The popular image of Japanese femininity inside the anime and manga culture of Japan and Sydney

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The Popular Image of Japanese Femininity Inside the Anime and Manga Culture of Japan and Sydney

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree

Master of Arts - Research (MA-Res)

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

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Faculty of Creative Arts, School of Art and Design

2009
Statement of Declaration

I certify that this thesis has not been submitted for a degree to any other university or institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by any other person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

Jennifer M. Stockins
Abstract

Manga (Japanese comic books), Anime (Japanese animation) and Superflat (the contemporary art by movement created Takashi Murakami) all share a common ancestry in the woodblock prints of the Edo period, which were once mass-produced as a form of entertainment. This thesis, *The Popular Image of Japanese Femininity Inside the Anime and Manga Culture of Japan and Sydney*, will examine female creators and consumers of Japanese popular culture. In doing so the investigation will highlight representations of women and girls in Anime and Manga cultures, as well as the way in which female fans and participants in associated activities have chosen to represent themselves.

The significant focus in this study is the examination of the changing role of women in Japanese society to the present day. Social change for women in Japan is accompanied by their changing visual presence in comic book culture. Over time, women became active in the culture and created new genres of Anime and Manga for their own consumption.

In Sydney, the increased access to Japanese popular culture has encouraged female fans to create their own art and fashion from Japanese influences. Like the female Japanese fans, the Sydney female Anime and Manga community is selective in their influences with the aim of creating a vision of how they see themselves. Exploration of the Sydney Manga scene necessitated field research conducted through Anime clubs and conventions, as well as interviews via internet forums, the importance of which informs this study.
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Chapter 1: Pre World War II Comics: Geisha, Courtesan and the Moga

Japan’s Anime (animated film) and Manga (comic book) culture stems from a long history of cross cultural influences and consumerism. Images of erotica and the female form were common in Japan’s early art as they still remain today in contemporary Anime and Manga. One of Japan’s earliest and most well known pieces of cartoon literature is the Animal Scrolls (1130) produced by Buddhist clergyman Bishop Toba (1053–1140). Buddhism was originally introduced to Japan from China and the Japanese clergy made their own scrolls in the Chinese Buddhist tradition. The Japanese Buddhist scrolls had a “playfulness” about them which was not seen in their Chinese counterpart. (Manga 29) Frederik Schodt, an authority on Manga, makes an important visual connection between the Animal Scrolls and modern Manga through Bishop Toga’s use of cute “Walt Disney-style of anthropomorphized animals”. (Manga 28)

Early Japanese scrolls were mostly concerned with religious themes, although there are examples comparable to humorous contemporary erotic Manga. For instance the Yo-butsu Kurabe works that: “Depicted men gleefully comparing their huge erect members and using them in feats of strength”. (Manga 30) The Buddhist clergy also produced scrolls of an extreme erotic nature. These scrolls were produced as Zen pictures or Zenga a tradition where images opened the mind through “posing seemingly non sensicial questions” so the viewer may gain spiritual enlightenment. (Carr 2)
Artwork produced by the Buddhist clergy was not readily available to the public. Like most art during this time it was considered a luxury only available to the wealthy. However, it wasn’t long before a demand for more affordable art created a new market where art was inexpensive and mass produced. The earliest kind of affordable art produced in Japan occurred during the Kanei era (1624-44) and was known as Otsu Pictures, as they were sold to travellers as souvenirs near the town of Otsu that is located outside Kyoto. Otsu Pictures were made with simple techniques on brown paper and with a limited colour pallet. These works were created through a production line process as members of the artist’s family would each be responsible for finishing a particular part of the work. The most popular themes in Otsu pictures were Buddhist imagery, “beautiful women, courtesans, heroes, animals and mythical goblins”. (Haruhara 2005) Some of the earliest Buddhist Otsu Pictures were bought by Japanese Christians who wanted to display them in their homes as a way of escaping persecution from the authorities for their beliefs.

Woodblock printing meant that images were able to be mass produced much faster in larger quantities. This proved perfect for commercial purposes and images were often reproduced from the block until wear rendered it unable to be used anymore. The first mass produced woodblock prints were called Ukiyo-e which means Floating World Pictures. The Floating World was, “a term suggestive of life’s uncertainties and the search for sensual pleasures to sweeten one’s feelings of hopelessness”. (Manga 33) The period in which Ukiyo-e developed is significant to its history as it was a time of great social change. The Edo period (1603-1868) was a very profitable time for the merchant
class who had long been considered as one of the lowest social groups in Japanese society. Their newly established wealth failed to increase their social status within Japan’s rigid feudal system. As a result the merchant class began making a new way of life for themselves, and created new forms of entertainment as a way to spend their new found wealth. This resulted in the establishment of the Kabuki Theatre and Yoshiwara pleasure districts. Their new lifestyle became known as the *Floating World* and it was a *Floating World* in two senses:

First in the traditional sense of a transitory, illusory place and, second, in the sense of the Hedonistic life of the age in which the Ukiyo-e evolved – that is, the world of fleshly pleasure centring in the theatre and the brothel. (Takahashi 9)

The *Ukiyo-e* prints were a popular item within the merchant class and the images produced within them documented their lifestyle. Popular print subjects included images of Kabuki theatre actors, beautiful women, courtesans and Geisha. These images were a product of changing fashions as: “Kabuki prints were linked to the performance season, a particular play or the popularity of a specific actor, and prints of beautiful women were swayed by fashion and the ‘star’ quality of their subjects” (Uhlenbeck 16)

The *Bijina* (beautiful women) genre did not just include images of popular courtesans and Geisha but a variety of women, from tea-house girls to wealthy merchant’s wives. Influential courtesans and Geisha of the day had an interest in these prints as they increased their own popularity and fame. *Ukiyo-e* prints also determined the new trends in fashion as pictures of Geisha in stylish new clothes would introduce, “the latest
fashions and designs available in fabric shops, which in turn attracted orders from a female audience”. (Gross 10)

One of the most well known Ukiyo-e artists is Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) who is also credited with being the “first person in Japan to coin the term Manga” (Bouquillard 9). Hokusai was a prolific artist who put together a resource for artists in training which he called The Manga (1814-1878). This manual was first published in 1814 and was followed by fourteen more volumes:

The word Manga itself, which today is the term used for Japanese comics, is difficult to translate. The ideogram man, which denotes something that is ‘incoherent’, ‘disjointed’, ‘confused’ or ‘casual’ and here refers to an ‘idea of total spontaneity and anarchic profusion is neatly combined with ga or ‘drawing’ to suggest rough rapid sketches- impromptu drawings done on the tide of inspiration, freely and with no sense of order, on a variety of subjects. (Bouquillard 9)

The idea to create a manual for artists appears to have been something that was modeled from an earlier Chinese painting manual The Dieziyuan Huazhuan (1679) (The Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting). Like the Chinese manual, Hokusai’s second edition of the Manga featured subjects such as “animals, insects, fish, plants, and then various vegetation, buildings, rivers and lakes”. (17) Hokusai’s influences ranged from the work of Ukiyo-e painters such as Kitao Masayoshi (1764-1824) to Dutch illustrators. One
example of the Western influence that appears in The Manga was his illustrations of Western firearms which were found in Japan at the time.

Like many other popular Ukiyo-e artists, Hokusai also created erotic pictures which were known as ‘Shunga’ or ‘Spring Pictures’. Hokusai’s erotic works depicted images of the newly established pleasure districts of Edo where the pursuits of the Floating World were realised. Shunga proved to be the most popular genre for commercial prints as they were not affected by changing fashion. The only thing that did inhibit the growth of Shunga was censorship. Shunga suffered under censorship during the Edo period as the “Tokugawa Shogunate” saw it “as a threat to public morality”. (Uhlenbeck 16) Censorship continues to be an issue for the study of Shunga today as Japanese censorship laws still prohibits the realistic depiction of genitalia. Therefore most of the present studies on Shunga have been made by Western scholars. The controversy that has surrounded Shunga during the Edo Period also makes it hard to determine who the intended audience for Shunga was and the sales figures for Shunga. There weren’t any publishing records kept which document the rise of Shunga, as many publishers kept their operation a secret to avoid being caught by the authorities. For this reason many works of Shunga weren’t even signed by the artist that created them.

Scholars such as “Monta Hayakawa” and “Timon Screech” have turned to the prints themselves to understand who was the intended audience for Shunga. (21) Courtesans and Geisha were common subjects for Shunga, but their presence seems to be for the fulfillment of male fantasy rather than for the promotion of the women’s careers.
Teahouse women that were depicted in Shunga were also commonly shown as loose women for the purpose of male fantasy. There is argument that Shunga was read by men and women due to examples in Shunga where couples are shown reading Shunga together for the purposes of sexual stimulation. Screech however disagrees as he believes that, “there are not enough Shunga illustrating couples reading Shunga together to conclude that they were utilized to stimulate couples sexually”. (Uhlenbeck 21)

The Dream of the Fisherman’s Wife (1820) (fig.1) by Katsushika Hokusai is an example of Shunga that addressed both sexes as it appears to celebrate female sexuality rather than simply creating an image for male fantasy. The woman pictured in this work is seen reclining while one large octopus performs oral sex and another smaller octopus sucks at her lips and fondles her breast. The woman’s body language suggests that she is not in any kind of distress; in fact it appears that she is enjoying herself. Early interpretations of the image by “western collectors and scholars like Edmund de Goncourt, Jack Huller and Richard Lane” believed that this was “a rape scene” (161) Further research by Danielle Talerico later revealed that this work is associated with the Japanese Myth of Tamatori. Tamatori was a female pearl diver who wanted to recover a lost treasure which had been intended as a gift from the Chinese Emperor to the Japanese Emperor. The treasure had been lost overboard by a Chinese official during his sea voyage to Japan. To retrieve the treasure Tamatori took her husband in a small boat to the site where it had been lost. It would not be an easy task to get it back as Dragons lived in the sea and they were guarding the treasure as they believed it was now their property. During her expedition to retrieve the treasure Tamatori meets many other animals of the sea including the octopus.
The text featured in the background of this print contains dialogue between the octopuses and Tamatori. In this version of the story that is presented in Hokusai’s print the large octopus agrees to take Tamatori to the dragons’ underwater palace in return for sex. The dialogue presented in the background text expresses the “mutual sexual enjoyment” of the woman and the octopus. (Uhlenbeck: 161)
Advances in woodblock printing also contributed to the development of Japan’s first comic books. The earliest of these was the Red Book, *(Akahon)* (1662-1750) named because of the colour of the ink used for its front piece. Red Books were made for people who did not have strong reading skills such as children and women. The narratives contained in these books “were written in a simple colloquial style and were accompanied by woodblock-printed illustrations”. (“Jaanus”) Red books were basically picture books as they contained very little text and you only needed to look at the images in order to understand the narrative. This genre of illustrated books dealt with themes of popular children’s stories, folk legends and fairy tales. There were however some Red Books that did illustrate Kabuki plays and puppet plays. The format of the Red Book was also adapted for guide books about famous places and the products they sold.

The Black Book *(Kurohon)* (1740-1790) was the next development in comic books and it was so named due to its black front page. The Black Book was a more sophisticated version of the Red Book as they contained more text and dealt with storylines which were more complex. Black Books explored stories featured in the Kabuki theatre and puppet plays as well as heroic tales from Japanese legends and wars. The language used in the Black Books however was colloquial so it was accessible to a wide proportion of the public.

The next development in comic books was called the Blue Book *(Aohon)* (1744-1774). The Blue Book was divided into two genres for children and adults. The Blue book “included plots adapted from Kabuki plays, ballads, marital stories and subjects, and tales
of vengeance”. (“Jaanus”) The adult version of the Blue Book was Japan’s first comic book made purely for the consumption of adults. These comic books paved the way for the Kibyōshi or Yellow Book. The development of Yellow Book may have occurred as a result of an accident with printing dyes. Kern has stated that yellow pigment was added to the blue printing dye used for the adult Aohon in order to give them a greenish tint and distinguish them from the Blue Books produced for children. This mixing of colours produced an aqua dye which over time was found to fade to a yellow colour. It isn’t known how long it took for the blue colour to fade to yellow it may “have either yellowed immediately after publication or it was published with yellow covers deliberately”. (Kern 191)

The Yellow Book (Kibyōshi) (1775-1806) was an adult comic which presented stories and Images from the Floating World of Edo Japan. It was not strictly a medium for pornography but a playful record of the pastimes of the inhabitants of The Floating World. Like the Ukiyo-e prints it is hard to know who consumed these little yellow comic books. There are images of women and young girls reading Kibyōshi, but without records from publishers it is hard to prove if this was the case. Kern believes that the Kibyōshi was primarily for the consumption of the well educated as “the range of allusions in the Kibyōshi” is “sweeping” in regards to “literary, dramatic and visual imagination of traditional Japan”. (45) The fact that men were “far more likely to be literate than women” and that men were also “the primary frequenters of the sorts of Floating World establishments also suggest an educated male readership.” (49)
Geisha and courtesans of the pleasure district were a popular subject in Kibyōshi and they were often depicted in a manner to interest and fuel male fantasy. In *A Pageant of the Latest Beauties: Their Calligraphy Mirrored* (1784) we see the interior of a house for courtesans and courtesans in training. (fig.2) It is most probable that this work is completely speculative as very few men would have ever had such a privileged view of behind the scenes in such an establishment. Images like this were meant to fulfill the fantasies of men as they could be considered as the “equivalent to the backstage dressing rooms of Vegas showgirls or Victoria’s secrete supermodels”. (Kern 5) The viewer is taken into the private world of the courtesans. We can see one young courtesan keeping another at bay while she glances at a comic book which appears to belong to one of the elder courtesans. Two of the older courtesan women sitting in the far room seem to be relaxing. They both sit elegantly in Kimono and one glances at a song book while playing the shamisen. Another of the elder courtesans is being rushed to get ready as she leaves for an appointment perhaps reminded by the maid who takes away the dishes.

**Figure 2**

The arrival of Commodore Perry’s Fleet from America in 1853 forced Japan to open itself up to the rest of the world. Because of this the Japanese public was exposed to British political style comic strips for the first time. Some British artists began to settle in Japan and produced work about their experience for the consumption of other foreigners. These cartoons became popular with both Westerners and the Japanese which lead to many of them also being translated into Japanese. There was a feeling that political cartoons that questioned both government and society were capable “of moving the world” which made them appealing to Japanese artists (Manga 42). American comic strips later also became an important influence on Japanese comic artists. Japanese artists were able to see the American style strips in American magazines that were produced in Japan. Artists such as Rakuten Kitazawa (1876-1955), Ippei Okamoto (1886-1948), Sako Shishido and Yutak Aso even traveled to America because of their interest in the American comic strips. This growing interest saw many American comic strips being translated into Japanese for printing in popular Japanese newspapers. The American comic strips also inspired many Japanese artists to adopt a format using speech bubbles in their own work which eventually superseded the popularity of “exotic” American comic strips to become “a smash hit”. (Manga 45)

The next big art revolution in Japan appeared in the greater Tashio Period (1900-1930). During the previous leadership of the Meiji Era (1868-1912) Japan had dramatically increased its economic wealth and defense force which made it the most powerful Asian country of the time. The Meiji government had promoted industrialisation and new Western technologies to ensure their safety against becoming conquered by the Western
world. The increase in technology also meant that Japan was able to increase trade as they were responsible for supplying many goods needed for the Allied forces during the First World War. This new industry in the cities created, “a widening gap between the traditional (agricultural) and modern (industrial) sectors of the economy” that “resulted in a deep cleavage in Japanese life. Two living standards developed, with important political, social, and economic consequences”. (Minichiello 11)

After the death of Emperor Meji many people began to question the purpose of this industrial grand plan. The country had worked together to bring prosperity to their country yet many individuals were still living in poverty. The increase of the country’s economic power also meant a rise in the cost of living for the countries poorest citizens. To add to Japan’s already failing confidence in their country’s leadership the new Emperor Tashio did not have the same political clout of his predecessor, as he lacked his charisma and also was plagued by health issues. (Minnichiello 9) The Taishō period therefore became a time for individualism and personal freedom, where people began to work alone to find their own path in life. Many people who had been living in poverty moved out of their extended family unit in rural areas to find new opportunities in the cities. (Chiaki 33) Due to an increase of wealth there was an increase in recreational travel which gave people a chance to learn what the rest of the world had to offer. This newfound knowledge influenced many Japanese to consume and adopt aspects of Western culture. The increase of independent working women also meant women’s issues slowly became of greater importance.
The dramatic growth in Japan’s major cities improved opportunities for women to join the workforce as there was an increased demand for workers. Despite this, female workers were highly discriminated against by government workplace laws. (Brown 19) This attitude was not helped by the new types of fashion many of these working women adopted. It was not unusual at the time for Japanese business men to adopt Western attire, but women doing the same became a very threatening sight. The attire of the modern girl or Moga as she was popularly known usually consisted of short wavy hair, heels and short skirts. Moga’s were scandalized for the way they dressed as popular Western fashions that were much less modest than traditional dress. In traditional garments Mogas still came under fire as they wore their Obi high on the waist when traditionally the function of the Obi was “to hide the behind”. (Silverberg 54) Their unconservative dress suggested their independence as working women and did not suit the country’s popular ideology of ‘good wife, wise mother’. The typical Moga’s interest in fashion and their power as consumers also created the idea that they were selfish, material obsessed women. Numerous Moga’s worked as café waitresses where the subculture as a whole was considered to be involved in improper behavior, as cafés became a popular place for men to flirt and also pick up women.

Artists who worked in the beautiful women genre of painting or bijin depicted the Moga as a sex object. In Kobayakawa Kiyoshi’s (1899-1948) woodblock print Tipsy (1930), (fig.3) we see a young Moga sitting at a bar. Unlike women pictured in traditional dress this Moga is not pictured as a gentle beauty. Her fashionable Western clothing exposes more flesh than a traditional Kimono and she doesn’t care that her hair comb is slipping
out of her hair. The clumsy position of the sitter extenuates her sexuality as she carelessly sits with her cigarette in hand and her cocktail in front of her. This Moga appears to be trying to seduce someone at the bar and she is represented as both dangerous and vulnerable as her eyes show she is clearly intoxicated. She has qualities that men at the time found both alluring and frightening. Her directness is very different to the traditional woman who put family first but: “The implication of the come-hither gaze is self evident” (Brown 34)

Figure 3
Big business began to realize what powerful consumers the new modern girl was and began to market products with them in mind. Images of young Moga women were used for many advertisement campaigns. During the 1930s Sapporo Beer utilized images of scantily clad Mogas to sell their product (fig.4). The Shiseido cosmetic company also used image of Moga in their advertising campaigns as the Moga who had a fondness for painting their faces with makeup became their target customers. Shiseido also produced a magazine, the Shiseido Greppo (1924) and in 1926 published “an article on the modern girl empathizing the coiffure, clothing and the cosmetics required to achieve the Moga look”. (Brown 19) (fig.5) During the American occupation the Japanese print industry was restabilised and a definite American influence on Japanese advertisements emerged with the use of English text and obvious Western inspired design. Japan’s exposure to new Western influences saw the introduction of “flapper style and colours inspired by Art Deco” into Japanese graphic art. (Gross 12)

Figure 4
Sapporo Beer
Advertisement. 1930.
Images of women also became important to the development of visual art in Japan as artists began to experiment with new art styles. The introduction of Western art to Japan divided the country’s artists into two groups being Nihonga (traditional artists) and Yoga (Western style artists). The differences were that: “Yoga artists worked in oil and watercolours and were focused towards Europe. Nihonga artists worked in traditional pigments and formats, taking their primary inspiration from Japan’s past.” (Brown 18)

The style in which an artist chose to work became a political statement about the artist’s own feelings on the modernization of the country. Images of women were important as the use of the traditional Japanese female form became a symbol of the nation’s identity. On the other hand the Yoga artists produced images of women in new Western style fashions to convey a sense of modernity. Wada Seika’s (b.1899) portrait of True Ueda titled Mrs. T. (1932) (fig.6) is an example of the Modern Girl image. Terue Ueda was the young wife of a University astronomer who traveled to America with her husband while
he undertook a university tour. Terue’s time overseas developed her love for “daring” Western fashions and also gave her a “boldly confident gaze” which set her apart from the meek Kimono clad ladies of Nihonga painting. (Brown 56)

Japan’s intrigue with Western culture at the height of the country’s prosperity saw the introduction of new technologies, fashions and attitudes. This also segregated the country through the affiliation with either Yoga or Nihonga art. These two art forms were responsible for fueling the debate about the changing position of Japanese women. The next chapter will examine how the American occupation further changed the role of women in Japan and the changing ways in which they have been represented in popular culture and Manga.
Chapter 2: Post War Manga and Anime: The Shoujo.

The American occupation after World War II (1945-1952) created new conditions for Japan’s Manga and Anime culture. American style comic strips had already been available to the Japanese public prior to the occupation and by the beginning of the war just some that “had been translated and serialized in Japan included Cliff Sterret’s Polly and her Pals, Bud Fisher’s Mutt and Jeff, Fred Hopper’s Happy Hooligan, and Pat Sullivan’s Felix the Cat”. (Dreamland 45) In Japan one of the most popular American comics circulated was Chic Young’s (1901-1973) Blondie. This comic strip first appeared in the Japanese Asahi newspaper in 1946. The Japanese public was captivated with the young housewife character Blondie (1930-1973) who seemed to have it all. She was smart, in command of her household and also was able to “enjoy the latest fashions and labour saving devices” which made her a vision of the American Dream. (Gravett 77) Blondie was living the lifestyle that many Japanese were trying to achieve after the devastation of war.

Japan’s own comic book culture gained popularity after World War II for two reasons, firstly as a cheap and easily portable form of entertainment and secondly as a means of reassurance for the Japanese during a time of great hardship:

The immediate postwar period was one of hunger and black markets, of orphans and limbless veterans. More than anything else, people wanted to rebuild their
lives. In the daily newspapers serialised four panel strips for the family were humorous and immensely popular. (Manga 61)

During this period family comedy Manga was popular with the Japanese public as they were able to relate to stories about people like themselves making do in difficult circumstances. (Manga 61) Science fiction was also a popular genre as it gave people a way in which to temporarily escape into another world. One of the most popular Manga of the family comedy genre was Sazae-San (1946-1974) (fig. 7). This Manga focused on a young Japanese woman known as Sazae–San, and the everyday trials of her family life in postwar Japan. It is also interesting to note that, “within days of General MacArthur’s recall to America in 1951, Asahi dropped Blondie and replaced it with the home grown Sazae-San”. (Gravett 77) Its author Machiko Hasegawa (1920-1992), was also one of Japan’s first successful female Manga artists.

Figure 7
The most famous of the early science fiction Manga would be Osamu Tezuka’s (1928-1989) *Mighty Atom* or *Astro Boy* (1951-1968) as he is known in the West. *Astro Boy* was a robot boy who grew up without a family in a world he could not comprehend. This was a situation that reflected the lives of many Japanese children who had been left orphaned by the war. Tezuka’s own experiences during the war lead him to create work with an emphasis on humanitarian themes such as racial equality and the follies of war.

In the *Astro Boy* pilot Manga titled *Ambassador Atom*, (1951) Tezuka tells the story of a society of people from a parallel universe who wander through space in order to find a new home as their Earth was destroyed “2000 years earlier”. (Kashiwagi 47) The people from this parallel dimension are broken up into their respective nations aboard spaceships. When the spaceship carrying the Japanese citizens from the parallel universe lands on Earth they discover a world almost identical to the one they left behind. It isn’t long before the other spaceships also begin to land with plans on settling “on the newly discovered Earth”. (47). Although these aliens appear almost indistinguishable from humans’ one difference that separates the two species is:

While humans are carnivorous and engage in hunting, extraterrestrials are able to extract atmospheric compounds to synthesize their nutrition; and since their existence is not predicated on the sacrifice of other species, there is no guilt attached to the progress of civilisation; progress is for pure good. Thus, freed from the necessary evil of the struggle for survival that continues to burden humans; the extraterrestrials can afford to maintain an inner kernel of innocence in spite of their technological advances. (Inuhiko 102)
The human race begins to feel threatened by the arrival of these extraterrestrials as their introduction to “human habits, notably the consumption of living creatures” creates food shortages on the planet. (101) Action is then taken by the humans to wipe out the alien race through the use of biological weapons. Inuhiko believes this highlights the flawed aspects of human nature:

(Note also that there is no suggestion in the story that their accidental arrival on Earth was in any way an act of aggression.) It is against the backdrop of this peaceful innocence that human evil is highlighted, a contrast brought forth with particular poignancy first in the introduction of the docile extraterrestrials to carnivorous habits (which inserts them into the terrestrial food chain), and next in the mass extermination of the extraterrestrials perpetuated by the humans. (102)

Astro Boy becomes the voice of reason during the conflict and prevents the aliens from retaliating against the human attack. As Astro Boy is neither a human nor an alien he is able to work as an objective outsider to end the conflict. As the two groups are reconciled the aliens decide to leave Earth for a new home on Venus. In this Manga Astro Boy is depicted as a symbol of hope due to the fact that he appears to be a rational force in a world inhabited by irrational concepts such as war. The ability that Astro Boy displays in being able to empathise with people of all races, reflected Tezuka’s own hopes for the future of his country which was at the time still occupied by American forces. Sakurai suggests that Tezuka’s desire for racial equality may have come from his own humiliating experience “of being beaten-up by a drunken American soldier”. (Sakurai 67)
Like other Manga artists of the post war period Tezuka also openly admitted the influence that American comics had on his own work. He had been captivated by the “roundness and the cuteness” of the Disney Characters and this was something that he aspired to achieve in his own drawings. (Takeuchi 91) From this source of inspiration Tezuka was able to create a new style of character drawing which has now become synonymous with Manga and Anime as other artists continue to emulate this style.

Tezuka created characters with a ‘wide eyed’ look which gave them an infant-like appearance as their large eyes were not in proportion to the rest of their face. This made his characters appear cute as well as providing a way to display their internal feelings. This technique became particularly important in Tezuka’s emotional charged Shoujo works as “pupil of the eye, is a window on the soul and one of the first places that emotion is manifested”. (Manga 92) The ‘wide eyed’ look utilised by Manga/Anime artists has often lead to questions about the characters looking more Western than Japanese. Fans of Anime and Manga in Japan never question the ethnicity of Manga/Anime characters despite features such as blue eyes and blonde hair. One explanation for the Japanese acceptance of the ‘wide eyed’ look is that Manga and Anime artists depict Japanese people in a way in which they “view-or wish to view-themselves”. (92)

Like Manga, Japan’s Anime industry also gained popularity after World War II. Western animated films had been introduced to Japan “as early as 1909” and Japanese animated films were in production “by 1915”. (Anime 16) However it wasn’t until after World War
II that the Japanese animated film industry began making successful feature length films. The success of Japan’s animated film industry has been indirectly influenced by the increasing amount of competition posed by foreign films. Japan could not compete commercially with the big budget Hollywood productions and animated films proved to be a solution as they could be produced with relatively small budgets as Napier explains:

For example, in 1988 Akira beat out Return of the Jedi to become the number one film in Japan. More recently Miazaki’s epic Princess Monoke became the number one film in Japanese box office history (until it was bested by Titanic). Produced for infinitely less money than the Hollywood hits, the two Japanese works are marvels of creativity and imagination. (19)

Japanese animators in these productions were free to explore storylines with futuristic and science fiction elements without worrying about the high cost of special effects. The popularity of Anime can also be attributed to Manga as the widespread appeal of the Manga medium ensured that Anime could be accepted by children and adults alike. (20)

The American enforced Japanese Constitution (1947) also played an important role in the development of the modern day Manga industry. This new Constitution created a change from the old Japanese Imperialism system of government to a new Democratic regime. With new government came a great deal of social change in Japan as well as new laws. Manga and Anime became governed by new censorship laws which regulated the operation of mass media, literature and entertainment. Erotic Manga and Anime were particularly affected by the laws as Article 175 of the Japanese penal code states:
A person who distributes or displays in public an obscene document, drawing or other object shall be punished by imprisonment with work for not more than 2 years, a fine not more than 2,500,000 yen or a petty fine. The same shall apply to a person who processes the same for the purpose of sale. (Japan Const. art.175)

This change in the law meant that Japanese publishers of Erotic material were now governed by Western “Christian concepts of morality”. (Manga 36) **Article 175** is vague in terms of what is considered ‘obscene’ material in Manga and Anime and this came to be interpreted as the realistic display of genitals or pubic hair. (Dreamland 53) Since the introduction of **Article 175** artists have invented some creative ways to work around the law. Images of genitalia and pubic hair are often pixilated or left blank, while some artists have replaced male genitalia with an object symbolic of the phallus (Allison 71). The most controversial method that the artists have utilised to avoid censorship is to draw their characters as young prepubescent girls. Through the incorporation of young undeveloped female figures, artists are able to avoid the depiction of adult genitalia and pubic hair. This in turn indirectly established a new genre of male erotic Manga and Anime known as Lolita Complex.

Cute or ‘Kawaii’ culture became an important aspect to male erotic Manga as it reached its peak during Japan’s ‘bubble years’ of the 1980s. During this period of economic prosperity, “‘cheeriness’ and terminal ‘cutesiness’ were ‘in’, cynicism, reflection, pessimism, introspection, seriousness, and anything ‘heavy’ or depressing all fell out of favor”. (Dreamland 55) The Shoujo commonly depicted as a young school girl character
that embodied purity and Kawaii (cute) culture became Japan’s new sex symbol as Schodt explains:

If in the West it was a madonna – whore (but nonetheless adult woman) image that fired men’s sexual fantasies in Japan the equivalent was a smiling junior high school girl clad in her ‘sailor suit’ school uniform and holding a stuffed animal toy. And young women were eager to cater to this fantasy; many in their late twenties could be seen around town with their cute stuffed toy dolls and innocent looks and high–pitched voices. Their numbers spawned the term burikko – the sophisticated, experienced adult female who acts like an innocent little girl. (Dreamland 55)

Popular teen fashion brands such as Baby, The Stars Shine Bright (1988) and Angelic Pretty (1979) (fig.8) created clothing inspired by this look. These brands became known for their frilly creations which often look like a preschooler’s party dress rather than a dress for a young woman. The large eyed, leggy, Shoujo girl is in reality a physical impossibility, however that doesn’t mean that some women won’t try to emulate these distorted visions of Kawaii (cute) culture. One major fashion accessory for any Lolita are platform shoes that give the wearer added height and longer looking legs. Ritchie believes this fad for platform shoes was established because a:

…desire for heightened eminence resulted in a new kind of footwear these were shoes with skyscraper soles (atsuzoko sandaru), some of hem up to ten inches (25
centimetres) deep, on top of which teenagers teetered down fashionable avenues of Shibuya, Harajuku and Omote-Sando. (Ritchie 155)

There are also young women that have even resorted to wearing contacts that make the iris of their eyes appear larger to give them the appearance of a Shoujo Manga/Anime character. These black contact lenses have, “oversize shiny white circles inside to give off a dreamy ‘girls’ comic’ look”. (Japanese 107)
The West has been fascinated in recent years with the street fashions developing in areas such as Harajuku and Shibuya. Harajuku had once been known as a foreigner friendly area which acted as a:

…haunt of young Japanese adults who worshipped 1950’s-style American Rock and Roll, clad in Levis and second hand clothes that once belonged to U.S families living in military housing. (Japanese 29)

Washington Heights, the American military housing facility built shortly after World War II that once stood in the area now known as Yoyogi Park was of particular importance to the establishment of youth culture in Harajuku as Shunya explains:

…the development of Harajuku into a ‘young people’s town’ cannot be explained without reference to Washington Heights, which was once a residential facility for American officers. The construction of the Heights began immediately after the end of the war. It was fully equipped with a hospital, school, fire station, church, department store, theatre, tennis courts and golf course. It thus became a symbol of ‘American affluence’ appearing suddenly like a mirage amid the surrounding burnt out ruins, barracks and black markets. (Shunya 85)

Since the introduction of American culture in Japan the Japanese have become famous for their appropriations of Western fashion. Western influences are reinvented in order to
create a statement which can be considered uniquely Japanese. One Tokyo fashion maker explained this phenomenon to Donald Ritchie:

…we Japanese have really good editing skills. We get bits and pieces from all over the world and digest it, put it through a filter, and then output it as new style that fits our culture. (Ritchie 157)

Japan has the freedom to reinvent fashions from the West without being tied to Western conventions. Japan’s geographic isolation and post-war economic growth allowed the Japanese the freedom to eagerly consume and redefine fashion as Ritchie explains:

Take for example the emblazoned T-shirt. In America, land of its birth, wearing a Coca-Cola emblazoned T-shirt originally meant precisely that one would not subscribe to those institutionalized habits which are perceived as accompanying indiscriminate and habitual Coca-Cola drinking. The intent was ironic. The viewer was being put on, and the wearer was doing the putting - as in the wearing of surplus U.S army gear, which in the U.S.A, meant that you were anti Vietnam War and were hence anti-Army. Definition by opposites became, for a time, a part of satirical grammar. (42)

The opposite is true in Japan, as Ritchie goes on to point out:

In Japan however, a land unusually innocent of irony, Coca-Cola wearers love Coca-Cola. It is a sign of their modernity. And surplus Army uniforms (always being U.S, never Japanese) means merely being with-it in some (to the Japanese) obscure sense. And as for the emblazoned messages, since no one can read them
or, if able to read them understand them, the mere fact of wearing English on a T-shirt indicates merely a contemporary and progressive state of mind. (Ritchie 42)

The Harajuku of today is the home of multitude of styles which originate from a number of different sources. The Japanese Sweet Lolita style of frilly dress made from pastel and cute printed fabrics has been partially influenced by 18th century French fashion. In the Japanese film Kamikaze Girls (2004) the main character and Lolita fashion devotee, Momoko explains her love for the style was inspired by a Rococo fueled fantasy:

Rococo, 18th Century France at its most lavish; it made Baroque look positively sober. An obscure neglected period; rarely mentioned in class. Critics called its art ‘cloying’...shallow, vulgar and indecent. Life then was like candy. Their world so sweet and dreamy, that was Rococo. Girdles were tightened for beauty sake; too tight for breathing. It was... very cute! Or so they said ridiculous! Hedonism and lovemaking were all that mattered. Out of bed, they liked embroidery. Then it was back to the bedroom. And then? Countryside walks. I was smitten by Rococo. A frilly dress and strolls in the country. That’s how I wanted to live! (Kamikaze Girls)

Another teenage fashion trend known as Gonguro (fig.9) incorporated bright Hawaiian print clothing and the use of dark makeup foundation or excessive trips to the tanning salon to achieve a dark complexion. In a Japanese study of Gonguro culture by Professor Tadahiko Kuraishi he:
…quotes a Mr. Shirasugi, the owner of a store selling Hawaiian goods (popular with Gals), who accounted for the appeal: ‘Black music influenced the surfers, and it moved over to the dance clubs. Hip-hop culture began to influence the young and the desire to actually become black increased. (Schoolgirl 63)

Ritchie also makes comparisons between the Gonguro look and a well known American cultural icon:

…her hair a frosty lemon or pure platinum, her eyes a sparkling blue or green, her skin a dark Palm-Beach hue, her skirt micro-mini, her encrusted fingernails glittering, her legs long and her height imposing. Isn’t there something familiar about her? Then we recognise her. Barbie! (Ritchie 156)
Wa Lolita is another variation of Lolita fashion that mixes traditional Japanese clothing with Western influences. Wa Lolita clothing usually consists of a kimono or yukuta top with a full Lolita style skirt (fig.10). In an Australian radio interview with Shoichi Aoki (b.1956), the photographer behind the Japanese street fashion magazine called Fruits, (1997) Aoki speaks about the incorporation of traditional Japanese fashion with Western influences:

I felt like there was a new generation that was becoming visible and perhaps the most poignant thing about this new generation was the use of the kimono. The kimono was something that Japanese people feel quite close to and yet it is traditional so also it’s ‘far away’. If commercial fashion designers had started to reuse the kimono it would probably not have worked but these young people took it back into their own culture and it was like a streak of genius coming – and real self expression.

(Shoichi Aoki)

Figure 10
There are young women who have made their love of Shoujo fashion into a career by entertaining Otaku males as Maid waitresses. Maid Café’s are a popular haunt for the Otaku male. One such establishment is Café Mailish in Tokyo; this is no ordinary café as its all female staff serve customers in either Shoujo maid attire or as cute characters from various Manga and Anime. The waitresses also offer other services such as conversing with customers and blowing on their food for them if it is too hot. Each waitress also has her own exclusive line of merchandise that depicts them in a typical Anime/Manga style. Macrias tells of his own experience as a customer at Café Mailish:

> For the afternoon shift, classic French maid uniforms are the standard attire. Then, from five until closing time, the girls trade in their black-and-white duds for more colourful anime Cosplay. Amuro ray from Mobile Suit Gundam served me lemon tea. The girl running the cash register was a cuter version of Rurohi Ken Shin (Samurai X) right down to a crimson scar across her face. (Cruising 114)

Despite the popularity of Lolita culture in Japan there has been recent concerns raised by mothers about Manga of a Lolita Complex nature. The alarm was originally raised after a horrific abduction, murder and mutilitation of three preschool girls in 1989 by Tstomu Miyazaki a 26 year old Otaku who was a “withdrawn obsessive fan” of Lolita Complex Manga and Anime. (Gravett 136) During the investigation police found that his room housed a large collection of horror and Lolita Complex videos and books. Since this event the term Otaku which was originally used by fans of Manga and Anime to address each other has become known as something more sinister. Due to the negative media
attention created by the Miyazaki case the term Otaku has now become an insult as Schodt states:

Since Miyazaki’s crime was particularly horrible and had occurred in a nation that prides itself on being almost crime – free, the media went into a feeding frenzy, establishing a perfect syllogism in the public mind – that otaku are people obsessed with Manga and animation; that Miyazaki was an otaku; and that all otaku are therefore like Miyazaki. A flood of reports on otaku and the otaku-zoku (‘otaku tribe’) soon appeared in the media creating the impression of a manga and anime fan community inhabited by socially deranged and autistic wackos. (Dreamland 46)

Since the Miyazaki incident some Manga publishers have taken steps to self censor the content of their publications. However Lolita Complex Manga is still quite freely available at conventions where amateur artists sell their self produced Manga (Dōjinshi) without the supervision of a publisher:

Because the artists or fans publish and sell their efforts personally, directly to the public or to their ‘coterie’ or ‘circle’ members, and via mail order and select outlets, some dōjinshi can circulate outside the legal system, which allows them to present much more extreme content than most commercial productions dare to. This license gave rise in the late 1980s to the rorikon, or ‘Lolita Complex’, a sizable subgenre of men’s pornographic dōjinshi depicting all manners of sex with extremely cute or kawaii young girls, who, despite their often voluptuous figures, appeared to be under-aged or barely pubescent virgins. (Gravett 136)
One reason for the popularity of the Lolita Complex genre with Japanese men may be
due to the changing roles of women in society. The Japanese Constitution established
during the American occupation allowed women to live in a democracy and the right to
vote. This has given women much more control of their own lives than they previously
experienced during the years of Imperialism. The prosperous ‘bubble’ period of Japan
also saw an increase of women entering the work force due to a high demand for workers
and putting off marriage and children till much later. Manga and Anime of the Lolita
Complex genre and pornographic nature have become popular with men in Japan as
many Japanese men found it hard to relate to the contemporary Japanese woman as
Napier states:

It is impossible to ignore the social or cultural context in which animation takes
place…the most disturbing sociological phenomena related to this male
reaction…include the growth of sexual interest in very young, nonthreatening
girls, a phenomenon known as the ‘Lolita Complex’ or rorikon. (Anime 80)

Male fans of the Lolita complex genre who have become disillusioned with real Japanese
women and developed ways outside of Manga/Anime to pursue the perfect Shoujo girl.
The Japanese male Otaku is now able to meet the girl of his dreams without leaving his
home or even engaging in a relationship with a real woman. Erotic computer games,
icomputer animated pornography and love dolls are three extreme examples of how men
build relationships with the idealised Shoujo girl.
A million Japanese people may be inflicted with ‘hikikomori syndrome’, a new social disease that takes the form of a shut-in lifestyle. Men are avoiding relationships in increasing numbers. Marriage rates are declining, along with birthrates. Japan currently ranks dead last among countries in the frequency of sexual intercourse. But…they’d also rank number one in the field of virtual sex. (Cruising 95)

In computer animated pornography genitalia is often pixilated to avoid obscenity laws. Erotic computer games take pornography to a new level as the user is able to take part in what he is watching on the screen. These types of video games give the gamer options which will ultimately direct the narrative of the game. They choose the girl that they wish to pursue and then form a relationship which will ultimately lead to sex. The types of characters that inhabit these games include, “Lesbians, Nurses, Naughty schoolgirls and maids” usually depicted in a style typical of Anime and Manga. (93)

Men also use dolls and figurines as another outlet for their Shoujo girl desire. The documentary A Perfect Fake (2004) examines the popularity of dolls as companions for Japanese men. In this documentary an interview with a male Otaku who creates erotic figurines states hat he is conflicted by his chosen lifestyle as:

I don’t think anyone should give credit to someone who shuts himself up in a small room reading comics or making half or totally naked erotic dolls. Here I am a typical example. I’m a thirty-eight year old man who shuts himself up in a
room making dolls instead of having a real child…I’m making these. I don’t know if that’s right”. (A Perfect Fake)

Love dolls are life-size dolls made for male companionship and sex. These dolls often appear as life-size replicas of the Anime/Manga Shoujo as they are created with the typical ‘wide eyed’ look. In Japan the popularity of Love Dolls is so great that there are pornographic magazines devoted to them as well as numerous sex clubs which facilitate sex with these dolls. Chikahiro Kawamura is the Editor of Idoiod magazine, an adult magazine which only features Love Dolls. His magazine was able to recognise the growing popularity of Love Dolls and provide an outlet for male users to share their experiences:

Idoiod Magazine is an adult magazine. Ordinarily adult magazines feature human females. The difference with Idoiod is that we feature only non-human females. We recognize Eros in anything shaped like a woman. Everything in the magazine is in the female shape except the human figure. The market is definitely getting bigger. The internet contributed a great deal. Love Doll users create home pages because they want everyone to see the dolls. When the dolls are naked they all look the same. Therefore the users use clothing, hair and accessories to conform the dolls to their tastes. (A Perfect Fake)

Doll clubs or doll brothels are also becoming a common element of the Japanese sex industry. At one such establishment called Secret the clients are able to completely customize a doll companion for their hour long session. Secret’s manager Mr. Narita
states, “our customers are usually too shy to be with a real woman… or sometimes they just don’t want to hear their wives nagging anymore”. (Sinclair 93)

The sex industry in Japan has found other ways in which to capitalize on the popularity of the Shoujo girl. Used panty shops sell used underwear of young women as well as used school uniforms. There are also image clubs which specialize in sexual encounters with women dressed as school girls. In these clubs women in costume occupy “elaborately decorated fantasy themed rooms”, such as classrooms, school gyms, school nurse clinics or train carriages (fig.11). (Sinclair 132) This fascination with the school girl fantasy also created an illegal practice ‘enjo kosia’, politely known as compensated dating. In this practice school aged girls (kogals) were often approached by older men to go on paid dates which often included sex. Often it was the girls themselves that approached men in order to make money to buy high ticket items like Louis Vuttion handbags. When his trend of paid dating became scandalized in the popular media:

…the Tokyo Metro political government conducted a survey of Japanese schoolgirls from eight graders to high school seniors to uncover how widespread the phenomenon actually was. Of the girls who responded, 3.8 percent of the middle school students and 4 percent of the high school students admitted to practicing paid dating at least once” (Japanese 51)

Some men not satisfied by a Shoujo substitute feel the desire to become a walking Shoujo themselves. This has lead to an extreme form of Cosplay called Kigurumin. Cosplay is a term which literately means costume play. Kigurumin first became popular in the streets
of Tokyo during 2003 by Mamba girls (girls who achieved very dark skin through the application of dark makeup, fake tan or frequent visits to the tanning salon). The original Kigurumin gals (Ethnic mascot in Japanese) “believed that they were creating a new species by wearing cow, bear, and hamster costumes while lounging in the streets at all hours”. (Schoolgirl 87) This fad was short lived but some men later also continued the trend by cross dressing as female Anime characters in full body suits complete with masks. The men involved in this new style of Cosplay became known as Kigiurummers and are known to take extreme measures to make sure not to display any of their actual skin, “some kigiurummers cover their faces in layers of cloth, there’s a risk of asphyxiation”. (Cruising 115) In this extreme form of costume play, men aspire not just to dress in character but to inhabit a character. This aspiration is not a new concept as “playing a simulation video game” can also an attempt to psychologically inhabit the character”. (115)
Japan is a country of reinvention. Since the beginning of Japan’s exposure to Western culture, Japan and its female population have undergone many transformations. Japanese women are building a culture for themselves which has caught the attention of the rest of the world. Western travelers flock to areas like Harajuku for a glimpse of the infamous ‘Harajuku Girl’. The Shoujo has become an ambassador for Japan, recognized internationally as a Japanese invention. But is the Shoujo a fair representation of contemporary Japanese women? The next chapter will explore the role of women as active consumers and artists of Shoujo Manga and Anime culture.
Chapter 3: The Shoujo, Ladies and the Female Manga Artist.

Despite the changing role of women in Japan and the sexualisation of the Shoujo in male Anime/Manga the Shoujo genre has remained popular with female fans. This chapter will examine the development of the Shoujo genre in Japan and its influence on Japanese female fans as consumers and artists. Historically women in Japan have experienced social conditions that have created a way of life that is very different from what Western women experience as:

…their sex roles rigidly defined and their socialisation with the opposite sex restricted. In feudal times, women were often treated like chattel and until World War II a woman’s place was in the home before and after marriage – which was arranged. Duty and submission to parents, husband, mother-in-law, and in old age to her own male children precluded love in the Western sense. A web of obligation held most relationships together. (Manga 94)

It is because of this that Japanese women have developed a strong and unique female culture which has created, “their own style of speech, using different personal pronouns, mannerisms, and verb endings” as well as their own female theatre and literature. (Manga 94) During the 10th century women of the Imperial Court began keeping diaries that “chronicled their feelings and their beautiful leisured lives”. (Manga 94) One of the most famous examples of this work is The Tale of Genji (1004) which was written by Murasaki Shikibu, (970 – 1031) “a lady-in-waiting to the empress”. (Gravett 76) In Murasaki’s novel of:
...54 chapters and one million and more words, Murasaki described the love affairs and inner most feelings of her ‘Shining Prince’. She also crystallized the aesthetic of aware, the acute perception of the impermanent but intense beauty of human beings and the natural world. Other women began to write, and feminine sensibilities found expression in their own literature. Just as these authors had refined the written word, so their modern counterparts would eventually enrich manga, Japan’s popular literature, with a similarly heightened sensitivity.

(Gravett 76)

The Tale of Genji was also written in a script which made it accessible by male and female readers. (Gravett 76) The Tale of Genji has now been readapted countless times and Manga versions of this story number, “no less than twenty”. (Miyake 359) One of the most successful Manga adaptations of the story has been “Yamato Waki’s (b.1948) exquisite thirteen-volume bestseller Asaki yume mishi (1979-1993)”. (Miyake 360) Waki a female Shoujo Manga artist was able to reflect the feminine sensibilities of the original text as:

The focus of Asaki yume mishi is the emotions, feelings and moods of the love relationships, not just the conquests or sexual encounters. The women are the prisms through which we view and experience the narrative and the world they inhabit. (Miyake 379)

Waki’s Manga version of the story also made it accessible to a wider audience as Miyake explains:
The initial publication in 1979 targeted upper – elementary – school – age girls, but older girls and women read it as well, and students seeking to commit to memory the Genji storyline for their university entrance exams turn to it also. (Miyake 369)

Another significant event that shaped Japanese literature was the creation of the Shoujo school persona. Reforms in the Japanese education system during the late 1800s meant that girls from wealthy families could attend higher education for the first time. The school girl figure captured the curiosity of the public during this period, often with negative results as stories emerged about degenerate schoolgirls and improper love affairs in the media. The degenerate Shoujo schoolgirl also became a common topic for writers as Czarnecki states:

As early as 1887, schoolgirls were the topic of literary imagination and had come to replace the geisha and the prostitute as the literary heroine of choice. The public emergence of the schoolgirl intrigued writers who were eager to bring this new heroine to life on paper. The scandal-laden love relationship between students depicted in the novels had the added advantage of luring the readers. (Czarnecki 54)

In these novels Shoujo heroines pushed the boundaries of what was considered to be proper behaviour for young ladies of the period. Shoujo characters were often depicted as career driven individuals who lacked the desire to start a family. Author Kosugi Tengai (1865-1952) wrote about a school girl named Hatsuno in his novel Makase Koikaze
(1903) (Demon Winds Love Winds) who was a typical example of the degenerate schoolgirl that was depicted in the media of the period. Hatsuno decides to distance herself from her disapproving family in order to complete her studies and become financially independent. In choosing her own destiny she scandalously becomes involved with an engaged man who later leaves her for his intended bride. Her bad luck of course does not end there as she becomes ill before her final exams and dies in what at the time must have seemed a fitting fate for such a juvenile delinquent. *Makase Koikaze* would have been considered a shocking story in the period it was published as Czarnecki states:

Hatsuno’s tale provides one account of the type of degenerate schoolgirl who flirted with sexual deviance. At the same time, her ambitious drive to graduate from the elite Imperial Girl’s College (Teikoku Joshi Gakuin) is fueled not by her desire to possess the credentials of a modern wife but instead her yearning to secure a job that will lead to economic independence. Her disregard for the higher school’s objective to mold good – wives and wise – mothers doubly cast her in the role of degenerate schoolgirl. (Czarnecki 54)

During the early 1900s the term Shoujo came into popular use and there were also books written for the consumption of young women which were known as Shoujo literature. These books “were loaded with the ideological policies of the period, emphasising that a girl, no longer a child but not yet a grown-up either should aspire only to refinement, romance, marriage and motherhood” (Gravett 76). One of the most popular female Shoujo writers of the period was Yoshiya Nobuko (1896-1973). Yoshiya wrote Shoujo novels which were serialized “in newspapers and women’s magazines from the 1910s to
the 1970s”. (Frederick 65) Unlike the scandalous stories of degenerate school girls that were popular around the establishment of girls’ higher education, Yoshiya’s characters can be called good girls. Yoshiya’s stories focused on the innocence of the Shoujo.

In Yoshiya’s novel *Two Virgins in the Attic* (1919) she creates a love story between two young women named Akitsu and Akiko. Stories of female homosexual attraction were common during this period as “Girls having romances and crushes amongst themselves were seen by some as a positive training ground for future kindnesses to husbands and children.”. (Frederick 68) The two female lead characters in *Two Virgins in the Attic* are also representative of the shy girl and her extrovert friend relationship that would later become common in Anime and Manga. (Frederick 69) One contemporary example of this is illustrated in the relationship between the shy Tomo and the sporty, outgoing young Sakura in CLAMP’s Manga series *Cardcaptor Sakura* (1996-2000). Yoshiya’s two female characters in the *Two Virgins in the Attic* would have been considered innocent and pure at the time of the story being published due to their inexperience with heterosexual relationships. Yoshiya also believed that it was important to look past the popular Japanese ‘good wife, wise mother’ ideal that was pushed by many other Shoujo writers. In a private letter to her partner she states:

The girls’ magazines are so terrible lately that I just sigh every time I read them…Almost to the point of endorsing obscenity, they push on girls the idea that they should be flirting with men. Are the artists and writers that publish there really human? They do this even though it is true that anyone having a pure spirit, anyone who is simply given the opportunity to polish it can enjoy their
solitude; still these people take their filthy hands and cover girls eyes, propping them up as so many clay dolls that can only think of marriage - they are truly a dirty bunch. (Frederick 75)

Yoshiya was considered to be an unconventional woman of her time; she adopted Western dress and a Western short hairstyle, supported herself financially, traveled the world and also lived with her female lover. Her stories that often reflected elements of her own lifestyle became a means of escapism for young women who could not enjoy the level of freedom that Yoshiya was able to experience. Yoshiya’s characters were mostly from the privileged classes and were able to indulge in higher education and entertain the prospect of finding a career. Yoshiya’s use of exotic Western locations for her stories also added to their appeal for readers who dreamt of one day traveling the world. Yoshiya’s work would later inspire future Shoujo Manga through her use of emotionally descriptive text as Frederick states:

The emotionally rich and descriptive style of her writing influenced a number of important Japanese genres including forms of domestic fiction (katei shosetsu), which still affects important cultural products such as Japanese comics and animation, could count Yoshiya among its originators. Yoshiya herself seems to have been well read and affected not only by girls’ fiction from abroad such as Frances Hodgson Burnett’s The Little Princess, but also by a wider reading of European fiction, the decadents in particular. She brought this rich background to girls’ culture. (Frederick 66)
After World War II the demand for Manga as a cheap means of entertainment for children, created a competitive boys (Shonen) Manga market. Manga artists who failed to break into the Shonen genre later began working in or Shoujo (girls) Manga. During the post World War II period there were not many women working as Manga artists. One of the few successful female Manga artists of the time was Machiko Hasegawa (1920-1992) the creator of the popular family comic Sazae-san (1946-1974). However it would not be until the 1960s that the first female artists would work in the Shoujo genre. Male Manga artists such as Tezuka Ozuma (1926-1989), Chiba Tetsuya (b.1939), Ishinmori Shotaro (1938-1998) and Matsumoto Leiji (b.1938) were the first to create Manga specifically for a young female audience. These artists used their success in the Shoujo genre to later create careers for themselves in the Shonen market. Creating Shoujo Manga was not an easy task for male artists who had little understanding of the desires of girls. Chiba admits that he often asked his wife about “girls’ feeling and aspirations” in order to create his Manga. (Toku: 22) Stories produced by male artists for Shoujo Manga were commonly tales about the path of true love. There were artists like Tezuka however that were able to find a more convincing female voice in their work.

Tezuka’s drawing style along with his love for storytelling were inspired by his childhood memories of the Takarazuka Revue (1913), an all female theatre group that played the female and male roles as Gravett states:

So where did Tezuka’s gender sympathy stem from? As a child, he was taken on frequent visits to the local Takarazuka theatre by his mother, who knew several of the performers. In this famous all-female company, women cross-dressed to
take the male parts. Their colourful extravaganzas drew on elements of traditional male-only Kabuki and Noh theatre, but glamorized them by introducing the spectacle of Parisian and Broadway revues and Hollywood musicals. These shows had a lasting effect on Tezuka, as he explained: ‘Naturally in my youth I imbibed the romantic and flamboyant atmosphere of this world. My characters’ costumes as well as the scenery that surrounds them owe much to the theatre. More importantly, the spirit of the nostalgia toward Takarazuka pervades and infuses my work’. (Gravett 77)

The dreamy wide-eyed look of Tezuka’s Manga characters was also partially inspired by the performances of the Takarazuka revue from his childhood as:

He would look up into the actresses’ eyes, heavily highlighted with mascara and twinkling with the reflections from the bright spotlights. He found that this stage technique also worked in Manga. Your gaze is instinctively drawn to these cartoon eyes, as big as windows that seem to follow you around the page. Tezuka also understood that, in the unspoken affairs of the heart, the eyes are the prime communicators of feeling, our first language. (Gravett 77)

The Takarazuka Revue may have also been the inspiration for Tezuka’s most well known Shoujo Manga series, Princess Knight (1953–56). (fig.12) Like the female cross-dressing actresses of the Takarazuka revue that play male roles, the main character of Princess Knight, Sapphire, is a girl who is forced to act as a boy in order to inherit the royal throne. Throughout the story Sapphire appears to be conflicted by her sexuality as an error made by a cherub called Tink causes Sapphire to be born “with both a girls’ and a
boys’ soul”. (Gravett 77) Sapphire secretly desires to dress and behave as a girl but in the public eye she is forced to act as the Crown Prince and protect the kingdom. Eventually Tink descends to earth, on a mission to make Sapphire a total woman and in the process “matches her up with a real prince charming - whose name, by the way, is Franz Charming”. (Manga 95)

On the surface the majority of Shoujo Manga produced by male artists ultimately ends with love conquering all; but “there are many great stories of strong willed heroines who never gave up hope, despite the tragic destinies created for them. (Toku 23) Chiba Tetsuya’s Manga series Miso Curds (1966), which told the story about “a latch-key city kid who finds new friends and confidence when she moves to the country”, is one
example of this theme. (Gravett 78) Shoujo Manga became important for young girls living in the aftermath of the war as it “captured girls’ hearts and kept on giving them hope to survive and even happiness”. (Toku 23)

It was not until the 1960s that women began to work as Shoujo Manga artists. Women made their debut in the Shoujo genre by entering competitions which were organised by Shoujo Manga magazines. For the first time female artist who had grown up reading Shoujo Manga were able to create their own stories that better reflected the hopes and dreams of young girls as they:

Shared their readers’ tastes for imported pop music, fashions and films, and reflected the mood of the Swinging Sixties in the exploits of blue-eyed Western blondes that they began to relate to in their fanciful visions of life in foreign countries. They also turned ordinary Japanese girls into manga heroines, creating more interesting and convincing female characters than Shoujo paper dolls typically created by men. (Gravett 78)

Machiko Satonaka (b.1947) who created Manga titles such as Pia no Shouzou (1964) and Ladies of Aries (1973) is one artist who began her career during the 1960s and is still working today. She has stated that her initial motivation for breaking into the Manga industry was:

I thought I could do a better job myself, and that women were more capable of understanding what girls want than men. Drawing comics was also a way of
getting freedom and independence without having to go to school for years. It was something I could do by myself, and it was a type of work that allowed women to be equal with men. (Manga 97)

In the 1970s female artists outnumbered their male counterparts in the Shoujo genre. These artists are responsible for creating the visual conventions in Shoujo Manga that still exist today. The most revolutionary female artists of this period were known as the Magnificent 24s’. This group of artists gained their title from “the year Showa 24, or 1949 when most of them were born”. (Gravett 78) The Magnificent 24s were: “five notable independent creators, Moto Hagio (b.1949), Riyoko Ikeda (b.1947), Yumiko Oshima (b.1947), Keiko Takemiya (b.1950) and Ryoko Yamagishi (b.1947)”. (Gravett 78) These women were responsible for reinventing the layout for Shoujo Manga through their use of metaphoric imagery and irregular splitting of each page. Floral images were used as visual metaphors to represent the inner most feelings of their characters. The particular flowers used were also important as each had its own meaning, “For example daisies usually denote simplicity, chrysanthemums sensitivity, and roses sensuality”. (Gravett 79) Other common floral motifs were blooming bouquets to represent passion and falling petals and leaves to signify a fading romance. (Gravett 79) This use of floral imagery is also reminiscent of the language featured in earlier popular Shoujo novels which often featured long detailed passages of emotion described by visions of flowers and other delicate signs of beauty. The Magnificent 24s’ also broke with the Manga tradition of dividing a page into equal segments and introduced new devices that reflected the narrative of their Manga:
They gave their panels whatever shape and configuration best suited the emotions they wanted to evoke. They softened the ruled borders outlining the panels, sometimes breaking them up, dissolving them or removing them altogether. They overlapped or merged sequences of panels into collages. A borderless panel could now permeate the page, often beneath flotillas of other panels sailing across it, or it could expand or ‘bleed’ off the edges of the printed page itself and imply an even bigger picture beyond the paper. Thus time and reality were no longer always locked up inside boxes and narratives could shift in and out of memories and dreams. Characters too were no longer always contained within panels, but could stand in front of them, sometimes shown full length, making them more vivid and showing off their body language and fashions. (Gravett 79)

Like Tezuka’s Princess Knight, androgyny and gender identity remained a popular theme with female artists in the 1970s. The most well known example of this is Riyoko Ikeda’s The Rose of Versailles (1972). (fig.13) This particular Manga shares many similarities with Tezuka’s Princess Knight. The story is set during the French Revolution and follows “the lives and the loves of two women”. (Gravett 79) One of these women is Queen Marie-Antoinette and the other is a fictional character called Oscar who is a woman that has been brought up to act as a man. Towards the end of the story Oscar becomes the most important character of the Manga as she attempts to reconcile her own sexuality and her feelings for a male servant named Andre. (Gravett 80) This Manga was also adapted as a play for the Takarazuka Revue and is considered by the Revue “and fans alike as the most memorable and successful postwar revue to date”. (Robertson 24) Like Tezuka’s Princess Knight, The Rose of Versailles also reflects the performances of the Revue’s
cross dressing actresses who play male roles. Robertson believes that the fact that women play these male parts is significant for creating the exoticism of a story which is set in the West:

The Rose of Versailles also illustrates how ‘the west’ is positioned as a site of tranvestism in Japanese popular culture, although the implications are differently construed depending on the spectator. For example, the Revue has deployed cross-dressing not only to represent ideal men and women, masculinity and femininity, but also to use non Japanese (especially Western) characters as foils against which a homogenous Japaneseness can be gauged and understood-the we-are-are-not-that maneuver. Thus, in American musicals, such as West Side Story (Uesutosaido monogatari, 1968-69), generic American gender markers are constructed and preformed in opposition to dominant assumptions and Japanese gender ideals. (Robertson 77)

Figure 13
After the success of *The Rose Of Versailles*, Moto Hagio, the creator of *Tooma no Shinzou* (1973) and Keiko Takemiya, the artist behind *Kaze to Kino Uta* (1976-1984), took relationships between androgynous characters in Shoujo Manga to a new level with stories of homosexual love. Both artists set their narrative in “boys only boarding schools in a make believe European past”. (Gravett 80) The male characters featured in these stories were feminine in appearance and the narrative reflected the romantic stories seen in other Shoujo Manga with the addition of “sex scenes, always artistically depicted”. (Gravett 80) The popularity of such stories created a new genre of Shoujo Manga which was known as *Shonen Ai* (Boys love) or *Bishonen* (Beautiful boys). Toshihiko Sugawa, an editor of the Sun publishing group, saw the potential for the genre and developed the concept for *June* Magazine (1978) which was entirely devoted to *Bishonen* Manga. (Dreamland 120) Sagawa believes that *Shonen Ai* genre became popular with girls because the characters are an ideal fantasy:

…that combine assumed or desired attributes of both males and females. Thus the heroes can be beautiful and gentle, like females, but without the jealously and the other negative qualities that women sometimes associate with themselves. The women readers are also attracted to the friendship and bonding that they assume takes place between males; the idea that men would die for each other on the battlefield, for example is seen as a type of ‘love’, when for men it’s probably seen as comradely. On the surface these characters are gay males, but in reality they are manifestations of females; they’re like young women wearing cartoon character costumes. (Dreamland 123)
The use of male characters in stories that included sexual themes and forbidden love also helped to make them more acceptable for the consumption of female readers as Sugawa states,

...girls and young women in Japan still have constraints on them socially. They feel the characters are freer if they are male, both socially and sexually.

(Dreamland 123)

In the 1980s Manga publishers began producing Manga for adult women for the first time: “as was the case with men, publishers have found that women raised on comics want and demand their own magazines”. (Schodt 102) The ‘bubble economy’ period of the 1980s also increased the demand for female office workers who despite this demand endured sexual discrimination and harassment in the work place. The lives of married women also changed under the Bubble Economy as male Salary Men (male office workers) were expected to work long hours and were rarely seen at home. The Manga market began to recognise the potential for adult female comics as:

Many of these young office ladies might be poorly paid and unfulfilled in the workplace, but outside of it they decided to live their single lives to the full in ways their mother’s had never imagined. The OLs postponed marriage, stayed in their jobs and continued to live with their parents. After work they could enjoy a double life of night clubs, fashionable parties, dating and perhaps real love in Japan’s high flying 1980s economic bubble. Commuting from the suburbs, these secretaries, receptionists, nurses and shop assistants, often single and lonely, as
well as bored wives left alone by their salary men husbands, proved a ready market for their own kind of Manga. (Gravett 116)

Artists working in Manga for adult women generally used a more realistic drawing style without the large eyes that were popular in Shoujo Manga. The issues that these artists dealt with in their work were often inspired by their readers who would submit letters to the magazines. Women’s Manga also offered a wealth of information to newly married women who were just learning to cope with their new roles as wives and mothers. One Manga magazine titled *Truly Horrifying Mother-In–Law and Daughter-in-Law Comics*, dealt with the issues of moving in with your husband’s family after marriage and how to cope with family conflict. Another magazine titled, *Paying The Bills* was a guide to handling household finances. (Gravett 118)

The lives of Office Ladies were also a subject worthy of adult women’s Manga. The most popular title that depicted the lives of these female working women was Risu Akizuki’s (b.1957) comic strip *OL Shinkaron* (1989). In this series Akizuki humorously highlighted issues surrounding working women, such as their spending habits and how they were viewed by their male co-workers. The sexual discrimination that Office Ladies in Japan face in the workplace often prevents them from being promoted to high level positions. As a result many women view their careers as merely an in-between period before marriage as after marriage very few women return to work. Living a life of few prospects many Office Ladies have chosen to continue living with their parents and spend their money on high end goods and holidays overseas. (Gravett 116) This behaviour has led to negative stereotypes of Office Ladies as being selfish and immature.
In the **OL Shinkaron** strip **We’re Different**, (fig.14) Akizuki compares the lives of the Office Ladies who choose to remain at home to those who support themselves. In this strip two clueless Office Ladies are oblivious to the struggles of their co-worker who cannot go out drinking with them after work due to problems with finances and housework. They assume that she can’t come along because “She must have a boyfriend waiting” and believe that living alone has given her a carefree life. (Akizuki 46) In the comic strips **the New Staff At Lunch**, (fig.15) **One Way Friendship** (fig.16) and **Both Extremes** (fig.17), Akizuki makes light of the way in which younger Office Ladies are treated in the workplace compared to older working women who face pressure to leave the workplace and marry.

![Figure 14](image)

**Figure 14**

Figure 15


Figure 16

The most popular genre of Manga for women are known as *Ladies’ Comics* which are erotic Manga. Women’s erotic Manga differs from its male counterpart due to its use of narrative which is much more developed. Like other kinds of comics for women the content is fueled by the letters of its readers and the resulting themes present in *Ladies’ comics* have been diverse as:

The first love, the seduction of a coworker, the affair with a husband’s friend…a woman seducing a son’s very young friend, women becoming a molester of men on a subway, and women characters who apparently enjoy enduring gang rapes,
sodomy, and every other kind of sexual torture and humiliation imaginable.

(Dreamland 125)

As Jones explains the genre of Ladies’ Comics:

…originated in the 1980s out of shoujo (young girl) manga that has been immensely popular in Japan since the 1950s. However, as the readership of shoujo manga matured, so did their interests. Readers and manga creators both wanted content that matched their new, adult concerns; marriage, family, and sex. (Jones 98)

One well known female artist of the erotic Ladies’ Comics genre is Milk Morizono (1957). Like many other female artists who started their careers in the 1980s, Morizono was discovered through a Manga competition held by a magazine publisher. In her early career Morizono drew Shoujo Manga but she decided to later pursue a career in the adult women’s genre as it allowed her to produce work that contained mature themes. As an artist who produces erotic Manga for women, Morizono is interested in developing complex narratives that intensify the erotic themes in her work. Morizono’s work has included stories which are “love stories based on Greek myths, and a two-volume story about AIDS titled Soshite Tsutaete Hibi no Owari ni (‘Tell People, to the End of Our Days’). (Dreamland 211) In an interview with Manga historian Frederik Schodt, Morizono shared her thoughts on the reasons erotic Manga for women is so popular:
It is because long-repressed Japanese women have pent-up frustration but now have the freedom to express themselves directly. Many of the readers of erotic ladies’ comics, she notes, are bored wives cheating on their husbands ‘sometimes they just buy the magazines just for the telephone club ads’. (Dreamland 210)

In the 1980s Shoujo characters became popular with both a male and female audience. Male artists began constructing their own sexualised version of the Shoujo in the Lolita complex genre which depicted prepubescent girl characters as objects of sexual desire. The popularity of the Shoujo character with both male and females has lead many female artists in the early 1990s to create Shoujo Manga which can be enjoyed by both sexes. One group of female Shoujo artists who have been successful in creating work for both a female and a male audience is CLAMP as Gravett states:

…the collective Clamp, whose principal members adopted this group pen name in order to divide their workload anonymously. Their combined speciality is the sexy and powerful ‘magic girls’, who appeal to males as much as girls looking for heroines (Gravett 81)

The groups members, Satsuki Igarashi (1969), Apapa Mokona (1968), Tsubaki Nekoi (1969) and Ageha Ohkawa (1967) formed 19 years ago while students at high school. Like many female fans of Manga the group started out by creating their own (Dōjinshi) amateur fan Manga based on their favourite pre-existing Manga stories. To date CLAMP is responsible for producing, “22 popular Manga series, many of which have been
adapted to animation”. (Solomon 2006) CLAMP’s collection of work has been inspired by a variety of themes such as science fiction, comedy, romance and fantasy.

CLAMP’s Manga **Chobits** (2002) is about a young student Hideki Motosuwa and his relationship with his personal robot girl or Persocom named Chi. Motosuwa is originally a country boy but he moves to the city in order to attend Cram School so that he can pass his University entrance exams. Motosuwa is a very typical teenage boy who is fascinated with technological boy toys and of course using them to access porn. When he moves to the city he first encounters Persecoms, robot assistants (made to look like attractive women) which are used to complete manual tasks as well as accessing the internet. Motosuwa dreams of one day being able to buy his own Persecom and can’t believe his luck when one day he happens to find a beautiful Persecom that was left in the garbage. Once Motosuwa gets her home she remains lifeless until he is able to figure out how to switch her on. Motosuwa looks everywhere for her switch and is terrified when he realizes that he must reach between her legs to turn her on. Once she comes alive Motosuwa is faced with the daunting task of teaching her the correct way to behave. This lead to many embarrassing situations for Motosuwa who is shy of women as Chi doesn’t know when to keep her clothes on. The story progresses into a typical Shoujo romance story as Motosuwa finds love with Chi against all odds. **(Chobits)**

The popularity of the Shoujo with a male audience has enabled many female Otaku (Manga/Anime fans) to make a living from their Anime and Manga obsessions by working in Maid Café’s, which serve male Otaku. Recently however women have been
able to indulge in their own version of Otaku culture. The name given to the female Otaku is Fujoshi. On one Japanese popular culture fan site, Fujoshi are defined as:

Literally rotten girl, the word is a pun on the homonym meaning ‘lady’ in Japanese. It is used to refer to female otaku who like anime or manga with male homosexual content; a genre known as BL (Boy Love) or Yaoi. Deprecatingly referring to their own way of thinking as being ‘rotten’, the Fujoshi have been around for as long as 10 years but only started to become more known in recent years. The Fujoshi frequents an area in Ikebukuro called the ‘Otome Road’. There are many Kakure Fujoshi, ‘hidden’ rotten girls who cannot, or prefer not, to profess their passion in public. (“Akibanana.com”)

A Fujoshi’s favourite place to socialise is Otome Road (nicknamed maiden road) in Ikebukuro which is a haven for stores selling Fujoshi goods and related entertainment. It is also not unusual to see young women Cosplaying as their favourite Anime/Manga characters on the streets of Ikebukuro. Cosplay became a popular pastime in Japan during the early 1990s, its beginning are not documented but is thought to have started by fans who started dressing as their favourite characters at comic markets. (Hiroaki 47) Many Fujoshi make their own costumes but as the trend has become more popular stores in areas like Otome Road begun selling costumes and accessories. In Ikebukuro there are also venues for Cosplay dance parties and photo shooting sessions.

Since the 1980s the fashion movements created by teenage girls have been linked in some way to Manga and Anime culture. Girls who followed alternative punk bands of the
Nagomu label in the 1980s were heavily associated with the experimental Manga publication Garo. (Schoolgirl 111) The style of clothing these girls wore could be described as “like a 1950s housewife after a nervous breakdown”. (109) The frilly dresses that were popular with these girls would later help to inspire Lolita fashion. The Lolita look which is now one of the most popular fashion styles adapted by Fujoshi was inspired by the French Rococo period as well as the cuteness of the Shoujo figure featured in Anime and Manga. Lolita fashion is also broken up into subgroups such as:

- Kuro-Loli (Black Lolitas who garb themselves in a single colour- guess which one?),
- Ama-Loli (who dress sweet and dreamy, like human birthday cakes),
- Guro-Loli (who are into wrist cutting and may have serious psychological issues),
- Goth-Pan ( punks), and Loli-Punks. (125)

These styles of Lolita fashion have appeared “in a host of animations and comics like Doll, Le Portrait De Petit Cossette, Rozen Maiden, and God Child”. (125) Due to the connection between Lolita fashion and Anime/Manga the style also appeals to female Otaku who enjoy indulging in Cosplay.

Boy Love Manga is the most popular of the Shoujo genres for the Fujoshi. The non-threatening feminine male characters that feature in these Manga have become the ideal fantasy figures of female Otaku. Like the Maid Café which serves male Otaku, Butler Café’s have become popular with Fujoshi. These café’s are serviced by female waiters dressed as men. Fujoshi go to these café’s to converse with the wait staff in the same manner of Otaku at Maid Café’s and to experience a fantasy relationship with a vision of
their ideal man. Macias speaks about his experience as a customer at B:Lily-rose a Butler Café in Ikebukuro:

Our ‘Garcon’ gives us a choice between a stainless steel table, lied with over-stylized black and red chairs smuggled in from the Mad Hatter’s tea party, perhaps. The other option is a gleaming white counter facing the wall, but a seat there costs an extra 500 yen (US$4.50), which entitles you to the ‘Conversation System’, an up-close and personal chat with the bartender (in picture perfect vest and bow tie) working the shift. (“An Eternal”)

Female Anime/Manga fans share a deep connection to their favourite artists and will often follow the work of a chosen artist from the beginning to the end of their career. Manga artists often strive to build this kind of relationship with their readers and often include personal information about themselves alongside their work informing the reader about their lives. The readers are also encouraged to send in letters to Manga magazines as well as artists to receive personalised responses in return. The Japanese have realised the potential Manga has to reach people and it is now being utilised by the government and businesses to promote and advertise ideas and products.

Likewise the art world has now also seen the potential of the Anime/Manga mediums and is creating a new kind of art under the term Superflat. This art movement which was created by artists Takashi Murakami (b.1963) is a hybrid of traditional Japanese art and contemporary Japanese popular culture. Since most of the Superflat artists grew up in the 1980s under the Shoujo Manga explosion the work they create is a testament to its
influence on their lives. The next chapter will examine the work of male and female Superflat artist and their interpretations of the Shoujo. As the Shoujo has been interpreted by male and female Anime/Manga fans in differing ways it is interesting to investigate what Superflat artists believe is the role of the Shoujo in contemporary Japan.
Chapter 4: Superflat: Female Otaku Artists

Superflat, the Japanese art movement founded by Takashi Murakami (b. 1962), is a new Pop Art hybrid inspired by traditional Japanese art (Nihonga) and Otaku (fans of Anime and Manga) culture. Feminine imagery is an important aspect of Superflat’s visual repertoire and is used to demonstrate the changing position of women in Japan. Images depicting progressive women as signifiers of social change are not new, as in previous eras, such as the Taishō period (1912-1926), representations of the Moga (modern girl) came to stand as symbols of modernity. For Superflat artists the Moga’s more contemporary version, the Shoujo, represents the current generation’s modern girl and her impact on fashion and popular media, particularly Manga and Anime. This chapter will examine Superflat’s vision of the Shoujo and her influence on male and female artists.

Superflat is a hybrid art movement, being a mixture of Japanese and Western traditions aspiring to a vision of the future. Murakami, like many Japanese who grew up during the prosperous economic period of the 1980s is searching for a true Japanese identity in the aftermath of Westernisation. In the wake of World War II and the Post-War American occupation of Japan, society faced numerous dramatic social and political changes, including the adoption of Western technologies and ideas. These changes had an impact on the Japanese art world as increasingly Western art styles began to dominate over traditional Japanese works. However, Murakami sought to create a contemporary art movement that could be considered distinctly Japanese, while also creating international interest in Japanese art. Subsequently, Murakami
developed Superflat an art movement to rekindle the passion for Japanese art within Japan.

The art world in Post-War Japan was divided into two categories, Traditional Japanese art and Western art. During the height of Japan’s prosperous period of economic growth in the 1960s, sales of art from the West exploded and largely destroyed the market for Japanese artists who painted in imitations of Western styles. Yet Japanese traditional art and particularly handicraft began fetching high prices as signifiers of “Japanese identity”. (Murakami 7) In the 1980s the increasing interest in the Japanese art market also raised the prices to a level higher than the rest of the world. Murakami believes that the introduction of discount international travel for the Japanese during this period exposed an inequality in the art market as a greater number of the population gained access to markets outside Japan. (17)

In order to create a uniquely Japanese contemporary art form, Superflat artists have employed techniques borrowed from Nihonga (traditional Japanese art) and combined them with those of Anime and Manga. Murakami was initially trained in the school of Nihonga, but has since been able to link visually early Japanese art and contemporary popular culture. In the case of Murakami, the ironic significance of his combination of past tradition and the popular contemporary culture is that Manga and Anime graphics are also indebted to Japan’s exposure to Western style comics, art and design.

The introduction of Western art and theory had biased younger Japanese artists to the view that flatness in traditional Japanese art was merely decorative and lacking in substance. Yet somewhat paradoxically, Japanese mediums of Anime and Manga that
have become popular in the West are predominantly constructed along a two-dimensional plane. The similarity between traditional Japanese art and Anime/Manga imagery is their use of flat subjects and backgrounds that lack depth or a sense of perspective. In creating Anime, artists also use flattened layers that makes the foreground and background appear to “lie on the same plane” with motion created in the horizontal plane. (Lamarre 132) Like Anime, Manga also creates motion through a shifting horizontal plane which helps guide the “movement of the observer’s gaze along planes”. (Murakami 9) Murakami noted the importance of the horizontal plane in his studies of narratives in traditional Japanese art. (Murakami 23) In short, Superflat artists see considerable benefit in allowing their flattened images to float rather than adhere to perspective, as they can create work that sits outside reality. In these imagined pictorial spaces artists have the freedom to create a world that illustrates their own value systems and beliefs as Brehm suggests “The question the artists raise is that of the possibility of creating an original image in the face of the prevailing inundation of images”. (Brehm 11) Brehm continues by stating:

Murakami replies to this question in many and varied ways throughout his oeuvre, either by isolating formal elements from the traditional pictorial vocabulary and transforming them in his works, or by using his own pictorial idiom to open up new perspectives on traditional themes and thus intimate a discussion at meta-level. (17)

It might also be claimed that Superflat has resurrected the flattening of images as a metaphor of the two dimensional and artificial aspects of consumer culture in Japan as Brehm notes that in Murakami’s work:
This flat style, which mirrors both the superficial (flat) motif and the users’ receptive habits, finds further expression in the sandpapering of the surface and the sides, obliterating every painterly gesture until the painting takes on the flawless aesthetic appearance of an industrial product. (Brehm 11)

In Japan, the country of Hello Kitty and the saucer-eyed Shoujo girl, Kawaii or cute culture has become an important part of life. The Kawaii characteristics found in depictions of the Shoujo are constructed by distorting and exaggerating parts of the body. Distortion is a technique that is common to Japanese traditional art and is used in Anime and Manga to highlight a particular aspect of the image. For example, in Edo erotic wood block prints (Shunga) the genitalia of the subjects would be enlarged in order to make the sex act the focal point of the image. It was also common for Geisha to be depicted as willow thin in order to give them an appearance of grace and fragility. In images of Shoujo figures, artists often exaggerate areas such as the eyes and the head to create characters that appear infant-like. Shoujo figures are drawn in this manner in order to invoke an emotional response from the viewer and also be used as a mask for something more sinister. Murakami demonstrates this sinister side of Shoujo Kawaii (cute) culture in his Miss ko sculptures.

Miss ko (1996) (fig.18) is a large-scale sculpture of a Shoujo figure that was a collaboration between Murakami and an artist who creates Otaku figurines known as Bome (b.1960). In Murakami’s Superflat catalogue he speaks about the difficulties facing sculptors, such as Bome, in recreating characters in three dimensions from the two dimensional world of Otaku:
Early attempts at sculpting anime figurines were at first lacking in an independent consistency that would allow them to be seen straight on in profile, and from an angle. In attempting to preserve the focus of the original—the character’s attractiveness – the transformation into three dimensions would result in an unbalanced sculpture. How could one reconstruct, in three dimensions, elements of a dissembled two dimensional face? This was the problem behind the creation of anime figurines. The answer was hidden in the complex modeling of the slope of the cheek and the large eyes. It took more than ten years of trial and error until the transformation from the two dimensions to three was finally completed. (Murakami 131)

Murakami also states that this may have been a problem encountered in early Japanese Buddhist sculpture as: “early works – whether a face or a body – were quite
abstract and flat, perhaps because they were based on painting rather than models.” (Murakami 131) The inspiration for Miss ko came from the sexually charged character models that are popular with male Otaku. On the surface Miss ko looks like a typical Maid Café waitress, she is cute with her saucer like eyes and welcoming smile. Because the viewer’s direct line of sight is right up Miss ko’s skirt we are reminded of the countless panty shots in Manga and Anime which are often known as fan service. Fan service is described on the Anime News Network website as the “addition of scenes of scantily clothed, seductively posed, well-endowed women, or something similar (panty shots)”. (“Anime News Network”) The scale of Miss ko, at 164 x 76 x 43cm, is unnerving and it could be argued that the viewer is subjected to a Pygmalion like desire for Otaku female perfection.

Miss ko is transformed into something more dangerous in Second Mission Project ko (1999-2000) (fig.19) as she becomes a fighter plane suitable for battle. Her cute exterior is transformed to a sinister object of destruction:

Miss ko, secret agent girl turning inter-aero-planar on her elevated plinth, is monstrous in the dictionary sense, i.e., ‘a huge object’; huge one might add, though hardly grandiose: ‘divine’, as in ‘absolutely fabulous’, a ‘portent’ of pure emptiness. (Hebdige 48)

In this work Miss ko becomes a sexualised version of the popular Shoujo magical girl genre. Shoujo characters with magical powers or special abilities in Manga and Anime have included Sailor Moon (1992-97) and Sakura from Cardcaptor Sakura (1998-2000). Characters presented in the magical girl genre of Manga and Anime are usually ordinary girls who stumble upon extraordinary powers that allow them to fight
evil and ultimately save the day. These characters are often sexualised by male fans through the publication of Dōjinshi (amateur comics). Macias gives an example of this as he speaks about one particular Dōjinshi he picked up at a Japanese comic market which incorporated characters from the popular Anime series Neon Genesis Evangelion (1995-96) that depicted, “…hot and nasty sex between the teenaged characters”. (Macias 124) In Second Mission Project ko, Murakami and Bome have upheld this tradition of sexual fantasy by turning Miss ko into a sexy machine capable of extraordinary strength.

Hiropon (1997) (fig.20), like Miss ko, is another large scale version of an Otaku figurine. She is designed with the almost mandatory large breasts, cute facial features and hairless genitalia that is common in sexualised versions of the Shoujo. Hiropon’s sexuality is so extreme she can be described as a ridiculous fertility goddess who is so out of control as she delights in spraying milk from her breasts. In this work Hiropon
extreme sexuality can be seen as a contemporary version of Shunga (Erotic art of the Edo period which creates emphasis on the sexual organs by exaggerating their size).

Figure 20
Murakami, Takashi. Hiropon.
1997. Oil paint, acrylic, fiberglass and iron. 177, 8 x 111,8 x 99cm.

My Lonesome Cowboy (1998) (fig.21) is also a large-scale sculpture that replicates an Anime figurine. This work differs from other sexualised Otaku figurines as it depicts a male figure. The reason this is so unusual is that in Anime/Manga men are not usually represented openly flaunting their sexuality. Like Hiropon this male figure is taking pleasure in his own display of bodily fluid. In erotic Manga and Anime male characters are mostly shown watching women during the sex act or as an invisible sexual partner who pursues the woman. However, Yaoi or Boy love Manga and Anime is the one exception to this theme, as it is not uncommon in Yaoi genre to see men openly engaging in sexual acts with other men. The depiction of such liaisons in Yaoi varies from that of heterosexual erotic Manga, as usually Yaoi are artistically
rendered in such a way as to avoid realistic details of the sex act. The substitution of the sexualized female figure for a male one questions the taken-for-granted role and depiction of men and women in Manga and Anime culture.

Mr. (b.1969) like Murakami is a male artist who references images of sexualised Shoujo characters in his work. Mr.’s work has been influenced by his occupation as a part-time Junk dealer selling Otaku related goods as well as the art movement *Arte Povera* (a art movement in which artists used inexpensive materials). (Murakami 119)

As Mr.’s interest and exposure in Otaku culture grew it became an important element of his art:

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The border between art and hobby become unclear. Fond of less-famous television personalities he taped short clips of things like the weather girls air
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checks until he had created 18-hour long tapes. He had a large collection of small circulation magazines purchased at comic conventions. Even though he had started out drawing the manga and anime that he liked so much, having been the member of a speed tribe (bike gang), he could not aspire to be a manga artist and had applied to the art university instead. (Murakami 119)

Mr. began creating Arte Povera inspired work by drawing Manga style portraits of his favourite celebrities on the backs of old receipts:

His production costs for the materials, by using these receipts, were practically zero, and daily life continually provided new canvases. It was the birth of a contemporary Arte Povera (poor art). His lifestyle was that of a synthesized Otaku and artist, leaving him hovering around the bottom of the contemporary Japanese social hierarchy. He was a hybrid of two disparate archetypes: the otaku, working in two dimensions and harboring a Lolita complex, and a counting artist, like Atsushi Kawahara and Jonathan Brofsky. (119)

Mr. creates images of Shoujo girls who appear to be strong willed and independent characters. They display behaviour which would be considered improper or uncharacteristic of the popular Japanese ‘good wife, wise mother’ ideology. His Shoujo girls are threatening, often monstrously tall and skilled in defending themselves as warriors and Ninjas that are unrestrained by circumstance, being free to run wild in back drops of mountains and suburban Japan. Mr.’s Shoujo are not bashful creatures nor fazed when the viewer can see right up their skirts. Their attire adds to
their brash attitude as their brightly coloured outfits feature every colour of the rainbow.

Male fandom of Shoujo characters is another important aspect of Mr.’s art. In Japan over recent years, Anime and Manga of a Lolita-Complex nature has become a topic of debate for concerned parents. Sexualised images of young girls participating in very adult behaviour depicted for a male audience are in danger of encouraging paedophilia. For this reason, Mr.’s paintings, which feature adult males and naked Shoujo characters, have divided Western art critics as Malcolm Falconer explains:

Critics looking at his contribution to Murakami’s celebrated New York survey of the artistic response to manga and anime, the 2005 show Little Boy, weren’t too sure how to read him, and looking at the work which will be appearing in Mr.’s first US solo show at Lehmann Maupin, it’s still a tough call. (Falconer 31)

Paintings such as 15 Minutes from Shiki-Station (2003) (fig.22) and In My House (2003) (fig.23) are particularly hard to read as Mr. places himself with young Shoujo character in questionable scenarios. In 15 Minutes from Shiki-Station Mr. depicts himself standing naked next to a young girl on a quiet suburban street at night. The young girl wearing a T-shirt which exclaims ‘yours’ appears to guide Mr. by the hip as he walks like an awkward toddler. Balancing on his penis is a smaller naked Shoujo figure posed as though she is ready to take a swan dive. The painting In My House also features a naked Mr. as he is shown bathing with a small Shoujo figure. The small naked Shoujo sits on the edge of the bath, washing herself as Mr. casually averts his gaze. Mr. openly admits his interest in the Lolita-Complex genre making it
harder to determine what his actual motives are in these paintings. 15 Minutes from Shiki-Station does appear to place Mr. in a dreamlike state as the reality of the background is juxtaposed with a surprised and clumsy image of the artist. The casual dreamy expression on Mr.’s face in the painting In My House also suggests that the Shoujo figure is perhaps just a figment of his imagination. Like Murakami, Mr. is alluding to a Pygmalion type relationship with the Shoujo girl.

Figure 22

Mr. 15 Minutes from Shiki-Station. 2003. 162 x 130cm
<http://english.kaikaikiki.co.jp/artworks/eachwork/st_shiki/>. 
Yoshitomo Nara (b.1959) is one of the most well known of the Superflat artists and in Japan he is ranked “as popular as a pop star” (Jansen 136). His first touring retrospective exhibition titled, I Don’t Mind If You Forget Me (2001-02) was visited by “300,000 (mostly young) visitors within a few weeks” (136) His illustrations of young Shoujo figures have appeared on the covers of CDs and magazines as well an abundance of Nara merchandise.
Nara’s Shoujo images differ from those of Murakami and Mr. as his work is not inspired by sexualized images of the Lolita Complex genre. Nara’s work instead investigates images of the younger incarnation of the Shoujo. Typically the term Shoujo is used to describe teenage girls who are no longer considered to be children but are also not yet adults. In Shoujo Manga and Anime the term Shoujo has often been expanded to include younger prepubescent characters such as 5 year old Mei in Miyazaki’s animated classic film *My Neighbour Totoro* (1988) and 10 year old Sakura from the Anime series *Cardcaptor Sakura* (1998-2000). The young Shoujo characters featured in Anime and Manga are generally sweet and innocent girls who are often forced to face harsh challenges such as losing a parent or facing dangerous situations alone. In *My Neighbour Totoro*, Mei’s anxieties about moving to a new house and waiting for news on her sick mother in hospital sends her to a world of her own imagination as a means to cope. Likewise, Sakura is a primary school aged girl who has had the misfortune of growing up without a mother and is forced to battle monsters of the Clow by herself in order to save the world.

Nara’s Shoujo characters are different from the typical young Shoujo heroines featured in Manga and Anime as they have developed as manifestations of Nara’s own “rural and happy childhood” (Jansen 136) His young female characters have suffered none of the emotional and physical hardships of the typical Anime/Manga Shoujo, yet they create a disturbing vision of childhood as they “stand under the strangely rapt tension between serenity, melancholy, sadness, angst, aggressiveness and despair. (Jansen 136) Nara’s young Shoujo characters have grown up wanting for nothing in Japan’s prosperous economic period of the 1980s. Their sinister
appearance breaks the façade of the sweet Shoujo, as in Japan today children have been overwhelmingly influenced by consumerism and Westernisation.

In his work *Fuck ‘Bout Everything*, (1999) (fig.24) Nara has painted over a photocopy of an Edo period woodblock print to create a disturbing scene where a young girl threatens two women with a knife. The large infant like Shoujo displays a level of angst that compliments the aggressive title of the work. Her threatening expression is fixed on the two Edo ladies who are the original inhabitants of the print. This aggressiveness is a dramatic contrast to the two seemingly gentle ladies. Another interesting contrast is the fact that the Shoujo character appears in Western dress, while the two Edo figures are in traditional Japanese, therefore representing the young modern Shoujo as a danger to the Japanese traditional way of life. The work also creates a sense of a lost innocence for young girls in a culture that celebrates consumerism as it displaces a simpler way of life as also stated by Brehm:

> His untamed creatures not only disturb the peace of the floating transient world, their reference to and simultaneous reinterpretation of an existing pictorial structure also link them with the artistic strategies developed in the West. (Brehm 17)
In a diptych titled *Pyromaniac Day/Pyromaniac Night* (1999) (fig.25) Nara creates aggressive head shot style portraits that capture the evil interior of Shoujo images that have become important consumer icons in Japan.
Female Superflat artists also create work that is heavily influenced by images of the Shoujo. Female artists depict Shoujo characters in their work to reflect their experiences as women in contemporary Japan. Like Murakami and Mr. most female Superflat artists openly admit their interest in Anime and Manga culture as Otaku (fans). Mahomi Kunikata’s (b.1979) work known for its sketchy Manga style would not look out of place at an amateur comic convention. Kunikata and her practice are described on the Tilton Gallery website as:

A self described otaku (a Japanese term specific to fans of anime and Manga roughly equivalent to the English ‘geek’), Kunikata’s work is infused with the tenets and aesthetics of the subculture…Addressing issues of abandonment, masochism, and depression, each painting contains a character facing a struggle, often surreal in nature, but human in its suffering (“Tilton Gallery”)

Her Kawaii (cute) Shoujo characters are featured in disturbing situations often involving sexual acts, death, mutilation and cannibalism. These works are reflective
of the kinds of images seen in the Lolita Complex genre of Anime and Manga that are created for male sexual gratification. This genre typically features young school-girl characters depicted in dark bondage scenarios that involve mutilation, torture and murder. Because of its graphic content it has recently become heavily criticized in Japan especially after the horrific deaths of three preschool aged girls at the hands of a male fan, Tsutomu Miyazaki (b.1962) in 1989.

In the Constellation Series (fig.26) Kunikata draws her female subjects in a variety of poses that are typical of Lolita Complex erotica. Each of the female subjects is depicted in a way which suggests that they are victims rather than willing participants. These girls are attacked by an invisible group of men and spied on during private moments such as using the toilet and during sex. Because of brutality of the images the humanity of the subjects has been stripped away leaving them to appear as little more than animals.

Anko-Chan and the Track Team Girls (2006) (fig.27) is another example of Kunikata’s nightmarish vision of the Shoujo. This work appears to be an innocent scene from a school athletics carnival with a group of girls in their sports attire. On closer inspection the girls appear to be worshipping a large Shoujo with a decapitated head. The large headless Shoujo figure is clad in the customary large loose socks and school uniform. The Shoujo’s large headless body sits legs apart so the viewer has a direct view of her underwear. As one group of girls surrounds the large head, cleansing and praying to it the other girls in the foreground build a barrier around the shrine. However, beneath this barrier lie partly hidden dangers of a giant squid and some horrifying looking teeth. This is perhaps a reference to the Japanese belief that
children who go to hell are forced to build a monument to Buddha with small pebbles in order to gain favour and escape their punishment. (Ashkenazi 52)
Figure 27

Kunikata’s work is critical of the cult of the Shoujo, where male fascination with the Shoujo has created a visual culture of violence. Behind the cute exterior of the Shoujo lurks a sinister interior even though many Shoujo fans are unaware of its existence. The Shoujo figure was originally intended to be for the consumption of young girls, but in male Manga she has become a representation of male anxieties over the changing role of Japanese women. To compensate for lost control the Shoujo becomes a victim of her male audience as stated by Napier:

> The image of a constantly changing female body is surely related to the change in the Japanese woman’s social and political identity over the last few decades. Confronted with more powerful and independent women, Japanese men have apparently suffered their own form of identity crisis Sumiko Iwao has pointed to some of the most disturbing sociological phenomena related to this male reaction which includes the growth of sexual interest in very young, non threatening girls, a phenomenon known as the ‘Lolita Complex’ or rorikon. (Anime 80)

Aya Takano (b.1976) produces work that is a fusion of traditional Japanese painting and Manga. However, unlike Kunikata, Takano’s female protagonists do not have the typical Shoujo appearance about them, although she considers Manga and Anime culture to have had a strong influence over her work. In the comic strip entitled My Personal History, Takano outlines the influence reading her father’s science fiction Manga collection had on the development of her work (Takano 12-13) (fig.28). Sexuality is also an important aspect of Takano’s output, but her approach differs to that of the male Otaku aesthetic. Vartanian describes this difference as:
The aesthetic of the otaku (the Japanese term once use as an epithet for the socially inept and hobby obsessed young men with only a tenuous grasp of reality) is played out to its full fetishistic extent. In addition to the commonplace appetite for girls in bikinis, unnaturally attenuated limbs and gravity-defying breasts of gargantuan scale, the otaku have a penchant for sailor-suit girls uniforms, accessories such as capes and wings and helmets, long (preferably blue) haired girls with an impressive mastery of the martial arts, role playing and of course saucer like eyes. (Vartanian 6)
In an illustration for the publication *Mail Mania Mami’s Summertime Move With A Rabbit* from the *Anthology of Hiroshi Homura* (2001) (fig.29) is an image of two people making love. In this instance Takano’s female figure does not seem to be the victim, unlike sexual images from the male Otaku aesthetic, instead the viewer has caught a glimpse of a private moment between two lovers. The title of the work suggests we are looking into someone’s fond memories reflecting upon a past love affair. The cute rabbit watching in the background of the scene is reminiscent of the woodland creatures often seen following the every move of princesses in Disney movies. These princesses are generally women so beautiful and kind that they enchant any animal they pass by. However, in Japanese culture the rabbit also represents the moon and its presence in this painting could be symbolic of moon light. (Sakade 34)

![Figure 29](Image)


In another illustration created for *Mail Mania Mami’s Summertime Move With A Rabbit*, (2001) Takano offers an image of female sexuality that is still often hidden. The image of a bloody tampon reminds the viewer of the biological concerns of being
a woman (fig.30). In men’s erotic Manga and Anime this part of being a woman is forgotten as the female characters are simply objects of desire available to men for pleasure, where the female’s importance is measured by attractiveness and willingness to be used by men. In heterosexual male oriented Manga and Anime women are not seen as mothers and there is no room in the narrative for them to fall pregnant. In Takano’s work the bloody tampon acts as a reminder of the true capabilities of women and the complexities of her life rendering her much more than just a two dimensional object of sex.

Chinatsu Ban (b.1973) has created a cute sexualized world shared by elephants and young Shoujo characters. Sexuality and an abnormal desire for women’s underpants link the two species in a way that highlights the absurdity of sexual Shoujo imagery in male Anime and Manga. Ban does not depict her subjects in a typical Manga/Anime style as she instead works with a naïve childlike perspective that adds to the humorous quality of the work.
The painting Twin Mt Fiji, (2004) (fig.31) features two young girls who appear to be pleasuring themselves amongst a sky of floating underwear and floating elephant butterflies. (Vartanian 102) The design of the girls dresses make them look as though they have been created from the peak of Mount Fuji. The naïve aspect of the work suggests that it could be the handiwork of a naughty child who is indulging themselves in toilet humour. Happy Birthday (2004) (fig.32) is another work which explores a sense of childish voyeurism. In this work a young girl holds up a large birthday cake for her elephant companion. As the elephant (dressed in his best pair of birthday underpants of course) blows out the numerous candles on his cake a smaller elephant sneaks a look up the girl’s dress, which is reminiscent of the numerous panty shots in male Shoujo Manga. (Vartanian 102) Images like Picking Up Panties (2002) (fig.33) depict Ban’s reoccurring use of elephants with cacti growing out of their heads. The desire of the elephants to collect as many pairs of underpants as possible has lead to an “evolution process of natural selection” where elephants sprout a cactus on top of their heads in order to catch more of the underpants which float through the sky. (Vartanian 104) The elephant’s obsessive need to collect is mirrored in male Otaku who collect erotic Manga/Anime material.
Figure 31

Figure 32
Superflat artists have created visions of the Shoujo that represent what they see as the significant issues of their time. The Shoujo has become a mascot for Japan in the face
of Westernisation, commercialisation and Kawaii culture. The depiction of Shoujo characters in Superflat creates debate about the positive as well as the negative aspects of women in contemporary Japan. The Shoujo persona is confident and self-assured, but she is also depicted as a vehicle for consumerism and as a dangerous sexual icon. As the influence of the Shoujo spreads into the Western world it is interesting to consider how she might be received by Western Otaku. In recent decades, as the Australian fan base steadily increased, it is worth asking if Shoujo is accurately and critically understood or are Australian fans fixated on a fantasy of an exotic other?
Chapter 5: Sydney’s Female Anime and Manga Scene.

In 2009, due to their activities on internet forums and fan sites, Sydney enthusiasts of Japanese popular culture can be considered part of an international fan community. However, the wealth of information that can be found on-line in Sydney has not put an end to misconceptions about aspects of Japanese culture. Ironically, many of these misconceptions hinge on Western interpretations of Japanese values and culture that are present in Western film and literature. Yet a significant number of Sydney fans have been sufficiently motivated by their interest in Japanese popular culture to make the trip to Japan or enroll in Japanese language and cultural studies. This is a trend that has also been observed by Napier in her study of American Anime/Manga communities. Napier states that fans are often motivated by their interest to travel “to Japan to make a ‘pilgrimage’ to Akihabara Tokyo’s electric city where popular-culture action dolls jostle against shelves crammed with the latest DVDs and Manga serials”. (Impressionism 148) Through her attendance at American Anime/Manga fan conventions Napier also noted the popularity of Japanese “non–anime–and–non–Manga–related elements” such as tea ceremonies, “language lessons” and displays of “martial arts and swordsmanship”. (152) This incorporation of Japanese culture and language at conventions highlights their importance in Anime/Manga fandom. (150) Travelling to Japan offers the Australian Manga/Anime fan the advantage of engaging in direct and specific in-the-field research including a tangible involvement in the culture and improved access to untranslated material on related subjects.
In short, this chapter will examine the West’s fascination with Japanese women and how this interest manifests in the Sydney Anime/Manga culture, while profiling the work of five Sydney women who are active in the community. The research for this chapter has been undertaken with a qualitative approach using a combination of reference books, interviews conducted via email and local fan forums, active participation in conventions and internet meet up groups, various locally published fan materials as well as a trip to Tokyo. My approach to qualitative research was influenced by Paul Hodkinson’s investigation of British Goth culture. Hodkinson’s methods seemed appropriate for my own research as an insider genuinely engaged with the culture being studied. Being an inside researcher does have its difficulties but also some important benefits, as Hodkinson states from his own experience:

Whether off - or online, the authenticity of my participation greatly enhanced the process of acquiring contacts, interviewees and information. As well as having a suitable appearance, the manner in which I behaved in clubs – dancing, requesting songs from Djs and socializing – made meeting people, arranging interviews, taking photographs and gaining advice far easier than they might otherwise have been. After awhile, I also learned to convey this insider status to the distinctive environment of Goth online discussion groups. While appearance was initially out of the equation in this context, my affiliation was gradually revealed through expressing informed opinions,
Like Hodkinson, I was attending subcultural events and had some knowledge and involvement with the Sydney Anime/Manga scene prior to commencing this research. Due to this continued involvement in the local Anime/Manga community I was able to make contacts for this study. Being involved online was also an important aspect of my research as it was not just another way to meet people it also broadened my knowledge of the jargon related to Anime/Manga and Lolita fashion in Sydney. It has been through my own involvement with the relatively new Anime/Manga conventions and internet forums that made me consider the complex relationship that exists between Sydney Anime/Manga fans and the Japanese culture from which it originated. It became obvious that my research could appear biased if not expanded outside my own experience, as Bell states:

As observers, we ‘filter’ the material we obtain from observation and that can lead us to impose our own interpretations on what is observed and so fail to understand ‘what an activity means for those who are involved in it’ (Bell185)

This was a potential problem that Hodkinson also identified in his own research and he notes that he had to become a “critical insider”. (Hodkinson 6) He continues by saying that he considers the role of the “critical insider” to be
“continually taking mental steps back so as to observe, compare, contrast and question as well as experience”. (6) For this reason it was necessary in my own research not to rely solely on my observations and interviews for data, but to also reference existing research such as Susan Napier’s studies of America’s Anime/Manga culture.

As outsiders to Japanese culture many in the West form their impression of the country through Western media, theatre, literature, films and paraphernalia. There are many examples of Western works of fiction about Japan such as Arthur Golden’s *Memoirs of a Geisha* and *Madam Butterfly*. It is also not uncommon to go to your local homewares store and find Japanese inspired furnishings that allow you to create your own version of Japan at home. This fascination with Japanese culture in the West has created a community of fans who are commonly known as Japanophiles. A Japanophile is considered to be someone who lives outside Japan but has a keen interest in the country, its people and or its culture. Aspects of Japanese culture have been modified and idealised in the minds of many Japanophiles through their exposure to Western interpretations. These ideals are sustained in the minds of many Westerners due to the fact that they never visit and experience the ‘real’ Japan. Sydney fans that do travel to Japan are often shocked by how different the country is in relation to how it has been represented in the West.

In May 2008 after many years of admiring Japanese popular culture from afar I travelled to Japan for the first time. Upon my arrival I was overwhelmed by how much
Anime/Manga culture was part of the country’s identity. Cute characters were literally everywhere, they were printed on traffic cones, used in television and print advertisements and even the Japanese Police force use a cute alien character called Pipo-Kun as their mascot. (fig 36) Perhaps more amazing was the large line of men I witnessed patiently waiting to be seated at @ Home Caf’e in Shibuya, a maid caf’e where customers would interact and be served by waitresses dressed as cute Anime/Manga characters. It was also not hard to stumble upon stores that exclusively sold Lolita and Cosplay fashions. Some examples of this are Bodyline and Closet Child in Harajuku, The Marui One department store in Shinjuku and the maid Cosplay store outside @ Home Caf’e.

Western assumptions about Japanese culture have plagued relations between the West and Japan since America first forced Japan to open up to the rest of the world in 1853 as stated by Napier:

In the years since 1853, when American naval officer Commodore Perry forced an isolationist Japan to open its doors, Western perceptions of Japan have gone through a myriad of transformations. (Impressionism 2)

Impressionist Artists such as Monet (1840-1926) were amongst some of the earliest fans and collectors of Japanese culture in the West. Monet, a known collector of Katsushika Hokusai’s (1760-1849) series of publications The Manga (1814-1878), painted many images that included Japanese fans and fabric patterns. The exotic nature of Japanese items caused many European Japanophiles to create their own vision of Japan based on
these objects. Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) made a comment about the West’s relationship with Japanese culture in his essay titled *The Decay of Lying – An Observation* (1891) where he states:

> The whole of Japan is a pure invention. There is no such country. There are no such people. If you desire to see a Japanese effect, you will stay at home and steep yourself in the work of certain Japanese artists (Impressionism 27)

Monet’s own interests in Japanese objects and art inspired him to paint *La Japonaise* (1876) (The Japanese Lady) (fig.34). This work is a portrait of Monet’s wife dressed in a brightly coloured kimono and surrounded by Japanese fans. What is interesting about this image is that Monet has chosen to depict a Western woman rather than a Japanese woman. For this reason *La Japonaise* can be considered an early image of Western Cosplay (costume play) as his wife playfully tries to reinvent herself as a courtesan from a Japanese woodblock print. Napier considers this painting to meet the criteria of contemporary Cosplay as:

> Monet is having his wife ‘try on’ a new identity, one that is still essentially European (after all the lady holds a fan with French colours), but one that is imbued with otherness, from the controversial subject matter and vivid colours and bold brush strokes to the empathy on the kimono rather than the model (leading one scholar to call La Japonaise a ‘kimono still life’).

(Impressionism 22)
At the time that *La Japonaise* was exhibited it was received with mixed reactions. There were some critics who considered the painting offensive as they found the pose and the attire of the subject to be sexually suggestive. As one critic stated his disgust about the position of the Japanese Samurai figure on the kimono, “The figure of the Samurai unsheathing his sword at a suggestive part of the woman’s body is certainly extraordinary”. (Impressionism 23) Napier believes that critics of the time could be justified in thinking the image was obscene as it:

…has an obvious Japanese courtesan’s visage depicted on it, implicitly underlining a link between Monet’s wife and the pleasure quarters, or what in France was known as the Demimonde. By the time of La Japonaise’s exhibition, at least some of the audience would have been familiar with the erotic Japanese prints known as Shunga, which depicted courtesans and their clients and this possible link might have disturbed (and titillated) viewers even more. (25)

To other critics the painting was considered simply a representation of the fashion of the period as Japanese cultural items such as fans became popular amongst, “the burgeoning middle classes, looking for something inexpensive but beautiful to display in their homes”. (24)
Nine years before the exhibition of Monet’s La Japonaise, Japan gave the Western world its first glance of their culture at Paris Universal Exposition of 1867. (Impressionism 27)

This international event showcased the achievements of countries around the world in areas of culture and technology. Eleven years, later Japan’s entry in the 1878 Universal Exposition held in Paris was particularly significant as its success:

…was not only an exemplar of the cult of Japonisme that was already reigning but a spur to even further fascination on the part of the Europeans. Not only were the Japanese pavilion, garden, farm, and tea house extensively admired and discussed, but the people whose culture had produced such beauty increasingly became an object of fascination in themselves. (Impressionism 27)
Japanese women have intrigued the West as figures of exotic beauty and have become the focus for many pieces of Western Literature, theatre and film. These Western representations of Japanese women generally create an image of a submissive, naïve, exotic beauty. One example of this is Giacomo Puccini’s (1858 – 1924) opera Madame Butterfly (1904) which, “quickly became (and remains) one of the most popular operas of all time, overwhelming audiences with the richness of its music and the power of its simple tragic narrative.” (104)

**Madame Butterfly** tells the tragic story of a young beautiful Japanese woman known as ‘Butterfly’ who marries an unfaithful American soldier, ‘Lieutenant B. F Pinkerton’. Butterfly is fooled into believing that Pinkerton’s intentions are pure when in fact Pinkerton secretly plans to leave her after only a few months of marriage. Her unconditional devotion to her new husband sees her renounce her religion in order to become closer to him and as a result earns her the scorn of her family. Butterfly is then soon abandoned by Pinkerton who returns to America to marry another woman. Pinkerton later returns to Japan with his new wife and asks Butterfly to allow him to take their child. The grief and shame of being replaced drives Butterfly to commit suicide. (Impressionism 103) **Madame Butterfly** embodies the typical Western perception of a Japanese woman as beautiful, subservient, naïve and loyal.

The novel (1997) and movie adaptation (2005) of **Memoirs of a Geisha** is the most recent example of a Western depiction of Japanese women. The main character of this story is a young girl called Sayuri who is sold to a Geisha House by her family as a servant. Sayuri attracts the attention of Chairman Ken Iwamura one day in the street and is astonished by
his kindness. She becomes determined from that day forward to become a Geisha in order to get close to him and win his love.

For the novel *Memoirs of a Geisha*, American author Arthur Golden (b.1956) reportedly interviewed a famous former Geisha, Mineko Iwasaki (b.1949), in order to gain insight into the lives of Geisha. Iwasaki who has claimed that she requested that her name to remain anonymous was outraged when she saw herself mentioned in the book’s acknowledgments. Having her name associated with the book has cost Iwasaki many friends within the Geisha profession, as speaking with outsiders on the subject is forbidden. The novel has also hurt the reputation of the profession as it reaffirmed the popular Western misconception that Geisha are high class prostitutes rather than trained entertainers. The misconception that Geisha are prostitutes was exacerbated in the West following the American occupation after World War II, when many Japanese prostitutes servicing American clients called themselves Geisha. In 2002, Iwasaki retaliated against Golden’s novel by writing her own book titled *Geisha of Goin* (2002) which is an autobiography that details Iwasaki’s career as a Geisha from the beginning of her training as a child.

In Iwasaki’s book she describes Geisha as artists who undertake a, “extremely rigorous regime of constant classes and rehearsals similar in intensity to that of a prima ballerina, concert pianist or opera singer in the West”. (Iwasaki ix) Iwasaki’s story is able to highlight the inaccuracies of Golden’s novel as she is depicted as a successful and independent woman.
In 2007, the first Western woman to train as a Geisha made her debut in Asakusa. Dr. Fiona Graham is a documentary filmmaker and researcher from Melbourne who trained as a Geisha in order to gain a privileged insight into the profession. Graham, being independent and well educated, is not the stereotype woman that many in the West might consider suitable for the life of a Geisha. As a consequence of her first hand experience Graham notes the damage that Memoirs of a Geisha in particular has done to the reputation of the profession, stating that the storyline has:

‘nothing to do with real Geisha life’. The fictional world of girls sold into slavery to Geisha houses, intense Geisha rivalry and submissive sex with rich men is a fantasy, she says ‘Geisha are not subservient. They are working women who are in control of their own income. They’re far more independent than the average housewife in Japan. (Tulloch 34)

In contemporary Australian society Japanese influences in areas such as food and fashion are common. In a 2006 issue of Sydney’s Cream magazine, reporter Theryns Koo spoke about the popularity of Japanese culture in Australia. To illustrate the point Koo goes on to speak about the recent popularity of Japanese food with the Australian public:

Japanese food manages to straddle the demesnes of the fast food function and haute cuisine unlike any other culture as it provides for efficiency, nutrition taste all at once. Japanese ‘fast’ food has manifested itself as both a luxury and a necessity in a world of super-sizing and home delivery. Even the schoolteacher’s aide in Queembeyan can partake of a bento box at her local Westfield, swigging
down a bottle of Lipton’s Iced Green Tea without trouble whilst doing her health
a wealth of good. (Koo 44)

Koo also states that Japan has also been a strong influence in recent years for the Australian fashion industry as:

One only has to turn their attention to the catwalk to note that turning Japanese is not only chic but the epitome of style and grace. Designer Akira Isogawa first made his splash down under with influence of costuming from his homeland, and an army of new Australian designers, like David Eyes…, are spilling Japanese inspiration into their ranges (Koo 44)

As Cream declares on their front cover to be a magazine which features “a cooler blend of pop culture” it is interesting that in this particular edition they have placed a large emphasis on Japanese design and culture as signifiers of cool. In this edition there is also a photo shoot titled Orient Express which features Western women modeling Japanese inspired fashions, makeup and cheap fans credited to souvenir stores in Sydney’s China Town (fig.35). (“Orient”) Like Monet’s La Japonaise, the photographs featured in the magazine depict Western women who appear to be Cosplaying as Japanese. The incorporation of the cheap fans in the photographs is also an indication that the West still views such objects to be interesting exotic collectable items.
Contemporary Japanese fashions have also influenced many international designers. American Pop star Gwen Stefani (b.1969) has even created her own fashion label called Harajuku Lovers (2004) which is influenced by Japanese sub cultural fashion as well as Kawaii (cute) culture. The Harajuku Lovers label features clothing and accessories with Manga style prints that depict Stefani and her four Japanese backup dancers who are known as Love, Angel, Music and Baby. (“Harajuku Lovers”)

The unique fashion of Japanese youth also caught the eye of young Australian designer Lang Leav (1980). In an email interview which appears in the appendix of this study (Appendix A) she states that her reason for travelling to Japan was that:
Japan has always been in my mind, the inventor of all things cute and quirky. I always felt a connection to the place and longed to be there. When I was finally able to visit, it was exactly as I imagined but better! It was a significant turning point for me creatively. (Leav)

In a self published report on her trip to Japan, Leav admits that she knew very little about Japanese popular culture before travelling to Japan:

I first visited Japan in May 2006 when my debut fashion collection won the Qantas spirit of Youth Award. Prior to that, my exposure has been through snippets of pop culture that have trickled down to the Western world in the form of Hello Kitty, Nintendo, Miyazaki films and Gwen Stefani’s depiction of ‘Harajuku girls’. (Leav 7)

Leav’s fashion label Akina was inspired by this first trip in 2006, where she encountered the Lolita style for the first time as she states:

My first exposure to Lolita fashion was in Maruione, (large department store dedicated to Lolita fashion) it was such a revelation. It felt like I had walked into the world of Louis Carrol. I was so enchanted and fascinated with the fashion and then I grew really interested in the culture. There is an entire industry that caters to this make believe. I still can’t get the opulent colours and textures out of my head. (Leav)
In 2007, Leav was the recipient of the Winston Churchill Fellowship which allowed her to again travel to Japan in order to study Japanese youth fashion with a particular emphasis on the Lolita Style. (“Akina”) Lolita is a term which was made famous in the Western world due to Vladimir Nabokov’s (1899-1977) novel of the same name. Lolita (1955) is the story of Humbert Humbert and his sexual attraction to a young girl named Delores who he calls Lolita. The connection between Nobokov's novel and Lolita fashion is not documented and devotees of the fashion often don’t see a relationship between the two. Kate Walton, an Australian fan of Japanese Lolita fashion states, “Lolita fashion...has about as much to do with underage lust as your average street wear does”. (Walton 34) Japanese Lolita fashion has been linked to a variety of influences such as 18th century French Rococo design and Japanese popular culture. (Walton 34) The Japanese Lolita style is typified by an abundance of decorative detail through the use of lace, large bows and frills.

During her second trip to Japan in 2007, Leav was able to build on her knowledge of Lolita fashion through interviews she conducted with devotees of the style in Tokyo. As a result of her research it soon became apparent to Leav that her original view of Japanese sub cultural fashion was flawed as she states in her Churchill Fellowship report:

> When applying for my Churchill grant I wrote, ‘to study the Harajuku Girls’, as the purpose of my intended investigative project. Since returning from my fellowship, I realize what a narrow minded view I had of the Japanese underground fashion scene. The title ‘Harajuku girls’, a term coined by US pop star Gwen Stefani lumps the array of fashion subcultures into one
indistinguishable group. When in fact, Harajuku is not the name of any subculture but simply just one of the several geographical areas that participants of various subcultures congregate. The myth of the ‘Harajuku Girls’ still persists in the western world, promoting a stereotypical view that undermines the brilliance and individually of each subculture, blurring the important distinctions between them. I wrote my report with the intention of breaking the ‘Harajuku girl’ myth along with many of the misconceptions linked to underground Japanese fashion. (Leav 52)

Through her label Akina, Leav produces handmade books, clothing and accessories. She was originally inspired to create art as a child as a form of escapism:

The earliest memories I have drawing are in my Dad’s surgery, where I’d spend most of my time. I would draw little girls and write the letter ‘P’ on their chests, ‘P’ stood for princess. I had a very strict upbringing where my parents aimed to shut out as much outside influence as possible. My reading material was restricted to encyclopedias and I was rarely allowed to watch TV. So I learnt from an early age that I could escape the monotony by creating my own fantasy worlds through drawing and writing. (Diskursdisko)

Leav’s drawings and stories have also been influenced by her childhood love of European fairytales:

My dad bought me a fairytale book when I was about 9 years old. It was a huge thick book – a collection of the complete and unabridged stories of the Brother’s
Grimm. The stories were contrary to the happy Disneyesque ones I was accustomed to. They were violent and often ended with children meeting gruesome deaths. I think I realized then that in their purest form fairytales are dark. This irony influences my work. (Diskursdisko)

This early fascination with fairytales perhaps explains Leav’s later interest in Japanese Lolita fashion as fairytales are a popular motif for Lolita garments. Yuko Ueda a Japanese writer and authority of Lolita fashion states:

Just as many artistic designs have sprung from the imagery of Alice in Wonderland and such fairy tales. It is also essential source for imagery in Lolita fashion. In these fairy-tale motifs, you’ll see the suits of cards and tea cups designed on all sorts of accessories and small items and they are a perfect match for Lolita fashion. (Adding an apron to a dress can make a lovely ‘Alice coordinate’, sometimes end up looking like you’re cosplaying so there are pros and cons to the look, but personally I think it is very darling.) There are other fun motifs that bring out a fairytale atmosphere, such as Cinderella, Little Red riding Hood, and little witches and princesses. (“A Lesson”)

Leav’s own work incorporates the darker side of Western fairytales with the extravagance of Lolita fashion. Through her hand made books she reinvents her cute female characters as villains. Her book The Teddy Bears Picnic (2007) examines popular fairytales such as Hansel and Gretel and Sleeping Beauty. In Leav’s version of Hansel and Gretel, Gretel not only pushes the wicked witch into the oven but also develops a taste for human flesh and eats her and also her brother Hansel (fig.36) Sleeping Beauty is also depicted less
than favorably as she is the victim of a self inflicted drug overdose which leaves her to sleep for eternity. Although Leav’s illustrations do not have the typical Manga/Anime style about them she does utilize the ‘wide-eyed’ look which was made famous by Osamu Tezuka (1928-1989). Her female characters are also immaculately dressed in the frills and lace which typify Lolita fashion. The Akina clothing and accessories range also share fairytale and Lolita influences. Her dresses and blouses incorporate the frills and lace of Japanese Lolita fashion with her illustrations of fairytale characters. (fig.37) Likewise Leav’s range of jewelry is based on her female characters that represent a mixture of the cute and sinister aspects of Western fairytales.

Figure 36
Illustration, 2007. Leav, Lang
The Teddy Bears Picnic.

Figure 37
In Sydney Lolita fashion is growing in popularity as clothing and accessories once only available in Japan are becoming more readily accessible. In Sydney it is now possible to find stores that specialize in Lolita fashion. Two such stores are Shibuya (named after the trendy shopping district in Tokyo) and Gothic Lolita Punk. High end Japanese Lolita brands such as Baby The Stars Shine Bright, Metamorphose, and Angelic Pretty are now also accepting internet orders outside of Japan. Even with the increased access to Lolita clothing, problems facing many Sydney fans are that Lolita clothing is typically very expensive and only caters to smaller sizes. In order to get around this problem many Sydney Lolita’s order their clothing from sites like EBay where dresses can be made to order in your own measurements for a fraction of the price. Non-brand clothing is not highly regarded among Japanese Lolita’s but in Sydney this prejudice does not seem to apply. Lolita’s in Sydney who are handy with a sewing machine are also encouraged to make clothing themselves. Instructions and patterns for Lolita garments are easily obtained from web sites as well as The Gothic Lolita Bible. This publication was originally established in Japan in order to keep Lolitas informed about the latest fashion trends. In 2008, the American Manga publishing house Tokyopop created an English version of the magazine that includes interviews with Lolitas from all over the world as well as fashion tips and dress patterns.

Social utility websites such as Facebook, My Space, Live Journal and Meetup have been instrumental in creating opportunities for Sydney’s Lolitas to socialise. While looking for Sydney Lolitas in a search engine I stumbled upon the Sydney Lolita Meetup Group and was surprised by the number of members who were already involved. Due to the costs of
maintaining the website the group has since disbanded but the original organizers still hold annual events via event pages on Facebook. In February 2009 the Third Annual Loli Fest was held in the Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens. Because Lolita fashion is still regarded as an underground phenomenon in Sydney many people passing by the group of picnicking Lolita’s could not help but stare. During a group photo session some of the other visitors to the gardens also couldn’t resist but take some photos themselves. (fig.38) At gatherings such as this one it becomes apparent that the attendees have many different reasons for their attraction to the Lolita style. Some of these reasons included an interest in the French Rococo (with several participants admitting to having recently watched Sofia Coppola’s film Marie Antoinette (2006)), an attraction to Japanese music (particularly Visual Kei), as well as a love of Anime and Manga titles such as Cardcaptors in which the young Sakura wears a variety of cute costumes.

Figure 38
Stockins, Jennifer photograph
The Sydney Anime and Manga community is largely an underground phenomenon that has recently gained prominence through free to view television screenings of popular titles, such as *Naruto* which appeared on Channel Ten’s children’s morning program *Toasted TV* and *Death Note* which recently aired on SBS. Sub-cultural art, events, music and fashion are mostly promoted by individuals inside the Manga and Anime community for the consumption of an audience already knowledgeable or involved in the scene. Sydney artists who work in the style of Anime and Manga generally only do so for the appreciation of a limited audience of their sub-cultural colleagues. For instance, Simone Wong (b.1985) is very well known in the Anime and Manga community as she has participated in many Anime conventions in Sydney. I first met Simone while I was looking at the stalls at the Animania convention held at Town Hall in 2007. She is a digital artist who creates high quality fantasy illustrations that incorporate a hybrid of the Japanese Anime and Manga character stylisation with Western influences. The drawing style Wong utilizes for her male characters is influenced by Japanese Manga/Anime produced for women and young girls. In an interview via email correspondence provided in the Appendix of this study (Appendix B); Wong affirms the influence of Anime in her practice:

> I think the simplest answer is that when I was much younger, I was very much a fan of anime (and still am). I watched series like *Sailor Moon* when I was still in primary school, and the moved on to series like *Evangelion* and *X/1999* when I was in high school. Because of my obsession with anime, I came into contact with fan art for these series on the internet, and subsequently, started drawing my own. If you look back to my earliest artworks, most of it is fan art. It wasn’t until
some time in 2001/2002 that I began drawing original art in the Manga influenced style. (Wong)

The Shoujo (young girls) genre of Manga has also been of particular importance to her practice, as she goes on to say:

… because I find the style of shoujo Manga (artists like CLAMP, Yuki Kaori), to be very aesthetically pleasing. It’s an unattainable ideal, and it’s almost perfection in my eyes. It’s not realism, so you can get away with unrealistic hair and eye colours, and clothing and hair styles that simply can’t work in real life. The distancing from realism also allows you to read more into the artworks and relate to the characters – you can see a bit of yourself in the characters because they don’t look exactly like someone else. Think of the same principle that applies to watching cartoons or reading comics… only the shoujo Manga style that influences my work is much more detail, and for lack of a better word, beautiful. (Wong)

Wong's work mixes Western mythology with Bishōnen style. Bishōnen is a term which means beautiful boy. Bishōnen characters in Anime and Manga are typically depicted as androgynous with long flowing hair, slender figure and elaborate costumes. Wong’s illustrations explore the beauty and complex relationships that occur between her Bishōnen characters. (fig.39)
In Sydney, fans might classify Wong’s work as Yaoi, however she prefers the term Shonen Ai (Boy love) as Yaoi in Japan is used to describe work of a pornographic nature. The Shonen Ai genre of Anime/Manga feature love stories between male characters. There are many theories surrounding the popularity of this genre with women and girls. as researcher Megumi Yoshinaka suggests:

> Often girls are disgusted with boys and men in general during puberty. Girls’ Manga shows asexual or ‘perfect’ characters. In terms of ‘perfection’, girls prefer flawless, hairless and beautiful boys. (Gravett 80)
Several other theories attempt to explain this phenomenon, including:

…that these boys provide an unthreatening way for Japanese girls to fantasize about the opposite sex without competing with another female presence. In Manga stories one male partner is often more effeminate than the other and some girls may choose to identify more strongly with one or the other role. Yet another interpretation suggests these boys are really seen as girls in drag, like the Takarazuka actresses, and so permit readers to fantasize safely about same-sex feelings. There is also the appeal of doomed love and seeing men suffer. (80)

The Shonen Ai and Yaoi genres have in recent years grown in popularity in Sydney. Active and motivated, the Sydney group calling themselves The Australian Yaoi Team (TAYT), campaigned in 2006 and was successful in gaining the release of the popular Shonen Ai title Gravitation (1996-2002) through the Madman media distribution corporation. One of the group’s founding members who goes by the internet persona Luciferian, spoke to me about the history of TAYT in an interview conducted via email which is recorded in the appendix of this study (Appendix C):

TAYT (The Australian Yaoi Team) was formed in 2004/2005 by a group of random fans of Shonen Ai and Yaoi it was actually based of me bitching on forum (The Madman forums) about how there was no Yaoi convention for Australia, from there I got a lot of people whinging at me because of the thread I posted then our “grandma” SB said basically why don’t we have a con (convention) and from there we formed TAYT, The Australian Yaoi Team so far we have had professional (well semi) panels going into the depths of Yaoi with
serious discussion. We actually got Gravitation a very popular boy Love Manga and Anime released through Madman, with a hand written petition and a lot of pestering. We run tables and have regular meetups. I’m kind of like the PR. I put the word out and invite people and try get more members and go about telling people that Yaoi is not just men having sex. (Luciferian)

Wong continues to participate in conventions and create her own artwork purely for her own interest. The lack of support for artists in Australia has stopped her from considering her work as a serious career path. Through her experience at conventions in Sydney she has noticed that female artist participation has long out numbered that of male artists:

…in Australia, if you look at conventions like SMASH! And Animania, the majority of the artists on the artist alley is female (for a few years, at Animania, there were ONLY girls!). The publishing industry for Manga in Australia on a professional level isn’t quite in existence yet though, so the only glimpse I have into the equality of women to men on this issue is through the conventions I attend. (Wong)

There are two specialist events held annually in Sydney for the Anime and Manga community, these are Animania and the newly formed SMASH. These events attract Anime and Manga fans of ages varying from children to adults. The common element with all visitors to these events is their wealth of sub-cultural knowledge. Anime/Manga conventions generally do not attract the attention of people who are not actively involved in the scene as only people with knowledge receive notification from the relevant mailing lists, flyers and websites. Outsiders who do manage to stumble upon a convention may
find the vast amount of prior knowledge required to understand the event a little intimidating. Likewise, visitors are often surprised to find that the Sydney Anime and Manga scene is quite large. This is perhaps because most people without insider knowledge associate Anime and Manga as strictly a Japanese medium of expression. Insider knowledge into the scene is gained by becoming a member of an Anime or Manga society, knowing the right websites and forums, sub-cultural stores, Australian Manga publications and through other events where leaflets are distributed.

Companies that sell Anime/Manga related items also strive to attract customers by creating a community around their products. One example of this is Australia’s largest distributor of Japanese Manga and Anime titles, Madman. This company sells its products through popular bookstores and DVD stores as well as through their cleverly designed website. The Madman website has been designed maintaining an Australian Anime and Manga community in mind, as it incorporates the company’s online shop front with forums, Anime/Manga news, fan art competitions and personal profiles. Individuals registered with the website receive regular newsletters via email as well as the latest information about local Anime/Manga events.

Madman was established as a result of founder Tim Anderson’s own appreciation for Japanese Anime and Manga. He noticed that there was a definite market for translated material as:
It was very difficult to get and the only stuff I could see anywhere was in some selected independent comic book stores and the prices were ludicrous. I thought there might be a bit of a market in this sort of stuff. (Ziffer)

In 1995 the company officially began operation and today it “currently employs around 100 staff across all departments and turns over approximately $50 million in sales annually”. (“Madman”) The big break for the company came with its release of the popular title _Neon Genesis Evangelion_ and it was Anderson’s mother who put up the “$A20,000 to help pay for the rights”. (Ziffer) SBS later bought the broadcast rights for the series which gave it the “exposure that caused video sales three or four times above expectations”. (Ziffer)

Manga and Anime societies have also played a large role in publicising conventions and creating a fan base in Sydney. University Anime clubs from The University of Technology (Anime@UTS), Macquarie University (AnimeMQ), The University of New South Wales (Anime UNSW), The University of Western Sydney (JAUWS) and Sydney University (SU Anime) are joined as part of a collective group known as _Anime Sydney_. Membership with one of the affiliated University Anime clubs offers members access to information from the wider Sydney Anime community through their respective newsletters and websites. Each University Anime group has their own website which features information about their group which is also provided in the Appendix of this study (Appendix D, E, F, G and H). There is also an Anime Sydney online forum page where people from inside and outside the University Anime clubs can advertise upcoming events and issues. Each of the individual Anime societies are known for
holding their own regular meetings and opportunities to socialise with screening of new Anime. These groups are also very active in supporting related Anime events. It is not uncommon to see these University societies holding a stall within festivals in Sydney. It is also possible to become a member of the society’s mailing list even if you are not a University student. The internet mailing lists contain information about screenings, festivals as well as special deals on Manga and Anime and related products.

**Animania** was the first ever convention held in NSW solely for Anime and Manga enthusiasts. During the first few years of the convention it seemed to exist purely by word of mouth between Anime/Manga fans as it was not widely advertised. The first time I attended **Animania** was just a coincidence as I was passing the venue and decided to enter and I had no idea that an event like this even existed. The history of Animania which is presented on the website and also provided in this Appendix of this study (Appendix I), states that the event has grown in popularity each year since its launch in 2002 when it attracted 500 visitors. This event generally attracts a young teenage audience, but it is not uncommon to see families with young children also attending. **Animania** holds competitions for Cosplay, drawing, Manga, Dolfies (ball jointed customized dolls) and AMVs, (Anime Music Videos). The fans who attend this convention are very active and many of them will spend weeks preparing their entries for the competitions.

The most popular event at a convention like **Animania** is the Cosplay competition. Cosplay is a term which literally means costume play, a pastime where participants wear
costumes of their favorite characters that they often make themselves. These costumes are often quite elaborate with careful attention to detail. Cosplayers will often go to the extremes of using coloured contact lenses to change the shape and the colour of their eyes as well as wigs to recreate a particular hairstyle. Like the artists that attend conventions female participants in Cosplay easily outnumber male participants. This is perhaps because many of the male visitors at conventions do not feel confident behind a sewing machine or feel self-conscious about dressing up. In 2008 competitors were given the chance to win a trip to Japan to compete in the World Cosplay Summit as representatives of Australia. The winners of the 2008 competition were a partnership of two young women Gabriella Lowgren and Katherine Lee who called their team The Love and Peace Movement. Regular attendees of Animania would have recognized these two Cosplayers as they have been deeply involved in competitions for a number of years. In their profiles featured on the Animania website and provided in the Appendix of this study (Appendix J), Lowgren is reported to have been Cosplaying for three years while her partner Lee has been involved for six years. Their winning entry to the competition finals saw them Cosplay as characters from the popular Shonen (boys) action Anime Full Metal Alchemist (2003-2004) with impressive costumes of the two main characters Edward Eric and Alphonse Eric. (“WCS”)

Cosplay in the Western world is considered more acceptable than it is in Japan due to the negative stereotyping of Otaku. At worst participants in the West may be giggled at by passersby who might catch a glimpse of them outside a convention. There is not the same
level of negativity directed towards Sydney Cosplayers as those in Japan, as a Japanese published Cosplay photo book explains:

Japanese subculture; such as Anime and Manga, have been highly prized internationally. In association with such trends, cosplay spread around the world. Especially in the United States, maybe because Americans are familiar with masquerades and Halloween, cosplay seems accepted by society. Unlike in Japan, cosplay does not provide a negative impression, like ‘oh that’s so otaku’ or ‘how dare you dress up like a prostitute’. It could be because there is a long tradition of cosplay led by trekkers (enthusiastic Star trek fans). (Hiroaki 49)

In 2008 SMASH or the Sydney Anime and Manga Show was held for the second time. This event was created by local Sydney fans of Anime and Manga who found that tickets to the other conventions to be much too expensive. Like other Anime/Manga conventions there wasn’t a lot of advertising for this event in its first few years apart from flyers being handed out at other conventions. This convention, now an annual event at the University of NSW, attracted 1435 visitors in its first year with 2295 visitors in 2008. (“SMASH”) During its first year SMASH presented its own version of a Japanese Maid Café. In Japan the Maid Café’s are popular with male Anime and Manga fans largely due to the interaction with cute female Cosplaying waitresses. SMASH’s version of the Maid Café attracted both male and female customers on the basis of the novelty of being served in this manner. (fig.40)
One of the organizers for SMASH is Manga artist and Editor Katie Huang (b.1983). Huang is responsible for the publication of Generation, a showcase of short Australian Manga which is produced annually and sold at conventions as well as selected comic stores and online. The work that appears in Generation is selected from submissions of local Manga artists who are looking to have their work published. The result is a book which features a variety of graphic styles and genres. The look of the work submitted is also often limited by the materials available to the artists as professional Manga pens are expensive and often have to be sourced from overseas. There are also more obvious differences between the works featured in Generation and Japanese Manga, as Generation uses the Western convention of reading the panels from left to right and in some cases the use of rigid uniform panels. In the foreword for the 2006 edition of Generation, Huang
speaks about how she believes that Australian Manga is received outside the Western world:

In the course of printing this book in Taiwan, I was told by some Taiwanese friends that my style looks American. I was so shocked. In Australia, everyone I’ve met considers my style to be Japanese. It never occurred to me that my style would appear American to some. So upon hearing this, I decided to re-examine some of my sketches with a fresh eye. I realized that my style is very away from conventional Japanese style. Its is rather a mix of European/Japanese style to people who have no exposure to European/American comics, they cannot distinguish the two). It seemed to be a natural result of my influences, disregarding the fact that I always tried to draw in a Japanese style. (Huang 1)

Huang goes on to explain why she believes that this mixture of East and West will continue to be prominent in Australian Manga:

I think style is a representation of one’s personality. Influences, culture and environment; we draw different styles because we see things in different ways. Whatever we see or experience will add to our work whether we like it or not. I think if artists can combine their influences from the east and west, and find a style that truthfully represents them, they would have some thing to be proud of. (Huang 1).

One artist who has published her work in Generation and has now gone on to be published by Tokyopop is Queenie Chan (b.1980). Chan has become one of Australia’s
most well known artists due to the exposure her three part Manga *The Dreaming* (2005-2007) received since its publication by American company Tokyopop. Chan was first exposed to Manga and Anime as a child while still living in Hong Kong. At age six she moved to Australia and her love for Manga and Anime continued. In 1998 she created her first Manga called *Shirley’s Story* which was about the trauma of a young girl who witnesses the suicide death of a friend who jumps in front of a train. Like many other Australian Manga artists Chan did not really know about the tools of the trade when she drew her first Manga as she states:

> When that first story (‘Shirley’s Story’) popped into my head, I didn’t know where to start, or even what kind of paper to use. I drew on some A4 computer paper (because it was handy), with fine-liners (because I didn’t yet know what ‘pen and ink’ was). And that was that. My next story was drawn in exactly the same way. It wasn’t only until I did some research on the internet and met other artists, that I began to know more about style, techniques and the tools of the trade. (Chan)

Chan’s three part Manga series *The Dreaming* is a Shoujo mystery/thriller set in the Australian bush (fig.41). The narrative focuses on a mystery of disappearing schoolgirls who are living in a boarding school surrounded by bush land which is reminiscent of the popular novel (1970) and film (1975) *Picnic at Hanging Rock*. At first Chan wanted to draw her characters in historically accurate clothing until she discovered Lolita fashion as she states in an interview for the Gothic Lolita Bible:
The clothing (for the ghosts) in The dreaming was less inspired by Victorian dresses than it was by the fanciful, ornate look of some elaborate gothic lolita costumes…real Victorian clothing can be quite plain and boring in comparison, and it was only after coming into contact with some (Lolita) designs I got the courage to say ‘bollocks’ to historical accuracy’ and just drew what ever I wanted. (81)

Chan’s knowledge of Shoujo Japanese Manga has made her successful in creating a work which is uniquely Australian while also referencing Japanese influences. The result is a publication that has an international appeal and has seen it translated into “Dutch, Spanish, French and Italian”. (Ridout)

Figure 41
Chan, Queenie. The Dreaming. The Dreaming Cover Art. 2005. Tokyopop
Researching Japanese images of women is quite challenging from a Western perspective. Visual conventions employed by Japanese artists can be easily misunderstood in a Western context due to the social and aesthetic differences that exist between cultures. Representations of Japanese women in Western literature and entertainment have established misconceptions in the West about the position of Japanese women that still linger today. US pop star Gwen Stefani has produced songs about the ‘Harajuku Girls’ of Tokyo that lead many in the West to believe that female Japanese sub-cultural fashion can be lumped into a single category. Arthur Golden’s fictional portrayal of Geisha life in his novel *Memoirs of a Geisha* gave Western readers the impression that Geisha are prostitutes that are often sold into the profession against their will.

Investigating images of Japanese femininity in art and Anime/Manga may provide some unexpected results for Western fans. The Western stereotypical view of Japanese women as subservient and naïve is not a real reflection of the complexities that surround Japanese women. Japanese female artists have also become powerful figures in the Anime/Manga industry. The Shoujo genre is particularly significant as female artists like CLAMP have been able to broaden the appeal of the genre to a male and older female audience. In Sydney female fans and artists of Japanese popular culture have been able to create their own versions of the sub-cultures that incorporate aspects of both Japanese and Western culture.

The Sydney Anime and Manga community has produced artists that create work that is influenced by their knowledge of Japanese popular culture as well as their environment.
Misconceptions about elements of Japanese culture still exist within the Sydney fan community, but they are becoming less common as fans are motivated to initiate their own study on the subject and also visit Japan. The resources to allow fans to conduct their own research have also become more accessible due to the growth of information presented on the internet and the availability of translated material from companies such as Madman. Female fans in Sydney have taken an active role in establishing the local Anime/Manga community. Their persistence and research has created greater access to Japanese sub cultural fashion, Manga and Anime as well as producing new versions of the culture which satisfy the connection between Australia and Japan.
Chapter 6: The Woman and the Octopus.

Through this study it became apparent that differences exist between the Japanese and Sydney Anime/Manga communities on the basis of immediate access to Japanese culture. Not surprisingly Sydney artists and fans who regularly engage in Anime/Manga activities are considered outsiders to the culture due to geographical distance and possible misconceptions about Japanese society. In Napier’s study of American Anime/Manga fans a quote made by one of her respondent’s highlights the misconceptions that can be made if you base your knowledge of Japan solely on what you see in Anime/Manga as she states:

If I were to gain my impression of Japan only from Anime I would think that all the guys are clueless but make great robot pilots and all the women are ultra cute and have magic powers. (Anime 187)

It was important to remember when working on the creative portion of this degree I was commenting on Japanese art history and popular culture as a Western artist and outside observer. The creative work that evolved from my research, The Woman and the Octopus explores the unfolding of female erotic narratives in Japanese Edo (1603-1867) woodblock prints, contemporary Anime (Japanese animated films), Manga (Japanese comic books), Cosplay and Lolita fashion from a Western perspective through contemporary installation art practice.
During the late 90s when I first became interested in Japanese popular culture it seemed exciting, exotic and confusing, as it presented itself as a country of contradictions. I viewed modern Japan as consisting of two very conflicting lifestyles, one a strict work ethic in the business world and the other a bizarre kind of popular culture that spawned strange game shows, over the top fashion and a love of all things cute. These apparent contradictions made it very hard to understand what inspired the Japanese Anime/Manga and crazy Japanese street fashion I loved. As access to information about Japanese popular culture has improved in the last few years on the internet and also in the media I became particularly interested in *Lolita* fashion and *Shoujo Manga/Anime*. It was an attraction that was hard to explain to my friends and family who often found something strange or unnerving about a grown woman who was still obsessed with cutesy things.

The term *Lolita* is also problematic for Western devotees of the Fashion due to its perceived association with the famous Vladimir Nabokov (1899–1977) novel of the same name that dealt with a grown man’s infatuation with a young girl. I was attracted to *Lolita* fashion because I loved the materials and detail used in its construction. I also liked the fact that it was so different to anything I had seen in Australia. As I am someone who enjoys dressing up I found *Lolita* clothing really fun to wear.
Like *Lolita* fashion *Shoujo Manga/Anime* is also hard to explain to the uninitiated Western viewer. The *Shoujo* genre typically features cute; young often prepubescent female characters that have the power to overcome seemingly impossible circumstances and even at times defeat difficult adult opponents. Perplexingly *Shoujo Anime/Manga* is produced for young girls, yet often features nudity and camera angles that produce up-skirt shots. Japanese artist Takashi Murakami (b.1963) who is a self confessed *Otaku* also produces artwork featuring his own *Shoujo* characters. Murakami has created an exaggerated version of *Shoujo* sexuality with his larger than life figurines of *Miss ko* (1997) and *Second Mission Project ko2* (1999). Murakami’s mixture of cuteness and prepubescent sexuality appears to be a staple in creating *Shoujo* characters in Japan. Artists in Sydney have also created their own version of the *Shoujo* girl with all the power and independence of a Japanese *Shoujo*, however without the nudity that a Western audience often deem unnecessary.

Murakami’s work and *Superflat* manifesto (2000) highlights the similarities between *Manga/Anime* images and Edo period woodblock prints. Like contemporary Japanese *Anime/Manga*, woodblocks of the Edo period developed as consumer products that commonly depict images of Japanese femininity. Images of women became a popular subject matter in Edo woodblock prints due to the public’s curiosity about the lives of women within the Yoshiwara pleasure district. Many of the most popular prints were portraits of the popular courtesans of the period. Today Japanese *Otaku* can easily buy products such as statues and
posters which depict their favourite Anime/Manga Shoujo characters. Akihabara is one area in Tokyo which has become a commercial centre for Otaku culture. I spent a day there roaming around the streets and it seemed like you couldn’t help but stumble on a store selling Otaku paraphernalia even in the smallest of alleyways. Akihabara is considered to be an area which specifically caters to the male Otaku yet there were Shoujo figurines, comics and posters everywhere. Like the Edo wood block prints the Shoujo girl paraphernalia can also be quite sexual at times which is often misconstrued as paedophilic material.

By comparing Japanese images of women to Western conventions it is possible to misinterpret their true meaning. Anthropologist Anne Allison highlights this point when she stumbled upon a children’s television program that depicted naked animated breasts alongside a song about the joys of motherhood:

I was struck, of course, not by the motherhood theme itself but by the device used to represent it: breasts. And they were not depicted as they might be on a show such as Sesame Street in the United States - by realistic photography in which a mother is seen discreetly nursing her child without revealing much, if any, breast - but rather cartooned and crafted to be explicitly naked and boldly displayed. These breasts lingered in my mind, fascinating to me in a way they were obviously were not to my Japanese friends. Most of those I asked, also mothers of nursery school children who watch Ponkiki in the mornings, had not
even noticed the breasts. Those who had found them remarkably ‘cute’
(kawaii). (Allison 2)

From Allison’s Western perspective naked women’s breast presented on a
Japanese children’s program were difficult to comprehend as she goes on to
explain:

Such a convention of representation was different from those with which
I was familiar in the country I had just left, the United States. Granted,
breasts generate no less interest or attention in the United States than in
Japan, but the fixation in the United States is exclusively sexual,
particularly in the medium of public or mass culture. This fixation
undoubtedly accounts for this discomfiture that surrounds even the
inadvertent slippage of maternal breast into public view. It was not until
the summer 1994 that women succeeded in getting legislation passed in
the state of New York to stem the discrimination they constantly face
when nursing in public. (Allison 2)

The depiction of the sex act in Japanese Anime/Manga can also prove to be
confronting for a Western audience. One common device employed by
Manga/Anime artist is to use tentacle like phalluses to represent the male figure in
heterosexual sex scenes. On the surface images like these can appear from a
Western perspective as disturbing and unnecessarily violent with female
characters often portrayed as victims. Napier believes that these kinds of images
have been the result of Japanese censorship laws that prohibits the depiction of
male genitalia and also a cultural insecurity about male sexuality. Napier believes that male sexual characters are often depicted in one of two ways, either as “demonic” male monsters (sometimes just consisting of tentacle like phalluses) or as passive “voyeurs”. (Anime 79) These two very distinct versions of male sexuality present in Anime/Manga poses the question, is this merely an artistic effect or a way to deal with a male identity crisis? Napier explains what she believes are the reasons behind this phenomenon in Anime and Manga:

What does this mean? Is it simply an aesthetic coincidence based on the special powers of the animation? Or does it suggest something about male sexual identity? The answer appears to be “yes” to both questions. The animator’s art lends itself to fantasy. The development of tentacles and huge phalluses, and the horned heads of the little demons are all features difficult to portray in live-action cinema. At the same time they are memorable in ways that depictions of more conventional sexual intercourse are not. There is also the question of censorship. Until fairly recently it was forbidden to show male genitalia in comics, animation and film or photography (79)

The ways in which scenes of heterosexual sex are depicted in Anime/Manga also relates to the changing status of Japanese women. Japan is still adapting to the concept of working women as many Japanese still hold the ideal that women should strive to be a good wife and mother. Napier believes the anxiety that Japanese men feel about women in the workforce often manifests in
Manga/Anime as stories of sexual apocalypse as she states in her description of Urotsukidoji (1986) (fig.42) the first Anime featuring tentacle sex scenes as:

Invocation of apocalypse on a largely sexual plane, the film demonstrates perhaps one more underlying reason behind the contemporary Japanese obsession with apocalypse, the demise of male patriarchal privilege in the decades since World War II. (Anime 256)

Images of tentacle sex in Japan are not new as there are examples as early as the Edo period in erotic woodblock prints. Images such as Katsushika Hokusai’s (1760-1849) infamous woodblock print The Dream of the Fisherman's Wife (1824) (fig.43) and Yanagawa Shigenobu’s (1787–1832) wood block print of an octopus performing oral sex on a female abalone diver. (Circa 1830) (fig.44)
Figure 43

Figure 44
The aim of my own work, *The Woman and the Octopus*, was to capture the variable and changeable natures of ‘tentacle erotica’ narrative and their cross-cultural interpretations. The underlying narrative behind the work references Hokusai’s *The Fisherman’s Wife’s Dream* and examines the relationship between the woman and the octopus after the first sexual encounter. The relationship between the woman and the octopus develops over time as a lover, a companion, and a figure of protection. This evolution slowly unfolds as the viewer makes their way through the gallery to be finally confronted by an octopus whose larger than life presence makes him appear as a figure of protection. This narrative that creates the relationship between the woman and the octopus is also influenced by my own interpretations of images of Japanese women found in woodblock prints and contemporary Japanese popular culture.

Constructing the world of the woman and the octopus in a three dimensional form rather than just simply a flat image was also an important element to encourage the viewer to construct their own stories from the textiles and forms being used. As the audience enters the gallery the initial stage of metamorphoses of the woman and the octopus is represented through a group of five figures that are entangled in tentacles. This arrangement of the figures depicts the octopus as a passive lover who is intent on keeping the woman diver in his underwater lair. His tentacles wrap around the woman’s body so to weigh her down and prevent any attempt to escape. (fig.45) This seems like an unnecessary precaution on behalf of
the octopus as the woman appears to be overjoyed at the prospect of staying with her new lover.

The female figures and the octopuses are arranged into groups which are reminiscent of *Otaku* (fans of *Anime/Manga*) collections. *Otaku* collectors of *Anime/Manga* figurines and *Dolfies* (a popular kind of ball jointed doll which is customized by its owner) often relate to these objects as if they were alive. The soft unsupported bodies of the figures were made so that they could only slump against the wall or each other. This became an important aspect of the work as aesthetically they became nothing more than a blank canvas for the viewer to project a personality. The dolls differ only by their surface patterns through the choice of fabrics and painted details, structurally however they are the same doll. The arrangement of such collections represents the desire of the owner to connect and become involved with their favourite Anime and Manga characters.

In terms of *Dolfies* particular emotions are embodied within the doll due to the fact that desires can be externalised by customisation with clothing, wigs and painted features. To many fans *Dolfies* become more than an object as they are considered companions that accompany their daily activities. Dolls can therefore become substitutes for relationships that just aren’t possible with other human beings. This is especially true for some socially awkward *Otaku* who would rather be involved with a fictional character than deal with the complexity of a real relationship. The interaction between the Octopus and the woman that is depicted
in the Edo Woodblock prints and in *Anime/Manga* tentacle sex scenes is impossible, yet by projecting this interaction onto a doll it becomes perceivable.

![The Woman and the Octopus](image)

In the installation of *The Woman and the Octopus*, the patterned textiles are utilised to express the next stage of metamorphose where the relationship between the woman and the octopus changes to one of companionship (fig.46). At this stage the octopus becomes the woman’s equal. Their bodies become almost indistinguishable from one another as they begin to share the same skin.
The representation of this relationship between the octopus and the female figure draws upon the practice of *Cosplay*. A term short for costume play, *Cosplay* is a pastime where fans of *Anime* and *Manga* create costumes of their favourite characters in order to create a connection between the *Anime/Manga* world and the real world. In Australia *Cosplay* has increased in popularity in recent years due to annual Anime and Manga conventions held in Sydney such as *Animania* and *SMASH*. These conventions provide an opportunity for *Cosplayers* to compete against each other and show off their handiwork. In competition the *Cosplayers* ability to act like their chosen character is as important as the accuracy of their costume. It can be argued that Australian *Cosplayers* are unwittingly *Cosplaying* more than just their favourite character as they are also *Cosplaying* as Japanese. The pretence of being Japanese occurs because the majority of popular *Anime* and *Manga* series are set in Japan; consequently Australian *Cosplayers* try to recreate mannerisms and clothing that they believe to be Japanese.

In my work, the woman and the octopus are trying to reconcile their differences by altering their outward appearance to convey their internal emotional state.
The choice of fabrics and patterns was important for this installation as it creates the relationship between the woman and the octopus as well as referencing elements of Japanese culture. Fabrics with traditional Japanese printed designs are utilised in this installation to evoke the seductively decorated clothing of women in Edo woodblock prints (fig.47). The dark and brightly coloured childlike fabrics are employed as representative of Shoujo culture with a particular emphasis on Japanese Lolita and Gonguro fashion.

As stated earlier, in the west Lolita is most well known as the novel of the same name however devotees of the fashion would argue that it developed from Japanese appropriation of 18th century French Rococo style rather than a
fetishized version of young femininity. In my observations of Sydney Lolita culture one of the most important elements of the fashion is the desire to cover up. Dress lengths are often scrutinized if they are above the knee. At Sydney Lolita outings even on hot days girls were dressed in layers of petticoats, blouses and bloomers underneath their dresses to keep their modesty. Unfortunately Lolita has also been used in Manga and Anime in the Lolita Complex genre which does sexualize young female characters.

Figure 47

J-rock group Malice Mizer is credited by many Lolita’s with creating the Lolita style as they became known for their on stage costumes. Mana, the bands
guitarist, was particularly extravagant and he would later create his own Gothic Lolita fashion label Moi-Meme-Moitie. The style became popular as:

fans of the band began wearing intricate handmade replicas on the streets and to live gigs. The Japanese fashion sector quickly took notice of the trend, with several hundred brands now specialising in Lolita clothing and accessories. (Walton 34)

Gothic Lolita clothing takes its influences from French Rococo, Victorian and Edwardian style fashion. This style of clothing is typically made with dark fabrics (mostly black) and embellished with masses of ribbon, lace and skull prints. As Gothic fashion is already quite popular in Sydney some of the Sydney stores that already sold Gothic fashions are now branching out into clothing they call Gothic Lolita. This caused a great deal of debate within the Sydney Lolita community as many believed that this clothing couldn’t really be considered Lolita due to the materials used and also the shorter length of the garments. In a discussion on a Lolita forum (Appendix K) one participant described the Lolita products produced and sold by one Sydney gothic store as “the epitome of the MORE LACE = MORE LOLI faux pas”. (Danaephreal 2006) The aesthetic differences between Western and Japanese Lolita clothing may be just another example of how the term Lolita is interpreted differently in the West as a fetishized version of youthful sexuality rather than a desire for elegance and refinement.
Another variation of the *Lolita* style is known as Sweet *Lolita*. This genre of *Lolita* fashion is influenced by extreme decorative styling of 18th century French Rococo design. Followers of Sweet *Lolita* fashion are typically obsessed with the French Rococo lifestyle of hedonism and beauty. The elaborate designs used in this style reflect the wearers desire to live the life of a princess. In Novala Takemoto’s (b.1968) novel *Kamikaze Girls* (2002) his main character is Momoko a Lolita who believes that “a true Lolita must nurture a Rococo spirit and live a Rococo lifestyle”. (Novala 5) Sweet *Lolita* Dresses are often made from gingham and printed cotton fabrics which feature motifs such as flowers, sweets and European fairytale characters. To complete the look dresses are also embellished with frills, large bows, lace and ribbons. In Japan Sweet *Lolita* fashion seems to attract far less attention than in Sydney. During my trip to Japan I did encounter some girls dressed in Sweet *Lolita* getting on the train in Shinjuku and even with their extreme frilly decorative style they didn’t warrant a response from their fellow commuters. This is a very different scenario from that of Sweet *Lolita’s* in Sydney who put up with gawking onlookers and sometimes rude comments or abuse. When attending some of the *Lolita* events myself I did feel a little uneasy at the amount of attention we seemed to attract as a group. Perhaps the differences in response to Sweet *Lolita* fashion might be that in Japan cute imagery and products are consumed and collected by adults as well as children, unlike in Western countries like Australia where we are often persuaded to give these things up once we become an adult. (Riche 54)
“Gonguro” “a word that literally means black face” is a term used to describe a Japanese fashion style that incorporate an extreme suntan with brightly coloured Hawaiian print clothing. (Schoolgirl 59) This fashion style began in the late 1990s by schoolgirls who were influenced by American hip hop and surfing culture. Just as many Western Cosplayers could be accused as Cosplaying as Japanese, wearers of Gonguro fashion appear to be Cosplaying as African Americans. After the controversy of the black face incident that occurred last year on Australia’s Hey Hey its Saturday when some amateur performers did a black face routine to Michael Jackson’s music, it would be interesting to see what the African American community thought of Gonguro. (Red Faces 2009) The significance of Hawaiian printed fabric in The Woman and the Octopus is also to highlight the influence that American culture has played in Japan since the American occupation after World War II.

Finally in the last metamorphose of the woman and the octopus, the octopus becomes a symbol of protection for the woman. (fig.48) The giant octopus sculpture with its smaller octopus offside creates an image which is reminiscent of Hayao Miyazaki’s (1941) Totoro in the full length feature Anime My Neighbour Totoro (1988). As Napier describes the young Shoujo character Mei’s first encounter with Totoro as:

Initially slightly disorientating because of the change in size shape, and quantity and potentially frightening because the … Totoro is so huge
with such a large mouth, is actually one of serenity and comfort,
surrounded by images of harmony and beauty. (Anime 159)

Figure 48  

When creating the work for The Woman and the Octopus, I warmed to the idea of making my characters appear cute and sinister at the same time. Even in the most innocent of Anime/Manga there are often cute characters that hide a sinister side. Miyazaki’s character Totoro, for example, is drawn to be cute yet his sheer size
and large mouth make him a potential threat to Mai and her sister. The large octopus in my installation is also potentially threatening as it dwarfs all the creatures by its sheer size but the viewer can be put at ease by its pink froufrou appearance that renders it more ridiculous than scary.

Creating *The Woman and the Octopus* project clarified my attraction to Japanese popular culture and helped me better understand the concepts of Japanese femininity and sexuality that have become a part of the culture. Differing cultural ideals in countries like Japan and Australia about what is considered offensive material can often lead to confusion about the intent of images found in *Manga/Anime* or the influences of particular Japanese street fashion. Even with the best intentions Australian artists who choose to produce Japanese inspired art or comics can’t help but create works that are also influenced by their own cultural experience. This is not a new concept as Western artists like Monet have included Japanese items in their work as early as the 1800s to create art that depicts their personal vision of Japan. Due to better and faster access to information about Japanese popular culture via the media and the internet Western fans are able to create a more accurate version of Japan for themselves.
List of Illustrations

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4
Figure 5


Figure 6


Figure 7


Figure 8


Figure 9

Figure 10


Figure 11


Figure 12


Figure 13


Figure 14

Figure 15

Figure 16

Figure 17

Figure 18
Figure 19


Figure 20


Figure 21


Figure 22

Mr. **15 Minutes from Shiki-Station.** 2003. 162 x 130cm Acrylic on canvas. Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin. *Kaikai Kiki.*

<http://english.kaikaikiki.co.jp/artworks/eachwork/st_shiki/>.
Figure 23


Figure 24


Figure 25


Figure 26


Figure 27

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Figure 47


Figure 48

Appendix

Appendix A:


What inspired you to first travel Japan in 2006? Japan has always been in my mind, the inventor of all things cute and quirky. I always felt a connection to the place and longed to be there. When I was finally able to visit, it was exactly as I imagined but better! It was the significant turning point for me creatively.

Are you a fan of Manga and anime? I wouldn’t say I am a fan but I do really appreciate the two mediums. I really love Cowboy Bebop, it’s extremely popular, even in the Western world. I love the Battle Royale Manga and have just started on Death Note.

What was it about Lolita fashion that inspired you? My first exposure to Lolita fashion was in Maruione, it was such a revelation. It felt like I had walked into the world of Louis Carroll. I was so enchanted and fascinated with the fashion and then I grew really interested in the culture. There is an entire industry that caters to this make believe. I still can’t get the opulent colours and textures out of my head.
Q&A!

1. What was it that made you want to make manga images?

I think the simplest answer is that when I was much younger (and still am), I was very much a fan of anime. I watched series like Sailor Moon when I was still in primary school, and the moved on to series like Evangelion and X/1999 when I was in high school. Because of my obsession with anime, I came into contact with fan art for these series on the internet, and subsequently, started drawing my own. If you look back to my earliest artworks, most of it is fanart. It wasn’t until some time in 2001/2002 that I began drawing original art in the manga influenced style.

The other answer… the one that answers why I still draw and continue to draw in this style, long after I’ve fallen out of love of the series that first started me on the road, and why I draw my original characters in this way, is simply because I find the style of shoujo manga (artists like CLAMP, Yuki Kaori), to be very aesthetically pleasing. It’s an unattainable ideal, and it’s almost perfection in my eyes. It’s not realism, so you can get away with unrealistic hair and eye colours, and clothing and hair styles that simply can’t work in real life. The distancing from realism also allows you to read more into the artworks and relate to the characters – you can see a bit of yourself in the characters because they don’t look exactly like someone else. Think of the same principle that applies to watching cartoons or reading comics... only the shoujo manga style that influences my work is much more detail, and for lack of a better word, beautiful.

2. Do you believe that Australian Manga artists produce work which is different to work produced in Japan?

Yes, I do. At least, from what I’ve seen of the manga styled work from the artists I’ve met and whose work I’ve seen or read. Mostly, I find the difference is in the content. The works produced in Australia often has some Australian culture embedded into it. For example, Queenie Chan’s *The Dreaming* which is set in a boarding school located in the Australian outback. The clothing styles and setting in that series have references to the Australian colonial period. Rae’s *Catching Faeries*, which is set in the Australian bush, uses Australian trees such as the Banksia in its backgrounds.

The language used, and the cultural references are also more Australian, so as a reader, I find you get more of the jokes and asides in the dialogue. Like, there’s no bowing (or at least, a lot less of it), and greetings are more familiar, and an omission of sayings that are fundamentally Japanese culture (sayings before and after a meal, leaving and coming home).

Art style wise... I believe each artist has their own style. Even if their style is influenced by manga, you can see their individuality in it, as no two styles are the same unless you are copying an artist exactly. I don’t believe you can look for any definitive difference between Australian and Japanese artists as such, only
differences between each different artist, as each artist’s style will be developed from different influences in their life, their own likes and dislikes.

3. What do you think about the manga audience in Australia?

Small, but growing. A lot more people know about it these days. For example, where I currently work, I was rather surprised that maybe 15-20% of the people there knew about and watched anime (not sure about reading manga) – it use to be 0% at my previous work place. Also, the number of conventions each year tends to grow... Animania started out in 2002 at Sydney University as a one day event. Now in 2007, it’s in 3 different states with something like 5 conventions, 1 or 2 of them spanning over 2-2.5 days. Supanova also has plans to go to Perth (previously it was only in Sydney and Brisbane). I can only assume from this that manga and anime is rising in popularity. Australian online book stores (such as Fishpond), also stock a great deal of manga. If you look at the Kinokuniya bookstore located in Sydney, their stock of manga on the shelves has grown to perhaps triple the size since I first came across it back in 2001. (And... much to the chagrin of some people... the manga section in Kino is ALWAYS filled to chocking point with people sitting there reading manga – to the point where you can’t browse!)

Additionally, at Supanova this year, we were told by some industry professionals who produced comics and graphic novels, that their has been a boom in manga/graphic novels in the US – as in, publishers are actively looking for artists to publish on the convention floor at some US conventions, and they suspect Australia might see a similar trend. (Though the last time I talked to an Australian publisher – back in the beginning of 2007, they still thought of manga as a “fringe” market, so it’s a bit conflicted there.)

4. Do you think the work of female artists differs greatly from male artists?

I think so, for most cases.

From what I’ve seen, the majority of female artists’ style, as well as content, differs quite extensively from what the majority of male artists do.

Female artists’ style is usually beautiful, smooth, soft, sensual, pure and more innocent, as well as often being embellished in some way – long eye lashes on men, intricate designs in clothing and jewellery. The character designs are often tall and slender for males, and petite and sweet for girls. You tend to notice that if a female character draws a series, and the main character is a girl, she’ll have some shortcoming, whilst the male characters are more ideal. For male artists, I find their representation of MALE characters is more realistic – not realism in style, but rather... in body and face designs, they’re not as angelic, they’re easier to see the average person in the characters. For male artists who illustrate girls, I find the majority them to be either overly young and cute, or very well endowed and curvy.

Content wise, women artists tend to focus more on romance and relationships, and men more on adventure and fighting/war. These are generalisations though, and you do get artists that cross over the gender divider.

5. Do you think that the status of women in this industry is equal to men?
In the manga industry in the US, I believe so. In Japan, I’m not too sure. If you look at Tokyo Pop, they're publishing a lot of western female manga artists. On top of that, in Australia, if you look at conventions like SMASH! And Animania, the majority of the artists on the artist alley is female (for a few years, at Animania, there were ONLY girls!). The publishing industry for manga in Australia on a professional level isn’t quite in existence yet though, so the only glimpse I have into the equality of women to men on this issue is through the conventions I attend.

6. What do you think are the most popular genres of manga for female fans?

Sadly, in my opinion, probably shoujo. The cute shoujo series at that... like Fruits Basket. School romances seem to be pretty well received. I’d LIKE to say YAOI/BL, but I know even among female fans, a lot of them don’t like it. Most of the artists that I know seem to enjoy it though, but at conventions, you do get quite a few girls turn their noses up at m/m artworks and series. The other genre that seems to be popular is shounen (boy) adventure types... like Naruto and Bleach, though you definitely hardly ever see female artists do those type of manga or artworks here in Australia. Australia female manga artists usually sell relationship or life orientated works at the conventions.

7. How hard is it to sell your work in Australia or to get published?

I don’t know about publishing. I haven’t tried to publish any of my work professionally. I have been approached on a few occasions to do illustrations, but mostly by amateurs, who do not value illustration appropriately and balk at the average prices you give them. I do sell my work – mostly stand alone illustrations as prints – at conventions and over the internet. I do fairly well selling at conventions, but over the net is a bit harder (no one seems to want to pay shipping... or can’t pay with the anything other than cash).

8. Why are you personally drawn to YAOI? And can you offer any insight of why this genre is popular with women.

I’d really rather not answer this question. I think you can find more than enough info on this topic on the net and it has been covered to death. It’s really personal choice and likes and dislikes as far as I’m concerned.

9. What age group do you think your work most appeals to?

The stories I write are meant for a mature female audience. But I know I have had readers as young as 13. My art is geared towards late teens and young women, because the characters are all late teens, and have a seductive/sexual edge. I do sell quite a few artworks to male teens and some men as well at conventions – these are stand alone illustrations... and I doubt they know anything about my characters.

10. Is there a greater participation of women in Manga than men?
Yes, in Australia, probably. Like I said in 5, at Animania, you notice a huge skewering towards female artists and it’s a rarity to see males on the artist alley who aren’t part of some community group. Even at the comic art group I go to – Hayase – the ones that draw "manga" style are mostly all female. The guys there tend to draw in a more "comic" style.

11. Did you have some professional training which helped you find your own style?

I did do a Bachelor of Design and majored in illustration, but I wouldn’t say this had any great influence on my style or the focus of my stories and art. My influences are mainly other manga artists – esp. CLAMP (X/1999) and Yuki Kaori (Angel Sanctuary). I learnt by studying their works and learning by experimenting with media and program tools. Now days, I also take inspiration from fantasy illustrations, gothic architecture, as well as mythology. I also work with other writers to create artworks of their characters.
Appendix C:

Luciferian. “The Australian Yaoi Team.” E-mail to Jennifer Stockins. 23 April. 2007.

*jennifer <info@meetup.com>* wrote:

Hello Luciferian,

jennifer sent you this message from The Sydney Cosplay Meetup Group on Meetup.com:

----------------------------------------------------------------

hi Luciferian,
I'm pretty new to Yaoi,
I am writing a thesis on women's involvement in manga, cosplay
and anime.

Could you tell me a little about your group and your personal
interest in Yaoi.

What are screaming fan girls?(Sorry that is a strange question)

Jennifer Stockins
Hi i would have replied earlier to this email but i only check this account every
couple of days.

Tayt was formed in 2004/2005 by a group of random fans of Shonen Ai and Yaoi it
was actually based of me bitching on forum (The Madman forums) about how there
was no Yaoi Convention for australia, from there i got a lot of people whinging at me
because of the thread i posted but then our "grandma" SB said basically why don't we
have a con and from there we formed TAYT The Australian Yaoi Team so far we have
had proffessional (well semi) panels going into the depths of Yaoi with serious
discussion.

We actually got Gravitation a very popular Boy Love manga and anime realised in
australia through madman, with a hand written petition and a lot of pestering.

We run tables and have regular meet-ups im kinda like the PR i put the word out
invite people and try and get more memebers and go about telling people that Yaoi is
not just men having sex.

Screaming fangirls okay "fangirls" is a term for girls who are fans of anime mostly
the name is a stereotype of a girl who squels very loudly at 2 guys kissing and so forth,
we are trying to dispel this myth that we aren't all screaming fan girls because fan
girls have a really bad reputation and i can't stand them myself :D
Hope that has been helpful check out website and forums we aren't talking much at the moment but we are all ways willing to help out, with stuff.

Goodluck with your thesis, i know they are a bitch of thing to write :D
Appendix D:


About Us

Mission Statement

The UTS Anime Club is dedicated to providing access to a wide selection of the latest Japanese animation for its members.

As well as showing anime we will be involved in other anime and manga based activities. This could be anything from a karaoke outing to cosplay parties and competitions. We will be trying our best to be involved as much as possible in the Australian anime scene, including the running of joint activities with other University anime clubs.

History

Disillusioned with the travelling distance to the screenings held at the UNSW campus, Ian Chen decided to go about creating a club at his own university to allow other students at UTS a chance to see anime series and movies they had not been able to previously. Using the resources available to him as an exec of the CompSoc at UTS he was able to hold weekly anime screenings which attracted a small number of devotees through word of mouth alone. Not long after this he petitioned the union to make an official Anime club at UTS, and thus the club was born - winning the best new club of 2001 award at the university.

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Appendix E:


What is AnimeMQ?

AnimeMQ is a student run club with the goal to satisfy all your anime needs. Organised by the fans, for the fans, we offer weekly lunch time screenings and a loan library with the latest series from Japan. We also have a number of special events such as marathons, art competitions and origami session.

Transport

Macquarie University can be got to via:

- 545 buses from Chatswood
- 288, 290, 295, and 256 buses from Epping
- 288, 290, 292 and 294 buses from the city.
- 611, 630 from Hills District

You can also take the new Epping / Chatswood train line

Want to join us?

Want to join AnimeMQ? It's easy and everyone is eligible to join! Membership fee:

- $10 for one year

2008 memberships expire on the 28th Feb 2009.

Come to any of our screenings or other events to join. If you would like to receive more details, please contact any of the AnimeMQ executives.

Member Discounts

AnimeMQ members get access to the following discounts:

- 10% off at Tamarket.
- 10% off at Cartoon Gallery.
- 10% off at Madman
- 5% off at Anime Traffic
- 10% off at Anime Power
- 10% off at Supreme Anime
Appendix F:


About

What is AnimeUNSW?

AnimeUNSW was formed in 1997 by three financially-challenged anime enthusiasts looking to support their passion. During its long history, it has been Sydney’s largest anime club, with over 800 registered members. Affiliated with the ARC’s CASOC (Clubs and Societies on Campus) department at the University of New South Wales, AnimeUNSW’s goal is to unite all like-minded people together to enjoy Anime and all things related, including but not limited to manga, drawing, games, costume play and music.

What do we do?

Our activities include:

- Screenings every Friday
- Art Sessions every Wednesday
- Eat-Out & Karaoke socials
- Pre/ Post Exam Shindigs
- Club fundraising campaigns at various local conventions
- Unique & experimental events

Who looks after AnimeUNSW?

AnimeUNSW is run by the executive committee, its volunteers and its members. The executive committee is decided every year through the club’s Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Please note that we are NOT affiliated with the website animeunsw.org in any way. Unfortunately, the domain name expired under previous administration and was taken by an unrelated third party.

Elwing | February 10, 2009 2:24 am
Club Information

What is JAUWS?

Japanese Animation UWS (A.K.A. JAUWS) is an anime society based at UWS Penrith Campus. What we do is run weekly screenings during semester time, as well as several other kinds of events. Such as, marathons, gaming days and other things that don’t involve looking at a glowing surface in a darkened lecture hall. Much fun is had by all.

Where can I join?

Just come along to any event or screening we’re holding and talk to one of our friendly executives (contrary to popular belief they don’t bite and are friendly like WHOAH). Membership for the year costs $5. FIVE DOLLARS! That’s a lot cheaper than going to see a movie or renting a few videos, and membership allows you to get into all of our screenings and events. Membership is open to anyone- you DO NOT have to be a UWS student to join.

Is there anything else?

Yes there is, we have an IRC channel (#jauws on irc.rizon.net) and a forum, if you’d like to go out and meet other members online, or discuss the latest happenings.
Appendix H:


About the Club

1. Why Join?
2. Talk to us
3. History of SUAnime

—

Why Join?

By being an SUAnime member, you not only become part of a social community of warm and friendly anime/manga fans meeting regularly at Wentworth Level 2, you also gain access into the innermost club activities. These include many fun events organised especially for you by our events’ directors, such as karaoke, movies, eat-outs, trivia nights, shopping tours, and of course, our every-day-a-weekly anime screenings.

Furthermore, our members are able to receive discounts and exclusive offers with our sponsors:
- Tamarket
- Shintokyo
- Madman
- MisterAnime
- Animavericks
- Hondarake

Information on our sponsors will be on our mailouts, so look out for those. If you’re impatient, though, feel free to email our publicity officer about this. Our Weekly Newsletters / mailouts will also be giving you the latest news and information regarding club events, screenings, conventions and socials, while our lending library features free rental of anime featured in our database.

There are many more reasons to join … and we’ll let you know TEN when you do join now!

Basic Membership - $5
Sign up at any event. Look for an exec and they’ll tell you how. 😊
IMPORTANT - All University of Sydney students must have a 2009 Access Card to join the club. This is compulsory under USU Regulations, and Access cards can be purchased at the Access Centre, Manning.

Talk to Us

If ever you feel bored, or have something to say about anime/manga, feel free to drop by our SUAnime subforum on the animesydney forums. Or hit up the #suanime or #animesydney channels on irc.rizon.net. With over 20 people online at all times, chances are someone might talk to you…if they aren’t lurking, of course.

If IRC’s a bit too perplexing for you, though, try starting off with the below threads at the forum.

09 Introductions - Introduce yourself here!!
Manga Discussion - We still need lot of help for this, from storyboaders to artists!!
Apply here. Also, vote for the format the work will be in.
Application - Post any questions regarding application you may have here.
Chibi Execs - This gets long…the first post will always be applicable though.

History of SUAnime

“I’m bored, Mike.”
“So am I, Dave, so am I.”
“Let’s start an anime club.”
“Sure, and while we’re at it we’ll build a rocket to the moon.”
“No Mike, I’m serious!”
“So am I, Dave, so am I.”
And thus SUAnime was born. (Conversation may or may not reflect actual events.)

The Sydney University Anime Society was founded on July 2001 by a group of university students who were intent on bringing anime to the masses. They realized that anime was becoming a growing, popular entertainment media in Sydney and wanted to provide a place where fans could watch and discuss anime. The original founding executives are Louis Lee (President), Dexter So (Vice-President), Sheau Ping Low (Secretary), Stephanie Loh (Treasurer), Jonathan Tsang-Loon (Editor), Damien McMonigal (Webmaster), David Harmon (Events Organiser), Rui Kikuchi (Art Director), Fei Fei Huang (Logistics Officer), Michael Camilleri (Executive) and James Clarke (Executive).

Since then the club has rapidly grown from a small-time society with a zealous, nay, fanatical following, to a fully-fledged anime society worthy of mention. Their popularity can be attributed to a combination of quality events and screenings of popular and lesser-known yet great anime titles. A constant stream of new ideas, courtesy of our good friend Mr Caffeine, has kept the club fresh and exciting year
after year. SUAnime has hosted such events as an animation cel exhibition, a “birthday party” for Astroboy, and a significant contribution to Sydney’s first dedicated anime convention, Animania. Its screenings have included such titles as Death Note, Trigun, Escaflowne, Ranma, Slayers, Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex and Gundam SEED.

In 2003, SUAnime won the Innovation Award for Best Programme/Event/Activity for its part in Animania and was Highly Commended for the 2003 Best Publicity or Publication Award for its website at the Clubs and Society Awards. It also came 15th in the e-zine AnimeFringe’s list of the best anime-related websites in the world.
Appendix I:


About Animania

Animania Festival is a celebration of all things anime, bringing together the best of the best for competitions and demonstrations, entertainment and commercial exhibits.

Animania began as the first Japanese animation festival ever to be held in NSW. Its inaugural event in 2002 was attended by more than 500 people. Each year after this first successful event, Animania has strived to achieve new heights and grow. In 2005, Animania took its events to Brisbane and in 2006, Melbourne, receiving great support in both states.

Bringing together thousands of people from local, interstate and overseas, Animania creates an environment for fans - old and new - to come together and celebrate Japanese pop culture in a fun and friendly atmosphere. As more and more individuals have become aware of anime as a versatile medium and manga as a unique form of story-telling, these aspects of Japanese pop culture have exploded into regular Australian life. Animania has been proud to play its part in this boom. It has hosted a wide variety of displays, performances and lectures that have (we hope!) provided a little bit more insight into the quirky but vibrant fan culture of anime and manga, piquing interests and broadening the community.

A real testament of this impact of anime in the West was the inclusion of Animania Festival in the Official Program of the 2006 Australia-Japan Year of Exchange - a year marking the 30 year anniversary of cultural exchange between Australia and Japan. This yearlong program endorsed by both embassies in both countries aimed at promoting cultural exchange and friendship between the two countries.

Since 2002, Animania Festival has steadily transformed in its diversity of events and focused on bringing not only a more exciting Festival than the year before, but a better Festival experience for fans of all types. This focus (which drives the Animania Team) has seen Animania produce one of the most awesome and most fulfilling Volunteer Programs and the best staged Cosplay Competition events in Australia. Not to mention a wide range of staple events including all-day screenings, karaoke, video games, yukata-workshops, art displays, panel discussions and forums, traditional cultural performances and demonstrations, and lots, lots more! Top this off with a fabulous Festival community (online and off) and you have a pretty well rounded Japanese pop culture experience in Australia!

What will 2009 bring for Animania Festival?

Animania Festival can only get better. 2009 presents a whole new year of stage shows, art, song, dance, insight, games, and lots, lots more. And don't forget about the Cosplay!

Last year, Animania Festival was proud to host the first ever Australian Preliminary Competition for the World Cosplay Summit (WCS), an international-level Cosplay event. This
brought out some of the best Cosplay we have seen in years - and now it's a fresh new year. While our 2008 winners will be working hard on their entries into the 2009 World Cosplay Summit, Animania Festival will be starting a new round of WCS Preselections and Preliminary for the next team that will represent us in Japan at the 2010 event. The bar was set high last year - we can't wait to see what this year's round of Cosplayers have to present.

And what other surprises will be in store?... well you'll just have to wait and see!

This year, we'll be pushing the envelope to bring Australia's anime and manga community one truly kick-ass year of events!

To find out the latest info on upcoming Animania Festivals, choose an event from the right menu.
Appendix J:


WCS Preliminary Australia 2008 Winners

In 2008, Animania Festival was proud to host the first preliminary competition that would qualify an Australia representative to enter the World Cosplay Summit!

The World Cosplay Summit is an annual international level Cosplay competition held in Nagoya, Japan and hosted by TV Aichi. The competition brings together contestants from all over the globe to showcase their prize-winning costumes. Some of the participating countries include Germany, France, Brazil, China, USA - and now Australia.

After an extraordinary year of Cosplay, we are proud to announce the first ever Australian representatives into the 2009 World Cosplay Summit - The Love & Peace Movement Duo! Read on below (or click the jump links) to find out more about this Duo as well as the runner up finalists.

- 2008/09 WCS Australian Representatives - The Love & Peace Movement
- 2008/09 WCS Australian Finalists - Go Wu Go!
- 2008/09 WCS Australian Finalists - Oh! My Bollucks!

For more details on the competition held at the Animania Sydney Weekend, its rules, procedures and judges, please click here.

2008/09 WCS AUSTRALIAN REPRESENTATIVES - THE LOVE & PEACE MOVEMENT
TEAM MEMBER 1: Gabriella Lowgren a.k.a. Cattypatra
Winning Preselection Cosplay: Allen Walker from D.Gray-man
Winning Final Preliminary Competition Cosplay: Edward Elric from Full Metal Alchemist

Profile

Cosplay History: 3 years

Favourite Manga & Anime: Angel Sanctuary, Bubble Gum Crisis Tokyo 2040, Revolutionary Girl Utena, Kingdom Hearts

On Japan: Japan is awesome food, fan merchandise, cheap manga and expensive anime.

Self-introduction: Hi I’m Catty, and I’m currently a student in Australia. I love playing games, hanging out with my Tsubaki and spending all my spare money on cosplay.

TEAM MEMBER 2: Katherine Lee a.k.a. Tsubaki-chan
Winning Preselection Cosplay: Second Level Akuma from *D.Gray-man*
Winning Final Preliminary Competition Cosplay: Alphonse Elric from *Full Metal Alchemist*

**Profile**

**Cosplay History:** 6 years

**Favourite Manga & Anime:** Kazan, Fullmetal Alchemist, D.Gray-man, Naruto, Junjo Romantica, Soul Eater, & many more. XD

**On Japan:** Japan is great for experiencing the different culture, I love the public transport and clean streets. It is the best place to see and experience cosplay. Also it is the best place for shopping & great food. X3

**Self-introduction:** Hi I’m Tsubaki, I’m a huge fan of cosplay. This will be an amazing experience for me, as I’ve always wanted to cosplay in Japan and to see and compete with amazing cosplayers from all over the world. I look forward to representing my country, Australia, with my beautiful partner Catty.
2008/09 WCS AUSTRALIAN FINALS - GO WU GO!

TEAM MEMBER 1: Amber M a.k.a. Asham
Preliminary Competition Finalist Cosplay 1: Sun Quan from Dynasty Warriors 5
Preliminary Competition Finalist Cosplay 2: Rikuson Hakugen from Koutetsu Sangokushi

Profile

Cosplay History: 6 years

Favorite Manga & Anime: I have far too many to name, but a few that I can think of are: Polemon and Yu-gi-oh! Were the earliest ones I discovered and enjoyed. They started off my interest in Japanese cartoons. An ongoing favourite is Hanakimi (I love the drawings more than the story, though). Blue Lagoon is a current favourite of mine, and right now I’m reading Death Note.

On Japan: It’s a country that I’ve enjoyed travelling to, both times I’ve been. I haven’t seen nearly enough of the land and culture to be able to talk about it intelligently though! I’d love to stay there for a few months and travel to every island...

Self Introduction: I have been cosplaying since 2002. I was about 14 when I went to my first convention. I now travel around Australia going to cons.
I never seem to have any money because of Cosplay and going to cons. I am always aiming to make bigger, brighter and more elaborate costumes. I love helping other people with their props, and enjoy preparing Cosplay skits for individual and group cosplays.

The university course I am doing involves drawing and 2D animation.

TEAM MEMBER 2: Melanie D
Preliminary Competition Finalist Cosplay 1: Sun Ce from Dynasty Warriors 5
Preliminary Competition Finalist Cosplay 2: Sonken Chuubou from Koutetsu Sangokushi

Profile

Cosplay History: 6 years

What got you into cosplay?: At the risk of sounding cliché, I’ve always loved dressing up, and whilst it was perfectly acceptable when I was little, as I got older, I had to hide it better -
and what better way than by fusing my love for costumes with my love for history, and joining a medieval re-enactment group?

I did not enjoy it as much as I’d hoped. Their rules were too strict, and my passion for using interesting fabrics and techniques was slowly being crushed. So, I submerged myself in the gothic subculture for a number of years, where I was free to use anything and everything in my garment construction! Whilst still very much involved in the goth scene, I met an American cosplayer online, who told me about his hobby, and I suddenly realised... that Chun-Li costume I’d made to go to a friend's party... that Maria costume I’d made to go to the Bloodlust Ball... I’d already tasted cosplay, and liked it!

Cosplay awards won recently: Haohmaru (Samurai Shodown), “Second Place Group”, AVCon (Adelaide) 2008; Arslan (Devil Kings), "Best Costume" (Sunday), Supanova (Brisbane) 2007; Kahz (Devil Kings), "3rd Place Male Costume" (Sunday), Animania (Brisbane) 2007; Shinjiro Hayashida (Cromartie High School), "Best Group", AVCon (Adelaide) 2007; Yukimura Sanada (Samurai Warriors), "Runner-up Best Technical" (Saturday), Manifest (Melbourne) 2007; Zowie (Gitaroo Man), "Runner-up Best Technical" (Sunday), Manifest (Melbourne) 2007 and, "Best Group" (Sunday), Supanova (Brisbane) 2008; Lu Xun (Dynasty Warriors 4), "Best Costume", Al Con (Hobart), 2006; Mitsuhide Akechi (Samurai Warriors 2), "Best Male Character", AVCon (Adelaide) 2006; Toshiie Maeda (Kessen III), "Best Group", Animania (Brisbane) 2006.

2008/09 WCS AUSTRALIAN FINALISTS - OH! MY BOLLUCKS!

TEAM MEMBER 1: Catherine N
Preliminary Competition Finalist Cosplay 1: Suigintou from Rozen Maiden
Preliminary Competition Finalist Cosplay 2: Rem from Death Note

Profile

Cosplay History: 6 years

Cosplay History: 5 years
What got you into cosplay?: Well I always enjoyed watching anime since I was young and back then there wasn't many anime fans. So one day our family friend (who also liked anime) told us there was a convention coming up and that people dress up as their favorite character from an anime.


TEAM MEMBER 2: Helen N
Preliminary Competition Finalist Cosplay: Shinku from Rozen Maiden
Preliminary Competition Finalist Cosplay 2: Ryuk from Death Note

Profile

Cosplay History: 5 years

What got you into cosplay?: Got sick of wearing everyday normal clothes and after watching a couple of anime episodes, I had to ask "why do they get to wear all the cool stuff"? Plus my sister did this before me and she can sew, so why not take advantage of it?

Other recent cosplays: Supernova 2003 - Yuna from Final Fantasy 10; Animania 2003 - Moogle from Final Fantasy; Animania 2004 - Haku from Naruto; Animania 2005 - Paine from Final Fantasy X-2; Animania 2006 - Fran from Final Fantasy 12; Animania 2007 - Wolf Link From The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess.
Appendix K

Danaeaphreal. “Gallery Serpentine”. 3 Jun 2006. EGL.
http://community.livejournal.com/egl/5228101.html

Rikki (therikkster) wrote in egl.
@ 2006-06-03 18:40:00

Current location: Home

Current mood: artistic

Current music: Save the last dance for me- Michael Buble

I was just wondering what everyone thinks of this outfit, although I haven't put all the parts together yet. I'm not sure what it comes under, besides possibly-EGA and 'Very stripey', but I thought I would check with the experts.

This skirt
With this bodice
With this coat (I already own this coat, and though it says male, it fits me perfectly and is knee-length on me)
With this top.

A. Do you think it works, altogether? I already know the bodice and coat work together because I have those two pieces.
B. If it does come under anything, what does it come under?
C. Any ideas for accessorising?

Be warned: The lolita section on 'Gallery serpentine' will bring you great pain, but the 'victoriana' section is delicious.
I think it will look good together, but I'm not sure about the brocade coat.

Also, I'd check that the pinstripes on the bodice and the skirt were the same size, width and colour. I've made that mistake before -_-;

As for accessorising, I think a choker with a cameo to go around the collar of your blouse would look really Victorian. Something like the first three HERE, but in black of course! or something more simple like THIS. I also think a pair of cute leather riding gloves and a matching top hat would look cute as pie.

And I don't know, guess the skirt makes it EGA. And well, the stuff I think you should wear with it would make it EGA. Hope that helped -_-;

You could even make something like this yourself: http://www.antiquingonline.com/cgi.bin/Web_store/Html/Images/cameos/s4247.jpg

So cute XD
umm.. judging by the look of the corsette and skirt
i think you'd be better off going as a gothic madame.
when i saw the skirt that's the impression that i get
plus, the coat is a little too dandy for an EGA i think

EGA is mainly about plain black/white/ (ocassionally blue) working together
not so much ruffles/laces (a tiny little ruffle on your blouse sleeve or neck tie is okay)
Atelier Boz and Moitie gave the best example for EGA most of the time
like Manamu here or Riku here

what you have atm, i think looks more like this one..

that's just what i think
but it is rather hard distinguishing gothic / madame / EGA sometimes .. ^^;
hope that helps a bit

ah i messed up the coding.. sorry..x_x;

Looks nice!

I actually kind of love it. I'm not 100% sure about the shirt, the frills might be
overkill but i wouldn't now until I saw it under the corset. But the rest of it = A+++.
It would be totally gorgeous EGA.
Wow. Their G+L section is like...the epitome of the MORE LACE = MORE LOLI faux pas.

Lycra tights + 10 pounds of lace = $110 of ugly, lolz.

As for your outfit, I think you might have trouble matching patterns. Seems to me like the bodice's stripes are going to be too big compared to the skirts. And that the skirts underportion (PVC) is going to make it a little too Gothy McGoth. And then the brocade and everything...

You might just want to try and simplify it all.

O_o o_O bloomer tights???

THEY'RE SOOOOO RORI.

That made my inner Loli cry, Ouji-sama. And bleed.

I'll compare them in the store, and if worst comes to worst, they do have a matching pinstripe corset I can save up for... The skirts underportion isn't PVC, though, it's silk?
I think the bodice, skirt and blouse would go together, but I'm not a fan of the jacket. And just make sure that the skirt's pinstripes match the bodices. *nods*

I think you should ditch the jacket. You're probably going to be fine with the blouse and corset. The items you picked look nice but their gothic & lolita section burns my eyes out. D:

Oh God the pain, the pain of it all! ;A; However, I do like this:  
http://www.galleryserpentine.com/ProductDetails.aspx?productID=331 for female aristocrat. XD And I'm not even into female aristocrat!

Oh mama! That IS nice!
i absolutely love the skirt. but your bodice seems to have wider stripes than the skirt, which could be an issue.

I'm less worried about the patterns than the length; I think a skirt like that would need either a very long coat or a short, fitted jacket (though with the bodice and the blouse you don't really need anything else).

It's a lovely coat, though. Did you order a standard size, or have it made to your measurements? And if you ordered a standard size, how does it fit in the shoulders?

I just got the standard size small, and I was suprised on how well it fit. I'm about 5'8, with large boobies, and it closes on me with no problem. You can have them made to your measurements, especially corsets, but it costs about $20 au more. Atleast, I think so. I just go to the shop and try them on. ^^;

oO I'm so jealous of you for being able to just "go to the shop".

(I recently bought their longline victorian corset, and oh, so much love.)

Anyways. I'm not sure the outfit would fall under ega, more the stylish victorian gothic style. Which I think leans very closely to ega. But does it really matter? I'm a huge fan of pinstripe and the outfit looks great. I think you could even wear it if the stripes don't match ^^
I'd have to see a pic of the coat on you before I could say anything about it, but I
think it has the wrong length to go with the skirt.

(Reply to this)

(21 comments) - (Post a new comment)
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