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 1990, around 230,000 people attended C38 at Makuhari Messe in Chiba, Tokyo. This growth in attendees is remarkable given the rising social concern over otaku activities. In 1989, otaku culture was negatively featured in media when Tsutomu Miyazaki was apprehended for the murder of four young girls. Since his room was filled with countless videos of anime and horror films, Miyazaki was labelled by the media as an otaku. This triggered a moral panic concerning otaku whose activities, such as creating and purchasing dōjinshi, were now seen as perverse and socially deviant. The media and critics traded in pop-psychology opinions about the otaku phenomenon but over the next few years, these youths were increasingly indicative of Japan’s “lost generation.” Triggered by the collapse of the Japanese economy in the 1990s, this generation of youths experienced what Kaichirō Morikawa described as a “futureless shock,” a devastating realisation that Japan was no longer an economic or even a technological superpower that could help them realise their grand dreams.

Theories abounded that this had pushed these youths to divert their energies into their fantasies. In some way, dōjinshi culture does reflect the creative escape of fans and artists. As I have shown in the last chapter, however, dōjinshi was also result of postwar media expansion and fans’ development of their intertextual fan literacies and practices. More than an escape, the growth of dōjinshi culture during the 1990s also marked the culmination of various fan literacies and practices which heightened fans’ affective response for fan works. As such, throughout the 90s, more people participated

595 Comic Market Preparation Committee, Comic Market 30’s File, 148.
596 Azuma, Otaku: Database Animals, 4–5.
600 Azuma, Otaku: Database Animals, 15–24; Morikawa, Otaku: personality = space = city, 22–24.
in fan events such as Comic Market. To the surprise of some, many of these participants were young female fans who enjoyed “corrupting” *shonen* texts through fanworks such as *yaoi*.

In this chapter, I look more closely at girls’ increasing interest in *shonen* manga *dōjinshi* during the 1990s. I argue that the success of these publications in disseminating fantasies relies on fan literacies that were refined during this decade. I also focus on the various literacies honed through girls *dōjinshi* during the 1990s. The development of these literacies was critical as they helped fans efficiently convey nuanced visual and textual grammars that taught their readers to unpack the intertextual potential of *shonen* texts. In organising and fine-tuning these literacies, girls easily learned and disseminated various concepts that transformed their consumption of *shonen* media. I argue that girls’ *dōjinshi* during the 1990s systematised girls’ fantasies, allowing them to informally educate readers on how to use various narrative and visual elements from their favourite *shonen* stories for their own pleasure.

During this period, two key sets of literacies were developed through girls’ *dōjinshi*: intertextual database and coupling. These literacies reached their peak in the 1990s and became cornerstones of the emerging *fujoshi* Discourse. I will first discuss the literacies involved in fans’ intertextual database — the virtual repository of various narrative elements that are intricately connected to other layers of meanings. Using postmodern theories of *otaku* culture alongside theories of women’s writings, I argue that female fans consumed popular *shonen* manga intertextually, allowing them to recognise the layers of meanings within each narrative component. This complex web of meanings pushed these girls to eventually develop a database filled with character elements and literary tropes. As an example of how intertextual database literacies were developed, I examined an archive of original texts and *dōjinshi* based on adventure series that ran in *Shonen Jump*, namely, *Jojo no bimyō na bōken* (Jojo’s Bizarre Adventure, 1986–present) by Hirohiko Araki, *Yūyū hakusho* (Yu Yu Hakusho, 1990–1994) by Yoshihiro Togashi, and *One Piece* (1997–present) by Eichirō Oda. I will specifically look at how the main texts affected *dōjinshi* creators through narrative elements that triggered their intertextual literacies.

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601 By the end of the 1990s, around 400,000 people attended the summer Comic Market.
603 This notion of corruption is explored in the introduction and Chapter One.
The second set of literacies I will examine are those behind the fan concept of *coupling*. Coupling refers to the pairing of two characters in a romantic relationship. Among *fujoshi*, this entails the pairing of two male characters from a series. Deciding which male characters to pair from which series may appear to be a whimsical matter. However, upon analysing the visual and narrative approaches of various *dōjinshi* creators, there appears to be a grammar involved in the *coupling* of these characters. Using *dōjinshi* based on a sports series in *Shōnen Jump*, namely, *Slam Dunk* (1990–1996) by Takehiko Inoue, I argue that fans developed literacies that allowed them to easily distinguish and pair male characters in homosocial contexts. I argue that in developing the grammar for *coupling*, readers were able to explore various relationships among men and drawing upon layers of meaning from their intertextual databases.

Together, these literacies helped to efficiently disseminate alternative readings, meanings, worlds, and relationships to female readers of *shōnen* texts. The organisation of girls’ fantasies through *dōjinshi* showed a fantastic world that had reason in its absurdity. These literacies created the logic behind girls’ “rotten” fantasies about boys.

### 5.2. The Organisation of the Fujoshi’s Intertextual Database

Attendees of *dōjinshi* events are often daunted by visually dense maps filled with carefully illustrated squares. During the 1990s, when Comic Market was expanded into a two-day event during the summer, maps were generated to provide the location and description of around 13,000 circles participating in the event. Each circle is represented by a *katto* (cut), a small box where a circle can draw images, symbols, or insert texts that represent their work. These *cuts* serve as markers for attendees to find out where their favourite circles are located and what they will be selling.

The sight of these *cuts* is as daunting as seeing the map physically manifest in a *dōjinshi* event, where rows upon rows of tables are stacked with *dōjinshi*, or in a *dōjinshi* shop where bursting shelves are laden with thousands of *dōjinshi*. Yet, through all this overwhelming madness, readers manage to discern which *dōjinshi* to purchase. Just by looking at the cover, some key illustrations and keywords, readers can recognise exactly the kind of texts they can buy from a circle. How did fans obtain the literacy necessary to understand the kind of *dōjinshi* they would encounter via a cut or a cover?

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605 Comic Market became a two-day event in the 1990s in the hopes of managing the growing crowds that event venues were finding difficult to manage.
At the same time, how did *dōjinshi* creators know the kind of visual cues and texts they need to use in a cut or a cover? Just as importantly, how were all of these texts organised for readers and creators to understand and use at a period when information technologies were limited? Understanding the logic behind these literacies in *dōjinshi* culture during the 1990s can help us understand how these readers processed texts and made their ideas accessible to others. This section explores how female readers organised information and constructed a deeply layered intertextual database.

I have integrated two key concepts related to fan culture: *intertextuality* and *database*. Intertextuality has been an integral part of women’s literature and, as argued in Chapters Two and Three, intertextuality is also deeply ingrained in *shōjo* literature which has been inherited by *shōjo* comics. Intertextuality in *shōjo* manga is best seen in the various stories that challenge established narrative aesthetics through emotionally-charged illustrations packed in fluid panels that move between characters’ internal emotions and their external reality. As seen in Chapter Four, intertextuality was not lost but was celebrated in *dōjinshi* through fan works such as *aniparo* and *yaoi*. Intertextuality opened readers to wider understandings of texts and other creative opportunities. Meanings became deeply complex and multi-layered, connecting memories and emotions to texts, leading to an explosion of creativity among readers. All of these intertextual meanings were managed in a “database” — a virtual space where these meanings are filed and stored.

A database is an integral component of information technology and has been defined as a “collection of related data.” When Hiroki Azuma analysed otaku culture, he realised that fans consumed anime and manga in the same way that computers load and process data from databases. Azuma argues that readers load information from their own databases whenever they encounter texts. For example, when *dōjinshi* artist Aiko Nobara encounters Zoro Roronoa, a character from *One Piece*, she immediately studies his character elements and traits, loads her database of collected character elements and traits from other texts, and concludes that Zoro is “definitely uke.”

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608 Azuma, *Otaku: Database Animals*.
609 Ibid., 30–33, 53–54.
degree, Azuma alludes to intertextuality but he digresses from this concept as he believes that *otaku* consume these narrative elements on a superficial level. As Azuma argues, “What is sought here is not the narrative dynamism of old, but a formula, without a worldview or a message, that effectively manipulates emotion.”\(^{611}\) Meanings are shallow as these narrative elements only satisfy an *otaku*’s instinctual pleasures.\(^{612}\) This is not necessarily true for *fujoshi*. I argue that *fujoshi* constructed a database born from the pleasure of ripping texts apart down to their narrative elements and recombining these with rich and complex meanings. This section explores the relationship between these two concepts and the literacies involved in the development of these concepts in girls’ *dōjinshi* culture during the 1990s.

5.2.1. THE GROWTH OF JAPANESE MEDIA AND ITS IMPACT ON INTERTEXTUAL PRACTICES

The growth in readers’ intertextual practices during this period was due to the diversification of media in Japan. More than ever, manga was serialised across various media platforms. Outside of manga magazines and comic books, popular manga series can be seen in television, film, home video, stage plays, and video games. These manga series could also be heard through special audio dramas and soundtracks. At the same time, the popular characters could be handled as they were turned into toys and other paraphernalia. At this point in time, Japanese manga overwhelmed the senses of its audiences with a variety of related media described by journalists as *media mikkusu* or *media mix*.

Media mix is seen as Japan’s answer to media convergence.\(^{613}\) Cultural scholar, Henry Jenkins, defined media convergence as the flow of multimedia content across multiple platforms as produced by multiple media industries for enthusiastic audiences.\(^{614}\) It is part of what Jenkins describes as convergence culture, where media is transformed by the interactions between old and new media and its active producers and consumers.\(^{615}\) In Japan’s case, Steinberg describes media mix as the expansion of Japanese media as it adapts to technologies and the shifting consumption patterns in Japanese society.\(^{616}\) The manga industry is no stranger to media mix. As Steinberg discusses in *Anime’s Media Mix*, even the “god of manga,” Osamu Tezuka, was seen as

\(^{612}\) Ibid., 87–95.
\(^{613}\) Steinberg, *Anime’s Media Mix*, viii.
\(^{615}\) Ibid., 2.
a major proponent in building manga and manga characters across multiple media platforms in the 1960s.617

Looking more closely into manga’s media mix, shōjo manga’s media mix was underdeveloped in comparison to its shōnen contemporaries. At least until the late 1970s, girls’ media relied heavily on print. Girls’ media centred on shōjo literary and manga magazines. These magazines dabbled mildly in mixed media when they released paraphernalia such as stickers, rulers, or posters related to a popular series. Only a select number of shōjo manga dabbled in media outside of print. For example, among the works of the Magnificent Year 24 group, Riyoko Ikeda’s The Rose of Versailles was the most successful.618 The Rose of Versailles had a television series (1979–1980), several Takarazuka musicals (1974–6, 1989–1990, 2001, 2006, 2013–14), an animated film (1980), and a home video (1990). Shōjo fan favourites such as Keiko Takemiya, Moto Hagio, and Yumiko Ōshima also ventured into other forms of media with lesser success compared to Ikeda.619 During the 1990s, hit manga titles such as Bishōjo senshi serāmūn (Pretty Soldier Sailormoon, 1991–1997) reinvigorated shōjo manga’s potential for multimedia. Apart from its highly successful television series, Sailormoon also had films, home video, live action television series, plays, and a massive amount of merchandise which continues to this day.

Compared to shōjo manga, shōnen manga’s media mix started in the 1960s and has long dominated popular youth media.620 Animated shows on television were comprised mostly of series from shōnen manga magazines. This made shōnen media more accessible, even to girls who were outside of shōnen media’s demographic audience.621 As a 1990 publishing report noted, televised animated manga series

616 Steinberg, Anime’s Media Mix, xi.
617 Ibid., 9–134.
620 For histories on media mix in Japan, see Anne Allison, Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 35–92; Steinberg, Anime’s Media Mix.
621 See Chapter 4.6 and 4.7 on the popularisation of Captain Tsubasa and Saint Seiya among girls.
produced fans who had not even read the manga. This led new audiences to seek for the manga related to these animated titles. The success of manga media mix led to the increase of manga books and magazine sales during the 1990s, with 1995 as its most profitable year, with earnings of ¥5.8 billion.

The expansion of the manga industry into other forms of media led to the growth of audiences’ intertextual literacies. Three layers of intertextuality come into play: textual, visual, and multimodal. The first involves a classic understanding of intertextual literacies rooted in printed texts. Through reading books and magazines, young readers receive and reconstruct meanings. As these texts expand to incorporate images, such as those seen in manga, readers learn another set of intertextual literacies that integrate textual and visual literacies. When manga expanded to television in the 1960s, the addition of sound and temporality added other dimensions to readers’ intertextual practices. As the media mix environment grew in the 1990s, readers were now learning to negotiate intertextualities across media platforms — video games, toys, and other forms of merchandise. As manga industries focused on producing a variety of media for their popular series, audiences were suddenly faced with elements of their favourite manga stories outside the pages of manga. Their favourite characters could talk and move, or were transformed into cute cuddly stuffed toys, or dressed in formal suits. Logos and images from their favourite series were turned into a variety of paraphernalia. Elements from their favourite narratives became intertextual commodities, goods intentionally created to produce multimodal ties to the main narrative. This elevated intertextuality to another level where texts were no longer limited to print but now included images, sound, and touch.

5.2.2. THE ELEMENTS OF AN INTERTEXTUAL DATABASE

The extraction of narrative elements from their main texts would have a profound effect on readers’ intertextual practices. The sight of comics divided into various media led to the development of specific fannish literacies. First, readers learned how to distinguish the kyarakutā (character), who is immersed in the narrative, and, to a degree,

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the kyara (chara), who is independent of the narrative. Second, they learned how to distinguish the neta and ōdō (narrative tropes and formulas). And lastly, by engaging in fan literacies and practices, readers learned how to break down the kyara and neta further by distinguishing their moe yōso (moe elements). These three literacies are important elements in the development of the intertextual database. This intertextual database helps readers break down narratives and make fan concepts and practices accessible to readers. The intertextual database represents fans’ collective intelligence as they eagerly contribute new moe elements to play with in their fan works.

The first of these literacy practices entails the recognition of characters in narratives. Before readers can even read a text, they are confronted with the image of the manga’s heroes. On covers and in advertisements, characters are used to draw readers towards their stories. Itō notes that the character serves as an intermediary between the text and the illustrations, a necessary element in comics.625 By extension, as these characters are used in other forms of media, they become the brand logo for their respective manga series and related merchandise.626 Similar to brand logos, characters are distinctly illustrated so that they solicit specific emotions from readers.627 The only difference between characters and brands is that brands cannot be a part of a story nor can they independently move in a story. Unlike brands, characters are deeply tied to narratives that humanises their images. These characters develop emotions and personalities in their narratives. They also experience various social relations that allow them to build relationships with other characters. According to Itō, these human-like characteristics constitute a character, regardless of whether the character has the body of a robot or a beast.628 However, this human-like quality is not enough for a character to stand out.

Miyamoto notes that there are six elements that distinguish a character in a story: individuality, variability, complexity, nontransparency, self-consciousness, and autonomy.629 Individuality stands for a character’s ability to stand out in a narrative, whether through the character’s physical features or their personality. Variability means that readers can see a character’s physical and emotional changes. For example, when a

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625 Gō Itō, Tezuka izu deddo: Hirakareta manga hyōgenron e [Tezuka is dead: Postmodernist and modernist approaches to manga] (Tokyo: NTT Shuppan, 2005), 83.
626 Steinberg, Anime’s Media Mix, 191.
627 Ibid.
628 Itō, Tezuka is dead, 118.
character gets into a fight, they get wounded or they express anger. This variability highlights a character’s complexity, a characteristic that embraces the strengths, weaknesses, and uniqueness of a character. Nontransparency refers to these complex character traits that a reader or other characters cannot see because these traits are not blatantly shown in the narrative. For example, readers are not exactly aware what characters do when they wake up unless it is addressed in the narrative.

Self-consciousness is the character’s awareness of his or her own traits and existence. While readers do not know what a character does in the morning, a character will be conscious of what he or she has done. This also highlights a character’s autonomy, their actions being independent from the main narrative. Collectively, these characteristics created recognisable faces in comics where characters serve as active elements that push a story forward. Manga, and by extension its related anime and games, is mostly driven by characters.630 The characters that stand out the most in these narratives have the potential to be ripped from their stories and become a kyara.

As a shorter moniker of character, the kyara has transformed into a concept that has stripped the character of many of its traits down to its barest essentials. When trying to distinguish the difference between a character and a kyara, Itō argues that a kyara can be considered a proto-character, an illustration that is on its way to becoming a character.631 As a proto-character, the kyara has the foundations of the character: its visual design and barebones persona. The visual design simply gives “face” to the character. The persona is simple enough to give the kyara some human-like expressions but not complex enough that it captures complex human psychologies and emotions. Kyara have been associated with brand mascots such as Hello Kitty632 or Pikachu,633 or with yurukyara (wobbly characters) such as Kumamoto prefecture’s Kumamon or Funabashi city’s Funasshi.634 The increasing popularity of kyara in Japanese popular culture has led to a growing affection for kyara and the elements that make a kyara.

630 Steinberg, Anime’s Media Mix, 200.
631 Itō, Tezuka is dead, 117, 119.
Azuma calls these characters *moe kyara* and notes that this has been a distinct practice among fans since the 1990s where fans paid more attention to specific *kyara* elements rather than narratives. For example, a *kyara* wearing glasses personifies intelligence or characters with loose strands of hair called *ahoge* (silly hair) are seen as clumsy.

The breakdown of characters into *kyara*, and much further into *kyara* elements, are literacies that allow readers to quickly distinguish characters based on their looks and personalities. These *kyara* elements serve as pieces that readers can study, examine, critique, and eventually experiment with in order to understand a character’s potential. Critical to the development of *kyara* literacy are *dōjinshi* and character features in fan magazines such as *Puff*. These character features gave fans opportunities to dissect characters into narrative elements since the 1980s. By the 1990s, these features became more elaborate such as *Puff*’s examination of the “good guy” characters in 1994. Not only did this issue list good characters but it also categorised them based on their body type, age, and their “good” relationships. In 1995, *Puff* asked fans to tackle the dangerous men in manga. These fan exercises in *Puff* documented how fans read and dissected characters. It also reflects how characters, *kyara*, and *kyara* elements trigger fans’ comprehensive examination of texts and other forms of media. Recognising various aspects of a character is a gateway literacy practice that opens audiences to immerse in a story’s world and narrative.

The consumption of characters leads readers towards their consumption of stories. Similar to characters, fans also break down stories to its barest elements such as its themes, scenarios, and settings. This process gives readers opportunities to create intertextual connections between different narratives. As a form of text, manga and anime narratives have long been subject to intertextual practices. This also lead to the literacy of compartmentalising narrative elements which fans eventually referred to as *neta*.

*Neta* is a variation of the word *tane* which, within the context of literature, translates as the content or the plot of a story. The term *netabare* reinforces this

636 See Chapter 4.3.
638 Ibid., 21.
639 Ibid., 20, 22.
640 Ibid., 23-4.
642 See Chapter 2.7 on the intertextual literacies in *shōjo* culture, 3.2.2 on the intertextual works of Shōtarō Ishinomori, 3.4-6 on intertextuality in *shōjo* manga, and 4.5-7 on intertextuality in *dōjinshi*. 
definition as the term translates as plot spoiler. Within the context of dōjinshi and fan activities, the term neta is used as a suffix to indicate specific narrative themes or literary tropes used in a dōjinshi. Examples of neta include kyūketsuki-neta (vampire plot), tsukimono-neta (evil spirit plot), tensei-neta (soul-switching plot), rinshitaiken-neta (near-death experience plot), byōki-neta (nursing plot), and kodomo/kosodate-neta (child/childcare plot). At times, neta have also been related to ōdō, which literally translates to “royal road,” and alludes to a general or common pattern found in narratives of a particular genre or theme. For example, the ōdō in boys love stories is a romance between two male characters. Contemporary dōjinshi creators also use the suffix paro (parody) to refer to neta. For example, daigakusei-paro entails a dōjinshi that features the characters in a university setting. Popularised in Yoroiden samurai torūpā (Ronin Warriors, 1988-1989) dōjinshi during the late 1980s, neta served as creative prompts for dōjinshi creators. Neta can also be seen as loose categories or quick keywords that immediately give dōjinshi readers an idea about a dōjinshi’s content. Distinguishing neta entails distinguishing narrative conventions which can be repurposed for fan works such as dōjinshi.

Fans’ fascination for neta is connected to the way narratives are structured and consumed in Japanese media. Manga magazines and anime serialise stories in weekly or monthly instalments. Instalments may include self-contained themes and plots or they can be part of a longer story arc. Content producers maximise the plot in every serial in hopes of sustaining their audience’s interests. As such, plots for serialised narratives must be both complex and concise. Readers, in return, learn to consume and comprehend these small serial narratives. As seen in the aforementioned neta among fans, they have learned to recognise specific themes and plots in stories. Smaller serialised narratives help build readers’ literary cognition for various narrative elements which include a story’s characters and its neta.

The small narrative also plays a critical role in empowering narratives. As Eiji Ōtsuka observes, production and consumption of media for youths has shifted towards

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643 Nishimura, *BL culture theory*, 70–95.
645 Neta is similar to the English-language fan fiction term *alternative universe* (au). Similar to neta, au is used as a modifier to indicate the theme or plot of the story. For example, school au entails a fanfic where the characters are in students. Among fans of Western media, neta also include common plot devices known as tropes.
narratives rather than the products themselves. Ōtsuka notes that smaller narratives eventually lead audiences to consume grander narratives. Snacks, toys, and other media for children offer small narratives which eventually add up to create a grand narrative. This grand narrative does not refer to a completed story, but rather the entire world in which these small narratives are found. Ōtsuka uses the example of Bikkuriman chocolates during the late 1980s which contained stickers containing an illustration and information about a character in the Bikkuriman world. Ōtsuka observes that rather than eating the chocolates, children disregarded the chocolate and collected the stickers instead. As children collect more stickers, they are able to understand more of the Bikkuriman world. These stickers work like a serialised narrative.

Similar to the way each sticker offered a portion of the Bikkuriman story, each episode or chapter in a manga or anime series offered a fragment of a series’ grand narrative. For example, One Piece is a story about an aspiring pirate named Monkey D. Luffy who is on a quest with his friends to sail the seas in search of an elusive treasure named One Piece. The grand narrative of One Piece is not determined by Luffy’s story alone. Rather, the stories of Luffy and the other characters in One Piece contribute to the unravelling of its grand narrative. The various places, cultures, materials, and ideas within that world also play a critical role in producing One Piece’s grand narrative.

Ōtsuka sees the grand narrative as a “worldview” where every component of a narrative helps readers construct a larger view of a story’s world. When readers learn and master these narrative components, they gain the power to shape the grand narrative. Ōtsuka argues that dōjin creators have become masters of small narratives within a grand narrative. He finds this problematic because it dilutes the grand narrative’s authenticity. His answer to this problem is to build variation in small narratives so that it builds a complex narrative which only the original creator can master.

While this may be true, complex grand narratives have never stopped readers from consuming and reshaping these narratives among themselves. Their passion for both the small and grand narratives pushes them to learn these variations. Sometimes, as seen in how neta is used in dōjinshi, grand narratives do not matter. Even unrelated narratives

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647 Ibid., 109.
648 Ibid., 104–6.
649 Ibid., 107–8.
650 Ibid., 109–10.
651 Ibid., 109.
and narrative elements are woven together in a *dōjinshi*. Ōtsuka’s theory of consumption only explores how readers extract small narratives from grand narratives and how content producers could respond to these extractions. It fails to follow what happens to these small narratives after they have been divorced from their grand narratives. For example, what happens to the story of Luffy if he is taken outside of his pirate world and is placed in a school setting? Can *One Piece*’s *kaizokuneta* (pirate *neta*) stand alone? As seen in various *dōjinshi*, it is possible to have narrative elements independent of their grand narratives. Azuma argues that as audiences engage in post-modern life, grand narratives decline and audiences consume these independent narrative elements which he collectively calls the *grand non-narrative.*

He describes the grand non-narrative as a database which stores a collection of signs, aesthetics, *neta*, settings, scenarios, and other independent narrative elements. Azuma sees this database as the deeper layer of small narratives. If characters are considered as small narratives, then the character’s design — from the curl of their hair to the colour of their eyes — is part of the grand non-narrative database. If *byouki-neta* is read as a small narrative, then the concept of sickness and nursing alongside the images of medicines and bandages combine to create this *neta*. According to Azuma, fans become more engrossed in these mundane details as they elicit some form of affection from fans called *moe*.

5.2.3. MOE ELEMENTS

The term *moe* emerged in Japanese online bulletin boards during the 1990s as a “euphoric response to fantasy characters or representations of them.” It stems from the term *moeru* which has homonyms that either mean “to sprout” or “to burn.” Hence fans use the term when they feel some form of affection “sprouting” or “burning” when they see a particular character or read a specific *neta*. Patrick Galbraith argues that *moe* is a form of affect, a physiological response divorced from logic. Unlike emotions which are influenced by language and logic, affect is instinctive and

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652 Steinberg, *Anime’s Media Mix*, 181–82.
654 Ibid., 38.
655 Ibid., 42-47.
656 Galbraith, “Moe and the Potential of Fantasy in Post-Millennial Japan.”
658 Galbraith, “Moe and the Potential of Fantasy in Post-Millennial Japan.”
illogical. Affect can be seen in girls who instinctively say, “kawaii” (cute) or “moe” at the sight of their favourite character.

Moe as an expression captures the autonomy of affect which is triggered by characters constructed by moe elements. These moe elements are specific visual, textual, aural, and spatial elements seen in characters/kyara or neta that solicit an affect from the consumers. A tuft of hair, a pair of glasses, a school setting, the circumstance of childhood friendship, or even the voice or voice actor of a character can serve as moe triggers to readers. These moe elements are often independent of any narrative. By themselves, moe elements set up readers to immediately feel some form of affection for a character or a circumstance. This innate response has made Azuma describe otaku, a predominantly male community of anime and manga fans, as animals whose media consumption instinctively responds to these empty moe elements. Can the same be said for the female fans who discover moe when consuming shōnen media and reproduce it in dōjinshi?

While moe elements are seen as independent of texts, I argue that girls relate moe elements to their intertextual meanings. Moe elements appear basic and simple but among female fans, these elements are immediately charged with feelings derived from other moe elements in their database. Their moe response is often followed by this intertextual connection that immediately seeks to transform this moe element into something different. From an element without logic, girls immediately give meaning to these moe elements and forge intimate relationships with texts. Elements such as a character’s height, hair, and his relationship with other characters are given new life as readers place their meanings on these elements. As I have described in previous chapters, this exercise becomes a kind of jouissance for many fans. If moe elements trigger affect among female readers, they also sustain their affections until they reach jouissance. Female fans load various intertextual meanings unto moe elements, hyping their emotions in the process until they reach their proverbial climax. As such, rather than considering the database as a collection of grand non-narratives, I see the database

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660 See Chapter 4.3 on fan’s character survey and responses.
of female fans as an intertextual database — a collection of moe elements charged with intertextual meanings.

The combination of moe elements and intertextual literacies results in affective responses which can be seen in dōjinshi. To a degree, dōjinshi can be seen as a form of affective hermeneutics. As Anna Wilson describes, “[a]ffective hermeneutics direct focus towards moments of high emotion in a text to stimulate equally strong feelings in the reader; these heighten a sense of empathy, connection, or intimacy between the readers and the characters in a text.”

Moe elements aid dōjinshi creators and consumers in isolating these moments of strong emotion in shōnen media. Intertextual literacies build on these emotions and dōjinshi becomes a medium where girls can freely explore emotions surrounding various narrative elements. Dōjinshi further highlight affective hermeneutics when dōjinshi creators fill gaps in narratives with a variety of neta in hopes of exhausting more feelings from their favourite characters and their stories. Like the fanfics that Anna Wilson studied, dōjinshi is also “a heuristic tool: a mental technology that facilitates understanding of a text by means of affective hermeneutics — a set way of gaining knowledge through feelings.” As such, intertextual databases are literacies of feeling. The effectiveness of dōjinshi as an affective medium relies on how well dōjinshi creators utilise their intertextual databases to solicit moe from elements seen in popular media. Mastery of the various literacies involved in an intertextual database — from recognising characters and neta, noting the elements that solicit moe, and sustaining this moe through affective hermeneutics — produces products that solicit the highest of feelings from the simplest of elements. During the 1990s, female dōjinshi creators managed to produce such works. This helped build an affective female fan community deeply immersed in the intertextual databases, thus allowing female fans to immediately recognise and produce various intertextual elements even in the smallest spaces such as a cut in a Comic Market catalog.

5.3. INTERTEXTUAL HEROES IN SHÔNEN JUMP

Central to these intertextual literacies was the most popular manga magazine during the 1990s, Weekly shōnen jump. The magazine’s success among fans can be seen
in the inclusion of *FC janpu* (Jump fan club/FC jump) in C38 (Summer 1990). Throughout the decade, specific Jump titles would stand out. *Captain Tsubasa* and *Saint Seiya* circles remained present in Comic Market until 1999. From C45 (Winter 1993) until C56 (Summer 1999), *Yu Yu Hakusho* also had its own genre code. *Slam Dunk* started having its own genre code from C46 (Summer 1994) and continued to do so until 2002.665 The generation of genre codes for specific *Shōnen jump* titles indicate a large number of circles participating in that genre. Figure 5.1 highlights these numbers as well as the ratio between male-organised and female-organised circles under these genres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comiket Genre</th>
<th>Total Circles</th>
<th>Attendance data</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male participants</td>
<td>Female participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC (Jump)</td>
<td>1,129</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTsubasa</td>
<td>1,089</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seiya</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC Shōnen</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC Shōjo</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anime (for men)</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5.1.** Sample circle data from Comic Market 43 (December 1992). *FC shōnen* combines fan clubs for all kinds of *shōnen* manga. The same goes for *FC shōjo*. *Anime danseimuke* (anime for men) is a genre code that replaced *eroanime* (erotic anime) genre during the 1980s. Source: Comic Market Preparation Committee, *Comic Market 30’s File*, 167.

The table above highlights the high number of female fans dedicated to *shōnen* texts, particularly those that run in *Shōnen jump*. As mentioned above, the success of girls’ interests in these *shōnen* texts lies in the affective use of intertextual database literacies by female *dōjinshi* writers. In this section, I will focus on two adventure series from *Shōnen jump* during the 1990s that showcased these intertextual literacies: *Jojo’s Bizarre Adventure*, and *Yu Yu Hakusho*. The complex and diverse worlds of these adventure stories became a breeding ground for girls’ intertextual database literacies.

### 5.3.1. INTERTEXTUALITY IN JOJO’S BIZARRE ADVENTURE

Hirohiko Araki’s *Jojo’s Bizarre Adventure* (JBA) began in 1987 as an adventure drama rooted in the rivalry between Jonathan Joestar and his adoptive brother, Dio

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664 Wilson, “The Role of Affect in Fan Fiction.”
Brando. Set in 1880s England, the world of Jonathan Joestar had the same bildungsroman settings seen in the shōnen 'ai manga of Hagio and Takemiya. The two rivals walked in candle-lit cobbled streets and wore frilly school boy suits. However, unlike the bishōnen, Jonathan and Dio were illustrated with muscular bodies, a hypermasculine and realistic aesthetic popularised in Shōnen jump during the 1990s by titles such as Hokuto no Ken (Fist of the North Star, 1983–1988) and City Hunter (1985–1991). The story itself is a straightforward action adventure where the two brothers each struggle to dominate the other. What makes JBA particularly important is how the story plays with intertextual elements which creates a highly varied grand narrative.

The complex narrative of Jojo’s Bizarre Adventure does not end with the victory of Jonathan Joestar nor the death of Dio Brando. Araki continues to write a narrative that follows Jonathan’s descendants as they pursue the powerful Dio Brando who has become immortal. Araki ensures that the name of Jonathan’s descendants bear the syllable “jo” so that they carry the legacy of their family and remain as the titular character of the series. Each generation of Jojo also has a different narrative and is inspired by various popular texts. For example, the story of Jonathan’s grandson, Jōtarō, a Japanese high school student, has its similarities with the classic Chinese tale Journey to the West. The story follows Jōtarō as he journeys with his grandfather, a monk, a dog, and two of his reformed enemies on a quest from Tokyo to Cairo in order to save his mother from Dio’s curse. When Jōtarō’s story ended, Jōsuke, the illegitimate son of his grandfather, became the new protagonist of JBA. Jōsuke’s story, which ran from 1992 to 1995, was an action adventure version of a cosy murder mystery.

The different incarnations of Jojo in this manga offer crazy narrative variations that sustain the readers’ interests. Beyond his changing protagonist and narrative styles, Araki also introduces other intertextual elements by naming other characters and

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665 Comic Market Preparation Committee, Comic Market 30’s File, 383–89.
669 A cosy mystery is a kind of mystery narrative that are set in small communities and downplays murders and violence. Examples of cosy mysteries are Agatha Christie’s Miss Marple series and the television series Murder She Wrote.
villains after popular cultural icons. While these characters were visually different to their namesake, they solicited a sense of familiarity for those who recognised these references or triggered readers to seek these references. Araki aided these interests with the release of his illustrated book in 1993, JOJO6251. This book was like an encyclopaedia and art book of JBA. Araki not only shared coloured illustrations of his characters in this book but also mundane data and facts about them and their powers.

It features the Jojo family lineage from the first three story arcs and even a map of the locations in his story. This variety in intertextual elements in JBA opens the series to diverse and complex readings. Apart from giving its readers an opportunity to learn and explore the world of Jojo, it also opens its readers to a grander narrative that they can control.

JBA dōjinshi played on many elements found in the main narrative. In fact, all of the 1990s dōjinshi I found for JBA remained faithful to the main setting of the stories. The dōjinshi creators played with the hilarious relationship dynamics of the characters, experimented with their powers called “stand,” and used it to pull pranks on the characters or had fun with the global setting of the series.

A JBA dōjinshi that stood out among the rest is an aniparo dōjinshi written by CLAMP. In their JBA dōjinshi titled Jojo no bimyō na shinkon seikatsu (Jojo’s strange newlywed life), Jōtarō consummates his love with his friend and rival, Kakyōin. The result of their love is an egg which eventually cracked to reveal their son who they named Jōta. The next chapters follow Jōta’s growth, his affections for his “mother” (which CLAMP assigned to Kakyōin), and his similarities with his father, Jōtarō.

Of the JBA dōjinshi I analysed, CLAMP’s JBA dōjinshi was furthest from the narrative and yet had a strong command of the series’ narrative elements. In their story, CLAMP clearly showed which narrative elements solicited their affective response: Kakyōin’s motherly persona, Jōtarō’s manliness, and the close friendship between Kakyōin and Jōtarō. They transformed these moe elements in their dōjinshi and raised affect for these elements with the inclusion of the strange egg-child of Kakyōin and

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670 Throughout the Jojo series, Araki has named some of his characters after relevant musicians and fashion designers during that period. For example, during Stardust Crusaders, Araki named a dog Iggy after Iggy Pop, a villain called Steely Dan, and a pair of villains named Oingo Boingo. To avoid any form of copyright infringement, some names have been changed in the English edition.
674 Ibid.
Jōtarō. CLAMP loved the idea of Jōta so much that CLAMP included him in their 1994 music video *Clamp in wonderland*. While CLAMP had already become professional writers by the time they published this *dōjinshi*, this fan work also highlighted the continuous intertextual practice of the group in both their original and fan work.

While *Jojo’s Bizarre Adventure* offered various opportunities for readers to play with its intertextual elements, fans’ response to this series was initially modest compared to its contemporaries but steadily grew over time. This initial disinterest in the series was probably due to the early hypermasculine aesthetic of the series. With the exception of CLAMP’s *dōjinshi*, most early *JBA* *dōjinshi* used Araki’s hypermasculine aesthetics. The other series in *Shōnen jump* favoured by female readers during the 1980s either had cartoonish features which were easier to manipulate or bore *bishōnen-like* or *biseinen-like* features which were familiar to *shōjo* readers. Fans’ interest in *JBA* really started during Jōtarō’s arc when Araki illustrated his characters with leaner hypermasculine bodies which bore similarities to the *biseinen* aesthetic. Readers may have also found *JBA*’s changing narrative to be intimidating. Another factor behind this initial disinterest was the fact that *JBA* was not broadcast on Japanese television until 2012. At best, a six-episode original animated video (OAV) of *Stardust Crusaders* was released between 1993 and 1994 and there have been occasional video games released since 1993.

While Araki did not inspire many *dōjinshi* during the 1990s despite having offered various elements for them to play with, *JBA* does accumulate a lot of fans over the years and has made the series one of *Shōnen jump*’s bestselling titles. I have included *JBA* in this analysis because of the series’ use of rich intertextual elements and the organisation of these elements through *JOJO6251*. This system may have been ahead of its time but it becomes a significant model by the end of the decade for *Shōnen jump* authors who wished to tap into female fans’ literacies and practices. *JBA*’s failure to inspire *dōjinshi* is also significant because it highlights how some literacies, in this case a character’s physique, must also match fans’ notion of a beautiful or a handsome man. At that time, the hypermasculine aesthetic was still unappealing to fans.

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5.3.2. Intertextuality in Yu Yu Hakusho

A Shōnen jump adventure series that did have a strong impact on girls’ dōjinshi culture in the 1990s was Togashi Yoshihiro’s Yu Yu Hakusho (YYH). First published in 1990, YYH follows Yūsuke Urameshi, a high school student who died an accidental death and became stuck between the world of the living and the dead. The prince of the underworld gives Urameshi a test he must pass in order to get back to the world of the living. Once he succeeds, the prince assigns Urameshi the role of a detective of the underworld and commands him to investigate supernatural activities on earth. In the process, he forms a ragtag crew which includes the half-human half-fox Kurama, the demon Hiei, and Urameshi’s bestfriend, Kuwabara. Together, they go through hell and back to fight the strongest demons and spirits that exist.

YYH’s story has similarities with many of the stories in Shōnen jump. It follows Shōnen jump’s ōdō where a character must go through countless battles, sometimes in the form of tournaments, to emerge as the best version of himself. YYH differs aesthetically from its contemporaries. Togashi’s art bridged the highly cartoonish aesthetic seen in Dragon Ball with the hypermasculine art seen in JBA. For an action adventure story, Togashi draws his protagonists with large expressive eyes and lean bodies. More mature characters in the story have highly muscular bodies and narrow eyes. Some have long-haired biseinen features as seen in series like Saint Seiya. This ambiguity in design appealed to female readers who saw the characters as cute.

The characters that appealed to fans the most were Hiei, a demon who trapped a black dragon in his hand, and Kurama, a high school student who was possessed by a demon fox. Hiei’s kyara appeal lies in his small stature, brooding personality, and his innocence. Kurama’s appeal resides in his long red hair, intelligence, impertinent personality, and his handsome transformation into the silver-haired demon fox. Kurama’s bishōnen-like features also extend with his power as he uses a rose whip for his battles. Kurama is often illustrated holding a rose. When in battle, Kurama is

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678 This will be discussed in Chapter Seven.
surrounded by rose petals. Compared to other characters in the series, Hiei and Kurama are loaded with elements that elicit intertextual reading from female readers.

Unlike JBA, YYH offers variation only through the growth of Urameshi and friends or in the villains they encounter. Togashi was also unlike Araki as he did not produce an illustrated book or encyclopaedia of YYH. The series was so well received that it eventually had an animated series in 1992 and two OAVs in 1993 and 1995. Shueisha compensated for the lack of data on the series when they published two books that covered the animation process of YYH. The book contains summaries of the episodes alongside illustrated character profiles. While these books are not as detailed as JOJO6251, the animation series have compensated for this by producing a variety of media for fans.

Apart from the OAVs, the anime production also released 20 original soundtrack CDs and 2 drama CDs between 1993 and 1999. Some of these soundtrack CDs include character songs and character duets sung by their respective voice actors. These character soundtracks add another narrative element that fans can play with. The soundtracks feature the characters as independent musicians and rockstars rather than underworld detectives. In addition to this, promotional materials for YYH were abundant and often featured the characters outside of their “world.” The boys of YYH either pose like half-naked models, or in floral shōjo-esque settings, or even in each other’s arms. These kinds of illustrations helped trigger and even encouraged girls’ intertextual literacies. The more YYH presented itself as a malleable narrative, the more it became appealing to its intertextual readers.

Fans’ interest in YYH increased after the manga was televised in 1993. Since the popularity of Saint Seiya, YYH was the first of the 1990s Shōnen jump series to get its own genre code in Comic Market. The YYH genre lasted from 1993 to 1999, showcasing fans’ continued interest in the series even when the series was abruptly concluded in 1994.

The reason behind the series’ sudden end was explored by Yoshihiro Togashi in a 1994 dōjinshi called Yoshirin de pon (Take a jab at Yoshirin). Togashi shared his

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682 For an example, see Yoshihiro Togashi, Yūyū hakusho [Yu Yu Hakusho], vol. 7 (Shūeisha, 1994), 11.
684 For an example, see Various Artists, Yū yū hakusho nesshōhen: Karaoke batoru roiyaru [Yu Yu Hakusho fevered performance arc: Karaoke battle royale], Audio CD (Media Remoras, 1993).
reflections on his publishing career and his impressions of YYH and its fans. He shared shared three reasons why he stopped YYH — (1) physical circumstances, (2) struggles with the manga, (3) desires outside of work. Togashi also made a subtle remark that highlighted his awareness of girls’ intertextual readings of his characters. While Togashi never made a direct remark to his female readers, his illustration of Hiei with large glassy eyes was indicative of Hiei illustrations seen in girls’ dōjinshi. It was becoming clear to Togashi that his story was being transformed beyond his control and this gave him great stress. Nobita Nobi, a manga critic and a writer of YYH dōjinshi, notes that Togashi’s struggle was mostly due to the weakness of his protagonist, Urameshi, who lacked the will to fight. Nobita argues that much like Urameshi, Togashi lost the will to fight against his readers who had shaped his texts in ways he had not intended.

Indeed, YYH continued in other forms even when the original manga had ended. Shōnen Jump continued to produce media mix goods for the series until the 2000s. Fans continued to consume YYH, whose narrative was now expanding due to its merchandise. Unlike JBA’s dōjinshi which were mostly set in the series, the forty YYH dōjinshi I analysed contained a mix of stories that set the characters in and out of YYH’s world. The dōjinshi that were set in the YYH world used gaps in the main narrative to explore the developing relationships between different characters. For example, REAL’s Suisō no naka no sakana (The fish inside the aquarium) explored what could have happened between Hiei and Kurama when they separated for a year to train under their former teachers in the main story. REAL speculated that Kurama was worried about Hiei’s obsession with his stronger demon form and her story resolves this tension between the two characters with a kiss. Stories like REAL’s highlight readers’ knowledge of the original narrative and its gaps. Like REAL, some dōjinshi use gaps in the main narrative to build readers’ affective response for the characters or their relationship.

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687 Ibid., 15.
688 Ibid., 14.
690 Ibid., 167–73.
691 REAL, Suisō no naka no sakana [The fish inside the aquarium], vol. 6, Real Books (Yokohama: Self-published, 1997).
692 Yoshihiro Togashi, Yūyū Hakusho [Yu Yu Hakusho], vol. 18 (Shūeisha, 1994), 7–86.
Most YYH *dōjinshi* situate its characters in various parodies and *neta*. These *dōjinshi* play with characters in the same way that YYH media mix place them in different settings. *Dōjinshi* writers extract characters and place them in various *neta*. For example, Nobita Nobi uses *byōki-neta* to see how Hiei, a dragon who is not familiar with human life, deals with the intimacy of being taken care of by a “medical professional,” played by Kurama. Some situate the characters in fairytales while most of the *YYH dōjinshi* I read ignore the setting altogether. As if trapped in an empty time and place, these *dōjinshi* generally focus on building affect for two characters, their relationship, and whatever *neta* authors wish to impose on them.

The cases of *Jojo’s Bizarre Adventure* and *Yu Yu Hakusho* highlight how narrative elements have been compartmentalised by both content producers and consumers in order to solicit affect. The case of JBA shows how the accessibility of the main narrative’s data gives fans the tools to play with the characters within the context of the narrative. The kinds of *dōjinshi* produced from highly documented stories such as JBA resulted in stories that utilised not just the characters but also many elements in the story. This led to the production of data books whose impact will be explored in the final chapter. On the other hand, the case of *YYH* highlights the power of intertextual reading in transforming texts to the point that the author loses control of his narrative. The lack of data from the series led fans to touch on the narrative elements that they could understand — the characters. Readers use their intertextual literacies to explore characters’ personalities in order to solicit affect. To elicit more *moe*, female fans examined the dynamics of characters’ relationships. The result is the *moe* element of *kappuringu* (coupling) where fans solicit affect by making two male characters fall in love with each other.

**5.4. Couples in Homosocial Worlds**

In contrast to otaku who find *moe* in *kyara* elements, Patrick Galbraith argues that female fans find *moe* in exploring “relationships among beautiful young boys.” While this was already practiced among girls during the 1970s and the 1980s, it was in the 1990s that the term *coupling* gained leverage among fans. For a concept that was

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696 Galbraith, “Moe and the Potential of Fantasy in Post-Millennial Japan.”
697 See Chapters Three and Four.
not openly discussed in fan magazines, books, or in any media available to the public until the 2000s, the development of this literacy that delineates couplings in shōnen texts is a decidedly intimate affair. It involves private “delusional” conversations amongst female fans either through small groups or in dōjinshi. The female fan community played an integral part in building the fantasies behind coupling.

Coupling, as I have defined earlier, refers to the romantic pairing of two male characters and is an extension of boys love literacy. Among Anglophone fans, this has been referred to as shipping (as in relationship). This pair consists of a seme — the character who leads the relationship and takes an active role in bed — and the uke — the character who takes the passive role in the relationship and in bed. These definitions are laced with intertextual meaning as they stem from words such as semeru, which means “to attack,” and ukeru, which means “to receive.” The use of these words to describe sexual positions of men in a male-male relationship has raised concerns about stereotyping among the gay community and has been tackled in various debates between the female yaoi community and the gay community. These two terms continue to bear weight among fans of boys love as they are integral variables of the genre’s ōdō — seme x uke = boys love couple.

All boys love texts are governed by the basic coupling equation of S x U, where “x” serves as the operand that pairs the two characters. The coupling operand varied during the 1980s before “x” became widely used by fans during the 1990s. As such, the aforementioned Hiei and Kurama are equated as Kurama x Hiei. Sometimes, fans shorten this equation by combining the reading of kanji from the couple’s names. In Figure 5.2., Dorukusu used the term HanaRu to indicate that their circle is selling Hanamichi x Rukawa dōjinshi. Sometimes an arrow (>) indicates a character’s one-sided attraction (S>U). A plus sign (+) indicates friendship between characters (A+B).

The earliest and clearest iterations of coupling was developed in the Ronin Warriors fandom where circles would use this clear coupling formula to indicate the couples in their dōjinshi. This was clearly visible in Comic Market 38 (Summer 1990)

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698 Aoyama, “BL (Boys’ Love) Literacy.”
701 Kiriaki and Katsuyama, BL guide for beginners, 10; Nishimura, BL culture theory, 70–72.
702 See Chapter 4.5 and Shiino, “Changes of the Coupling Notation in Comic Market.”
703 Galbraith, “Moe and the Potential of Fantasy in Post-Millennial Japan.”
where *Ronin Warriors* circles wrote their coupling formulas on their cuts.\(^{704}\) The popularity of this practice was passed on to other circles so that by C45 (Winter 1993), when *Slam Dunk* and *YYH* had its own genres in Comic Market, most circles used the “x” operand.\(^{705}\) By C48 (Summer 1995), fans’ coupling equations helped Comic Market organisers to devise a system that arranged genre circles further by coupling.\(^{706}\) For example, all the Kurama x Hiei circles were separated from the Urameshi x Kuwabara circles. This categorisation of coupling is still used in most *dōjinshi* events. More than a categorisation that has made it easier to navigate fan events, coupling serves as a clear representation of women’s male-male romantic fantasies and it offers readers opportunities to compare and contrast two of their favourite characters and explore their romantic potential.\(^{707}\)

Despite the apparent simplicity of this coupling equation, the literacies behind coupling are far more complex. Deciding who becomes a couple in a *shōnen* text demands a thorough understanding of these characters’ features, personalities, and their relationships. These characteristics aid readers in deciding who gets to be *seme* and who gets to be *uke* in the relationship. Scholars note that personalities and physical traits of the *seme* and *uke* are crucial in formulating these characters’ coupling.\(^{708}\) Yumiko Watanabe notes that it is crucial that a *seme* must have a dominant personality and that the *uke* gets to play the *weaker* partner.\(^{709}\) Febriani Sihombing adds that there are also visual codes that indicate who are *seme* and *uke*.\(^{710}\) Physical differences such as height, eyes, build (persona codes), and even their facial expressions (emotional codes) and actions (action codes) in the illustration serve as visual cues for readers to determine who are the *seme* and the *uke* in a relationship.\(^{711}\) For example, in a coupling that involves an older and a younger man, ideally, the younger man takes the role of the *uke*. However, if the older man is depicted as having a more quiet demeanour compared to the younger man, the older man can be seen as an *uke*.\(^{712}\) While it appears that there are conventions in coupling, these conventions are also malleable. For example, there also

\(^{707}\) Nagakubo, *Theorizing yaoi fiction*, 100.
\(^{709}\) Watanabe, “‘Yaoi’ read from youth manga”, 71.
\(^{710}\) Sihombing, “On The Iconic Difference between Couple Characters in Boys Love Manga.”
\(^{711}\) Ibid., 155–59.
\(^{712}\) Ibid., 158.
exists a third variable, R, which stands for riba, meaning ribāshiburu (reversible). Riba are produced in a seme x seme equation where both characters can dominate the other. Sihombing notes that riba are difficult to distinguish because they often hold both codes for seme and uke.

Moe elements are also attached to these coupling variables. These elements describe either a character’s physical characteristics or their persona. These moe elements often precede the coupling variable and they give readers an idea of what kind of seme or uke that particular character is. Examples of physical moe elements used in conjunction with coupling variables are megane (a character who wears eyeglasses), gachimuchi (muscular), oyaji (older man), and toshishita (younger character). Examples of moe elements based on a character’s persona include yancha (naughty), oresama (narcissistic), nakimushi (crybaby), hetare (useless), kichiku (cruel), and tsundere (a character who appears cold but is secretly affectionate). Hence, a coupling can be a combination of oyaji uke (older uke) x toshishita seme (younger seme) or a kichiku seme (cruel seme) x nakimushi uke (crybaby uke). In original BL texts, these elements are independent of the narrative and authors tend to use these moe elements to construct the story behind these elements. In the case of girls’ dōjinshi, these moe elements are loaded onto characters in shōnen media from girls’ intertextual databases. This will have a profound effect on how girls consume shōnen media. More than these moe elements, girls’ also lace male homosocial relationships with intertextual meanings in order to elicit greater affect.

Sonoko Azuma reinforces Galbraith’s argument and adds that more than just consuming moe elements, female fans consume relationships that transform heteronormative notions of relationships in texts. Azuma follows Jonathan Culler’s interpretive game which he defines as the reader’s quest, equipped with all the Discourses they own, to interpret texts. Azuma argues that fans’ consumption of relationships is an exercise of the interpretive game. As such, when they see particular relationships in texts, female fans take pleasure in interpreting these relationships. In Figure 5.2, Azuma notes how original narratives are transformed within

713 Nishimura, BL culture theory, 133–35.
715 Ownsha, Welcome to right BL, 148–53.
718 Azuma, “Community of delusions,” 256.
the consumption of relationships in *yaoi*. Each circle represents a character and the lines highlight the kinds of relationships they have. In original texts, a direct connection entails friendship while female readers interpret this friendship as love. Opposing connections indicate animosity between two characters in original texts. Azuma argues, however, that this animosity is a sign of passionate jealousy or envy between the two characters. Lastly a one-directional link between one character and another represents a character’s envy. When viewed by female fans, this envy is interpreted as illicit love.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 5.2.** Sonoko Azuma’s diagram of *yaoi* fans’ relationship consumption. Source: Azuma, “Community of delusions,” 255.

Azuma’s diagram of relationship consumption captures the basic structure of relationships in homosocial texts that are reinterpreted in girls’ *dōjinshi* as homosexual. It reinforces Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s idea that representation of men’s relationships in homosocial texts are constantly in danger of tipping over into the homosexual.\(^{719}\) Sedgwick describes this as homosocial desire, the “potential unbrokenness between

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homosexual and homosexual.\textsuperscript{720} Absent of any socially and historically constructed homophobia, Sedgwick argues that homosocial activities such as “male bonding” must be equally seen as homosexual. She sees the denial of this homosexual symmetry with homosocial relationships as homophobic. Sedgwick’s argument reinforces the homosexual readings of female fans such as that of Fumi Yoshinaga who senses something “strange” when she encountered the homosocial relationships between two male characters in \textit{shōnen} manga and openly speculated about this relationship as homosexual in her \textit{dōjinshi}.\textsuperscript{721} At the same time, the apparent disbelief of male authors\textsuperscript{722} and critics\textsuperscript{723} concerning women’s reinterpretation of texts only justifies Sedgwick’s stand on the inherent homophobia in contemporary society.

\textit{Dōjinshi} became the space for the interpretation game. As Yoshinaga noted, \textit{dōjinshi} became a space where she could explore these relationships in hopes that someone would see the same strange things as she did.\textsuperscript{724} While coupling begins as a personal exercise, the \textit{dōjinshi} community’s response to these couplings helps cement particular coupling conventions. These coupling conventions are often coloured by a \textit{dōjinshi} writer’s ability to elicit affect for a particular coupling dynamic. In order to establish these conventions, a \textit{dōjinshi} writer must effectively use the various \textit{moe} elements to maximise affect on a particular coupling. Once again, intertextual literacies are used to construct convincing couples. The best \textit{dōjinshi} make a couple appear organic and instinctively natural to readers.\textsuperscript{725} Readers learn these coupling literacies and in turn associate them with the original homosocial texts. For example, Kazuka Minami notes how series such as the \textit{Prince of Tennis} makes her instinctively couple characters, offering a “coupling variation” which is rare for many series.\textsuperscript{726} \textit{Dōjinshi} artists become important proponents in teaching their readers the various literacies behind successful couplings by means of affective hermeneutics. The artists whose couplings elicit most affect from readers influence the popularity of a coupling among fans. Their readers respond either by contributing more delusional speculations on this

\textsuperscript{720} Ibid., 1.
\textsuperscript{721} Fumi Yoshinaga, \textit{Ano hito to koko dake no oshaberi: Yoshinaga Fumi taidanshū} [Conversations with people right now: Collection of interviews by Yoshinaga Fumi] (Tokyo: Hakusensha, 2007), 166.
\textsuperscript{722} As seen in Togashi’s response to female fans.
\textsuperscript{723} As seen in Gō Itō and Eiji Ōtsuka’s befuddlement when it comes to girls’ \textit{dōjinshi} culture. See Itō, \textit{Tezuka is dead}, 9; and Ōtsuka, “Reproduction and Consumption of Narrative,” 110.
\textsuperscript{724} Yoshinaga, \textit{Conversations with people}, 63.
\textsuperscript{726} Ibid.
coupling with their own *dōjinshi* or by actively supporting the artist to construct a more elaborate cohesive narrative surrounding a coupling. The presence of coupling conventions in fans’ literacies shaped the way homosocial worlds were read by girls. Suddenly, school varsities became havens for couplings.

5.4.1. **SLAM DUNK AND THE COUPLING STANDARD**

Apart from *Yu Yu Hakusho*, the other breakthrough fandom among female fans in the 1990s was *Slam Dunk*. Written by Takehiko Inoue, *Slam Dunk* was published in *Shōnen jump* from 1990 until 1996 and had an animated series from 1993 until 1996. The story focuses on the brash Hanamichi Sakuragi, a delinquent freshman who wants to impress the girl of his dreams, Haruko Akagi, by joining the basketball team of Shohoku High School. Having no previous knowledge about basketball, the story follows Sakuragi’s development as an athlete. With the rest of his team, Sakuragi learns the basic gameplay and strategies in basketball. At the same time, the story also highlights sportsmanship through Sakuragi’s growing relationships with his teammates and opponents.

Unlike *Captain Tsubasa* which featured highly outrageous and unrealistic football techniques, Inoue was representative of a group of comic writers who wished to capture realism in their comics. Inoue looked towards the NBA, America’s National Basketball Association, and its heroes — from Kareem Abdul Jabbar to Michael Jordan — for inspiration in his comics. After all, Inoue was once a basketball player in high school and he used *Slam Dunk* to introduce basketball to Japanese audiences.¹²⁷

*Slam Dunk* became the next big sports series from *Shōnen jump* after *Captain Tsubasa*. It remains one of the best-selling series for the magazine, having sold more than 120 million copies as of 2013.¹²⁸ Its appeal stems from Inoue’s exciting storytelling through his dynamic images which, he confesses, stems from his muscle memory from playing basketball.¹²⁹ Inoue’s technique of drawing based on muscle memory definitely had an impact on the way he illustrated his characters. Compared to the cartoonish frames of *Captain Tsubasa* and *Saint Seiya*, Inoue’s characters are detailed and muscled, displaying the athleticism and masculinity of the characters.

¹³⁰ Ibid.
Unlike Araki’s heroes, most of Inoue’s characters are leaner and have the handsome appeal of biseinen characters. This makes *Slam Dunk*’s characters more appealing for girls. Yoshinaga also notes that despite being a sports *shōnen* manga, she finds *Slam Dunk* accessible because it contains some *shōjo* grammar. The backstories, the comedy, and even the speech balloons of *Slam Dunk* reminds Yoshinaga of *shōjo* manga. Inoue’s storytelling techniques that combine *shōnen* visual aesthetics with *shōjo* narrative elements opened *Slam Dunk* to girls’ intertextual literacies which were now blurring the lines between *shōnen* and *shōjo* manga.

Of particular interest among girls are Sakuragi, the protagonist of the series, and Kaede Rukawa, a basketball prodigy and Sakuragi’s teammate. The two characters are visually handsome, with youthful faces and athletic bodies. In terms of personalities, Rukawa has a cool persona and exerts all his energy in court while Sakuragi is a wild athlete who uses his luck and youthful vigour to score points. The two boys see each other as rivals and fans viewed this homosocial tension as an opportunity to explore their coupling dynamics.

Given that both men contain dominant personalities and physiques, fans played on their potential as both *seme* and *uke*. As much as there are Rukawa x Hanamichi *dōjinshi*, there are also Hanamichi x Rukawa, a *gyakukappuru* (reverse couple). This *gyakukappuru* relies on the different ways fans read Hanamichi and Rukawa’s relationship. Ayano Yamane, a prominent Rukawa x Hanamichi artist, illustrated their coupling in terms of Rukawa’s level-headedness controlling the wild Hanamichi. Her highly erotic fanworks maximise this coupling dynamic regardless of the *neta* she imposed on these characters. The reverse perspective of this coupling sees Hanamichi as the wild passionate *seme* who is out to melt the cold austerity of Rukawa. This alternative perspective still plays with the same elements but it highlights readers’ subjectivities through the multiple readings of characters with the same *moe* elements.

Other relationships in the series would inspire more coupling dynamics. Kiminobu Kogure is one of the senior members of Shohoku High School who serves as vice-captain of the team. He is level-headed, like team captain Akagi, but has a nervous

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731 Yoshinaga, *Conversations with people*, 63.
732 For an example of psychological portrait used in *Slam Dunk*, see Takehiko Inoue, *Slam Dunk*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1990), 51.
734 An example of this is in *Come with the wind* where Yamane place Sakuragi and Rukawa in parodies of popular films. See Ayano Yamane, *Come with the wind*. 
disposition when faced with wild cards such as Sakuragi. He is also very caring to his teammates especially to his fellow senior, Hisashi Mitsui, who had left his delinquent ways in order to live a better life. Mitsui appears reckless yet on the court he is a hard worker and a diligent player. He is seen as the cool handsome senior and serves as an example to Sakuragi and Rukawa that they can reform their delinquent ways. Akagi and Kogure work together to keep Mitsui in check.

The relationship of these Shohoku seniors has also inspired female readers to explore the close friendship between these three boys. When Mitsui is paired with Akagi — who is described as a gorilla by Sakuragi — Mitsui takes the **uke** role. This dynamic is determined by the physical difference between the two where Akagi has a larger and more muscular physique compared to Mitsui. When Mitsui is paired with Kogure, Mitsui takes the **seme** role. This is also based on the physical difference between the two as Kogure has a slimmer body compared to Mitsui and Kogure’s glasses serve as a **moe** element that makes him more cute than manly.

Fumi Yoshinaga’s theory behind the Mitsui x Kogure coupling lies in Mitsui’s determination and forwardness which eases Kogure’s anxieties. Mitsui’s wild side is also the perfect excuse to include many erotic scenes in her **dōjinshi**. From 1992 to 2003, Yoshinaga created a series of **dōjinshi** that explored the relationship of Mitsui and Kogure from the time they fell in love in high school until they graduated from college. Unlike most of her contemporaries, Yoshinaga’s dedication for this coupling continued even during her professional career. To a degree, even her professional boys love works have traces of Mitsui and Kogure’s coupling dynamics.

Since *Slam Dunk* has a simple setting, **dōjinshi** for *Slam Dunk* focus heavily on the characters and **neta**. As Yoshinaga remembers, *Slam Dunk dōjinshi* during the 1990s had so much freedom that a lot of people experimented with narratives and character

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735 Fumi Yoshinaga, *Anata to hajime atta koro* [The first time we met] (Tokyo: Self-published, 2001); Fumi Yoshinaga, *Yoru, hoshi o miru* [Tonight, I can see the stars] (Tokyo: Self-published, 1998); Fumi Yoshinaga, *Soshite bokura ni wa seishun ga atta* [Thus, we had our youth] (Tokyo: Self-published, 2003).


738 The relationship between Mitsui and Kogure has its similarities in her characters Ono and Tachibana from *Antique Bakery*. Ono is caring and wears eyeglasses while Tachibana was a determined individual. She also wrote a dōjinshi for these two characters that has its parallels with Ono and Tachibana’s coupling where Ono has anxieties with his friendship with Tachibana. The difference is that Ono and Tachibana’s relationship never comes to fruition.
types which provided a healthy creative environment. While this can be seen through the variety of *neta* explored by *Slam Dunk* fans, figures 5.3. and 5.4 highlight the various character and coupling conventions in *Slam Dunk dōjinshi*. Some characters naturally fall within conventions of *seme* and *uke* while others have room to play with both given the right circumstances. In terms of relationship dynamics, most *dōjinshi* exploited the homosocial world of *Slam Dunk* and saw these relationships as sexual rather than friendly.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Characters</th>
<th>Seme</th>
<th>Uke</th>
<th>Seme Tendency</th>
<th>Uke Tendency</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hanamichi Sakuragi</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>95.00%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rukawa Kaede</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>70.37%</td>
<td>29.63%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitsui Hisashi</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>94.12%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takenori Akagi</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiminobu Kagure</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sendoh Akira</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5.3.** Coupling variables in *Slam Dunk dōjinshi*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
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<th>Romantic</th>
<th>Sexual</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teammates (Friends)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enemies (Rivals)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5.4.** Relationship dynamics in *Slam Dunk dōjinshi*. The general column refers to stories that are strictly *aniparo* and does not have any notion of coupling. The romantic column features a romantic narrative with light expressions of affections (a hug or a kiss). The sexual column counts *dōjinshi* that featured erotic content regardless of whether it is romantic or not.

### 5.6. Conclusion

Compared to the previous decade when writers were still getting a grasp of how to use *dōjinshi* to create parodies, nineties *dōjinshi* had the clarity to convey their intertextual understanding of *shōnen* texts. The changes in fans’ consumption of media transformed the way *dōjinshi* writers shared their “delusions.” *Dōjinshi* during the nineties were constructed in such a way that each element must have meaning and

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purpose in order to sustain the delusion. The organisation of these elements helped educate readers on new ways to interpret texts.

As seen in this chapter, the construction of girls’ intertextual databases, through *dōjinshi*’s writers use of affective narrative elements in their *dōjinshi* and in fan discussions, educated their readers to recognise specific elements in narratives — from characters, settings, to plots. In doing so, female fans recognised the elements that gave them most affect. In turn, they used these *moe* elements in their *dōjinshi* in order to share the same affect with their friends or with other readers. Their effective use of *moe* elements made moments in *dōjinshi* emotionally memorable to their readers. In the process, readers’ understanding of these elements, especially those seen in *shōnen* texts, are transformed. As seen in the fans of *YYH* and *Slam Dunk*, heroes looked cute and delinquents were highly sexual.

*Dōjinshi* served as a playground for authors to work on how to efficiently use these *moe* elements especially when they had to convince their readers that friendships between two male characters could lead to love. The sight of their two favourite male characters kissing would have shocked readers, but given the right combination of *moe* elements, this kiss would become believable. The efficient use of these *moe* elements can be seen through the construction of coupling variables, *seme* and *uke*, as well as their diverse permutations. When artists, such as Ayano Yamane and Fumi Yoshinaga present couplings with such clarity, it influences readers’ perception of those relationships and their works become pillars of these couplings. In having the literacy to recognise signifiers for coupling, readers overwrite their homosocial understanding of relationships and welcome the homoerotic potential of *shōnen* texts.

All these *moe* elements, drawn from fans’ intertextual databases, were carefully pieced together by *dōjinshi* artists, to present a new reading of *shōnen* media. Fans’ “rotting” of *shōnen* media is closer to a person creating patterns with the colours in a Rubik’s cube. Through *dōjinshi*, fans clearly showed their readers the *jouissance* they discovered in these new patterns. In the process, readers learned the literacies to understand how these patterns were made and in turn produce their own patterns.

As the decade ended, the patterns created by fans’ intertextual database would become a “rotten” sight for some. As their nuanced literacies and practices distinctly shaped their developing Discourse, some people recognised their non-normative ways and perceived it as “rotten.” In the next chapter, I will tackle how these private and intimate literacies became tied to the public stigma called *fujoshi*. 
6. THE IMAGINED FUJOSHI: PUBLIC RECOGNITION OF FANS "ROTTEN" DISCOURSE

6.1. INTRODUCTION

When a shy otaku sought romantic advice on a Japanese online forum in 2004, nobody imagined that his story would transform the tarnished public perception of the otaku. Unlike the murderer Tsutomu Miyazaki, the hero of Densha Otoko (Train Man, 2004) was a mild-mannered otaku whose courage, innocence, and naivety captured the hearts of the Japanese public. The man’s actual identity remained unknown, yet the Japanese public came to know his story as they consumed it via books, manga, film, and a television drama based on the online events. The story of Densha Otoko sparked public curiosity about Japan’s fan culture. Mass media began to investigate otaku spaces such as Akihabara and Comic Market. Television shows and magazines interviewed prominent members of the otaku community, many of whom, like Densha Otoko, were male, on the positive aspects of otaku culture. Although there were more female participants at some of these fan events, male perspectives initially dominated public discussions about fans.

It took a 2005 article by journalist Yumiko Sugiura to shift the spotlight onto female fans. Sugiura’s article used the term fujoshi to refer to female fans who enjoy boys love in their anime, manga, and other forms of popular culture. While these young women’s passion for popular culture was seen as similar to that of male otaku, their skewed interpretation of male homosocial relationships as being both romantic and sexual was perceived as a “rotten” practice. Hence, to capture their “rotten” interests, the first character of the common term fujoshi (婦女子, women and girls), was replaced with a homophone that meant “rotten,” transforming the term into fujoshi (腐女子, rotten girl). The term fujoshi was already widely used online to describe these girls.

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740 See Chapter 5.1.
743 These thought leaders ranged from otaku cultural critics such Yoshihiro Yonezawa and Toshio Okada, otaku scholars such as Kaichirō Morikawa, who have studied otaku culture, and Go Itō.
744 As of 2005, 71.5% of circle participants are female. Meanwhile, 56.9% of attendees are also female. See Comic Market Preparation Committee, Comic Market 30’s File, 290.
745 Sugiura, Study of female otaku, 9–12.
but it was through Sugiura’s article that the term *fujoshi* was first used in the mass media.\(^{747}\) A year after Sugiura’s article, *fujoshi* and their intimate “rotten” practices began to appear in public through various films, television shows, novels, and manga. Not only did *fujoshi* culture entertain the Japanese public but the ensuing “*fujoshi* boom” also educated the public about the various non-normative literacies female fans practised. The “*fujoshi* boom” during the mid-2000s helped shape the public imagination of female fans and virtually united those who practised these “rotten” literacies.

In this chapter, I examine the emergence of *fujoshi* in Japanese popular culture, and the role literacies played in shaping the *fujoshi* identity. The previous chapters have looked at how various literacies and practices were shaping an emerging Discourse among female fans. In New Literacy Studies, literacies are significant because they serve as markers for Discourses and identities. This chapter specifically looks at the role literacies play in building *fujoshi* Discourse and identity. I argue that specific fan literacies practised by some female fans, such as intertextual databasing and coupling, distinguished *fujoshi* from other fan cultures, such as the *otaku*. Their non-normative literacies served as criteria to discriminate between these female fans and others, thus validating the “rotten” label the media has attached to their Discourse.

I also argue that the public recognition of *fujoshi* also gave women the opportunity to shape and claim this “rotten” identity. The discussions surrounding *fujoshi* identity in Japanese media helped shape the public’s imagination of these women while informally teaching various literacies that would shape the consumption and re/production of popular culture. These discussions would have a profound effect on popular culture, especially in gendered media such as *shônen* magazines like *Shônen Jump*.

I begin with a brief discussion of the relationship between literacies, Discourses, and identities in New Literacy Studies. An analysis of the shifting representations of female fans and their literacies in the media during this period follows the theoretical discussion. I first consider how female fans are represented in media before Sugiura’s article in 2005. Then, I look at Sugiura’s works before examining the other media that

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\(^{748}\) This Discourse (with a capital D) follows James Gee’s definition which I have explored in Chapter 1 but will expand further in the following section, especially its relationship with identities.
have followed her lead — *Mōsō shōjo otaku* (Delusional girl otaku/*Fujoshi Rumi*, 2006–2013), *Tonari no 801chan* (My neighbor 801chan, 2006–present), and *Fujoshi kanojo* (Fujoshi girlfriend/*My Girlfriend is a Geek*, 2006). By comparing the notion of female fans in popular media prior to Sugiura’s article, I intend to highlight the shift in the representation of female fans in Japan. The various titles that follow after Sugiura’s *fujoshi* label have been critical in popularising the “rotten” nuance of women’s literacies. These works on *fujoshi* have led women to critique these representations and reclaim the *fujoshi* identity, as seen in special issues of *Eureka* (*Fujoshi manga compendium*, 2007; and *BL studies*, 2007) and manga such as *Kusare joshi* (Rotten girl, 2009). These discussions about *fujoshi* would impact not just on the public’s imagination of female fans but also their literacy concerning this kind of girls’ culture.

### 6.2. SPACES AND IDENTITIES

The previous five chapters traced the development of fans’ literacies and practices as young women engaged with mass media. These literacies operated beyond reading and writing as technological developments in media encouraged fans to develop multimodal literacies and practices. As such, a female fan by the end of the 1990s had to be adept in a variety of literacies and practices, from intertextual reading to coupling, to engage in her fan community. A young woman’s literacy practices would contribute to her identity and how she would be perceived by society.

As I have discussed in Chapter One, New Literacy Studies views literacies as the various ways we comprehend, communicate, feel about, and navigate different aspects of our lives as members of specific groups through the use of various technologies.749 These literacies are tied to social practices which we engage in because of our *life-worlds*750 or Discourses.751 James Paul Gee notes that a Discourse (with a capital D) is a distinct ways of acting, speaking, thinking, or feeling that is recognised as part of a specific group.752 Unlike discourses (with a lowercase D) which focus on the social context of language, Gee argues that Discourses encompass practices beyond spoken and written language.753 Gee notes that Discourses combine a variety of “ways of being

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752 Ibid., 3.
in the world” to the point that they define us as a “kind of person.” This “kind of person” refers to our identities which we are either born into, assigned by institutions, or recognised by our peers or other people. In this regard, Gee highlights the connections between our literacies, Discourses, and our identities.

We learn and engage in specific practices because we engage with and are a part of various Discourses. For example, in an effort to participate in fan Discourse, a young woman sketches her favourite Shōnen jump character on an empty corner of her notebook in the hopes of sharing the image with other fans she knows. As we enact the literacies of our Discourses, our identities emerge. When people see this same girl, they identify her as a fan because they recognise that her action of drawing her favourite character is a practice among fans. Within specific contexts, people “make up” other people’s identities through their practices. Individuals embody Discourses through the enactment of literacies within specific contexts.

Ian Hacking sees identities as a form of dynamic nominalism. He notes that, “a kind of person came into being at the same time the kind itself was being invented.” Hacking argues that identities are not simply about recognising a new person but they involve a social process of inventing a label for certain people who do certain things. Scholars understand the influence of our histories and social contexts in our actions and ways of being a certain “kind of person.” It is important to recognise identities as they are constituted. This can be studied by examining how literacies, Discourses, and identities intertwine and emerge together. While these concepts appear tightly knit, identities are unlike Discourses which are produced within their contexts. Identities demand external recognition outside their contexts. This does not invalidate an individual’s internal reflection on his or her identity, but it recognises the importance of others in the creation of identities.

People situated within their Discourses are not aware of their unique literacies until they engage with other Discourses that may contest or disagree with them. Charles

754 Gee, Social Linguistics and Literacies, 3.
756 Ibid.
758 Ibid., 165.
759 Ibid., 170.
Taylor argues that identities are negotiated through dialogue with others.\textsuperscript{761} The “others” referred to by Taylor loosely encapsulate people, institutions, and other forces outside of a specific Discourse. This dialogue highlights the differences in peoples’ practices, allowing another set of people to acknowledge the different Discourses people live by. If life is a play, an actor’s success lies in his or her ability to think, act, and speak (literacies) in a specific role (Discourse) that allows the audience to immediately recognise his or her character (identity).

Gee notes that there are four ways to view identity.\textsuperscript{762} The first is our natural identity, referring to our biological identity which encompasses things such as our sex and the colour of our skin. Institutional identity refers to how social and cultural institutions recognise our identity. For example, within the smallest social unit of the family, we may be identified as a husband, wife, or child. The third way to view identity is through discursive-identity, where identities are recognised through dialogues with other people. Like Taylor, Gee emphasises the role of “recognition,” which reinforces the importance of dialogue in the creation of identities. Discursive-identity relies on an individual’s effort in “recruiting” people’s recognition of that identity which Gee sees as an identity pertaining to one’s achievement.\textsuperscript{763} The final way is called affinity identity which identifies a person based on practices tied to an affinity space.

Affinity space has similarities to Lave and Wenger’s concept of community of practice which sees identities emerge from people’s participation in a specific community.\textsuperscript{764} However, “community” implies strict physical boundaries and for Gee, “space” encompasses practices that take place in virtual spaces such as online forums or social media.\textsuperscript{765} For Gee, affinity spaces are bound “primarily to a set of common endeavours or practices and secondarily to other people in terms of shared culture or traits.”\textsuperscript{766} These perspectives are not mutually exclusive and often come together to identify our various identities. Looking back at my earlier example, the young woman sketching in her notebook is institutionally identified as a student while her practice of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
    \item[\textsuperscript{762}] Gee, “Identity as an Analytic Lens for Research in Education.”
    \item[\textsuperscript{763}] Ib., 104.
    \item[\textsuperscript{764}] Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
    \item[\textsuperscript{766}] Gee, “Identity as an Analytic Lens for Research in Education,” 105.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
drawing fan art ties her to fan spaces. In this chapter, I will be using these perspectives in determining the various forces that recognise and distinguish fujoshi from other fans.

A critical force behind the recognition of fujoshi is mass media. As I have mentioned above, the various publications and other media that featured fujoshi were critical in highlighting this identity to the public. Benedict Anderson recognised the power of media when he studied the contribution of print-capitalism in shaping people’s imagination of modern nations. In Imagined Communities, he argues that print-capitalism provides a space for print-languages to create “unified fields of exchange and communication.” Anderson argues that vernacular print media are able to share narratives that virtually connect people who share the same language and experience. This shared imagination of people, time, practices, and places gives readers a shared experience. Printed texts such as newspapers helped geographically disperse readers to imagine themselves and other people as members of the same community. While Anderson developed his theory within the context of modern nation-states, this imagined community also extends to affinity spaces. Affinity spaces expand the boundaries of this imagined community by accommodating affinities brought on by new technologies.

Chapter Four has shown how developments in print technologies have allowed fervent readers to produce dōjinshi, providing them with an opportunity to create a discursive affinity space from which fan literacies have developed. The internet provides online environments that make it easier for virtual communities to form and create identities. Howard Rheingold defines virtual communities as “social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace.” Steve Fox notes that as technologies integrate physical and virtual spaces, the new imagined communities must reflect literacies from both worlds. Fox argues, that “we should view the virtual community as a natural

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568 Ibid., 44.
569 An example of this can be seen in Dollase’s study of early shōjo culture. See Dollase, “Early Twentieth Century Japanese Girls’ Magazine Stories,” 731.
571 Ibid., 6.
extension of the physical community rather than as a completely separate entity.” He adds that beyond Anderson’s methods, new imagined communities must also be viewed in five ways:

1. the technology that enables entrance into the community,
2. the content and representation… that help create the structure and form of the imagined community
3. the history of the users…
4. the intertextuality of content…
5. the communication/interaction among individuals.

Fox argues that in studying emerging communities, and by extension, identities, one must take into consideration the degrees of interaction between the virtual, physical, and imagined community. For example, there are communities that have strong online engagement but rarely meet in person. There are other communities that value physical engagement with members of their community but have little regard for online activities. There are also those who strike a balance between both worlds. In determining the shape of *fujoshi* as it comes into being as an identity, it is important to consider what role media played in shaping this imagined identity through the representation of the virtual and physical aspects of *fujoshi* community.

I will examine below the development of the *fujoshi* identity as it emerged from an imagined sense of shared affinity spaces. As mentioned above, representations of female fans in popular media played a critical role in recognising women’s “rotten” identity by exposing their non-normative Discourse in mainstream media. This raised fans’ own awareness of their “rotten” Discourse, allowing them to understand their distinctive literacy practices. This also became an opportunity for girls and women who already practised these literacies to engage in a discussion that shaped people’s understanding of their identity.

6.3. Hidden in Plain Sight: Female Fan Identities Before 2005

Discussions about female fan identities were around before 2005. Fan magazines such as *Puff* often highlighted nuanced fan practices that raised readers’ awareness of being a “kind of fan.” One particular instance of this was a 1987 discussion in *Puff*’s fan column called, *Oshaberi kaidan (Idle conversations)* where fans discussed tensions

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773 Ibid., 51.
774 Ibid., 53.
within the *Captain Tsubasa* fandom.\footnote{Welker, “History of Shōnen’AI, Yaoi, and Boys Love,” 55–57.} One letter expressed increasing concern over *yaoi yatteru hitotachi* — people who do *yaoi*.\footnote{Ibid., 37.} This letter talked about how these “people who do *yaoi*” had a superficial appreciation of *Captain Tsubasa* since they were more concerned about how beautiful these characters were and they had little or no interest in the general direction of the series. The word *yaoi* had already gained leverage in Japanese fandom during the late-1980s and had become a descriptive category for fan texts that contained male-male romance.\footnote{Hester, “Fujoshi Emergent,” 172.} This letter highlighted fans’ recognition of people who specifically consume and produce *yaoi*. At times, the *dōjinshi* they consumed and produced served as markers for their identities. Fans who enjoyed male-male romance in *aniparo dōjinshi* were called *yaoi-kei* (*yaoi* group) while those who enjoyed original works in the same vein as *June* were called *June-kei* (*June*-group).\footnote{Toshio Okada, *Tōdai otaking zemi* [Tokyo University’s otaku course] (Tokyo: Jiyūkokuminsha, 1998); Toshio Okada, *Otakugaku nyūmon* [Introduction to otaku studies] (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2000); Toshio Okada, *Ushinawareta mirai* [Lost future] (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbun Publications, 2000).}

The Miyazaki incident would have a profound effect on fan identity in general. It encouraged the fan community to open up and lay claim to discussions about otaku identity. Toshio Okada, one of the founders of the animation company *Gainax* and popularly known in the community as the *otaking* (king of otaku), wrote a series of books that examined otaku culture.\footnote{For more on cosplay, see Osmud Rahman, Liu Wing-sun, and Brittany Hei-man Cheung, “‘Cosplay’: Imaginative Self and Performing Identity,” *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture* 16, no. 3 (September 2012): 317–41; Patrick W Galbraith, “Cosplay, Lolita and Gender in Japan and Australia: An Introduction,” *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*, no. 32 (July 2013), accessed May 9, 2013, http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue32/galbraith_intro.htm.} His animation company, Gainax, produced an animated video called *Otaku no video* (*Otaku video*, 1991) which featured the rise of otaku culture through the lens of its main characters. *Otaku no video* also included mockumentary inserts that featured “real” otaku and their delinquent activities. This tongue-in-cheek video of otaku culture was highly focused on the activities and interests of male fans. At best, the female fans featured in the video engaged in cosplay — a short term for “costume play” which is a practice where fans dress up and act like characters in fiction.\footnote{780} Yoshihiro Yonezawa, one of the founding organisers of Comic Market, joined in this discourse by discussing *dōjinshi* culture under the pen name Shun

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\footnote{“Oshaberi kaidan” [Idle conversations], *Puff*, August 1987.}
Ajima. While Yonezawa was cognizant of the large participation of women in Comic Market, the focus of his books was mostly on men’s interests. The same can be said for subsequent critiques and studies of otaku culture. What generally recurred among these texts were admissions of their authors’ inability to fully understand women’s interest in male-male romances.

As men dominated the discourse on fan identity, female fans also made an effort to examine their literacies and practices. Azusa Nakajima was one of the few scholars who studied girls’ interest in *bishōnen* before exploring her views on women’s interest in *yaoi*. Dōjinshi artist Nobita Nobi also published essays on her views on sexual expression in *yaoi* texts. Subsequent texts continued to study girls’ interests in male-male romances and fan culture without putting a label on these girls. Most of these texts used general female identifiers (*joshi, shōjo, onna*, and so on) and would occasionally use the term “fan.” Rarely did these texts use otaku to describe female fans. One can sense these women’s hesitation to associate themselves with otaku culture and identity during the 1990s. This hesitation was probably due to the negative and rather masculine image of otaku, especially after the Miyazaki Incident. At best, a book that studied the economics of female fans referred to these girls as otaku *shōjo*. While fans understood the connection of their non-normative literacies to *shōjo* culture, they did not identify themselves as *shōjo*. By the 1990s, the identity of female fans immersed in *yaoi* and boys love texts was yet to take shape.

6.3.1. THE FEMALE FAN IN COMIC PARTY AND DENNO YAOI SHOJO

As attendees of fan events such as Comic Market steadily increased during the late 1990s, some artists and creatives attempted to capture female fan culture in their

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783 Nakajima, *A primer on the beautiful boy*.

784 Nakajima, *Communication deficiency syndrome*; Nakajima, *The children of Thanatos*.

785 Nobi, *Adults won’t understand us*.

works. One of the earliest works that featured female fans was *Komikku pāti* (*Comic Party*, 1999), a romantic role-playing dating simulation video game published by Leaf. The game features a young male protagonist named Kazuki who has been inspired to create his own *dōjinshi* after visiting a monthly fan event called Comic Party. Throughout the game, he meets a variety of girls, many of whom are female fans who either produce their own *dōjinshi* or participate in Comic Party. As a dating simulation game, the game’s objective is for Kazuki to raise his skills, produce a *dōjinshi* for every Comic Party event, and finally date one of the girls he met.

The women in the game have different interests and opinions on otaku and *dōjinshi* culture. For example, Kazuki’s childhood friend expresses disgust for otaku and *dōjinshi* culture but she eventually understands Kazuki’s interests and supports him by doing cosplay. As Kazuki meets the other women in the game, his knowledge of *dōjinshi* and otaku culture expands. The female fans in the game mostly produce original *bishōjo dōjinshi* whose themes appeal to male fans. This is understandable since the game is intended for male audiences. The video game was eventually relicensed for manga (2001–2005) and two anime series (2001, *Comic Party Revolution*, 2005). Unlike the video game, the manga and anime have a limited narrative as they follow a linear story line. While *Comic Party* captures women’s participation in *dōjinshi* and otaku culture to, it highlights men’s perspective on desirable female fans. Since these female characters are intended to trigger *moe* among men, they do not possess traits that male fans consider unappealing. Based on the female characters in this series, interest in *yaoi* is an unappealing trait.

Published in the same year as *Comic Party*, *Dennō yaoi shōjo* (*Cyber yaoi girl*, 1999–2006) focuses on female fans who met in an online chatroom for *yaoi* fans. This four-panel comic by Sahoko Nakajima features Mitsuki Tanaka, a college student, and her online *yaoi* friends as they balance their fan and personal lives. Unlike *Comic Party*, which highlights girls’ passionate immersion in fan culture, *Dennō yaoi shōjo* focuses on the real-life comedy of women trying to tread a fine line between their normal lives and their *yaoi* practices.788 For example, while Tanaka is a passionate fan of *yaoi*, she makes an effort not to reveal her hobby to her boyfriend. In one story, her boyfriend invites her on a date during Christmas.789 Tanaka finds herself in a snag as Comic

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789 In Japan, Christmas is more known among single young people as a romantic holiday for couples.
Market will be held on the same day and she has already made a commitment to meet her online yaoi friends. She then tells her boyfriend about her previous commitment, to which he responds that since it was “important” then perhaps they can meet afterwards. While Tanaka is moved by his understanding, she contemplates on the “importance” of fangirling yaoi dōjinshi with her friends.\(^790\)

The value of Dennō yaoi shōjo lies in its depiction of women’s fan literacies and practices. While the story is fictional, Nakajima partly reveals in her afterword her awareness of this online culture.\(^791\) The comic itself is littered with footnotes that define specific terms such as yaoi, uke, seme, and so on. The series also features fan practices such as intertextual consumption of various moe elements, buying dōjinshi at dōjin events such as Comic Market, and engaging in moe talk\(^792\) online and offline. The manga’s focus on these girls online and offline interactions also highlights how their virtual communities are present in their offline lives. Nakajima also showcases specific online literacies and practices that fans used to separate their fan life from their real life. In one comic, Tanaka needed to input the word yaoi as a password for a yaoi fan site.\(^793\) This scene highlights the high level of literacy demanded by fans in order to protect their works and interests from public scrutiny. Dennō yaoi shōjo succeeds in showing these specific literacies among female fans but since it was serialised in a niche magazine\(^794\) for young adults, it failed to have an impact on shaping popular understandings of women’s fan culture.

6.3.2. THE FEMALE FAN IN GENSHIKEN

A series that had a greater impact on fan identity before the 2005 fujoshi boom was Shimoku Kio’s Genshiken (The Society for the Study of Modern Visual Culture, 2002–2006). The first arc of the comic ran in Kodansha’s Afutanūn (Afternoon), one of the top manga magazines for men.\(^795\) The success of the first arc of this series eventually led to an animated series in 2004, an OAV in 2006, and another animated

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\(^{790}\) Sahoko Nakajima, *Dennō yaoi shōjo* [Cyber yaoi girl], vol. 1 (Tokyo: Takeshobo, 2002), 49–51.

\(^{791}\) Ibid., 1:131.

\(^{792}\) Galbraith, “Moe Talk.”

\(^{793}\) Nakajima, *Cyber yaoi girl*, 14.

\(^{794}\) *Dennō yaoi shōjo* was serialised in *Manga kurabu originaru* (Manga club original), a seinen (young adult) magazine that features only 4-panel comic strips. The National Publication Society Institute considers four-panel manga magazines as part of a niche manga cluster that includes BL, pachinko, sports, and other manga magazines tied to specific interests. As of 2013, this niche manga cluster collectively occupied 10.1% of the manga magazine market. See National Publication Society Institute, *2014 Annual Publication Index Report*, 222.

series in 2007. The timing of *Genshiken* could not have been more fortuitous as the manga and animated series were available during the 2004 otaku boom. *Genshiken* became a part of the otaku discussions that arose from the popularity of *Train Man*. Just like *Train Man*, *Genshiken* aided in shaping people’s imagination of the “good” otaku.

*Genshiken* stands for the nickname of a university club named Gendai Shikaku Bunka Kenkyūkai — The Society for the Study of Modern Visual Culture. This club, which immerses in studying popular culture, is notoriously known as the “otaku club” in the university. The first arc of the manga follows the story of freshman Kanji Sasahara as he experiences college life through Genshiken. Through members of Genshiken, Sasahara learns about otaku culture and directs his life towards pursuing his passions. In his freshman year, he gains the courage to try making a *dōjinshi* for a large *dōjin* event called Comic Festival (ComiFes). By the end of his college years, as president of the club, he leads his club to have a circle at ComiFes while pursuing his dream of working as a manga editor. While the first arc of *Genshiken* focuses on male otaku interests, in 2004, it also introduces its readers to two female fans: Kanoko Ohno and Chika Ogiue.

Ohno and Ogiue give *Genshiken* readers a window into women’s fan culture. Ohno initially acts like the ideal female fan for men—a busty cosplayer who enjoys the challenge of wearing sexy costumes. However, when Ogiue is thrown into Genshiken by the manga club, Ohno “senses” something different about her.

Unlike Ohno, Ogiue does not share the same positive attitude towards otaku culture. Instead, she introduces herself to *Genshiken* members by saying, “I am the otaku-hating Ogiue.” Her statement reflects the prevailing public sentiment against otaku. To challenge Ogiue’s statement and break the tension in the club room, Ohno replies, “There is no girl who does not like *homo!*” The term *homo* refers to homosexual. The story uses the term loosely to describe texts that feature homosexual relationships. Female fans also loosely interchange *yaoi* with *homo*. Ohno’s outcry reveals not only her opinion of female fans but also her, and possibly Ogiue’s, interest in *yaoi* texts. This statement opens a new window for fan expression in *Genshiken* as it acknowledges girls’ interest in *yaoi*. While Ogiue initially denies Ohno’s claim, a later

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796 A cosplayer is someone who cosplays.
798 Ibid., 4:154.
chapter reveals Ogiue’s personal struggle in coming to terms with her “unusual” interest.

In a chapter titled *Dive Dive Dive*, Ohno sets a trap inside the Genshiken room in hopes of understanding and revealing Ogiue’s “true” character. Ohno lays *yaoi dōjinshi* all over the clubroom table in hopes of luring Ogiue to pick a *dōjinshi* that would reveal her *yaoi* interests. While Ohno does not catch Ogiue peeking at *yaoi dōjinshi*, a discussion regarding *otaku*’s pornographic consumption of *dōjinshi* shows Ogiue’s hesitation about revealing her interests. She reveals that she first encountered *yaoi dōjinshi* as an elementary student and was affected by such texts. A fellow club member interprets it as trauma while Ohno, who was raised in the US, taunts her by insinuating that children in the US had already been aware of such nasty texts and are already “BLEEPing” at that age. Ohno insists that Ogiue’s hiding her true self and continues to taunt her until Ogiue raises a *yaoi dōjinshi* as though disgusted by the idea that Ohno uses such material for “BLEEPing”. Ohno retorts by raising another *yaoi dōjinshi* with a different coupling, insinuating that she prefers to “BLEEP” for a different text. The girls’ argument is interrupted by another new club member who reveals that he had seen Ogiue attend a *yaoi dōjinshi* event that featured the coupling of the *dōjinshi* she had just held. Ohno smiles and raises the said *dōjinshi* to Ogiue who is so embarrassed that she tries to get out of the club room by jumping out the window. Thankfully, another club member stops her, indicating that the club openly welcomes Ogiue and her “weird” interest.

Ogiue’s “outing” as a *yaoi* fan reinforces an attitude seen in *Dennō yaoi shōjo* where girls hesitate to reveal their fan identities to people they know in real life, especially when their interests deviate from the social norm. Knowing that *Genshiken* is mostly comprised of male members, Ogiue is uncomfortable about revealing her true self. However, Ohno’s outcry and persistence give Ogiue the space to be more comfortable with expressing her interests in *yaoi*.

This chapter also reveals women’s fan literacies and practices — from consumption of *yaoi dōjinshi*, coupling, parody, attending *dōjinshi* events, and BLEEPing. While the author used BLEEP to insinuate some form of sexual entendre, the word also invites a specific reading from fans where *moe* can be used as a valid

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800 The author used the word “pi—-” to indicate a bleeping sound.
substitute for BLEEP. If the BLEEP means moe, then Ohno and Ogiue are debating over the affective impact of dōjinshi. The chapter also uses narrative elements that trigger a female fan’s intertextual database. For example, some of the dōjinshi Ohno displays are from Shōnen jump titles and the event Ogiue attends is a Sukuramu Danku (Scram Dunk) MitRei event which parodies the MitKo coupling in Slam Dunk. In a later chapter, Ogiue will also fantasise over her two male seniors in Genshiken by imagining them as a couple. She will later discuss this fantasy with Ohno who indulges her with moe talk. Her fantasies about her seniors will eventually lead Ogiue to publish her first yaoi dōjinshi with the support of Genshiken.

Ohno and Ogiue’s fan literacies and practices become one of the underlying themes in the manga. Rather than segregating women’s fan literacies from the men, Genshiken attempts to portray a space where these two fan worlds can peacefully coexist. During the first arc of the series, the girls are not referred to as fujoshi but as otaku. Ogiue’s earlier struggle with the weirdness of her yaoi interests is placated by everyone else’s weird interests. From the perspective of non-Genshiken members in the manga, they all act weird. Thus, they are all otaku. For Genshiken members, they are all otaku because they are interested in the same thing (popular culture) and share the same goal of participating in a large dōjinshi event.

To quote Gee, one can view Genshiken’s identity as an affinity perspective where “their allegiance is primarily to a set of common endeavors or practices and secondarily to other people in terms of shared culture or traits.” Affinity groups share the same Discourse. People within that Discourse can distinguish other members of the group based on their practices, regardless of whether they are online (as seen in Dennō yaoi shōjo) or offline (as seen through Ohno and Ogiue in Genshiken). To a degree, Genshiken becomes an affinity space where the club unites individuals who shared similar interests and goals. Even when there are slight differences, as in the case of Ohno and Ogiue’s yaoi practices, the manga glosses them over for the purpose of uniting all its characters under the otaku identity.

Dennō yaoi shōjo and Genshiken highlight the still unclear identity of female fans before 2005. On one hand, Dennō yaoi shōjo depicts female fans within their yaoi world

801 MitKo was one of the popular couplings for the Shōnen Jump series, Slam Dunk. Fumi Yoshinaga was one of the famous artists who drew for this coupling. See Chapter 5.5.
but shows the hesitation female fans have toward breaking their closed world out of fear of being ostracised due to their non-normative literacies that go beyond Japanese heteronormative social norms. *Dennō yaoi shōjo* also highlights female fans’ “strategies of identity concealment,” the various efforts women make to maintain an acceptable identity in Japanese society.

On the other hand, *Genshiken* depicts girls forced out of their closed worlds and assimilating an identity that is on its way to becoming socially accepted. While *Genshiken* shows an affinity space for fans, it does not give Ogiue or Ohno the opportunity to claim their specific fan identity. Instead, the two girls hide their nuanced literacies and quietly assimilate to the rest of the group. The girls take comfort under the general *otaku* identity which is shared and accepted by more people. While both stories show positive aspects of girls’ fan culture and showcase their unique literacies, they also highlight the pressure on women to submit to heteronormative norms. These comics show the practice of female fans hiding their literacies, leaving them with no opportunity to create their own affinity spaces. If anything, the two comics demonstrate to their readers how *yaoi* fans need to make concessions to the heteronormative *otaku* and society.

### 6.4. PUFF’S OTOME AS AN AFFINITY IDENTITY

While the *yaoi* girl in *Genshiken* hid behind the general *otaku* category, the fan magazine *Puff* celebrated women’s own fan culture. For thirty years, the magazine featured women’s diverse interests that ranged from cute *shōnen* heroes to tragic *josei* heroines. The magazine was also an important discursive space where women built and refined their intertextual databases and practices, fan networks, and *dōjinshi* culture. *Puff* also championed women’s creativity by featuring various female manga and *dōjinshi* artists. While *Puff* was not one to discriminate against its male readers, it acknowledged its female readers in 2004 by calling them *otome* (maiden).

The emergence of *otome* as a label for female fans did not gain popular currency until the magazine used it to describe a street in East Ikebukuro lined with various anime and manga shops. The magazine called this road Otome Rōdo (Maiden’s road),

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805 The second arc of *Genshiken* (2009–2016) tackles Ogiue’s ownership of her *fujoshi* identity as *fujoshi* join the club.
806 See Chapters Four and Five above.
alluding to the paradise it offered to young female fans shopping for anime and manga goods.\textsuperscript{809} *Otome* was deemed to be a fitting description for these fans, many of whom were young women who did not necessarily associate themselves with *shōjo* culture but were deeply immersed in a fan culture that was distinctly their own.

While there are other spaces (such as Akihabara and Shinjuku) that also have areas and streets where anime and manga shops converged, Sugiura argues that Otome Road is more appealing to female shoppers because of its safety and nearby amenities. Unlike Akihabara, the epicentre of male *otaku* culture, the cafes, shopping malls, arcades, and karaoke shops near Otome Road are more accessible to young female fans. Unlike Shinjuku, which is also home to one of Tokyo’s red-light districts, Sugiura remarks that Otome Road does not have predatory men who accost or flirt with passing girls.\textsuperscript{810} As such, East Ikebukuro’s Otome Road is considered a safer haven for young “maidens.”

*Puff* reinforced this *otome* identity when it published a special feature in their December 2004 issue called *Otome no moe o saguru* (Let’s investigate the *otome*’s *moe*).\textsuperscript{811} This feature was *Puff*’s attempt to understand the things that would make an *otome* excited. The feature was based on a readers’ survey where the magazine asked where, what, and who made its readers feel *moe*. While the feature briefly used the term *fujoshi* in its introduction,\textsuperscript{812} the rest of the article consistently referred to its respondents as *otome*. Even readers themselves referred to themselves as *otome*.\textsuperscript{813} The *otome* label appeared to be a fitting opposite to the male *otaku*, in the same way that *shōjo* was the opposite of *shōnen*. The article’s self-conscious decision to use *otome*, let alone its’ readers’ acknowledgement of the label as an identity, highlighted the magazine’s efforts in shaping a separate identity for female fans.

The 2005 *Puff* feature on the *Otome’s moe* was especially significant for three reasons. First, it tied *moe*, a fannish literacy that was associated with men’s fan culture,\textsuperscript{814} to women’s fan culture. During the 1980s and early 1990s, fans had different ways of expressing affect for particular characters. For example, readers of *Puff* used

\textsuperscript{808} The word *otome* is a female identity associated with a young girl’s virginity and sexual chastity. See Chapter 2.6.


\textsuperscript{811} “Otome no moe o saguru” [Let’s investigate the otome’s moe], *Puff*, December 2004.

\textsuperscript{812} Ibid., 8.

\textsuperscript{813} Ibid., 9.

kawaii (cute) or kakkoii (cool) for their favourite characters. Moe, as fans’ affective expression, became popular in the 1990s when it was used by fans in online forums. In Azuma’s study of otaku culture, moe proved to be a critical term as an indicator of the media’s success in eliciting affect from their audiences. Scholars turned towards manga, anime, and video games, many of which were intended for men. While there were efforts to include female fans in their studies, many situated themselves within men’s otaku culture either due to interest, accessibility, or familiarity. Puff’s feature reinforced the idea that female fans could also express moe and have ownership of this affective response.

The second important feature of Otome’s moe was its organisation of women’s moe. The feature noted that there were four categories that elicit women’s affective response: kyarakuta (character), kankeisei (relationship), opushon (option), and shichuēshon (situation, see Figure 6.1). These four categories worked hand-in-hand in stimulating fans’ emotions while giving them a structured metalanguage that would help their narrative consumption of texts. I am using metalanguage within the context of New Literacy Studies where specific sets of words, values, and beliefs from a Discourse

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are used to critique another Discourse.\textsuperscript{818} As Cope and Kalantzis notes, metalanguages should be used as “a tool kit” whose purpose is to “identify and explain differences between texts, and relate these to the contexts of culture and situation in which they seem to work.”\textsuperscript{819} In this case, \textit{Puff}’s feature gave their readers an opportunity to contribute and learn how female fans’ metalanguage was used and applied within their own \textit{moe} culture. While never fully formalised, this metalanguage had long been formed in girls’ fan Discourse as part of the intertextual database that contained \textit{neta}, \textit{kyara}, and \textit{moe} elements learned from fan and \textit{dōjinshi} culture. In consolidating their readers’ responses, \textit{Puff} was able to organise this metalanguage that coloured their readers’ consumption of anime and manga.

The first of these \textit{moe} categories is \textit{character}. \textit{Puff}’s readers view characters either by their \textit{taipu} (type) or \textit{bishuaru} (visual). Types refer to a character’s personality and are further categorised into five types: \textit{kūru} (cool), \textit{yancha/nekketsu} (naughty/hot-blooded), \textit{honobono/tennen} (dim-witted, laidback), \textit{oresama} (narcissistic), and \textit{misuteriasu} (mysterious).\textsuperscript{820} Character visuals refer to a character’s physical depiction — whether they looked old or young or \textit{kawaii} (cute) or \textit{kakkoii} (cool). This recognition of various character elements goes back to the idea of \textit{kyara} and \textit{kyara} elements as part of fans’ intertextual database.\textsuperscript{821} It reinforces readers’ critical consumption of narratives which dissects a character into its various elements. \textit{Puff}’s recognition of character as a critical element in eliciting fans’ \textit{moe} also highlights how various character elements have the power to sway readers’ emotions.

Another category that fuels readers’ \textit{moe} is relationship. A relationship only elicits \textit{moe} if it is \textit{tokubetsu} (special).\textsuperscript{822} This special relationship means that two characters have a special bond that they do not share with any other character in the series. These bonds range from \textit{nakama/pātonā} (friend/partner), \textit{raibaru/teki} (rival/enemy), \textit{ren’ai} (romantic), \textit{jōge} (hierarchal), \textit{ketsuen} (relative), \textit{sankakukei} (threesome), \textit{osananajimi} (childhood friends), and many others.\textsuperscript{823} It is important to note that many of the fans’ suggestions for this category come from a wide range of manga from all kinds of genres.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{817} Azuma, \textit{Otaku: Database Animals}, 48.
  \item \textsuperscript{819} Cope and Kalantzis, \textit{Multiliteracies}, 24.
  \item \textsuperscript{820} “Let’s investigate the otome’s moe,” 8–12.
  \item \textsuperscript{821} See Chapter 5.2.
  \item \textsuperscript{822} “Let’s investigate the otome’s moe,” 16.
\end{itemize}
While readers suggested some relationships from BL manga, readers also noted relationships from *shōnen*, *seinen*, and *shōjo* manga. Though readers’ did not blatantly suggest that relationships outside of BL manga might lead to romantic relationships, a scan of the suggestions would show some notable couplings that were popular among girls’ *dōjinshi*. For example, a reader suggested *Prince of Tennis*’ Kunimitsu Tezuka and Ryōma Echizen and their special relationship as teammates. The reader noted that their relationship as mentor and mentee highlighted Tezuka’s hopes for his teammate’s growth and Echizen’s desire for his mentor’s approval.\(^{824}\) This relationship dynamic reflected a *neta* often used in *dōjinshi* between Tezuka and Echizen.\(^{825}\) While readers did not label their suggested relationships as couplings, readers familiar with *dōjinshi* trends would be able to recognise the various couplings hinted at throughout the feature. The various supposedly platonic homosocial relationships in *shōnen* manga alongside homosexual romantic relationships in BL manga highlighted how readers recognised the homosexual potential of homosocial relationships in manga.\(^{826}\) The feature showcased diverse readings of characters’ relationships and suggested its affective impact on fans. *Puff*’s feature on relationships highlights the pleasure readers derive from distinguishing “special” relationships in all kinds of texts.

Option is a category which considers the various elements that enhances fans’ *moe* experience. Options are subdivided into two categories: *aitemu* (item)\(^{827}\) and *butai settei* (narrative settings).\(^{828}\) Items are similar to *kyara moe* elements involving items that can be worn or used by a character such as glasses, uniforms, suits, or cigarettes. Settings refer to places where these stories take place such as a school, company, hospital, or in another world. When these options are combined with characters and relationships, they create a *shichūēshon* (situation)\(^{829}\) which readers see as another kind of *moe* experience. Situations are closer to *neta* where the combinations of these various *moe* elements contribute to a narrative plot that triggers readers’ *moe*. These situations range from *dekoboko konbi* (unequal combination) to *kodawari no settei* (obsession plot). In organising of *otome’s moe* in this manner, *Puff* gave its female readers the

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\(^{823}\) Ibid., 16–18.
\(^{824}\) Ibid., 18.
\(^{826}\) Sedgwick, *Between Men*.
\(^{827}\) “Let’s investigate the *otome*’s moe,” 15.
\(^{828}\) Ibid., 19.
\(^{829}\) Ibid., 22-23.
space to develop, shape, and share the metalanguage of their fan Discourse. Fans’ discussions in the feature exemplified what Kaneda describes as *kaishaku kyōdotai* (collective interpretation) where fans feel solidarity through the collective construction of their intertextual database.\(^{830}\) Much like the power of the vernacular in imagined communities,\(^{831}\) the publication of the *otome*’s metalanguage shapes girls’ imagined sense of community and teaches others the nuances of their Discourse.

The final reason why this *Otome’s moe* feature was significant was it provided a virtual yet tangible affinity space where contributors and readers of this feature could sense some semblance of belonging as an *otome*. While it may appear that the magazine was solely responsible for labelling their respondents as *otome*, the contributors to this feature played a major role in owning this *otome* identity by referring to themselves as *otome*. This ownership of the *otome* identity reinforced what Gee and Hayes describe as a “sense of ‘us’ (the insiders) against ‘them’ (the outsiders).”\(^{832}\) In this case, “them” might refer to the dominant otaku culture which this feature aimed to break away from.

Since most of the contributors came from different parts of Japan, these *otome* were not bound to a physical space but were connected through *Puff*, a magazine that provided a virtual space where *otome* had a common goal of determining what made them feel *moe*. This feature’s decision to distinguish and use *otome* as an identity reflects the gendered-nature of this affinity space. *Puff* would make an effort in maintaining this affinity space for women by creating *otome*-oriented sections for their readers. In 2005, the magazine would change the title of its readers’ corner from the gender-neutral *Pafu shūkaisho* (*Puff*’s meeting place) to the more female-oriented *Otome no uraniwa* (Maidens’ backyard). This readers’ corner would continue until the end of 2010 before the magazine switched back to the gender-neutral title *Otayori Terasu* (Letter Terrace) until the magazine’s final issue was published in August 2011.

*Puff*’s identification of their female readers as *otome* was a valiant effort in claiming the identity and Discourse of female fans. *Puff*’s editors never judged their female readers and even defended them from some critics by saying *yaoi* books were

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actually interesting.\textsuperscript{833} Despite positioning \textit{Puff} as a magazine whose readers were primarily female, the magazine’s content covered all sorts of manga genres to cater to fans’ diverse interests. Despite \textit{Puff}'s exclusivity as a fan magazine for girls, it tried its best to be inclusive. However, as their readers sought for a label that would unite them in the same way that otaku had united male fans, \textit{Puff} responded by aiding their readers in claiming the word \textit{otome}. \textit{Puff}'s \textit{otome} was the identity that female fans had chosen for themselves — an affinity identity. The magazine succeeded in giving life to this identity but due to the changing nature of media, they were not able to sustain this identity outside their magazine. Instead, a “rotten” online nickname would have a stronger impact on people’s impression of female fans.

\section*{6.5. The Rotten F\textsuperscript{u}j\textsuperscript{o}shi as Discursive and Affinity Identities}

One of the earliest accounts I have read that uses the term \textit{fujoshi} comes from an online diary of a male government official who encountered the term online in 1999. In an effort to understand why some girls are referred to as \textit{fujoshi}, he tries to note down some characteristics he has observed. His observations of \textit{fujoshi} are as follows:

- Their topics are quite vulgar but they are not even 18
- Figuratively, they’re similar to moss\textsuperscript{834}
- They don’t seem insincere but they are not formal either
- They are like otaku but are not gloomy\textsuperscript{835}

While this man confesses to not having a better understanding of this label, his account highlights the ambiguity of the term \textit{fujoshi} which describes a certain “kind of girl” online. Scholars note that the term \textit{fujoshi} has been used in online forums such as 2ch\textsuperscript{836} even before Sugiura uses the label in her 2005 article. What is certain is that at this point in women’s fan history, their fan practices are viewed with disdain\textsuperscript{837} and are overlooked as men dominate discussions on fan expression and experience.\textsuperscript{838}

\textsuperscript{833} “Reader’s kingdom,” 125.
\textsuperscript{834} The writer perhaps alludes to the idea that \textit{fujoshi} could be found in dark shady places.
\textsuperscript{837} For tensions between female fans and Japan’s gay community, see Lunsing, “Intersections: Yaoi Ronsō: Discussing Depictions of Male Homosexuality in Japanese Girls’ Comics, Gay Comics and Gay Pornography”; Vincent, “A Japanese Electra and Her Queer Progeny”; Welker, “Flower Tribes and Female Desire.”
Puff’s mention of fujoshi in their Otome moe feature highlights female fans’ familiarity with the term. The feature’s insistence in using otome indicates Puff’s hesitation to own the fujoshi label, perhaps out of respect to their audience and possibly because of their immersion in women’s fan culture. As an affinity space for female fans, Puff is cognizant of how female fans identify themselves. However, people outside Puff’s affinity space do not have the literacies to recognise or understand their emerging Discourse.

One can view the emergence of the fujoshi identity as a misunderstanding of women’s fan culture. As Charles Taylor argues, an identity is “partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others….” Unlike otome, which female fans chose because of their affinity space, the fujoshi identity was born from discussions that were ignorant of women’s fan Discourse. Fujoshi is an identity that emerged through dialogue, one discussed by various individuals and pitted against other Discourses and identities. In the case of female fans, their non-normative literacies and practices, which includes the production and consumption of boys love texts, distinguishes them from other fans, or even Japanese society as a whole, which generally privileges heteronormative texts.

These different literacies and practices can be approached in two ways. One approach ignores these differences so that one can be subsumed as part of a more general identity. Such is the case in Genshiken where Ogiue and Ohno’s nuanced literacies are glossed over and they are assimilated in the general otaku identity in the text. Charles Taylor defines this phenomenon as the politics of equal dignity where people are recognised for their similar traits so that they all live under the same Discourse. This is problematic as it “negates identity by forcing people into a homogenous mold that is untrue to them.” On the other hand, when differences are recognised, they are compared to dominant Discourses.

In an ideal world, these differences must be equally respected. However, as the world operates via inequality, dominant Discourses tend to colour the recognition of these differences. To a degree, the recognition of women’s fan literacy practices as “rotten” shows the pervading heteronormative and masculine ideas operative in

839 “Let’s investigate the otome’s moe,” 8.
843 Ibid., 43.
Japanese fan culture. While men’s nonheterosexual sexualities were visible and were tolerated at some points in Japanese history, women’s diverse sexual and gender expressions were generally overlooked or met with disdain or confusion. Such is the case of the fujoshi whose non-normative Discourse is beyond the comprehension of the dominant heteronormative and masculine Discourses in Japanese society.

The publication of Sugiura’s article in 2005 and her subsequent book, Joshi otaku kenkyū (Study of female otaku, 2006) would have a profound impact on reinforcing this misrecognised identity of female fans. As a journalist, Sugiura comes from a position of someone who became aware of otaku culture thanks to the publicity around Train Man. A private encounter with a female fan leads her to investigate women’s fan culture.

As she discovers women’s diverse fan interests, ranging from male idols (Janīzu otaku) and musicals (myuotaku or musical otaku), she realises that these fans are also identified as fujoshi. Sugiura defines fujoshi, in the broadest sense, as any female fan of popular culture. This includes fans of movies, musicians, bands, and plays. She then adds that in the narrowest sense, they refer to girls who are interested in boys love. Her ambiguous definition reflects the confusion surrounding the label. Sugiura is aware that the term fujoshi emerged online mostly among male otaku but also notes that female fans also acknowledge the term. She uses the anecdote of a girl who sees two chummy salarymen on a train and begins to fantasise about these two men getting together. The strength of her fantasy leads the girl to realise that she is “rotten,” thus acknowledging that she is a fujoshi. While Sugiura sees that fujoshi share similarities with otaku, she adds that fujoshi are still different due to their unique interests as well as being more socially adept than otaku.

845 See Leupp, Male Colors; McLelland, Male Homosexuality in Modern Japan; Mark McLelland and Romit Dasgupta, eds., Genders, Transgenders and Sexualities in Japan (Routledge, 2005); Pflugfelder, Cartographies of Desire.
848 Janīzu or Johnny’s refers to the talent company of Johnny Kitagawa (1968) that manages some of the top male pop idols and celebrities in Japan.
849 This is a wrong presumption on Sugiura’s part as it had been already been previously defined by critics and scholars in Eureka as bunkakei joshi (Culture girls.) See Yurika. Bunkakei joshi katarogu [Eureka. Culture Girls Catalogue], vol. 37, 11 (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2005).
850 Sugiura, Study of female otaku, 6.
851 Ibid., 31.
852 Ibid., 33.
Sugiura manages to detail *fujoshi* practices in her book such as their passionate interest in anime and manga, *coupling*, and *neta*.\(^{853}\) I find her descriptions mildly problematic as some contained hasty generalisations. For example, in talking about the *ribāshiburu* (reversible) coupling, she indicates that fans hate this concept\(^{854}\) which is not the case at all as the concept is extensively explored by fans through *gyakukappuru* (reverse couples).\(^{855}\) There are many other generalisations fans have noticed and criticised.\(^{856}\) Sugiura’s book reflects the perspective of an outsider with heteronormative views who is making an effort to grasp this growing Discourse. After her article and books, various authors followed her lead and shared their experience of understanding *fujoshi*. This time, it would be through the lens of men who were trying their best to understand the women they loved.

### 6.5.1. Men’s Representation of *Fujoshi* Identity

In 2006, three texts helped establish the image of the *fujoshi* in the public’s imagination. Just like Sugiura’s works, these texts would identify the female fans in their stories as *fujoshi*. These texts were the webcomic *Tonari no 801chan*, the weblog *My Girlfriend is a Geek*, and the manga *Fujoshi Rumi*. These texts were influential because these stories had a large media mix that made them accessible for different audiences. For audiences who were not web-savvy, they could read the novelisation (2006–2007), manga (2007–2010), and watch the resulting live-action movie (2009) of the *My Girlfriend is a Geek* blog. Similarly, they could engage with the comic (2006–present) and original live-action video (2007) of *Tonari no 801chan*, and the comic (2006–2010) and live-action film (2007) of *Fujoshi Rumi*. While these three titles did not break any bookseller’s list or box-office records, their media mix opened the world of *fujoshi* to a wider audience. To the female fan’s chagrin, this meant that a larger audience was viewing their world through men’s eyes.

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\(^{853}\) Ibid., 58-95.

\(^{854}\) Ibid., 83.

\(^{855}\) See Chapter 5.5.

While these stories all originate in different contexts, all of them share the same plot line of a young man trying to understand the fan interests and practices of his girlfriend who identifies as a fujoshi. The weblog *Tonari no 801chan* is a semi-autobiographical webcomic of an otaku who thinks he has found a woman who could understand his interests. Later on, he realises that the reason why his girlfriend tolerates his lifestyle is because she is actually a fujoshi. *My Girlfriend is a Geek* is another semi-autobiographical story about a college student who falls in love with an older clerical worker who identifies as fujoshi. Unlike the boyfriend in *Tonari no 801chan*, the boyfriend in *My Girlfriend is a Geek* is not familiar with otaku culture. Prior to accepting his confession, the woman reveals and explains to the man her fujoshi identity before giving him a chance to reject her. The man’s feelings do not waver and he accepts the woman along with her fujoshi identity. Lastly, *Fujoshi Rumi* is about a high-school boy who falls in love with a girl in their school’s art club. As he gets to know her, he discovers her quirky interests and personality before his best friend reveals that girls like her are called fujoshi.

Collectively, these stories serve as gateways to fujoshi culture. People who never read or watched these stories join the protagonists in learning about their girlfriends’ fujoshi practices. In the process, these stories help build the public’s imagination of fujoshi by educating them about their literacies and practices.

The first lesson these stories teach is the definition of fujoshi. Unlike previous stories that either identify such girls as otaku or by another yaoi-related name, these stories are consistent in defining their fujoshi heroines as girls who fervently engage with popular culture and are particularly passionate about texts that feature male-male romances. The notion of male-male romance is not specified clearly in these texts which loosely uses terms such as homo, dōseiai or BL. While readers may not have understood the nuances of these different terms, the stories reinforce the non-normative nature of fujoshi’s interest in male-male romances. These texts also showed key fujoshi literacies (intertextual databases, moe elements, and coupling), practices (mōsō, moe talk, creating dōjinshi, and cosplay), and their conscious decision to separate their fan and

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857 Kojima, *Tonari no 801chan* [My Neighbor 801chan].
860 Konjō, *Fujoshi Rumi*.
861 This is a practice where fans fantasise/daydream characters under specific neta. See Chapters 1.4 and 4.5.
normal lives. Since these literacies are practised by characters who identify in the text as *fujoshi*, they are strongly tied to the *fujoshi* identity.

These three stories have different approaches to explaining *fujoshi* literacies which highly depended on the medium in which they are presented. The live action films of these stories present these literacies in a concise and clear fashion as the films have little room for extensive explanations. For example, in the *Fujoshi Rumi* film, the *fujoshi* practice of coupling is shown through a scene where the heroine is sketching her favourite character in front of another character whom she sees as his partner. The practice of *mōsō* is captured through scenes where the girls escape to an elaborate daydream when they are triggered by particular *moe* elements. The other two films follow a similar depiction of *fujoshi* practices although *Tonari no 801chan* demands most *fujoshi* literacies from its audiences. The *Tonari no 801chan* film presents select webcomic strips like short comedy sketches. As such, the film has little opportunities to elaborately explain these nuanced literacies and practices.

On the other hand, the comic versions of these three titles have extensive explanations on the various literacy practices shown throughout the series. *Tonari no 801chan* and *My Girlfriend is a Geek* contains extensive footnotes that explains words, ideas, actions, and even the intertextual references that are said and done by the *fujoshi* characters. In *Fujoshi Rumi*, literacies are woven into the narrative which allows characters to either explain actions through dialogue with another person or their internal thoughts. While the films show these *fujoshi* practices in action, the books have a better balance in showing and explaining *fujoshi* literacies, especially the integration of intertextual databases in their daily lives. The titles also have detailed footnotes that explains many intertextual references in the series.

An example of this can be seen in a scene in *Tonari no 801chan* where the boyfriend asks the *fujoshi*, “What’s the opposite of ‘seme’?” Rather than answering “*uke*,” the *fujoshi* answers with “*mamori*” (protection). When her boyfriend asks her to explain her answer, she reasons that *uke* is a trick answer and that *fujoshi* with a higher level takes all things into consideration. The footnote to the comic strip has a quote from someone named Ikegami who says, “Defense is his esteemed reputation.” Fans with high intertextual literacies immediately know who this Ikegami is and what this

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862 Teichi Hori, *Mōsō shōjo otaku* [Fujoshi Rumi], DVD (Dōgadō, 2008).
863 Atsushi Kaneshige, *Fujoshi kanojo* [My Girlfriend’s a Geek] (Enterbrain, 2006); Kōtarō Terauchi, *Tonari no 801chan* [My Neighbor 801chan], DVD (Pony Canyon, 2007).
quote means. For those who do not know this reference, they can easily search for the quote online and find a Wikipedia entry that shows that Ikegami is a character in *Slam Dunk* who is known for his impregnable defensive skills which protected his team from losing to Sohoku’s offence. As such, the *fujoshi*’s answer means that the opposite of the *seme* is someone who valiantly protects their relationship. Another intertextual reference mentioned in this series is Ohno’s outburst in *Genshiken*.865

6.5.2. WOMEN’S RECLAMATION OF FUJOSHI IDENTITY

These books have given their readers the opportunity to understand the various literacies and practices behind *fujoshi* Discourse. While some *fujoshi* practices are highly exaggerated, these books still carry some truths with regards to some of their literacies. The books serve as informal educational tools that help readers understand and perhaps imbibe some *fujoshi* practices. Not only are readers able to learn *fujoshi* literacies but they also learn the context in which these literacies are used — who, when, and where they can practice their *fujoshi* literacies. For some readers, these texts serve as “manuals for constructing identity.”866 For some female fans, the *fujoshi* in these texts provide a virtual identity they resonate with. At the same time, these texts also create a virtual affinity between female fans who share literacies with the books’ *fujoshi* heroines. Despite the problematic label, the books are successful in capturing women’s fan Discourse. As such, rather than rejecting the label, the female fan community have embraced and claimed this identity via humorous self-deprecation.

In December 2006, Toranoana, one of the leading manga, anime and *dōjinshi* shop for female fans, held a “*Fujoshi matsuri*” (*Fujoshi* festival, Figures 6.2 and 6.3) at their main shop in Ikebukuro. While the festival was an effort to promote *Fujoshi Rumi, My Girlfriend is a Geek, and Tonari no 801chan*, the store also made an effort to rile up their female customers. Alongside the promotional posters for the three *fujoshi* titles was an image of Ohno’s battle cry that says, “There’s no girl that does not like homo”. This intertextual reference was posted at the entrance of the store with a message that encouraged their customers to carve Ohno’s words in their hearts, heighten their fantasies, and swear to pursue their desires in all forms.867 While this festival was

865 Ibid., 4.
intended to promote books on fujoshi, Toranoana’s campaign was symbolic as it acknowledges their customer’s “rotten” identities and encouraged fans to establish an affinity with the virtual fujoshi in these texts and practice their fujoshi literacies in the heart of fujoshi mecca, Ikebukuro.

Figure 6.2 (top) and 6.3 (bottom). Toranoana’s display for their Fujoshi Festival. Source: “‘Homo ga kirai na onna nanka imasen!!’ Torahonten no sensei to fujoshi matsuri” [‘There’s no girl who doesn’t like homosexuals!!’ Toranoana’s main bookstore’s pledge and fujoshi festival],” Akiba Blog, December 11, 2006, accessed May 10, 2013, http://www.akibablog.net/archives/2006/12/post_939.html.

Toranoana continued to strengthen their ties with their fujoshi customers when they established a new marketing campaign in January 2007. This time, Toranoana had a poster in their main store’s elevator titled “Shokun, watashi wa BL ga suki da” — Gentlemen, I like BL. The poster contained a parodied speech from the series Hellsing (1997–2008) which listed a variety of literacies fujoshi practised. The speech is as follows:
Gentlemen, I like BL
Gentlemen, I love BL

I like *kichiku megane*[^868]
I like younger *seme*
I like naughty types
I like school stories
I like *riiman*[^869]
I like parallel worlds[^870]
I like *gachi muchi*[^871]
I like cross-dressing *neta*[^872]

In parks, in schools
In companies, on streets
In harems, in deserts[^873]
In darkness, in daylight

I love every aspect of boy’s love that takes place on this earth

I like it when the customer holds their goods and head straight to the cash register, and I swiftly pack their merchandise
When new publications on the stand decrease at amazing speed, my heart dances

I like using the computer and responding to a customer inquiry quickly
When new books are brought to the cash register, my heart feels at ease

Gentlemen, I desire BL, BL that is like hell
Gentlemen, my comrades who followed me in this battle,
What is it that you desire?

Do you desire even more BL?

Do you desire PC games and commercial magazines that strike the wallet with no mercy?
Do you desire *dōjinshi* crammed with fantasies as though it is a storm with iron-clad lightning of all kinds in the world?

"BL! BL! BL!"
Very well, they are on the 3rd, 4th floor\textsuperscript{874}

Toranoana’s fujoshi campaigns during this period gave a glimpse of the increasing social recognition of this community which always had its Discourse but never had a cohesive identity. The shop’s efforts, alongside the aforementioned fujoshi titles, made the identity more concrete to female fans, providing an affinity space whose goal was to reclaim this misrepresented identity.

In 2007, two issues of the literary magazine *Yurīka* (Eureka) also actively seized the fujoshi identity within the terms of Japanese female writers, artists, fans, and leading feminist critics.\textsuperscript{875} The first special issue, *Fujoshi manga taikei* (Fujoshi manga compendium) tackled fujoshi identity by exploring various dimensions of fujoshi Discourse through various cultural critiques of different fujoshi literacies.\textsuperscript{876}

In this issue, Chizuko Ueno takes the task of understanding who are the fujoshi and their place in Japanese culture.\textsuperscript{877} She breaks fujoshi’s ties with the male-oriented otaku culture and reconnects fujoshi identity with women’s culture where its unique fujoshi literacies has long been introduced and developed. Her essay captures the tone of the issue where all the contributions attempt to reclaim the fujoshi identity and correct the misrepresentation of fujoshi literacies in popular media. The *Fujoshi manga taikei* also contains an extensive reading list called the *Fujoshitachi no baiburū 50* (Fujoshi’s bible 50) which is a boys love canon compiled by fujoshi critics.\textsuperscript{878}

The subsequent issue, December 2007’s *BL studies*, continued to examine various aspects of fujoshi culture. This issue is also pivotal in starting a new tradition in BL culture with the introduction of *Kono BL ga sugoi* (This BL is amazing!), a ranking of critically-acclaimed BL titles.\textsuperscript{879} In the next years, this list becomes *Kono BL ga yabai* (This BL is dangerous!) and is published as a book with interviews with select artists.


\textsuperscript{876} See *Fujoshi manga compendium*.


\textsuperscript{878} See *BL studies*.

\textsuperscript{879} “Kono BL ga Sugoi” [This BL is amazing], in *Yurīka: BL sutadīsu*, vol. 39, 16 (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2007), 205–69.
and extensive commentaries from readers and critics. In 2012, Eureka also published another special issue called BL on za ran! (BL on the Run).

The Eureka issues have been critical in directing the discussions on fujoshi identity away from men’s perspectives and towards the lens and experiences of fujoshi. These texts strengthen the voices of fujoshi although some contributions are highly subjective, especially from contributors who are also fans. This subjectivity is balanced by essays from various cultural critics who use their expertise to understand and explain various aspects of fujoshi Discourse. In contrast to previous texts which overwhelm readers with the grammar of fujoshi literacies, the Eureka issues explain the emotional intelligence behind these literacies. These Eureka issues have inspired women’s discussions on fujoshi culture which has led to the publication of various BL guidebooks, a glossary, and other critical texts that contribute to shaping fujoshi Discourse.

The representation of fujoshi by fujoshi in popular media have also increased. This is best exemplified by Sachiko Takeuchi’s autobiographical manga essay titled Kusare joshi (Rotten girl, 2009) and Kusare joshi in deep (Rotten girl in deep, 2009). Her comics relate the fujoshi adventures of Takeuchi and her friends. Her comics give an honest yet comedic insight into their fujoshi experiences, literacies, and practices. She also uses her comic to explain various ideas emerging within the fujoshi community such as women’s affection for fictional characters. In one chapter, Takeuchi confesses to her friends that she is a fan of zenjigen (all dimensions). Her friend ponders if Takeuchi refers to another coupling but she explains that the zenjigen means that she is a fan of 2D (nijigen/two-dimensional, referring to anime and manga), 2.5D (nitengojigen/two point five-dimensional, referring to musicals about manga and anime), and 3D (sanjigen/three-dimensional, referring to real-life actors). The girls immersed in moe talk as they considered where to place other characters in other dimensions, such as

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880 Since 2008, Kono BL ga yabai comprised not just notable fujoshi critics but also various BL manga bloggers and readers who sent their ranking by either voting online or in shops such as Animate or Toranoana.

881 See Boys’ love on the run.

882 Ownsha, Welcome to right BL; Katsukura Editorial Department, Fujoshi aruaru [That is so Fujoshi] (Tokyo: Shinkigensha, 2013); Kiriaki and Katsuyama, BL guide for beginners.


884 Mizoguchi, Theorizing BL as a transformative genre; Nishimura, BL culture theory.
fictionalised representation of historical people. The comic ended with the girls mapping where these characters could fall between 2D to 3D.885

*Kusare joshi* is also important in showcasing the diverse interests and affective responses of *fujoshi*. For example, in one chapter, the girls share how they feel about characters in texts. One of Takeuchi’s friends confesses that she immerses herself in the story and imagines marrying her favourite character. Another friend shares that she does not see herself in such a fantasy hence she just fantasises about two boys getting together. Takeuchi, who is lesbian, is similar to her other friend who is not keen on immersing herself in stories, even if these texts were *yuri*.886 While they all identify as *fujoshi*, this story breaks the singularity of fans’ *moe* and consumption. Instead, the entire series showcases *fujoshi* Discourse while celebrating their diversity as women.

*Kusare joshi* paves the way for other comics where authors share their personal experiences as a *fujoshi*.887 Fictional representations of *fujoshi* in manga also take a more grounded yet comedic (rather than exaggerated) view of women’s fan culture.888 Even *Genshiken* changes its tune during its second arc making Ogiue its lead character and its club members comprise mostly of *fujoshi*. Some of these stories have also been animated which further increases the visibility of *fujoshi* in Japanese popular culture.

### 6.6. CONCLUSION

The exposure of women’s fan culture in popular media highlights the relevance of literacies and practices in discerning Discourses. The stories of *Dennō yaoi shōjo*, Ohno and Ogiue of *Genshiken*, and Puff’s *otome*, shows how specific literacies help distinguish new ways in which girls think, write, speak, and act. In the process, these texts highlight a new fan Discourse lived by a “kind of girl” whose literacy practices are immediately subject to people’s critique and judgement. Against the masculine otaku culture and heteronormative norms, these women’s non-normative interest in boys love is perceived as “rotten.” As such, this “kind of girl” has become a *fujoshi*.

*fujoshi* is an identity that has emerged out of confusion, one where people have tried to wrap their head around the “kind of girls” who enjoy male-male romances. To a degree, Sugiura and the three male characters in *Tonari no 801chan, My Girlfriend’s a

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886 Yuri is fannish genre that is the opposite of *yaoi* as it explores romantic relationships between women.
Geek, and Fushoshi Rumi have become the eyes, ears, and voices of a society with heteronormative views. The publication of their experiences in various forms of media highlight various practices that are now being tied to this “rotten girl.” These texts have shaped people’s imagination of fushoshi and their affinity space. In the end, the popularisation of fushoshi have exposed these girls bare. Rather than running away from this exposure, these “rotten girls” have claimed their “rotten” literacies and practices while revealing their rich history and culture.

The responses of female fans towards the imagined fushoshi highlight women’s creativity, intelligence, resilience, and humour. These female fans are unlike the mindless fushoshi Sugiura described who simply coupled any two men together. The Eureka issues and stories such as Kusare joshi show intelligence in women’s affective consumption and reproduction of popular culture. Puff’s Otome’s moe highlights the complex structure of women’s affective responses. As women claim their fushoshi identity, female fans expose their “rotten” discourse in hopes of invigorating an affinity space and positive public interest.

The exposure of fushoshi Discourse would have a profound effect on the very media they enjoyed, specifically shonen media. Magazines such as Shonen Jump would come to understand this once mysterious audience who liberally played with their heroes. The next chapter looks at how knowledge of fushoshi literacies became integral to Shonen Jump’s transformation into Shojo Jump. The magazine would use fushoshi literacies as “baits” that lured fans with various intertextual elements that they could play with to achieve jouissance. In the process, the magazine built a convergent culture that commodified fushoshi’s fervent engagement with their stories.

7. THE SHŌJO IN SHŌNEN: THE CONVERGENCE OF FUJOSHI DISCOURSE AND SHŌNEN JUMP

7.1. INTRODUCTION

In October 1999, Shōnen jump did the unexpected when its newest series, Naruto, featured its hero kissing another boy. While Naruto, the hero of this series, sizes up Sasuke, the most popular boy in his school, one of their classmates accidentally pushes Naruto forward, forcing him to “kiss” Sasuke. The story is keen on showing this “kiss” as an accident. The panels that follow the “kiss” immediately show the characters’ disgust, with Naruto immediately grumbling that his mouth is now “rotten.” While Shōnen jump has been notorious for publishing crazy things for the sake of comedy, this “kiss” is far from what is usually considered as “normal.”

Like other shōnen manga magazines, Shōnen jump has never shown its heroes as openly gay or in romantic situations with other men. At best, stories have featured okama, male-female transgenders, for comedic relief. Expressions of intimacy among shōnen heroes are always depicted within the context of camaraderie, hard work, and victory. A pat on the back, a hard punch, or a victorious huddle are fairly common in shōnen manga, but a kiss between two male characters in a boys’ manga magazine is highly unlikely. Regardless of how much the story goes on to deny the significance of this shared intimacy between Naruto and Sasuke, as seen through the shocked reaction of their classmates, a kiss is still a kiss.

This chapter explores how this “kiss,” along with other suggestive intertextual images, have been incorporated in many Shōnen jump titles and its other media in recent years. Since Naruto’s “first kiss,” some Shōnen jump titles have integrated various scenarios that suggest romantic relationships between its male characters. This chapter seeks to understand how a magazine that celebrates masculine endeavours has integrated various fujoshi literacies that raise their heroes’ homoerotic potential.

This chapter is titled “Shōjo in Shōnen” because it examines the convergence between *Shōnen Jump* and their female readers. It specifically looks at the role of *fujoshi* literacies in shaping *shōnen* media during the early 2000s. This chapter begins with a brief discussion on convergence and how it has shaped Japan’s manga industry. This chapter considers convergence as an active dialogue and collaboration between content producers and consumers which have led to the production of collective intelligence and transformations in media. In this chapter, I specifically consider the engagement between *Shōnen Jump* and their female fans which led to the integration of various *fujoshi* literacies in their media, thus transforming the magazine into “Shōjo” *Jump*.

In this chapter, I argue that these subtle changes in *Shōnen Jump*’s plot lines reflect the magazine’s desire to accommodate the interests of their new audience — the *fujoshi*. The continued popularity of *Shōnen Jump* titles, such as *Captain Tsubasa* and *Slam Dunk*, among female readers provoked the magazine to assess women’s consumption of their texts. In the process, *Shōnen Jump* became aware of *fujoshi* Discourse — the various thoughts, emotions, and ways in which girls reinterpret the magazine’s male homosocial world as potentially homosexual.

I argue that *fujoshi* literacies have become critical tools that *Shōnen Jump* uses to “bait” and sustain the interests of its female, specifically *fujoshī*, readers. The magazine’s subtle yet efficient use of women’s fan literacies and practices was crucial in triggering fans’ *mōsō*. Since Naruto’s “kiss,” *Shōnen Jump*’s extensive media mix has tapped women’s intertextual databases in the hopes of inspiring *fujoshi*’s active engagement with their texts. The result is a kind of “convergent culture” where content producers such as *Shōnen Jump* give fans opportunities to contribute and shape their media.

The analysis of convergence begins with how various stories in *Shōnen Jump* uses *fujoshi* literacies as “baits” to “lure” *fujoshi* readers and trigger their *moe* responses. From *Naruto* to *Gintama*, I examine how the magazine placed these “baits” in their stories and their impact on *fujoshi* and *dōjinshi* culture. I argue that *Shōnen Jump*’s use of *fujoshi* literacies as “baits” symbolises the magazine’s acknowledgement of its female readers and their *fujoshi* practices. *Shōnen Jump*’s recognition of their *fujoshi* audience is strengthened by the production of various media mix commodities, from character guidebooks to specialty cafes, which also acknowledge various *fujoshi* literacies.
While *Shōnen Jump*’s convergence with *fujoshi* Discourse highlights the power of young women in shaping men’s media, this chapter also examines the divergence that emerged in response to *Shōnen Jump*’s *fujoshi*-oriented media. The discussion surrounding the magazine’s convergence highlights the pervading hegemonic masculinity in Japanese media that young women continue to challenge. It also showcases the commercialisation of *fujoshi* Discourse which capitalises on fans’ “immaterial labour.”891 This chapter ends by looking at the legacy of this convergence and how *fujoshi* literacies continue to shape *shōnen* media.

### 7.2. Convergence in Japan’s Manga Industry

Convergence is a term widely used to describe transformations in contemporary media where, as Henry Jenkins describes, there is “a reconfiguration of media power and a reshaping of media aesthetics and economics.”892 In his book *Convergence Culture* (2006), Jenkins defines convergence as “the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences that they want.”893 Convergence shows a media landscape that highlights the complex and shifting relationships between media industries, audiences, and technologies. More than a technological phenomenon, convergence is also a socio-cultural process — an ongoing collaboration between media industries and audiences that aims to facilitate collective intelligence across all kinds of media platforms. This chapter focuses on the socio-cultural convergence between *Shōnen Jump* and their female readers.

Collective intelligence is knowledge born from the collaboration of various individuals and groups who freely share their ideas and skills in spaces that are accessible to the public.894 It has been lauded as the democratisation of media, where

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893 Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 2.
audiences easily contribute to the production of shared knowledge. Since collective intelligence requires mass participation, this has been connected to various online social technologies where users openly share information. Websites such as Wikipedia, Reddit, and YouTube have become sites of collective intelligence. These digital technologies have given their users the tools to easily share their expertise online and collaborate with others to produce new content. These websites have also empowered their users to exercise their media citizenship, shifting the power of information from the media industry to the hands of their audiences.

For Jenkins, traditional media creators such as newspapers, television, and radio, no longer dominate contemporary media. Instead, these “old” media industries share the media landscape with individuals and communities who use new media technologies such as blogs, vlogs, and podcasts. Advances in communication technologies have afforded audiences the ability to actively engage with media. Audiences are no longer passive media consumers but are now active contributors to an evolving collective knowledge. Collective intelligence recognises the contributions of participatory culture. Convergence culture allows media consumers and producers to collaborate and create collective intelligence.

The complexity of convergence, especially with its contributions to collective intelligence, may give the impression that convergence culture is only possible through the use of new digital technologies. Flew argues that media convergence often involves “the combination of the three Cs of computing (digital media and information technologies), communication (networks, artefacts and practices), and content (media and information).” Network technologies such as the internet have made collective intelligence highly accessible to both media industries and audiences. Digital media technologies have afforded audiences the tools to create their own content and even challenge the media economy by crowdsourcing their creations. While the contributions of these “new” technologies are valid, media convergence has also been in

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896 Jenkins, Convergence Culture, 4.
897 Lev Manovich, The Language of New Media, Rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2002); Flew, New Media.
898 Flew, New Media, 5.
existence even before the internet was publicly accessible. Rather than focusing on the latest media technologies, convergence relies on new media.

Lievrouw and Livingstone see new media as media technologies that impact the social dynamics between devices, practices, and social arrangements. These devices may include old forms of media, such as television and print, as well as new technologies such as social networking sites, that change the way we communicate and interact with people and institutions. Thus, dōjinshi, which has been integral in the development of various fujoshi literacies and practices, can be seen as a form of new media. Assessing various mediums as new media allows us to examine the social impact of various media technologies and their roles in media convergence.

For Japanese studies scholars, manga culture and its media mix is an example of media convergence in Japan that predates network and digital technologies. Marc Steinberg notes that media mix has its roots with the expansion of Osamu Tezuka’s manga Astro Boy into transmedia franchises that made its characters more accessible to its audiences. From television shows to chocolate stickers, Astro Boy had a pervasive presence in people’s lives.

The varying narratives between Astro Boy franchises also highlight a transmedia storytelling where a story “unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole.” Jenkins notes that transmedia storytelling is one of the markers of media convergence as it highlights texts flowing through various media platforms. The success of Astro Boy media led to the development of other transmedia franchises which immersed audiences in a rich media environment and in turn taught them media literacies at a very young age. While Steinberg establishes manga’s successful diversification into other mediums, his study mostly focuses on the media industry’s efforts in creating a media mix culture. It does not highlight the contribution of audiences to this media mix culture.

Throughout this thesis, I have tried to address this gap by showcasing the various participatory cultures that emerged from Japanese youth media culture. In highlighting the various media literacies learned by readers of Japanese youth magazines, I have shown how readers have used these literacies to produce works that contributed to this
media environment. Youth magazines have been facilitating varying degrees of media convergence with their readers. The stories of early shōjo magazines such as Shōjo no tomo and Shōjo gahō highlight the creative collaboration between the magazine editors and their readers that lead to the creation of shōjo culture. Manga magazines continued this practice and fostered manga’s participatory culture by encouraging talented fans to submit in various workshops and awards. This gave fans the opportunity to directly shape commercial youth media with their narratives. Fans’ contributions to manga magazines such as Puff and JUNE also exemplified convergence in youth media. In more ways than one, fan Discourse converges with commercial media, which raises fans’ visibility in popular culture. The active engagement between Japanese youth media and its fans illustrates a convergence that highlights collaboration and collective intelligence.

While commercial youth media openly engages with fans, their relationship with their readers is far from symbiotic. Despite providing fans’ various democratic tools and spaces in their magazines, editors exercise full control over their magazine’s content. More often than not, readers’ contributions are only entertained if they align with the magazine’s vision and purpose. Not all fan contributors get compensation for submitting an illustration or a survey postcard to the magazine. In some ways, these magazines have capitalised on their readers’ submissions as they have profited from the publication of these free contributions in their magazines. Just like in every democracy, not all of their readers’ desires are granted. That said, these democratic tools are still important for manga magazines as readers’ insights have contributed to a collective intelligence that influences the narratives in the magazine and its related media. The manga industry draws readers’ emotions and desires from this collective intelligence which are used to produce commodities that elicit more affect from readers.

Affect plays a critical role in stirring audiences to invest their time, money, and skills to respond, create, and contribute to this collective intelligence. Media industries have noticed the power of affect on audiences. People’s emotional attachment to media has helped create a participatory culture that both celebrates and challenges

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904 Ibid., 93–130.
905 See Chapter 2.6.
906 See Chapter 4.2.
907 See Chapter 3 and 4.2.
908 See Chapter 4.5-7 and 5.2.
909 See Chapter 6.
910 Jenkins, Convergence Culture, 63.
traditional media. Not all media industries openly embrace participatory audiences. Some authors and publishers have taken drastic measures to stop audiences from producing derivative works.⁹¹¹ Others have sought ways to control their audiences’ participation by setting guidelines on how they can or cannot transform their texts.⁹¹² Those that do welcome the fanfare over their texts sometimes choose to capitalise on their audience’s emotions. Jenkins calls this “affective economics” — a new marketing strategy that seeks to “quantify desire, to measure connections, and to commodify commitments….”⁹¹³ Through affective economics, media industries hope to shape the consumption patterns of their audiences for profit.

Japan’s media industry is driven by affective economics. As seen in fans’ affective responses to various narratives,⁹¹⁴ Japanese media produce commodities that elicit emotional investments from their consumers. To a degree, moe culture is a product of Japanese media’s affective economy. Magazines such as Shōnen jump produce highly emotional narratives to create and maintain strong emotional bonds with their readers on a weekly basis. Animated series also consider an episode’s emotional pace in order to sustain the interests of their viewers every week. As Kevin Roberts, the CEO of advertising company Saatchi & Saatchi, argues, “emotions are a serious opportunity to get in touch with consumers.”⁹¹⁵ Emotions help people build affection for commodities. Loved commodities inspire “Loyalty Beyond Reason.”⁹¹⁶ For manga magazines, emotions lead to loyal readers who are emotionally invested in their characters and their stories.

Affective economics enable magazines to maintain strong emotional bonds with their readers. Some of these loyal readers become passionate fans who extend the

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⁹¹³ Jenkins, Convergence Culture, 62.

⁹¹⁴ See Chapters 3.4-5, 4.3, and 5.2-3.


⁹¹⁶ Ibid., 66–69.
shelf-life of their favourite titles through fan works and goods such as dōjinshi. The success of best-selling magazines such as Shōnen Jump has relied on readers’ affective responses to their stories and its related media. In many ways, the diverse media related to a manga series — from its anime, toys, light novels, and other merchandise — reflect the manga industry’s desire to extract as much affect as possible from their fans.

As an affective economy, manga’s media mix industry relies on efficient ways to capitalise on their readers’ emotions. Media mix is not just about a series’ diverse set of goods but rather the production of goods that expands a series’ “world.” Media mix builds intimate connections with their products’ audiences by immersing consumers in these narrative “worlds” through transmedia goods. This follows Ōtsuka and Steinberg’s arguments that media mix audiences consume narratives. Audiences’ emotional responses to these narratives are measured by media companies either through formal channels, such as survey postcards or readers’ submissions or through informal channels such as dōjinshi. Unlike regulated formal channels, dōjinshi provide insight into the elements of the narrative that make their audiences feel intense emotions. Dōjinshi showcase the various characters, scenarios, and settings that audiences intimately enjoyed from a “world.”

Manga publishers have a love-hate relationship with dōjinshi. Ōtsuka argues that dōjinshi provide a “variation” to the industry’s “world” which highlights consumers’ power in creating narratives. As seen in previous chapters, fan dōjinshi find delight in deconstructing a story’s original “world” as fans play with its various narrative elements. While manga publishers think these fannish practices “cannibalizes their market,” they also understand that dōjinshi serve as a productive space where amateur creators strive to become professional artists. The industry sees fans as a valuable resource whose talents and practices can be integrated into the contents industry. This highlights the media industry’s effort to build a convergence culture with their audiences and leads to what Ōtsuka believes is the last stage of narrative consumption where the fine line between media consumers and producers disappear as consumers become creators who

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917 See Chapters 4 and 5.
918 Ōtsuka, “Reproduction and Consumption of Narrative”; Steinberg, Anime’s Media Mix, 200.
are as powerful as media producers. This relationship reinforces Jenkins’ definition of convergence where power in media shifts between audiences and the media industry.

7.3. FUJOSHI “BAIT” IN SHÔDEN JUMP CANON

At the turn of the millennium, Shônen jump found itself at a critical crossroad as their magazine sales began to decline. The 1990s was seen as the Golden Age of Shônen jump. The success of 1980s titles such as Captain Tsubasa, Saint Seiya, and Dragon Ball contributed to the magazine’s growing profile and audience. Shônen jump’s knack for new talent opened opportunities for young writers such as Takehiko Inoue and Yoshihiro Togashi to produce award-winning titles with Slam Dunk and Yu Yu Hakusho in the 1990s. During that decade, nineteen Shônen jump titles were made as anime, paving the way for various media mix products such as novels, video games, and toys. This media mix had an astounding effect on titles such as Slam Dunk whose print run doubled from 1 million to 2.5 million copies per volume in 1994. In 1995, Shônen jump had its highest recorded circulation of 6.53 million copies each week.

Throughout the decade, Shônen jump had become one of the top comic magazines in Japan. The magazine’s growth made its heroes and their stories accessible to a larger audience. Japan’s diversifying media landscape had made it difficult, however, for manga magazines to compete with emerging media technologies such as personal computers, phones and video games. The circulation of weekly youth manga magazines dramatically dropped by nineteen per cent between 1995 and 1999. Shônen jump’s circulation was down to 3.63 million copies per week and second only to Shônen Magazine by the end of the decade.

Shônen jump’s decline appeared disproportionate to fans’ increasing interest in their magazine. Dōjinshi for Shônen jump titles became increasingly popular by the end of the 1990s, especially among girls. Stories such as Slam Dunk and Yu Yu Hakusho strongly appealed to female readers who were moved by its male heroes and their inter-personal relationships. This pushed some female fans to explore these relationships through dōjinshi which immediately distinguished these women from most institutes. Ōtsuka, “Reproduction and Consumption of Narrative,” 113.

925 National Publication Society Institute, 2000 Annual Publication Index Report, 252.
926 Ibid., 240.
Shōnen jump readers. The dedication of these women in using various literacies to produce Shōnen jump dōjinshi is highly commendable as many female dōjinshi artists, such as CLAMP and Yoshinaga Fumi, subsequently became popular critically-acclaimed\textsuperscript{927} mainstream artists in their own right. These artists used the literacies they honed in their Shōnen jump dōjinshi in their original commercial works. Just like their dōjinshi, their works also provoked strong emotions in their readers. Their ability to use their literacies to sustain their readers’ feelings highlights the power of affect. Their success also showcased the emerging fujoshi Discourse and its mainstream potential. By the end of the decade, Shōnen jump could no longer ignore their emotionally invested female audience. With their dwindling circulation, the magazine editors saw this as a perfect opportunity to capitalise on their fans’ emotions. Tapping this community meant that Shōnen jump must reflect their literacies and practices. This pushed the magazine to pursue convergence with their female fans.

The incorporation of fujoshi elements into mainstream Japanese media has been described by English-speaking fans in recent years as fujoshi bait. When a certain title features handsome boys or objectifies male bodies, fans immediately see these as “baits” for fujoshi audiences.\textsuperscript{928} While this term emerged in Anglophone fan communities, Japanese fans have also been noticing the influence of fujoshi on mainstream texts.\textsuperscript{929} Much like fujoshi, fujoshi bait also has a negative connotation as it is seen as “corruption” of masculine images and heteronormative mainstream texts.

The term is sometimes seen as synonymous to queer baiting, a practice in Western mainstream media where stories are designed to lure queer readings from queer and slash fans without showing the consummation of a gay or queer relationship.\textsuperscript{930} I argue, however, that a distinction must be made between the two as fujoshi bait operates differently compared to queer baiting. The lack of clarity on fujoshi bait and how it

\textsuperscript{927} CLAMP was shortlisted for the Shōgakukan Manga Award in 1999 and won Seiun Award for best manga in 2001 for Kādo kyouputā sakura (Card Captor Sakura, 1996–2000). Fumi Yoshinaga won the Kodansha Manga Award for shōjo in 2002 for her work Seiyō kottō yōgashiten (Antique Bakery, 1999–2002).

\textsuperscript{928} While the term fujoshi bait has been used in fandom for a while, the term became prominent after the release of the animated show Free! (2013) which featured an all-male high school swimming team. For examples of the use of fujoshi bait in English-speaking fan discourse see Elliot Gay, “KyoAni’s next TV Anime Is FREE!,” Japanator, April 26, 2013, accessed October 22, 2015, http://www.japanator.com/kyoani-s-next-tv-anime-is-free--28562.phtml; Scorpion1d3x, “How Fujoshi Bait Works,” Memecenter, 2014, accessed February 27, 2015, http://www.memecenter.com/fun/4031351/how-fujoshi-bait-works/comments.

\textsuperscript{929} Sayaka, “Jump and Fujoshi”; Shibata and Hirayama, “The Support of Fervent Girls for ‘Shōnen Jump.’”
functions within Japanese media and fandom needs to be addressed. As such, it is important to redefine this term within the context of Japanese media and its audiences.

I define *fujoshi* bait as the inclusion of some *fujoshi* literacies and practices in Japanese mainstream media in the hopes of establishing an affective economy with female audiences. By mainstream media, I refer to media industries that do not produce boys love commodities or intentionally caters to boys love consumers. This means that *fujoshi* bait is not just about throwing a group of handsome boys to a story nor is it Japanese media’s efforts to insert subliminal queer meanings into their texts. Instead, *fujoshi* bait should be seen as a marketing strategy in Japanese media that uses *fujoshi* literacies and practices in order to capitalise on female fans’ emotional investment in their media.

As women consume and remix mainstream media using *fujoshi Discourse,* mainstream media is using the same Discourse to lure *fujoshi* to their “worlds” (Figure 7.1). This presents a cycle of media consumption and production that relies on fans’ affective responses. At the start of the millennium, *Shōnen jump* attempted to use this system to situate their magazine at the heart of women’s affective economy.

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**Figure 7.1. ** *Fujoshi* bait and the media cycle of women’s affective economy.

*Shōnen jump* has incorporated *fujoshi* Discourse in their media via two methods. The first method ties *fujoshi* literacies and practices to the original narratives written by the authors of select *Shōnen jump* series and the producers of their respective animated

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930 “It’s Queer Baiting, Not Representation,” *Diva,* October 2015, 40–41; “Queer Baiting,” *Fanlore,*
series. This method integrates fujoshi Discourse into the canon of various Shônen jump media such as manga and its anime. The second method operates outside the series canon where Shônen jump uses fujoshi Discourse in producing media mix commodities. This method focuses on Shônen jump’s production of “smaller narratives” such as moe elements and aims to intensify fans’ attachment to these stories. These two methods operate on different levels of affect for consumers as it influences their engagement with the series and their practices.

7.3.1. THE CASE OF NARUTO

The inclusion of fujoshi literacies and practices in Shônen jump stories was incorporated in the magazine in trickles with Naruto as its testing ground. Masashi Kishimoto’s (1974–) Naruto is named after the hero of the series who is a young orphan aspiring to be the best ninja in his village. The story follows the growth of Naruto as he fulfils his dreams. As the story sets its tone, Naruto manages to incorporate three fujoshi literacies within its first volume: an ambiguous masculine body, a special relationship between two characters, and in-depth information about the series’ “world.”

The first literacy falls on the construction of Naruto’s character. Naruto is introduced as a young boy who is silly to a fault. At the age of 12, Naruto is already notorious as the village delinquent. While most people perceive Naruto negatively, there are a few who find Naruto’s innocence to be endearing and his courage admirable. Physically, Naruto does not have the characteristics of a bishônen but his cheerful smile and his cat-like whiskers make him look cute and appealing. These characteristics do not, however, make him gender ambiguous. Instead, a specific ninja technique makes Naruto special.

In the first chapter, he shows his capacity for ambiguity by performing a ninja technique called O-iroke no jutsu (The sexy technique) where he transforms his body into that of a sexy naked girl.931 Seeing a girl’s sexy body is nothing new in shônen magazines since they are notoriously known for using women’s eroticism, either through sexy costumes or an occasional “panty shot,” for entertainment purposes.932

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931 Kishimoto, Naruto, 1: 13–14.
These manga are described as *etchi* (lewd) manga and the pioneering title for this kind of manga is *Harenchi gakuen* which was published in *Shōnen jump*.

While Naruto uses this sexy female body to distract his teachers, his sexy transformation highlights his potential for eroticism and masculine ambiguity, just like the *bishōnen*. This transformation would have an impact on *dōjinshi* where authors would use this characteristic to play with Naruto’s sexuality where he embraces his female body. While Naruto’s gender potential may be seen as progressive, the portrayal of gender, particularly of women, in Naruto has been criticised as conservative.

Naruto’s accidental kiss with Sasuke highlights the second *fujoshi* literacy which aims to trigger affect by introducing a special relationship between two characters. In this same chapter, Naruto describes Sasuke as a brooding character whom he sees as his rival. Sasuke is unlike Naruto as he comes from a prestigious yet fallen family in the village. Sasuke is also seen as a prodigy as he easily manages his ninja skills while Naruto struggles with his basic tasks. The two boys are polar opposites of each other and the first volume establishes their heated rivalry. When the two boys become teammates, they develop a friendly rivalry and a friendship that would be tested throughout the series.

Unlike most couplings that require in-depth reading of characters and their relationships, Naruto and Sasuke’s relationship is perhaps the most assertive *fujoshi* “bait” placed in *Shōnen jump*. Their “kiss,” while written with comedic intent, draws so much intertextual meaning from *fujoshi* who read beyond its comedy. Their team, which includes Naruto’s crush, Sakura, falls within Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s love triangle dynamic where Naruto’s relationships can be perceived as potentially heterosexual and homosexual. It is interesting to note that throughout the series, Naruto prioritises his relationship with Sasuke over others. Even when Sasuke drives Naruto close to death, Naruto still considers him his friend. The series’ attention to Naruto and Sasuke’s relationship has captured the hearts of its readers, especially women. Among

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933 For more on *etchi* manga and *Harenchi cakuen*, see Chapter 2.8 and Nishimura, *Farewell, the shōnen jump of my youth*, 153–57.
female fans, their kiss was the start of a beautiful yet painful relationship, making SasuNaru (or NaruSasu) as the most prominent coupling in *Naruto*. The last literacy deployed in *Naruto* contributes to the *fujoshi* practice of intertextual databasing. In between chapters, Kishimoto writes little notes to his readers about his creative process for *Naruto*. In the first volume, this included his thoughts on his characters and their initial designs. Within the actual story, Kishimoto uses his characters to explain the “world” of Naruto. In the second volume, Kishimoto dedicates panels that explain the social structure of Naruto’s village and the geography of their “world.” These clear descriptions of a story’s “structure” help readers understand the rules and boundaries of Naruto’s canon. While Kishimoto provides easy references in his comics, he later follows the footsteps of *Jojo’s Bizarre Adventure*’s Araki and publishes a data book that contains various information on his characters. This information ranges from random character notes such as their birthdays and star signs to their personality, histories, and relationships. This attention to detail stems from the fan practice of narrative consumption which is related to the practice of intertextual databasing.

Other series also publish their own data books which have become important reference books for anyone interested in knowing more about the world of the series. These data books serve as valuable resources for fans of the series who wish to create *dōjinshi*. Unlike a decade ago when fans had to mine information from the text itself, these official data books have become textbooks for these series. The first *Naruto* character book, for example, contains a character lineup that shows the height of characters in relation to each other. For *dōjinshi* artists, this is a valuable visual resource that helps them understand the spatial ratios of each character. This character book also contains a relationship chart of the major characters which also aids fans to visually map the various relationships they can explore. Not only do these character

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938 In Comic Market 86 (Summer 2014), *Naruto* had been integrated into the *Jump* variety genre where it had 162 circles. 46 of these circles (28%) were dedicated to a Naruto and Sasuke coupling. See Comic Market Preparation Committee, *Comic Market 86 Catalog* (Tokyo: Comiket, 2014), 554–59.


940 Ibid., 2:41.

941 See Chapter 4.3.


943 Ibid., 228–29.
books condense the content of the series but their organised information also aids readers’ comprehension of the series. In many ways, the data books published by Shōnen jump are a physical manifestation of fans’ intertextual database.

7.3.2. THE CASE OF PRINCE OF TENNIS

Among Naruto’s contemporaries, the Shōnen jump series highly associated with its female audience is Prince of Tennis (Tenipuri) by Takeshi Konomi (1970—). Tenipuri is a sports manga which features the growth of an arrogant tennis prodigy from America named Ryōma Echizen as he joins a Japanese middle school tennis team. By participating in his club’s activities and tournaments, Echizen develops his athleticism, sportsmanship, and camaraderie. Unlike Naruto, Tenipuri is set in contemporary Japan which means that its readers are not required to have a unique knowledge of its “world.” Tenipuri also has a narrative typical of most shōnen manga where a young hero grows through competition. While these things make it appear that Tenipuri offers nothing new, these typical settings give Konomi a canvas that allows him to focus on other elements in the story, specifically his characters.

Of all the Shōnen jump series published during this period, Tenipuri is notorious for using fujoshi literacies surrounding moe kyara. Most of Konomi’s Tenipuri characters combine various moe kyara elements that are familiar to fujoshi. For example, Echizen is seen as a kūru (cool) kyara. One of Echizen’s teammates, Kikumaru, is seen as an okosama (childish) kyara. Keigo Atobe, the captain of Hyōtei, one of the rival schools of Seigaku, is portrayed as an oresama (narcissistic/princely) kyara. All these characters also have trademark moves and catchphrases, similar to the characters in Captain Tsubasa, and these are sometimes used as punchlines throughout the story. While these characters have their own stories within the canon of Tenipuri manga, they are not complex enough to stray far from their kyara stereotypes. In fact, the television adaptation of Tenipuri takes advantage of these boys’ versatility as kyara.

When the Tenipuri television series catches up to the manga and requires a new episode for broadcast, they sometimes create a new story that uses their characters in a parody. The first of these was the Tenisu no mukashibanashi (Fairytale of tennis, 2003) which featured the boys, in a super-deformed (SD) form, as characters in

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944 “Let’s investigate the otome’s moe,” 10.
945 For more on Captain Tsubasa, see Chapter 4.6 above.
Japanese legends. Echizen plays the role of the story’s version of Momotarō while teammates play oni (demons).  

The popularity of this SD-form story led to the production of other independent SD episodes where the Tenipuri boys parody other popular genres. In these parodies, the animators are not shy of transgressing the gender or the bodies of the boys. In one SD episode, Tenipuri parodies Sazae-san by Machiko Hasegawa. In this episode, Echizen’s teammates play a family where Oishi, the team vice-captain, plays the matriarch while Fuji, one of the senior players, is the grandmother, Momoshirō becomes Momoko and plays the youngest daughter, and lastly, Kikumaru is the house cat. Despite their transformed bodies, the kyara of these characters are still sufficiently distinguishable that their dispositions are not lost in the parody. These episodes highlight the show’s validation of fans’ intertextual literacies and practices.

The animated parodies of Tenipuri highlight Konomi’s openness with his story. Unlike other authors who like to take control of their stories and keep their fans’ readings and activities at a relative distance, Konomi revels in the support of his readers and remains open to fans’ interpretations of his characters. Konomi embraces his fans’ intertextual practices and celebrates them through three Tenipuri fan books. The Tenipuri fan books were the first of its kind among Shōnen Jump titles. More than just a data book, these Tenipuri fan books became a space to showcase fujoshi literacies and practices.

The Tenipuri fan books have four crucial components: official data, fan interaction, “sentiment analysis,” and fan-submitted data. The official data is comprised of characters’ information, official images, and interviews with the creatives behind the series. Some official data included in the Tenipuri fan books are far more meticulous compared to other titles. For example, Konomi shares the layout of the boys’ rooms, the contents of their bags, the brands of the shoes and tennis rackets they use, and even a spread of their lunches. Konomi also publishes interviews with featured characters and newsletters from the various schools featured in the series. The

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946 Takayuki Hamana, “Tenisu no Ōjisama Supesharu!!” [Prince of Tennis Special], Tenisu no Ōjisama [Prince of Tennis] (Japan: TV Tokyo, June 25, 2003).
948 This was the case for Inoue Takehiko and Yoshihiro Togashi. See Chapter 5.3 and 5.5.
950 While Konomi mentions various brands his characters use, the series did not have a commercial tie-in that influenced these choices.
fan books also include small gifts such as a blank school ID, a Tenipuri club ID, and tickets to the final match of the National Junior High School Tournament.\footnote{Konomi, \textit{Prince of Tennis 10.5 official fan book}; Takeshi Konomi, \textit{Tenisu No ojisama 20.5 kōshiki fan bukku} [Prince of Tennis 20.5 Official fan book] (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 2003); Takeshi Konomi, \textit{Tenisu no ojisama 40.5 kōshiki fan bukku} [Prince of Tennis 40.5 official fan book] (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 2007).} The official data for Tenipuri is rich in information for a series that does not have the same narrative complexity as the fantastic worlds of \textit{Naruto} or \textit{One Piece}. This highlights Konomi’s willingness to include in his series many moe elements that his fans can play with.

Konomi, and to an extent his editors, also uses the Tenipuri fan books to communicate and interact with their fans. These interactions come through various games and responses from the creative team behind the Tenipuri fan books. The games for fans range from trivia quizzes about the series, puzzles, and quizzes that sort out your possible school in Tenipuri or your possible doubles partner. Throughout the book, Konomi and his team also respond to fans’ submissions. The best example of this interaction is seen in the third fan book where Konomi answers 108 questions from fans.\footnote{Konomi, \textit{Prince of Tennis 40.5 official fan book}, 111–17.} These questions range from personal questions (such as what he likes to eat for breakfast) to what he thinks about his characters. Konomi’s answer column reads like one of the Tenipuri character interviews and profiles which makes one think about how his fans perceive Konomi. It may appear that fans are consuming Konomi like a kyara but I argue that fans, out of love for the series, have also become emotionally attached to its creator.

The third crucial component of the Tenipuri fan book measures audiences’ emotional attachment to various elements in the series. Mark Andrejevic calls this “sentiment analysis” whose purpose is to “channel and structure that [affect’s] intensity.”\footnote{Andrejevic, “The Work That Affective Economics Does,” 609.} In the case of Tenipuri fan books, various questions are used to structure the effect Tenipuri characters have on their fans. This system is an extension of \textit{Shōnen Jump}’s regular postcard surveys that specifically measures the affective responses of Tenipuri fans.

The scale of Tenipuri’s audience metric is impressive and gives insight into readers’ consumption of this series. For the first fan book alone, 22 surveys were conducted where more than 50,000 postcards were sorted for these surveys alone. The most common survey is the character ranking, a survey that has been practised by fans
since the 1970s. One of the more impressive surveys in the fan book lists 1000 readers who sent postcards to the magazine so that their name could be included in the official ōendan (cheerleading) squad of a specific player. Readers were also asked to specify their favourite scenes for a specific character and their largest survey, which had 29,139 respondents by the third fan book, asked questions such as “Who would you like to be your younger brother?” or “Which famous actor do you want to play the role of this character?” More than just mining the story, the editorial team behind Tenipuri was also mining their readers’ emotional attachment to their series. The editorial team of Tenipuri used this information to direct the story of the manga towards the interests of their readers. For example, when the series was transferred to a new Jump magazine, Konomi retained the popular characters in Shin tenisu no ōjisama (The New Prince of Tennis, 2009–present).

The agency and power of Tenipuri fans are highlighted through the various submissions in these fan books. Beyond the surveys, fans are also asked to send fan illustrations, comics, and even theories about the characters. At the peak of the series’ popularity, fans submitted 85,000 postcards for the illustration gallery of the second fan book. Just as substantial are the theoretical submissions from fans where they contribute to the series’ collective knowledge and showcase their intertextual practices. These theoretical submissions are part of the character profiles where readers submit their insights on a character’s specific trait. Fans’ theories range from redesigning a characters’ glasses to speculating the relationship between two characters. These fan submissions show the editorial team’s interest in fans’ intertextual practices. In giving fans the space to share their thoughts about the series, the editorial team encourages fans’ intertextual reading of the texts. By printing these thoughts in the fan books, they also validate these fans’ intertextual consumption of Tenipuri.

The relationship Tenipuri has developed with its fans can be described as Shōnen jump’s successful attempt at establishing convergence with its female fans. While the series never claimed to focus on female readers, the fan books suggest, with survey questions that ask, “who do you think would be the best lover?” or “what is your ideal

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954 See Chapter 4.3.
date with this character?,” that the editors are aware that they have a strong following among women.

In dōjinshi culture, Tenipuri has its own genre in Comic Market since 2002 and continues to have small events that cater specifically to Tenipuri characters. During C66 (Summer 2004), Tenipuri had 2,100 circles, occupying two halls at Tokyo Big Sight, the largest for a single genre at that time. While the series never explicitly acknowledges couplings, the series still allows its readers to pair characters together as a “doubles” team for tennis matches. This is the best that the official Tenipuri can offer to their fujoshi fans. Despite not having incorporated all fujoshi literacies, the relationship between female fans and Tenipuri has been strong enough to sustain the series over the years and across multiple platforms.

Tenipuri’s successful convergence with its fans has made the series a model for other Shōnen jump titles. Its contemporaries, Naruto, One Piece, and Reborn! released data books a year after the first Tenipuri fan book. Katekyō Hitman Rebōn is particularly interesting as it is an action manga that uses various moe kyara elements. When Tenipuri ended its run in Shōnen jump, Kuroko no basuke (Kuroko’s Basketball, 2008–2014) follows after Tenipuri’s focus on moe kyara in a sports manga and has also received a strong following among female fans. The inclusion of fan responses into the narrative has also been embraced by some authors, one of whom has made it a critical part of his series.

7.3.3. THE CASE OF GINTAMA

Gintama (Silver Soul, 2003–present) is a comedy manga by Hideaki Sorachi (1979–) that reimagines late Edō (1853–1867) culture and history in an intergalactic world. It features the ragtag crew named Yorozuya (Jack-of-all-trades Shop) who is spearheaded by the series’ hero, the lazy sweet-toothed man named Gintoki Sakata. The series follows Yorozuya as they take odd jobs all over the district of Kabukichō. The series combines short comedic episodes with dramatic story arcs that develop its

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961 Comic Market Preparation Committee, 40th Comic Market Chronicle, 128.
963 Shibata and Hirayama, “The Support of Fervent Girls for ‘Shōnen Jump.’”
characters and progress the story. The series humour incorporates various pastiches of modern Japanese life, some of which includes references to fan literacies and practices.

The comedy of *Gintama* relies on its readers’ intertextual literacies. The story has layers of parody which draw from history, science fiction, politics, and contemporary Japanese culture. The series, while set in the far future, operates within an empty time especially when the series references various things from the past and the present. For example, some of the characters are based on historical figures, such as Toshirō Hijikata and Isao Kondō, who are based on the Shinsengumi leaders, Toshizō Hijikata and Isami Kondō.964 These characters, while supposedly from Edo, would often make references to contemporary Japanese pop culture. From holidays to shamed politicians,965 almost nothing escapes *Gintama*’s satire.

*Gintama*’s fantastic setting allows the series to do almost anything that it wants. In a way, *Gintama* is the commercial counterpart of parody *dōjinshi*. It heavily integrates various literacies and practices from *dōjinshi* culture in order to produce a story that reflects the joys and sorrows of our time. *Gintama*’s fan *dōjinshi* also uses the same satire as the best of these, at least those that do not contain any blatant sexual content, can fit flawlessly into the *Gintama* canon. The series often mentions that it is a joke away from being sued for copyright and pursued by the parent-teacher associations for their questionable content. At times, the series even breaks the closed world of the narrative in an effort to recognise the presence of their readers.

Similar to *Tenipuri*, *Gintama* interacts intensively with its readers. While *Gintama* never released fan books as elaborate as *Tenipuri*’s, the series has incorporated fan submissions within the pages of its comics. Since the third volume of the series, *Gintama* has included an illustration gallery for fan art submissions and a readers’ corner where Sorachi answers readers’ questions about anything related to the series. Unlike Konomi who takes the questions of his fans seriously, Sorachi also satires readers by replying to them in a light-hearted fashion.966 Sorachi presents himself to his readers as a lazy gorilla which is quite ironic given the careful attention he gives to

966 Hideaki Sorachi, *Gintama* [Silver Soul], vol. 31 (Tokyo: Shōeisha, 2009), 68.
creating the series. More than his own interests, Sorachi also makes an effort to acknowledge his fans within the canon of *Gintama*.

The series is notorious for breaking the fourth wall — a narrative device where characters are aware of the audience and recognise their presence. The best example of this is a story arc in *Gintama* titled “Ninki tōhyō nante kuso kurae” (To hell with popularity polls). As mentioned earlier, character polls have become an integral part of *Shōnen Jump*’s audience metrics. In this story arc, *Gintama* incorporates the results of their latest character poll by showing the characters’ reaction to the result. The story follows one of the Yorozuya, Shinpachi, as he tries to uncover readers’ rationale behind their ranking. All the characters have their corresponding rank beside their faces and Shinpachi is shocked as he realises that despite frequently appearing in the series, he receives the eighth ranking and is lower than other characters who only appears occasionally. Shinpachi soon discovers that characters’ rankings can be changed if a character behaves outside of the audience’s expectations. It is then Shinpachi realises that readers are like gods who favour characters who appeal to them. The story progresses into a fierce battle where the characters fight for their readers’ support by changing their or another character’s kyara elements. The story ends with Shinpachi finding satisfaction in his rank after realising that he operates within a narrative purpose.

This episode acknowledges the various factors—from their physical features to their countenance—involving in eliciting readers’ affective response. At the same time, the story also recognises that characters are part of a grand narrative and are not determined solely by their kyara elements. More importantly, this story showcases the power of Sorachi and *Gintama* fans in shaping *Gintama*’s stories.

The strong intertextual nature of *Gintama*’s canon allows the text to play with many themes including gender and sexuality. Many of the characters of *Gintama* have already crossdressed and swapped genders in the texts. The series also hosts a cast of transgender characters, from an okama hostess club in Kabukichō to a girl who identifies as a boy. *Gintama*’s gender fluidity also extends to the relationships between characters where their heteronormative relationships equal their potentially homosexual

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or homosocial relationships. This is best seen in the relationships of *Gintama*’s protagonist, Gintoki Sakata.

Throughout the series, Gintoki finds himself in situations where he builds strong relationships with both women and men. Some of these situations are emotional while some have sexual connotations. For example, after one drunken night, Gintoki finds himself “responsible” for four women and one man. While the women are just playing a prank on Gintoki to make him stop his excessive drinking, the man confesses that Gintoki had sex with him that night.¹⁶⁹ In many occasions, Gintoki also finds himself in intimate situations with his rival, Hijikata.

The anime series even has a running joke on the commercial appeal of the Gintoki x Hijikata coupling and that the animation company released DVDs with GinHiji on the cover.⁹⁷⁰ While this DVD is not real nor has Sorachi ever given Gintoki a romantic partner, Gintoki’s strong relationships with both men and women highlight the series’ own pleasure in playing with his sexuality. Sorachi does this skillfully with his choice of intertextual narrative elements which are open to readers’ interpretations. Fujoshi-literate readers can easily interpret these situations as being “of the same scent” as boys love⁹⁷¹ while those unfamiliar with *fujoshi* literacies can take them as a good joke. The result of these intertextual moments leads to *dōjinshi* that explore these couplings.⁹⁷²

The inclusion of *fujoshi* literacies and practices in these *Shōnen jump* series marked a turning point for the magazine. By making its texts more accessible to fans through various data books, fans’ thirst for consuming narratives and databasing stories was satiated. The ongoing discussions on fan Discourse⁹⁷³ helped the magazine construct stories and texts that were valuable to their audience’s literacies and practices.

As seen through *Naruto*, *Prince of Tennis*, and *Gintama*, the magazine adapted various moe elements, fans’ databasing practice, and to an extent, implied possible couplings through the creation of “special relationships.” The inclusion of these elements was

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¹⁷⁰ Shinji Takamatsu, “Hito no tansho o mitsukeru yori chōsho o mitsukerareru hito ni nare” [Be a person who can see people’s strong points and not their weak points], *Gintama* (TV Tokyo, February 7, 2008); and Yoichi Fujita, “Kizuna no iro wa jūnin toiro” [The color for each person’s bond comes in various colors], *Gintama* (TV Tokyo, February 19, 2009).
¹⁷² The male characters that have the most intimate interactions in *Gintama* are Gintoki and Hijikata. They are the most popular coupling from the series with 25% of *Gintama* circles dedicated to this coupling at Comic Market 86 (2014). See Comic Market Preparation Committee, *C86 Catalog*, 568–77.
¹⁷³ See Chapter Six.
designed to bait fujoshi interests, trigger their delusions, and hopefully inspire them to channel their affective response either through fan works or by supporting the series.

The fujoshi baits in Shōnen jump extend beyond what fans perceive as fan service for women — beautiful boys with athletic physiques who are in “special relationships” with each other. Instead, these baits were designed to invite women to play with various elements in their narratives and inspire fans to explore the infinite potential of their favourite characters. In return, girls expressed their jouissance by making Shōnen jump their favourite manga magazine more than any shōjo or josei manga magazine in the market.974 In Comic Market, Shōnen jump is one of the top performing magazines with an average of 15 per cent of all circles during the first decade of the 2000s.975 In surveys, girls pick Shōnen jump titles and characters as their favourites.976 While the magazine never recovered its former distribution numbers, through accommodating their female readers, the magazine has reached a wider audience that has made them the top-selling manga magazine in Japan since 2002.977 Despite this success, Shōnen jump understands the shifting media needs of their audiences. As such, the magazine also uses fujoshi baits in their media mix.

7.4. FUJOSHI “BAIT” IN SHŌNEN JUMP MEDIA MIX

In Shūeisha’s 2012 media guide that shows advertisers information about their boys’ comic magazines, the company’s profile for Shōnen jump includes two pie charts that show how much money a child receives as otoshidama (new year’s gift) and where they spend their money. The pie chart for where children spend their gifts shows over 20.7% of their money is spent on comics and 10% are spent on magazines.978 The next amount goes to video games, and the rest are distributed between card games, clothes, music, savings, and others. In the next page, they indicate the costs of advertisements in the magazine with a note saying, “You can strongly appeal to our reader’s hearts.”979

974 “Girl’s Favorite Comic Magazine is ‘Shōnen Jump.’”
975 Myrmecoleon, “[Dojinshi to toshokan] Jyantar kōdo betsu sākuru kazu ichiran (c78–c74) to natsucomi kokuchi” [[Dojinshi and library] Summary of particular genre codes and its circle participants (c78–c84) and summer comic market announcements], Blog, Myrmecoleon in Paradoxical Library, accessed October 8, 2013, http://d.hatena.ne.jp/myrmecoleon/20130531.
979 Ibid., 3.
These pages highlight the magazine’s understanding of their readers’ consumption patterns as well as their intent to build an affective economy.

The previous section has shown how *Shōnen jump* manages to connect to the emotions of female readers through their stories. In using various *fujoshi* literacies, the magazine has managed to build emotional connections to their readers. To a degree, *Shōnen jump* media mix banks on sustaining these emotions outside fans’ consumption of their main stories. As such, the focus of this section is not on media mix franchises that are somewhat related to the “grand narrative” of the series such as the television shows, films, light novels, and video games. In this section, I focus on two specific media mixes: merchandise and immersive events.

Merchandising in Japan is diverse and complex especially for media franchises that tap large audiences. Merchandise aims to provide pleasures across various channels that bridge fantasy and reality. The polymorphously perverse nature of Japanese merchandise incites affect across all forms of media. These kinds of merchandise play a critical role in building *Shōnen jump*’s affective economy with their female audiences. In many ways, girls’ consumption of *Shōnen jump* goods becomes another expression of their affection, transforming many *fujoshi* practices.

While *Shōnen jump* fan goods had been tapping girls’ intertextual literacies since the 1990s, it was during the popularity of *Tenipuri* that goods were deliberately designed for fans’ intertextual consumption. These goods did not come as collectible toys but mostly comprised of soundtracks and decorative items. Similar to *Yu Yu Hakusho*, *Tenipuri* has released various soundtracks and albums related to the series. In the span of sixteen years, *Tenipuri* has released around 500 CDs. This wealth of music stems from the fact that the characters of *Tenipuri* have been repackaged as music idols. Almost all 71 characters of the series have released their own character singles sung by their voice actors. In addition to this, each team and doubles pairs have also been presented as boy bands. Some characters have been grouped as a band simply because they share some *kyara* elements. For example, three bespectacled characters form an idol unit called *Megane* (Glasses). Lastly, these CDs

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981 See Chapter Five.
also include short radio drama skits and talk shows which contribute loosely to the grand narrative of the series.

These character songs are no musical masterpieces but they do provide a space for characters to express themselves outside of the canon. Original compositions for the characters often reflect their canon personas and give insight into their emotions which are not openly explored in the canon. At the same time, characters’ remakes of old pop songs are entertaining pastiches that simulate karaoke parties. For some fans who avidly support voice actors, these CDs are extensions of their favourite voice actor’s discography. Their idol-like presentation purposefully takes their audiences into a fantastic space that settles comfortably between the Tenipuri canon and fans’ intertextual database.

These intertextual characteristics also extended to merchandise that ranges from stuffed toys, stationery, the school jerseys of characters which have become valuable to cosplayers, and other decorative items. The designs of these goods vary from one manufacturer to another. For example, those directly produced by Shōnen jump use their artists’ illustrations. Anime-related goods follow the illustrations of the anime while other manufacturers transform these characters into kawaii (cute) goods. The variety of these goods are endless and it contributes to fans’ expanding intertextual database.

From pins to mobile phone charms, these decorative accessories have become badges of affection which transform fans’ affective expression for their favourite characters. Ideally, the intent of these goods is for fans to buy them as tokens that make their favourite characters feel intimately present in their daily lives. These charms also foster a sense of fan identity and community as they become visible indicators of fujoshi Discourse.

Recently, these charms have been taken to a different level after the popularity of decora street fashion. Decora (short for decorative) was an emerging fashion trend in Japan during the late 1990s where young women wore bright colours from head to toe while decorating themselves with a lot of colourful accessories. Patrick Macias adds that these girls are like “a walking human toy store,” who uses their favourite characters as part of their accessories. These characters initially comprised of cute characters.

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983 Ogonoski, “Cosplaying the Media Mix.”
984 Allison, Millennial Monsters, 25.
from the Sanrio corporation, such as Hello Kitty, but this has soon expanded to other cute characters goods which now include Shōnen jump characters.

*Decora* girls have been heavily decorating themselves with their favourite *Shōnen jump* characters in recent years. These girls repurpose various *Shōnen jump* merchandise to transform them into accessories such as necklaces (Figure 7.2). Their most discernible fan expression is the *itabaggu* (annoying bag, *itabag*) where they decorate tote bags with a variety of pins and charms of the same character (Figure 7.3). The number and the kinds of pins they use on their *itabag* serve as a visual representation of their love for their character. For example, a girl who has an entire bag filled with limited edition pins highlights her fervour as a fan. *Fujoshi* who are not keen on *deco* fashion can still show their love by making their own *itabag*. In the last few years, the *itabag* has become a popular practice among *fujoshi*.


This excessive character decoration is also expressed in another recent *fujoshi* practice called *seitansai* (birth festival). *Seitansai* is a hashtag used by fans to celebrate the birthdays of their favourite characters. Fans celebrate these birthdays by either posting on Twitter or Pixiv a fan illustration, a cosplay photo, or a photo of a birthday *saidan* (altar) where fans build an altar for their favourite character and offer food or a birthday cake. There are no set rules on how fans build their *seitansai saidan*. The practice emerged in 2013 when fans on Twitter used this opportunity to display the various merchandise associated with their favourite character.986 The *seitansai* is also an example of many online fan practices which virtually connect fans.

While the seitansai gives fans opportunities to virtually celebrate their favourite character’s birthdays, Shōnen jump has also collaborated with various companies to build spaces where fans can experience pastiches of their favourite characters in real life. One kind of space is the live performances related to various Shōnen jump series. These live performances range from talk events, which feature commentaries from the anime series’ showrunners and voice actors, to 2.5 dimension musicals.

**Figure 7.5.** (From right to left, clockwise) Locker display for Kuroko’s Basketball, desserts from the J-World food court, and Kuroko’s Basketball character stands. Photographs were taken by the author. 2015.

Another space that immerses Shōnen jump fans in their fantasies are the various exhibits and theme attractions dedicated to Shōnen jump titles. From upscale museum

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987 An example of this is the Gintama talk event held every January. See “Gintama hare matsuri” [Gintama’s grand festival], Gintama Hare Matsuri, accessed October 9, 2016, http://www.sunrise-inc.co.jp/gintama/2016event/.

988 The earliest Shōnen jump musical was SMAP’s Saint Seiya in 1991. This was followed by Hunter x Hunter musicals in the 2000s as performed by their voice actors. 2.5 musicals took shape upon the production of Prince of Tennis musicals also known as Tenimyu. Tenimyu is currently the longest running 2.5 production. Other Shōnen jump titles, such as Naruto and Haikyū have also been produced as musicals. For more information, see Akiko Sugawa, “Fantajī ni asobu: 2.5jigen bunka ryōiki to imajinēshon” [Interplay with fantasy: 2.5. dimensional culture and imagination], in Yurīka: 2.5 jigen - 2jigen kara tachi ga aru arata na entateimento [Eureka: 2.5 dimension - A new entertainment rising from 2-dimension], Kindle ed., vol. 47, 5 (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2015).
exhibits\textsuperscript{989} to popup attractions, these spaces give life to these imagined worlds. Most of these attractions are situated in Ikebukuro, the mecca of fujoshi Discourse. J-World, a theme park attraction managed by Namco for \textit{Shōnen jump}, was established in 2013 at Sunshine City’s World Import Mall.\textsuperscript{990} This theme park hosts rides, games, a food court, and a shop that features many \textit{Shōnen jump} titles. Popular \textit{Shōnen jump} titles such as \textit{One Piece} and \textit{Naruto} have permanent attractions in the area. Other titles are rotated throughout the year. The theme park is like a journey through fans’ intertextual databases as one could slip in the “world” Naruto before escaping towards a team’s locker room in \textit{Kuroko’s Basketball} (Figure 7.5). After immersing in these worlds, the food court becomes a place to relax where fans can engage in moe talk or hold a small \textit{seitansai} while eating their favourite character’s dessert or a cake inspired by their favourite characters. This intertextual atmosphere is also applied in various theme cafes all over Ikebukuro.

Theme cafes, such as maid and butler cafes, have developed in fan spaces such as Ikebukuro and Akihabara. Stemming from the popularity of cosplay cafes, where the wait staff cosplay popular characters, Animate, a specialty store dedicated to anime and manga goods, have opened their own theme cafe in collaboration with various series popular among girls.\textsuperscript{991} \textit{Shōnen jump} titles were some of the earliest themed cafes by Animate. Namco also has collaboration cafes for \textit{Shōnen jump} series.\textsuperscript{992} The food in these cafes often features various \textit{moe kyara} elements from popular characters. Apart from having the chance to eat food inspired by the series, these cafes draw more attention for their limited edition goods, many of which girls use for their \textit{itabags} and \textit{seitansai saidan}, or inspire \textit{dōjinshi} that use the intertextual promotional images (Figure 7.6). These limited goods are not easy to purchase. They often involve games where players need luck or skill to hit the right target in order to get the character that they want. Hence, to fill a bag with just one character entails countless trials which can cost a fortune.

\textsuperscript{989} In 2012, in celebration of its 15th anniversary, \textit{One Piece} held an exhibit at Mori Arts Museum. \textit{Naruto} did the same in 2015 to mark the end of the manga. This year, \textit{Jojo’s Bizarre Adventure} is part of an exhibit where Louvre recognises comics as an art form.


\textsuperscript{991} “Animate Cafe,” \textit{Animate Cafe}, accessed November 22, 2015, https://cafe.animate.co.jp/.


Umberto Eco describes these spaces as hyperreal places where “Absolute unreality is offered as reality.”993 These spaces and performances draw the fictional worlds of Shōnen jump closer to fans’ own realities, offering hyperreal experiences to women while capitalising on their affections. As hyperreal items, these Shōnen jump merchandise and spaces make real things from women’s mōsō. In many ways, these goods and spaces materialise fujoshi’s jouissance. Their favourite kyara, who were once only malleable in their dōjinshi, are now redesigned to their tastes, loaded with intertextual potential.

The pleasure derived from consuming these new intertextual goods has led to more expressions of jouissance among fujoshi. As they create trending topics online with their birthday festivals, their itabags, and desserts inspired by their favourite characters, fujoshi Discourse has become more visible and their affection for Shōnen jump series ever more fervent. The “baits” laid by Shōnen jump have successfully lured fujoshi and also situated Shōnen jump within fujoshi Discourse. Shōnen jump has become shōjo jump for female readers. While this convergence showcases the increasingly blurred lines between shōjo and shōnen media, this convergence does not come about without resistance.

993 Umberto Eco, Travels in Hyperreality (San Diego, Calif.: Harvest Books, 1990), 7.
7.5. **Divergence in Convergence**

As Jenkin argues, divergence runs parallel with convergence. While there is cause for celebration for the emergence of *shōjo jump*, this convergence has also posed some issues which lead towards various paths of divergence. The first issue concerns *Shōnen jump* and its place in male-oriented media which values hegemonic masculinities. The second concern is corporate control of fan literacies and practices which connects to the last issue surrounding the exploitation of fans’ “immaterial labor”—the uncompensated work behind the production of information such as fans’ collective intelligence. These issues highlight the challenges convergence culture faces in balancing the powers between participatory audiences and commercial industries.

The first concern ties with an issue I have raised in my introduction where fans have become cognizant of these changes in *Shōnen jump*. Sayaka’s concern over *Shōnen jump*’s transformation highlights the public expectation that manga magazines are designed for specific audiences and *Shōnen jump*, in particular, must entertain boys and young men. As early as 2006, she has noticed that the inclusion of *fujoshi* literacies have compromised the magazine’s narratives and have isolated some of its readers who are not familiar with these literacies. She states that while some *fujoshi* welcome these changes, there are also *fujoshi* who would rather be isolated and consume a *Shōnen jump* designed for a general audience. While she does not assert that this audience must be masculine, she does imply that *fujoshi* literacies are not for general consumption.

Six years later, Nikkei journalists studied *Shōnen jump*’s growing fervent female audience and revealed the value of *fujoshi* literacies in the magazine. Their feature highlights the popularity of *Kuroko’s Basketball* among girls whose anime just aired. Just a month before this article, the author of *Kuroko’s Basketball* received death threats from a man who identified as *Kaijin 801 mensō* (The fiend with 801 faces) and left a suspicious liquid at Sophia University in hopes of “baiting” and harming a female fan.

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997 Sayaka, “Jump and Fujoshi.”
998 Shibata and Hirayama, “The Support of Fervent Girls for ‘Shōnen Jump.’”
While the suspect argued that his issues with Fujimaki were personal, his constant threats to girls’ *dōjinshi* events, including Comic Market, showcased his resentment against the series’ female fans and their practices. Threats were also sent to affected television stations, bookstores, and convenience stores.

As if responding to these threats, Nikkei released another feature that highlighted *Shōnen jump*’s pursuit of better male-oriented stories in order to bring back its *shōnen* readers. The article noted that the new stories published in the magazine refrained from using *fujoshi* literacies and *Shōnen jump*’s “golden formula” of battle-oriented stories. This article reflects the growing discontent among some fans who have been feeling isolated because of the magazine’s focus on their female audience and the magazine’s attempt at reconciling this problem.

In the last ten years since the Moepre blog’s critique of the magazine, many *Shōnen jump* series popular among *fujoshi* have also been reassigned to new magazines. Popular boys love authors have also been reassigned to adult-oriented *Jump* magazines. *Naruto* just ended in 2015 and *Gintama* is gearing towards its end. Various titles in *Shōnen jump* include more literacies from men’s fan culture — ranging

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1005 *Prince of Tennis* is now serialised *Jump Square* (SQ) while *Kuroko’s Basketball* ran a few more chapters in *Jump Next!*

1006 Boys love authors who have mainstream appeal, such as Asumiko Nakamura and Natsume Ono, are writing in *Ultra Jump* magazine alongside Hirohiko Araki’s *Jojo’s Bizarre Adventure*. 

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from *bishōjo* heroines to more *etchi* scenes.\(^{1007}\) In more ways that one, *Shōnen* *jump* is trying rebuild walls that separate their male and female audiences. This redirection of *Shōnen* *jump* media was obvious at C90 (Summer 2016) where *Shōnen* *jump* circles dropped to 7.6 per cent. That said, the merchandise for popular titles among *fujoshi*, such as *Kuroko’s Basketball*, continues to dominate many specialty shops around Japan.

The commercial production of highly intertextual goods reflects an imbalance of power between *Shōnen* *jump* and their female fans as it benefits the production companies more than it benefits the people who engage in this collective intelligence. The manga industry is notoriously known for their deplorable working conditions and meagre salaries and this applies even to successful manga artists. When a *Gintama* reader asks if Sorachi has become so rich after the success of *Gintama* movies, Sorachi replies honestly and says that apart from the license, the people who profited the most from the movie’s success are the various companies behind the production of the movie.\(^{1008}\)

To an extent, the various fans who sent thousands of postcards for the *Tenipuri* fan books were never financially compensated for their contributions. The many fans who produce and consume *dōjinshi* are also uncompensated for their promotion of their favourite titles. Not that these fans ever looked for a reward as most fans would say they did those things out of love for that series. Emotions, such as love, are seen by marketers as an unlimited resource.\(^{1009}\) As fans and authors continue to contribute to collective intelligence, media industries will continue to capitalise on their “free” immaterial labour and use this information to draw more affect from audiences. In mining *fujoshi*’s literacies and practices, *Shōnen* *jump* has made a profit from their delusions and affect. Rather than being the creators and owners of their fantasies, these fans are now paying *Shōnen* *jump* for these fantasies. As women spend money in various themed spaces for charms and other merchandise, *jouissance*, to some degree, is no longer free.

7.6. CONCLUSION

While *Shōnen* *jump* struggles to find a balance between their male and female readers, the story of *shōjo* *jump* has left a strong impression on *shōnen* media. *Shōjo*

\(^{1007}\) This is apparent in new titles such as *Shokugeki no sōma* (*Food Wars!,* 2012–present), *Saiki Kusuo no sainan* (*The disastrous life of Saiki Kusuo,* 2012–present), and *Isobe Isobē monogatari* (*The tales of Isobe Isobē,* 2013–present).

\(^{1008}\) Hideaki Sorachi, *Gintama* [Silver Soul], vol. 51 (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 2013), 138.
"jump" has become a marker for many shōnen magazines of their readers’ pressing desire to read stories that break gendered notions of youth entertainment. The collapse of shōjo jump has also taught the industry that a balance must be maintained so that no reader feels isolated.

The shōnen media from other shōnen magazines that followed shōjo jump have pursued a balance between their male and female readers and some have proven to be successful. Titles such as Bessatsu shōnen magazine’s (Boys’ magazine special) Shingeki no kyōjin (Attack on Titan, 2009–present) and Shūkan shōnen champion’s (Weekly boys’ champion) Yowamushi pedaru (Yowamushi Pedal, 2008–present) are currently the best examples of balanced shōnen media. These titles have rich narratives that are critically-acclaimed and are well-loved by both male and female audiences. While these stories have produced fujoshi “bait” merchandise, their main stories have kept true to their narratives even when they play with various moe kyara elements. Attack on Titan has developed rich and complex transmedia stories that feed its fans with rich intertextual content. The title continues to have a strong local and global appeal. Yowamushi Pedal has established strong relations with its fans. Its author, Wataru Watanabe (1971—), holds a regular talk event called Pedal Night where he discusses the current development of his story and directly answers fans’ questions about the series. During C90 (Summer 2016), Watanabe walked around the Yowamushi Pedal area and greeted fans of his series while thanking them for their support despite facing a lot coupling dōjinshi based on his characters.

The two series highlight the possibility of youth media that combines the best literacies and practices from both genders. In my quest to find the answer behind the emergence of shōjo jump, I found a genuine attempt between creators and their female fans to build a convergent culture that breaks the gendered walls of Japanese youth media. In many ways, shōjo jump has inspired other series to produce content that is

1009 Roberts, Lovemarks, 43.
1010 Attack on Titan has won a Kodansha Manga Award in 2011 and has been nominated for a Manga Taishō (Manga Grand Prize) and the Tezuka Osamu Cultural Prize. Yowamushi Pedal has won a Kodansha Manga Award in 2013.
equally loved by all audiences. While *shōjo jump* may have ended in a bittersweet affair thanks to pervading values of hegemonic masculinity in Japanese society and the media industry’s exploitation of *fujoshi* affect, it has paved the way for media producers to consider producing gender-neutral youth media. The new developments in *shōnen media* promise stories that can be thoroughly enjoyed by all audiences.

Another example of this is the television remake of Akatsuki Fujio’s *Osomatsu-kun* (1962–1969), *Osomatsu-san* (Mr. Osomatsu, 2015–2016). The television series is a comedy parody series and was produced by the same team behind the animation series of *Gintama*. Similar to *Gintama*, it is also popular among male and female audiences.
AFTERWORD

Throughout this thesis, I have examined the historical development of fujoshi Discourse in women’s culture and its transformative impact on mainstream media. This thesis has focused on women’s historical engagement with popular culture that has sought to dismantle the various structures that had created a gendered division in Japanese media. Deploying various approaches derived from New Literacies Studies, I highlighted the different mechanisms women have developed that has led to an increasing convergence between shōjo and shōnen media. These mechanisms are the nuanced literacies and practices women have learned about and developed by engaging with popular culture across the past century. By conducting a diachronic study of women’s fan literacies and practices, this thesis has established the following arguments.

First, women’s engagement with Shōnen Jump is a consequential result of women’s transformative literacies and practices that have developed through their engagement with youth media and in fan spaces such as dōjinshi. Second, fans’ affective responses or jouissance in regard to popular media has determined these literacies and practices which have been deployed to create and share affective discussions and narratives in dōjinshi. In the process, dōjinshi serve as pedagogical tools for fans’ nuanced literacies and practices while women’s dōjinshi and fan culture have become informal educational spaces. Finally, as women’s affective engagement with popular media, such as Shōnen Jump became increasingly accessible and visible, their literacies and practices contribute to the recognition of their non-normative “rotten” discourse — fujoshi Discourse. This thesis’ historical analysis of fujoshi Discourse contributes to boys love studies by highlighting fans’ literacies and practices that have emerged from their constant negotiations and experimentations with commercial youth media.

At its core, fujoshi Discourse relies on basic visual and textual literacies and practices which have their roots in education and early youth media during the late 1800s. As Japanese society reimagined men’s and women’s roles at the end of the nineteenth century, youth media played a critical role in shaping gendered literacies and practices of young men and women from the late Meiji throughout the early Shōwa periods. Through shōjo magazines, young women cultivated literacy practices that utilised textual relationships to create new meanings in texts — a process I have
referred to as intertextuality. Some *shōjo* magazines encouraged women’s active engagement in producing intertextual texts which resulted in women’s early participatory culture that expressed women’s *jouissance*. *Shōnen* magazines, on the other hand, developed literacies and practices that celebrated masculine bravado and reinforced boys’ privileged position in Japanese society. These literacies and practices were disrupted during the Pacific War and were later re-evaluated in Postwar youth media which included a new mode of expression that combined visual and textual literacies — comics.

As discussed in Chapter Three, comics would have a profound impact on the development of *fujoshi* Discourse as various manga magazines for youths became experimental places that challenged the gendered walls of youth media. Male artists such as Shōtarō Ishinomori and Tetsuya Chiba were pivotal in deploying intertextual techniques in their comics. Their contributions to both *shōjo* and *shōnen* manga magazines were valuable resources for emerging artists who wanted to use comics to express their *jouissance*. Both Ishinomori and Chiba inspired female artists such as Keiko Takemiya and Moto Hagio to produce intertextual comic narratives whose characters traversed between the worlds of *shōjo* and *shōnen* — the *bishōnen*. The figure of the *bishōnen* became an integral component of a literacy that challenged heteronormative notions of sexuality — boys love. These innovative literacies in manga would elicit affective responses from readers, inspiring a generation of manga fans.

Early manga fan culture would seek to understand the various affective elements in manga. As seen in Chapters Four and Five, discursive spaces in fan magazines such as *Puff* contributed to fans’ narrative consumption of texts which helped sustain fans’ intertextual literacies and practices. The practice of narrative consumption gave fans the opportunity to understand the various narrative elements that can be combined to create affective stories. Women’s *dōjinshi* served as educational tools as they became sites for fans’ intertextual experiments, leading to *aniparo* works and eventually *yaoi*, another iteration of boys love. Chapter Four explored how fans used popular *Shōnen jump* titles such as *Captain Tsubasa* and *Saint Seiya* to experiment with various narrative elements that increased readers’ emotional attachment to the series and their characters. Chapter Five highlights the organisation of fans’ experiments as they arranged affective narrative elements into an intertextual database. Female fans’ adaptation of boys love on various series in *Shōnen jump* also led to the development of coupling semantics which explored the romantic, sometimes sexual, dynamics between two characters. The
organisation of fans’ intertextual database clarified various literacies and practices tied to women’s fan culture.

Women’s fan literacies and practices are embedded in dōjinshi which has become a critical space for women’s narrative experiments and jouissance. Through dōjinshi, female fans freely express their desires, fantasies, and pleasures. Fans use various nuanced literacies such as boys love, moe kyara elements, and neta that transform men’s homosocial adventures into fantastic male-male romances. These literacies in dōjinshi also reveal practices such as narrative consumption, coupling, intertextual reading and databasing, mōsō, and moe talk. Women’s dōjinshi culture reflects women’s rich history of literacies and practices which were developed through their constant engagement with popular media. Dōjinshi is also an affective medium that reflects fans’ desire to share their jouissance with fellow fans. As seen in previous chapters, dōjinshi have inspired girls to pursue the impossible in shōnen media as they play with and transform narrative patterns that challenge hegemonic notions of gender, relationships, and sexuality. In the process, these women’s non-normative interests earned them the label fujoshi — the rotten girl. Their literacies and practices eventually defined fujoshi Discourse.

While women’s dōjinshi and boys love culture have been criticised for their “rotten” notions of masculinity and sexuality, Chapter Six highlights how women have faced their critics and proven that their “rotten” ideas and ways have produced innovative literacies and practices which led to creative and entertaining works that transformed youth media. Various female dōjinshi artists have become award-winning and best-selling manga artists. Fujoshi are also at the heart of discussions surrounding non-normative texts in Japanese popular culture. As fujoshi Discourse becomes increasingly apparent in popular media, commercial media industries, particularly shōnen media such as Shōnen jump, have adapted some of their literacies and practices through various intertextual and affective commodities and spaces.” In the process, Shōnen jump transforms into shōjo jump.

Shōjo jump has emerged as a result of women’s history of transformative literacies and practices as they engaged with popular media. The transformation of shōnen media was made possible by women’s creative quest for knowledge and expressive freedom. Rather than be encumbered by the limits of youth media, women’s curiosity led to various experiments with narratives and images that contributed to the development of different literacies and practices that capture their fantasies and desires.
The pages of fan magazines, such as *Puff* and various *dōjinshi* became sites for *fujoshi*’s collective intelligence — the intertextual database. The organisation of *fujoshi*’s intertextual database opened opportunities for fans to clearly convey their *jouissance* and share their affective responses with other readers. *Shōnen Jump*’s use of *fujoshi*’s intertextual database highlights the magazine’s desire to elicit readers’ affect in hopes of establishing a strong relationship with its readers.

In studying the history of women’s *dōjinshi*, I learned that the power of *fujoshi* Discourse lies in their desire to share affect. Every visual aesthetic, coupling formula, storytelling technique, and other literacy practice has been carefully honed by fans so that they can share with clarity to their readers their strong feelings and hopefully share their *jouissance*. As Aoyama has argued, “[w]hat brings blissful moments seems to be the *shōjo*’s freedom and pride,… and those friendships in the context of which this freedom and pride can be shared.” More than a space for self-expression, girls have used *dōjinshi* to be heard. They have also used *dōjinshi* to educate their readers about their Discourse in hopes of building a kind of collective affect.

In an increasingly connected world, this collective affect has also been shared with girls all over the globe. Much like Japanese *fujoshi*, these overseas fans have stumbled on *dōjinshi* to satisfy a thirst that their favourite story could not seem to satiate. Their thirst has led them to travels to Japanese bookstores, engage in conversations with other friends, or, more commonly, to browse the internet for anything and everything they could learn about their favourite character and series. Somewhere along the way, these fans have discovered *dōjinshi* and in the process learnt the various literacies and practices embedded in these texts. Certainly, there are things lost in translation. While this has lead to glocalised *fujoshi* practices, *dōjinshi* still manage to communicate the fundamental *fujoshi* literacies and practices to many girls all over the globe.

*Fujoshi* Discourse certainly educated me, a young fan from the Philippines, about the intertextual potential of texts and the “rotten” love shared between my favourite male characters. As I consumed *dōjinshi* from various online spaces, I was unaware that I was unpacking and processing Japanese girls’ intertextual databases and learning their literacies. I was aware, however, of the affective impact of these texts as I was shocked, amused, and delighted by fans’ *mōsō*. Even when I hardly understood Japanese at that time, I somehow managed to share a fan’s *jouissance*. In hindsight, that moment was a testament to the ability of *fujoshi* literacies to elicit affect. Many *dōjinshi* later, these
same literacies helped me navigate through fan spaces in Japan, conduct archival research for this thesis, and to even contribute to this collective affect when I produced my own dōjinshi.

While my experience may not speak for most fans, global access to fan works has made it increasingly possible for fans to learn various literacies and practices from other fans all over the globe. Fans of anime and manga look towards fujoshi culture as a resource for various literacies and practices. Foreign participants in Japanese fan events have steadily increased to the extent that event organiser, Akaboo, has prepared a set of key phrases on their website so that foreign fans can communicate with Japanese fans at their events.1015 As fujoshi works become increasingly available and accessible online, more girls are about these learning literacies and are being shaped by fan practices. To a degree, the emergence of fujoshi “bait” on online English-language discourses highlights how this literacy has affected popular youth culture. Just as fujoshi Discourse has changed young women’s culture in Japan, it is steadily “rotting” women’s cultures all over the globe. The impact of fujoshi literacies globally merits future research because, as the story of shōjo jump reveals, fujoshi Discourse has the power to shape gendered popular youth culture.

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