

THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

EDITORS, ARTISTS AND THE CHANGING STATUS OF MANGA
IN JAPANESE SOCIETY 1986-1995

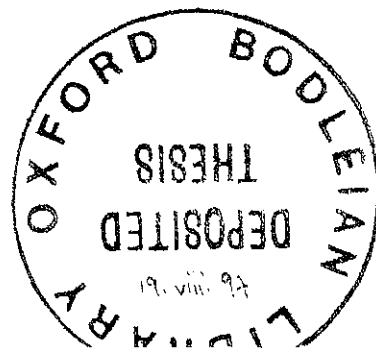
A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
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SHARON KINSELLA

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ABSTRACT

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EDITORS, ARTISTS AND THE CHANGING STATUS OF MANGA IN JAPANESE SOCIETY, 1986-1995

The contemporary Japanese manga industry began in 1959 when the first weekly manga magazines were published. Throughout the 1960s publishing companies attracted a large adult readership by incorporating radical political themes and realistic drawing styles in manga magazines. The readership continued to expand throughout the 1970s and 1980s and manga became a mass medium on a similar scale to television or pop-music.

This thesis identifies two distinct trends in the cultural status of manga which were developing from the mid-1980s onwards. On the one hand, what had previously been seen as 'commercial' manga became respected as an 'art' form and highbrow communication medium. On the other, manga was vilified as pornography and as the extreme expression of an increasingly fragmented society. In the former trend, prestigious corporations sponsored a new category of 'information' manga, whilst in the latter, 'girls' and 'otaku' manga genres were censured by a quasi-governmental censorship movement. The amateur manga subculture in particular became the focus of a 'moral panic' where those involved were characterised as isolated and socially dysfunctional.

This thesis, based on ten months' participant observation and intensive interviews in 'Morning' manga magazine editorial office in 1994, examines how this editorial was influenced by the changing status of manga in Japanese society in the formulation of its editorial policy and production methods. Editors felt that in the 1990s social changes presented the manga industry with serious production problems - in particular, a dearth of 'good' artists who could produce social themes, and a shrinking readership. Morning editorial attempted to overcome these problems by pioneering a new form of artistic, high-quality and respectable adult manga, aimed at older and more socially-élite readers. By creating a new proactive intellectual role for manga editors at the same time as sponsoring experimental graphic styles, Morning editorial produced a distinctive new form of conservative, state-supporting social and political adult manga.

The re-definition of specific genres of manga as 'art' by Japanese institutions was paralleled by changes in commercial manga production which privileged the social and intellectual interests of editors over those of readers and artists. This study concludes that editors have become increasingly important in manga production between 1986 and 1995, and that there is a tight interrelationship between commercial cultural production and broader cultural and social discourses generally.

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In Japan I owe a special debt of gratitude to Kurihara Yoshiyuki who exhibited generosity and an admirable zeal for experimental activities, in allowing me to spend ten months freely in his editorial department. The staff of Morning, Afternoon, Magazine, and Young Sunday magazine editorials were extremely generous with their time and it was they who made this project possible. I owe particular debts to Suga Tomoko, Ichihara Shinji, Ogawa Haruo, Pierre-Alan Szigeti, Doi Takashi and Torigae Takushi for the hours they spent answering questions and efforts they went to introduce me to their friends and professional contacts. Other individuals in Japan and England who have contributed their time and thoughts to this research include David Morriss, Kôjiwa Shinobu, Hayakawa Takeshi, Ishikawa Takeshi, Hiranuma Atsushi, Tomioka Hidenori, Taka Yûmi, Matsumoto Tomohiko, Nigel Shephard, Peter Rhoades, Emmanuel Ohajah and Yoshida Satoru. An extra special note of thanks is reserved for Robert Kinsella, Dr. Roger Goodman, Rod Tweedy, Tom Feiling, and John Fitzpatrick who each undertook the substantial task of proof-reading and gave me support in the final weeks before submission.

CONVENTIONS and GLOSSARY

Name Order:

1 All Japanese names are given in Japanese name order. ie. The family name first, followed by the personal name. [eg. Watanabe Kyô]

Money:

1 All amounts of money are given in yen followed by the equivalent in pounds in brackets, [eg. ¥6000 (£400)]. The exchange rate used throughout this thesis is ¥150:£1, which is an approximation of the exchange rate which prevailed throughout 1994.

Titles:

1 The titles of organisations, both Japanese and non-Japanese, are printed in normal, non-italic style. [e.g. Manga Japan, Seishônén Taisaku Honbu]

2 All book titles, both Japanese and non-Japanese, are underlined. [e.g. The Nerd Book]

3 The titles of Japanese books, manga series, and organisations appear in English translation first, followed by the actual Japanese title in brackets. eg. [The Nerd Book (Otaku no Hon), Tokyo Mothers' Society (Tokyo Haha no Kai)]

4 In order that they can easily be differentiated from the titles of manga magazines, the titles of manga series, both in Japanese and English translation, appear in italics. [e.g. *108 Temptations* (*Hyakuhachi no Koi*)]

5 The titles of manga series appear in English translation first, followed, by the actual Japanese title in brackets. [e.g. *Tomorrow's Joe* (*Ashita no Joe*)] Where the title of the manga series is not comprised of dictionary terms and is difficult to

translate it may be given only in its original Japanese. [e.g. *Gamurakan*]

6 The titles of newspaper and periodical articles, and single episodes of manga series appear in normal font enclosed in single quotation marks. [e.g. newspaper article - '*Ninki no risô no kacho, demo genjitsu wa...*', manga series episode - 'Front cover day']

Japanese terms:

1 All translations from interviews and secondary materials are my own.

2 All Japanese terms and statements which are NOT part of magazine, book, article, or organisation titles, are italicised. [eg. *tensai mitai to sunao*]

3 Where the original Japanese term used by an interviewee is of sociolinguistic interest and worth recording, it is given in brackets after the English translation. [e.g. un-sociable (*kurai*), particularistic (*jiheiteki*)]

4 It has been estimated that up to 20 percent of Japanese currently in everyday usage is comprised of English loan words. In this research in particular the titles of organisations, magazines and manga series', as well as the speech of interviewees contain a large number of English loan words. These words are Japanese terms and they appear in italics where the conventions dictate this. [e.g. *Sisters Panic, parody, ideology*] In order to make the interesting use of English loan words apparent, they are written according to their normal English spelling, and not in romanized *katakana*, - a phonetic syllabary used in Japanese to write, amongst other things, English loan words. [e.g. Manga *Dainamaito* (romanised *katakana*) will be spelt as Manga Dynamite (English), *idiorigii* will be spelt as *ideology*, *komiketto* will be spelt as Comiket].

5 In cases where an entire title is comprised of English loan words, it is not followed by an English translation. [e.g. *Sisters Panic*, Manga Japan]

Magazine titles:

There are a large number of confusingly similar manga magazine titles. In order to simplify the text, magazines which are discussed frequently are referred to according to the abbreviations of their titles. These abbreviated titles are in common usage in Japan. English loan words in magazine titles are spelt in English rather than romanised *katakana*. The first time a magazine title is mentioned in the text it is followed by the full Japanese title in brackets. [e.g. Jump (Shûkan Shônen Jump)]

English translations of Manga magazine titles, in some cases in their abbreviated forms, are listed below:

<u>English Translation</u>	<u>Actual Japanese Title</u>
Boy's Club	Shônen Gorakubu
Girl's Club	Shôjo Gorakubu
Kid's Club	Yônen Gorakubu
Shadow	Kage
The Street	Machi
Manga Boy	Manga Shônen
Magazine	Shûkan Shônen Magazine
Sunday	Shûkan Shônen Sunday
King	Shûkan Shônen King
Jump	Shûkan Shônen Jump
Monthly Jump	Gekkan Shônen Jump
Monthly Magazine	Gekkan Shônen Magazine
Young Magazine	Young Magazine
Mr Magazine	Mr Magazine
Reed Comic	Reed Comic
Action	Weekly Manga Action
Young Jump	Young Jump
Young Sunday	Young Sunday
BJ	Business Jump

Big Comic	Big Comic
Original	Big Comic Original
Spirits	Big Comic Spirits
Big Comic Special	Big Comic Special
Afternoon	Gekkan Afternoon
Morning	Shûkan Comic Morning
GARO	GARO
COM	COM

Frequently used Japanese terms:

<i>artist</i>	artist (in the modern sense of a special individual who makes 'art')
<i>comic</i>	manga books (<i>comic</i> is NOT usually used to refer to manga magazines)
<i>dôjinshi</i>	amateur (unpublished) manga books
<i>gekiga</i>	genre category of realistic, adult manga
<i>henshû</i>	edit
<i>henshûsha</i>	editor
<i>manga</i>	Japanese comics, manga magazines
<i>mangaka</i>	manga artist (the literal translation is "manga-maker")
<i>otaku</i>	nerd, amateur manga artist
<i>seinenshi</i>	adult manga magazines
<i>shôjo manga</i>	girls' manga
<i>shônen manga</i>	boys' manga
<i>shoten</i>	publisher
<i>shûkan</i>	weekly (publication)
<i>shûkanshi</i>	weekly magazines
<i>shuppan</i>	publish
<i>shuppansha</i>	publishing company
<i>tankôbon</i>	compilation volumes, manga books

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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction - Theory and Methodology

1.1 A background to the thesis

This thesis examines how the cultural status of the manga medium in Japanese society and the relationships between editors and artists involved in its production have changed in the recent period since 1986. It contributes new knowledge and ideas to our understanding of contemporary Japanese culture and society and to the production of popular culture generally, as well as providing the first comprehensive account of manga in the English language. It is the first study of its kind on the manga medium.

The thesis is divided into three sections. Section One provides a general account of the ethnography of commercial manga production which is based on the roles and relationships of manga artists and editors. Section Two is comprised of three chapters which examine social discourses about manga and the changing status of manga in Japanese society between 1986 and 1995. The first chapter is a detailed study of the development of the amateur manga medium and its wide-spread condemnation in the Japanese media after 1989. The second chapter examines an anti-manga censorship movement which was orchestrated by citizens' groups and government agencies together between 1990 and 1992. The third chapter examines the promotion of certain genres of commercial boys' and adult manga to the status of 'art' by cultural critics and cultural and educational institutions, and the emergence of a new category of 'high-quality' information and business manga books and political

and economics manga series in adult manga magazines. Section Three is a detailed ethnographic account of editorial discussions about manga and changes in manga production in the offices of Afternoon and Morning adult manga magazines in 1994. The first chapter of this section examines editors' criticisms of contemporary manga, and discusses problems facing manga producers in the 1990s and how they might be resolved. The second chapter examines actual production experiments which took place in these editorials in an attempt to create a new form of manga which was made substantially by editors. These three sections are preceded by two chapters which provide a brief theoretical and methodological background to the study of popular culture in Japan and a historical background of the manga medium and industry, respectively.

Although this study draws on Japanese Studies and Cultural Studies, the research was empirically-led rather than based on the exploration of a detailed theoretical interest. That is, I was interested in youth and culture in contemporary Japan - largely because I had been 'young in Japan' myself prior to becoming a graduate student. It later became apparent that from whatever perspective it is observed, there are in fact few theoretical or historical studies which have a direct relevance to this study. In particular there are no comprehensive studies of manga and there is little theoretical work on cultural production within the fields of sociology and culture studies. Hopefully this thesis will contribute towards filling those spaces.

The majority of research into popular culture has examined its consumption and the activities and perspectives of its audiences.

This is a study of cultural production - it is about popular culture from the perspective of its producers, in this case manga editors. The sociology of manga readers and the different ways in which manga is read, do not enter into this study. This angle is related not only to the fact that I chose to study manga producers and located the fieldwork in a manga production office, but also to the fact that one of the interesting aspects of this particular manga office was its conscious attempt to ignore the readers of its products.

For the same reason, this study is not significantly based on the stylistic history of manga or content analysis. However, the genres and contents of manga are inseparable from an examination of its commercial production - which is to a large extent organised by genre - and the changing status of manga in society. Basic descriptions of key manga genres and themes are outlined where this is a necessary part of broader explanations of their production and treatment in society. Actual samples are provided as an additional means of illustrating the main qualities of these genres and also, in some cases, as a form of evidence of trends described in the text.¹

Fascinating relationships, which hover in the background of this study, exist between the aesthetic currents of fantasy and realism in girls' and boys' manga, and social and political thought in the post-war period. In general, fantasy genres, including girls'

¹A number of the samples of manga provided are quite rare and unlikely either to appear in published histories of manga or remain indefinitely intact for future studies. Moreover, samples of current manga series which are readily available in the shops are not regularly stored after publication and are liable to complete erasure within a few years.

manga, Science Fiction, Lolita complex manga, and homoerotica for women, which are associated with unrealistic drawing styles such as large eyes, cute characters and fragmented composition, have been linked to personal romance, 'individualism' and the exploration of narrow personal issues. At the opposite extreme, 'realistic' manga or *gekiga*, which is associated with strong plots and more 'realistic' drawing styles - such as landscapes, historical settings, photographic detail, Japanese-looking characters, and perspective - has been linked to a commitment and interest in society and politics. During the 1950s and 1960s social realism in manga was associated with left-wing politics and passionate attitudes towards society, and also personal social success. Realistic manga (*gekiga*) was produced exclusively by men and continues to be associated only with commercial boys' and adult manga. The quite different type of fantastical girls' manga was developed from the mid-1970s by female manga artists. This was initially considered by many critics to be politically regressive or conservative in relation to realistic manga, because it was 'individualistic' and generally excluded social and political themes. During the 1980s the connotations of fantasy manga associated with women and realistic manga associated with men shifted significantly. Fantasy and girls' manga has become associated with play, individualism and self-expression in a positive sense and is viewed by some as a form of cultural resistance to the constraints of Japanese society. Realistic manga - which has been revived in adult manga magazines since the late 1980s - has become associated with *new conservative* politics and pro-business, pro-establishment idealism. This yet unexplored

dimension of the stylistic history of manga promises to be an interesting subject for a future art history thesis.

Another related issue which exists in the background of this study is the question of gender in contemporary Japanese society. With the rise of contemporary culture - such as girls' manga - led by women and threatened shifts in the broader role of women in the economy - reflected to some degree in the 1985 Equal Opportunities Employment Law, women have become increasingly central to Japanese popular and consumer culture and social and political discourse since the 1980s. As this is a study of the production of adult manga, made predominantly by and for men, the issue of women's involvement in manga is not immediately involved. In one sense, however, the category of adult manga only exists because it has been defined in relation to girls' or ladies' manga. Chapter five examines the condemnation of amateur manga derived from girls' manga genres' and the critical stance of Morning editors towards the former, between 1989 and 1994. Girls' and ladies' manga has barely been mentioned in Japanese studies of the medium and it too undoubtedly represents another extremely interesting thesis waiting to be written.

1.2 Studies of Japanese culture in Japanese Studies

The formula of 'cultural relativism' which decreed that the culture and civilisation of every nation should be respected as different but equal was central to the allied negotiation of a new era of international relations at the end of the Second World War. In 1951, the structural anthropologist, Claude Levi-

Strauss, was commissioned by UNESCO to write Race and History in which the conclusion that cultural differences divide the world is made quite clear:

... there is not, and never can be, a world civilization in the absolute sense in which that term is often used, since civilization implies, and indeed consists in, the coexistence of cultures exhibiting the maximum possible diversities. A world civilization could, in fact, represent no more than a world-wide coalition of cultures, each of which would preserve its own originality.²

The concept of cultural difference has been particularly influential in theorising about post-war Japanese society. In 1944, Ruth Benedict, an American adherent of the Boas school of Anthropology, published what many regard as the most influential text on Japan in the post-war period, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword. Benedict outlines her approach:

This volume therefore is not a volume specifically about Japanese religion or economic life or politics or the family. It examines Japanese assumptions about the conduct of life...It is about what makes Japan a nation of Japanese.³

Benedict's conclusion that Japanese culture is a series of fixed characteristics which eventually determine the entire structure of its society, politics, education, family formation, and so on, has had a paradigmatic influence on post-war Japanese Studies. The theory that Japan has a particularly different culture has also been internalised within the Japanese social sciences, and in domestic social debates about Japanese identity

²Levi-Strauss, C. (1952) Race and History, Paris: UNESCO. 45.

³Benedict, R. (1947) The Chrysanthemum and the Sword, London: Secker and Warburg. 13.

- which are collectively referred to as *nihonjinron*. Exclusive interpretations of Japanese culture, both in Japanese Studies and Japanese social discourse itself, have been challenged during the mid-1980s by the widely-appreciated work of, amongst others, Sugimoto Yoshio and Ross Mouer, Peter Dale, Carol Gluck and Yoshino Kôzaku.⁴ They proposed that the idea of a unique Japanese culture was essentially an ideological construct. These analyses of 'Japanese culture' keyed into a general intellectual interest in the 'artificial' construction of modern national identities, or 'imagined communities', through language, culture, and the mass media, which was piloted through the mid-1980s by the influential writings of Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger and Benedict Anderson.⁵ Critiques of the concept of Japanese cultural difference, in particular that of Peter Dale, have, however, erred in the direction of blaming Japanese intellectuals and social scientists themselves for originating and propagating theories of Japanese cultural uniqueness. A new approach emerged which implies not that Japanese culture itself is unique, but that the Japanese national obsession with defining a sense of its own cultural uniqueness, is unique. To a degree, this latter reinterpretation has legitimised the continued application of the concept of (self-constructed) Japanese cultural difference in Japanese Studies. Notions of

⁴Dale, P. (1988) The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness, London: Routledge; Gluck, C. (1985) Japan's Modern Myths, Ideology in the Late Meiji Period, Princeton University Press; Sugimoto, Y. & Mouer, R. (1986) Images of Japanese Society, A Study in the Structure of Social Reality, London: KPI; Yoshino, K. (1992) Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan, London: Routledge.

⁵See Benedict, A. (1983) Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, London: Verso; and Hobsbawm, E. (1983) The Invention of Tradition, Cambridge University Press.

all-pervading cultural difference continue to underpin popular textbooks on contemporary Japanese society:

Japanese society is here presented, therefore, according to a social anthropological approach. The aim is to introduce the world as it is seen by Japanese people. The reader is asked to suspend his or her own judgements and assumptions about how people should or should not order their lives, and try to imagine how a Japanese might see things differently.⁶

The art historian, Yamazaki Masakazu, has pointed out that there are, however, clear continuities between pre-war theories of racial difference and post-war theories of Japanese culture:

Thus two dangerous tendencies inevitably accompany cultural theorising. First, because cultural comparison lends itself to stressing differences rather than similarities, it tends to lead to over emphasising a culture's unique attributes. In Japan's case theories of culture have frequently gone hand in hand with racism and nationalism.⁷

More or less fetishistic emphases on the 'difference' embodied in Japanese culture have been present in the majority of more popular texts about post-war Japanese popular culture, including Ian Buruma's A Japanese Mirror and Nicholas Bornoff's Pink Samurai. The only book about manga in the English language, Frederik Schodt's Manga! Manga!, is also framed by the notion that manga is a part of a unique and relatively unchanging Japanese cultural heritage.

During the 1990s a new category of academic research into Japanese popular culture and culture industries began to

⁶Hendry, J. (1995) Understanding Japanese Society, London: Routledge. 2.

⁷Yamazaki, M. (1994) Individualism and the Japanese: An Alternative Approach to Cultural Comparison, Tokyo: Japan Echo. Inc. 7.

distinguish itself. In this work, the expanding field of culture studies, and in particular semiology, sociolinguistics, and textual analysis, converged with the critique of the construction of Japanese national identity inside Japan, in Japanese Studies. Analyses of Japanese popular culture have focused particularly on the creation of a unique Japanese culture, or a sense of 'Japaneseness', in the Japanese mass media and popular culture. Painter's research into Japanese daytime television, exemplifies aspects of this trend:

For many Japanese... challenging TV's images of unity probably seems a foolhardy undertaking: who doesn't already know that televisual unity, like the *tatema* consensus found in many Japanese in-groups, is always partly a product of the imagination?⁸

In an article examining the negotiation of ideas about Japanese national identity and the local interests of Kuzaki villagers, Martinez observes that ordinary Japanese people who have become the subject of a television film about an aspect of traditional culture, consent to media myth-making about national culture:

...the villagers took part in that search for the sources of a 'unique traditional' Japan which occupies much of television-filming, domestic tourism and nationalist literature.⁹

Martinez and Painter are careful to point out that the construction of a cultural tradition in the Japanese mass media is neither peculiar to Japan, nor entirely manipulative, -

⁸Painter, A. (1993) 'Japanese Daytime Television, Popular Culture and Ideology', in the Journal of Japanese Studies, 19:2. 324.

⁹Martinez, D. P. (1992) 'NHK comes to Kuzaki: Ideology, mythology and documentary film-making', in Goodman, R. & Refsing, K. (eds.) Ideology and Practise in Modern Japan, London: Routledge. 164.

cultural idealism being an ordinary, as well as a special national, process. In Language and Popular Culture in Japan, Moeran suggests in a sociolinguistic survey, that 'keywords' used in the Japanese mass media and popular culture reflect, perhaps more than a unique Japanese obsession with cultural identity per se, a specific Japanese interpretation of modernity, which is comparable to that reflected in 'keywords' in the English language:

There is then a 'hard core' of keywords, numbering perhaps not more than a hundred, which seems to deal adequately with all aspects of Japanese culture.¹⁰

In addition to popular culture research, a number of insightful literary analyses of Japanese popular texts and even animation, including John Treat's dissection of the works of best-seller author, Yoshimoto Banana, and Susan Napier's critiques of Japanese science fiction, appeared in the 1990s.¹¹ Most recent studies of Japanese popular culture have begun to diverge away from the theme of Japanese cultural identity, towards issues related to the changing status of women and consumption in Japan. In particular, research into the production and content of women's magazines, fashion trends, advertising, and consumerism in Japan, has been generated under the umbrella of the academic research organisation, ConsumAsian, founded in 1992. This strand of contemporary Japanese popular culture studies has received its first purely theoretical exposition in

¹⁰Moeran, B. (1989) 'Keywords and the Japanese Spirit', in Language and Popular Culture in Japan, Manchester University Press. 72.

¹¹Treat, J. W. (1993) 'Yoshimoto Banana Writes Home: *Shōjo* Culture and the Nostalgic Subject', in Journal of Japanese Studies, 19:2.; and Napier, S. (1996) The Fantastic in Japanese Literature: The Subversion of Modernity, London: Routledge.

John Clammer's Difference and Modernity, published in 1995.

Clammer proposes that Japanese popular culture can be viewed as a multiple phenomenon, in essentially the same way as popular culture in Europe or the United States:

... as intense creativity taking place within certain defined technological and cultural parameters - it profoundly alters the way in which the whole phenomenon is viewed: as basically (especially through its use of language) reinforcing and confirming existing social norms, particularly by creating a sense of community and by breaking down the division that exists between the self and other...; as the cultural output of hegemonic capitalism...; or as a struggle for identity and alternative meanings in a basically oppressive cultural environment.¹²

This thesis is not about 'Japanese culture' in either the essentialising or broad anthropological senses in which it has generally been conceived in post-war Japanese Studies. On the other hand, although the issue of national identity does enter into the Second and Third Section of this research, it is not specifically concerned with the sociolinguistics or production of a sense of 'Japaneseness' in the contents of contemporary Japanese popular culture either. Finally, although this research has been influenced by contemporaneous studies of Japanese popular culture, it is not directly concerned with the issues of identity, manipulation and resistance in consumer culture, or the changing role of women in Japanese society. In fact, contemporary girls' (*shôjo*) culture could be perceived as the complementary opposite, and occasional adversary, of adult manga magazines, which are read mainly by working men with low

¹²Clammer, J. (1995) 'High Culture/Mass Culture and the experience of Late Modernity', in Difference and Modernity: Social Theory and Contemporary Japanese Society, London: KPI. 36.

disposable incomes. Through making a detailed study of manga which traces how it has developed within Japanese society over the past three decades, this thesis implicitly rejects the notion of a primordial 'Japanese culture' and affirms the antithesis, that all aspects of Japanese culture, like those of any other society, are subject to historical change and variation.

1.3 Theories of popular culture

The social significance of popular culture in the modern era is charted by the way it has been linked to the idea of mass culture. The coming of the mass media and the increasing commercialisation of culture and leisure gave rise to debates in the 1920s and 1930s, which have continued to the present. Leo Lowenthal traces some of the central arguments back to the writings of Pascal and Montaigne in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and links their emergence to the rise of the market economy.¹³

Three related themes can be discerned in contemporary debates about popular culture. Firstly, who makes popular culture? Does it emerge from the people as an autonomous expression of their interests and tastes or is it imposed on them from above by people in a position of power? Secondly, does the emergence of commodified popular culture mean that the criterion for profitability takes over from the criterion for quality, integrity, and artistry? Or does the consumer market ensure that

¹³See Lowenthal, L. (1957) 'Historical Perspectives of Popular Culture', in Rosenberg, B. & White, D. (eds.) Mass Culture, Glencoe: Free Press.

culture is truly popular because it makes available commodities that people actually want? Lastly, what is the ideological role of popular culture? Does it indoctrinate people with the ideologies of those in power? Or does it express resistance and the subversion of dominant ideologies? The focus on representation and ideology in the post-war period has reflected the general theoretical balance of the era and also the new interest in 'mass societies' or democracy.

The potential for popular culture to be used as a medium for ideological propaganda by those in power was demonstrated by the conscious attempt of the Nazi party in Germany in the 1930s to establish official Nazi ideology in all areas of culture and art, and to eradicate alternative political and aesthetic ideologies. In Japan too, the mass media, and artists, writers and manga artists organisations, were centralised and run under the direct surveillance of the military government throughout the Pacific War. The experience of totalitarian culture and mass society in wartime Germany influenced the theories of the Frankfurt School, which remain pivotal to post-war popular culture theory. Though not widely read until the late 1960s, key members of the Frankfurt School, Adorno and Horkheimer, produced a seminal critique of popular culture, The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception, in 1944. According to Adorno and Horkheimer, who drew from the German Marxist tradition, commercial popular culture produced by 'culture industries', reflects the consolidation of commodity fetishism and state monopoly capitalism. Popular culture shapes the tastes and preferences of the masses and moulds their consciousness by

inculcating the desire for false needs. In this way commercial popular culture turns its audiences into passive, dependant consumers, and undermines the potential for political resistance and opposition:

Films, radio and magazines make up a system which is uniform as a whole and in every part. Even the aesthetic activities of political opposites are one in their enthusiastic obedience to the rhythm of the iron system.¹⁴

Walter Benjamin, however, also a member of the Frankfurt School widely read in the early 1970s, stressed the democratic and participatory potential of contemporary popular culture.

Benjamin pointed out that the very process of mass reproducing popular culture created the potential for political and social representation:

But the instant the criterion of authenticity ceases to be applicable to artistic production, the total function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practise - that of politics.¹⁵

Throughout the post-war period these two theoretical poles have been returned to in a drawn-out debate about the nature of ideology and popular culture. Between the 1960s and the 1980s, theories of youth culture and deviancy, and reception and audience theories, highlighted the fact that popular culture was often consumed, particularly by women, blacks and working class youth, in an active and imaginative way. Dick Hebdige

¹⁴Adorno, T. W. & Horkheimer, M. (1972) 'The Culture Industry', in Dialectic of Enlightenment, New York: Herder and Herder. 120.

¹⁵Benjamin, W. (1936) 'The work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in Illuminations, London: Fontana. 1992. 218.

exemplifies the view that popular culture is not consumed in the form in which it is produced:

Hollywood films, advertising images, packaging, clothes and music - offers a rich iconography, a set of symbols, objects and artefacts which can be assembled and re-assembled by different groups of people in a literally limitless number of combinations.¹⁶

Through the active role of its audiences in influencing and subverting its meanings, social scientists such as Simon Frith, felt that popular culture could become a form of resistance:

Kids can use the symbols of pop culture as a source of collective power in their struggle with schools or police.¹⁷

The emergence of this group of theories focusing on resistance in popular culture, is linked to the historical circumstance of the emergence of massive youth subcultures in post-war Britain. By the late 1980s a number of critiques of these theories had emerged. In 1990 Jim McGuigan characterised the main strands of popular culture theory as a form of self-defeating 'cultural populism':

... the excessively audience-orientated and one-dimensional consumptionist perspectives have led to a lamentable foreclosure on questions concerning both 'quality', in the broadest sense, and the narrower sense of 'progressiveness'...¹⁸

¹⁶Hebdige, D. (1988) Hiding in the Light: On Images and Things, London: Routledge. 74.

¹⁷Frith, S. (1976) 'The Politics of Youth Culture', in Hall, S. & Jefferson, T. Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-war Britain, London: Unwin Hyman. 237.

¹⁸McGuigan, J. (1990) Cultural Populism, London: Routledge. 82.

McGuigan's main concerns are that theories which emphasise only the democratic and participatory aspects of popular culture display a complicity with 'consumer sovereignty' theories, and neglect to notice broader economic influences on the construction of peoples lives. Similar criticisms have also been made in the recently prominent political economy school of cultural analysis. This school returns, in part, to Adorno and Horkheimer's view of the culture industries - except this time the critique is based on material rather than idealistic grounds:

In general, then, the determining context for production is always that of the market. In seeking to maximise this market, products must draw on the most widely legitimated central core values while rejecting the dissenting voice or the incompatible objection to a ruling myth. The need for easily understood, popular, formulated, undisturbing, assimilable fictional material is at once a commercial imperative and an aesthetic recipe.¹⁹

One of the persistent problems of popular culture theory appears to be its inability to link together in a theoretically meaningful way the prerogatives of consumers and the prerogatives of the culture industries. Martin Barker has proposed a way of understanding comic texts as a 'contract' between readers and the publishers, between whom there exists an understanding about the type of contents and conventions which will be used in the texts. Barker also draws from dialogical theory developed by Bakhtin, to describe the two-way nature of popular culture texts:

¹⁹Murdock, G. & Golding, P. (1977) 'Capitalism, communication and class relations', in Curran, J. Gurevitch, M. and Woollacott, J. (eds.) Mass Communication and Society, London: Edward Arnold. 40.

... if all comics, all media, involve a dialogue between the text and the reader, then to study one side without implicitly assuming the other, would be like listening to one end of a telephone conversation without thinking about the other person's part... we need to understand ideology as dialogical.²⁰

Another related problem has been the separation of Culture Studies from mainstream social science. Through its treatment as a discrete subject, culture has been trivialised. Popular culture, however, is a central part of contemporary social structures, alongside politics and economics. By developing a sociological analysis of culture, in which its consumption is situated in the broader context of contemporary class structures, Pierre Bourdieu has contributed to overcoming this separation. In Distinction Bourdieu demonstrates how the career strategies of individual workers and the fights over social status between groups of cultural consumers interact within a context of general class struggle to structure 'cultural fields'. Bourdieu has also commented upon the social context of cultural production, in a way which is pertinent to aspects of the production of manga:

The relationship between a creative artist and his work, and therefore his work itself, is affected by the system of social relations within which creation as an act of communication takes place, or to be precise, by the position of the creative artist in the structure of the intellectual field...²¹

²⁰Barker, M. (1989) Comics: Ideology, Power and The Critics, Manchester University Press. 261.

²¹Bourdieu, P. (1971) 'Intellectual Field and Creative Project' in Young, M.F.D. (ed.) Knowledge and Control: New directions in the Sociology of Education, London, Collier-Macmillan. 161.

Despite occasional references to the theoretical importance of focusing on cultural production, there have, however, been few research projects on this subject:²²

Much work on cultural production from a broadly political economic perspective - certainly much work on ideology within the Marxist tradition - has taken the actual work of producing and distributing institutions and of those who work within them as unproblematic.²³

One of the underlying aims of this thesis is the search for a more integrated approach to analysing the relationship between culture and society. That is an approach in which intellectual and political currents in society affecting the consciousness of consumers and producers of popular culture, and the economic constraints of the culture industries, are understood at their point of convergence or 'determination' in the negotiation of cultural production in the culture industries. This perspective has been remotely inspired by challenges raised in the work of Raymond Williams:

What is fundamentally lacking... is any adequate recognition of the indissoluble connections between material production, political and cultural institutions and activity, and consciousness... (these) are in practice indissoluble: not in the sense that they cannot be distinguished for purposes of analysis, but in the decisive sense that these are not separate 'areas' or 'elements' but the whole, specific activities and products of real men.²⁴

²²Richard Jenkins advises: "You will look in vain in Bourdieu for a sociology of practices of cultural production...". Jenkins, R. (1992) Pierre Bourdieu, London: Routledge. 130.

²³Garnham, N. (1990) Capitalism and Communication: Global Culture and the Economics of Information, London: Sage. 12.

²⁴Williams, R. (1977) Marxism and Literature, Oxford University Press. 80.

1.4 Studies of manga

Debate about manga in Japan has been focused on its ideological role, namely, whether it represents a form of ideological indoctrination, or an expression of resistance to those in power. The latter question has been closely tied to discussion about whether or not manga is a popular culture which is created spontaneously by the people. During the 1950s a group of academics, including Tsurumi Shunsuke and Satô Takao, formed the Science of Thought Group (Shisô no Kagaku Group) which began to theorise the new popular cultures (*taishû bunka*), of which manga was a main component. Research into popular culture in this period was strongly influenced by a long and specific Japanese tradition of 'cultural populism', in which popular culture, rather than *realpolitik*, has been celebrated as the real locus of social equality in modern Japan. Ethnographic research into domestic popular culture and "everyday life" - such as public bathing - was well established by the early twentieth century.²⁵ Satô and Tsurumi felt that as an exceedingly popular new culture, manga could help to establish democracy in post-war Japan:

As the number of youth who enjoy manga increase, manga is published by small magazines, and printed by amateurs, political manga will be liberated from its restrictions. Young people who have been brought up during the manga age are now beginning to make political statements, and political manga has the potential to develop rapidly.²⁶

²⁵See Katô, H. (1988) 'Japanese Popular Culture Reconsidered', in Kato, H. & Powers, R. & Stronach, B. (eds) A Handbook of Japanese Popular Culture, New York: Greenwood Press.

²⁶Satô Takao in Tsurumi, S. (ed.) (1970) Post-war Manga Volumes I (Manga Sengoshi I), Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô. 344.

In The Theory of Border Art published in 1967, Tsurumi developed the view that the manga medium belonged to a special category of popular culture which had arisen during the specific circumstances of the 1960s. By virtue of being made by and for amateurs, amongst the ordinary masses, Tsurumi proposed that manga was a truly representative popular culture and a new art form on the borders of society.²⁷

In Managed Society and Democratic Reason published in 1982, social scientist, Kurihara Akira, categorises post-war Japanese popular culture into three groups. These are organised on a spectrum spanning from the most managed and manipulated cultures (Popular Culture III), to the most *convivial* cultures, which are easily accessible and involve spontaneity and active participation (Popular Culture I). Kurihara places surveillance and television in Popular Culture III; pop-music, consumer goods, and newspapers in Popular Culture II; and manga, letter writing and *parody* songs (*kaeuta*), in the most *convivial* category.²⁸ Kurihara explains:

Although, relative to other media, manga is generally located in Popular Culture I, there is internal variation within manga. The works of Shirato Sanpei and Tsuge Yoshiharu, for instance, are more *convivial*, and the works of Tezuka Osamu and Ishinomori Shôtarô are more managed.²⁹

²⁷Tsurumi, S. (1967) The Theory of Border Art (Genkai Geijitsu Ron), Tokyo: Keisho Shobo.

²⁸Kurihara, A. (1982) Managed Society and Democratic Reason: A Political Sociology of Everyday Consciousness (Kanri Shakai to Minshû Risei: Nichijô Ishiki no Seiji Shakaigaku), Tokyo: Shinyôsha. 133.

²⁹Kurihara, A. (1982). 132-133.

While Kurihara's categorisation system seems a little arbitrary, his view that the level of democratic representation or manipulation in popular culture is essentially variable, and that the manga medium is one of the most representative popular cultures of post-war Japan, is clear.

In the wake of the Japanese publication of Contemporary Manga: The Complete Picture by Kure Tomofusa in 1986, several Japanese content analyses have appeared which challenge the theory that manga represents the viewpoint of the masses. Kure strongly criticises early theories of manga as a form of left-wing populism:

Even today the theory that manga is the weapon of the people is extremely strong. Though of course manga does have a history, there is no basis whatsoever to this argument. During the intense political formations around the period of the Pacific war, some manga, it is true, became critical, but some manga also became complicit with the political order.³⁰

In The Expressive Space of Post-war Manga, published in 1994, Otsuka Eiji, a prominent social anthropologist, applies Jungian psychoanalysis to a textual analysis of manga. Otsuka suggests that the potential for manga to express any form of resistance is severely limited by the pictorial form of manga itself:

With regard to the expressive space of post-war manga, it is not possible to say that there is an internal aspect, or metaphor about reality, on the inside of manga character's artificial skins.³¹

³⁰Kure, T. (1990). Contemporary Manga: The Complete Picture (Gendai Manga no Zentai Zô), Tokyo: Shiki Shuppan. 126.

³¹Otsuka, E. (1994) The Expressive Space of Post-war Manga: The Spell of the Symbolic Body (Sengo Manga no Hyôgen Kûkan: Kigôteki Shitai no Jûbaku), Tokyo: Hôzôkan. 389.

Moreover, Otsuka suggests that manga readers are hypnotised by the nature of some forms of manga expression through quasi-mythical manga characters - such as Tezuka's *Atom Boy* which represents scientific progress - into an unquestioning acceptance of the symbolic meanings of manga stories. In Manga Theory also published in 1994, Yomota Inuhiko (pen name) also emphasises the hidden potential for ideological manipulation which is present in the styles of manga drawing:

Manga poses as an individual experiencing a story, but the manga itself has an ideological existence. If manga temporarily carries a world-view, and if the contents of that story which are embodied in manga are put aside, then manga is physically composed of lines, colour, and shapes, which must also be taken into consideration.³²

While the approaches taken in these analyses are diverse and specialised, their preoccupation with forms of ideological manipulation in manga is nevertheless apparent. This represents a complete reversal of the early post-war discussions about the progressive nature of the manga medium which accompanied its commercialisation. Despite rising interest in manga as a special form of Japanese popular culture, no Japanese research has yet been carried out on the production of manga or the economics of the manga publishing industry.

English-language material on the subject of manga is scarce. In 1983 Frederik Schodt published, Manga! Manga! An Introduction to the World of Japanese Comics, in which he traces in detail

³²Yomota, I. (1994) Manga Theory (Manga Genron), Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo. 10.

aspects of manga history. This account is concerned with the continuities and variations of its graphic style, themes and form of manga, which are traced as far back as the eighth century. Schodt does not pay attention to the fact that the commercial manga medium, which has provided the great majority of manga forms and styles, has expanded only from the 1960s, and is a highly contemporary social phenomenon.

In 1987 a chapter on the social history of manga by Tsurumi Shunsuke was published in English. Tsurumi places emphasis on the resistance of poorer sections of post-war society expressed in key works by Shirato Sanpei, Mizugi Shigeru and Yamagami Tatsuhiko.³³ In an article published in 1988, John Lent contributes new detail about the anti-establishment political history of cartooning and manga between the 1860s and the 1960s.³⁴ A problem which affects all of these historical accounts, and the majority of Japanese-language manga histories too, is that authors do not discuss manga in detail after the 1970s.

Several short articles based on content analysis of specific genres of manga have appeared in the Journal of Popular Culture. In 1979 Kenneth Skinner published an article on 'Salaryman Comics in Japan' based on a content analysis of *salaryman manga*, a genre which became popular during the 1970s. Skinner makes the plausible suggestion that:

³³Tsurumi, S. (1987) 'Comics in Postwar Japan', in A Cultural History of Post-War Japan 1945-1980, London: KPI. 29-45.

³⁴Lent, J. (1989) 'Japanese Comics', in Kato, H. & Powers, R. & Stronach, B. (eds) A Handbook of Japanese Popular Culture, New York: Greenwood Press. 221-235.

Social scientists' research and discussion about large Japanese work organisations have produced the image of the salaried employee as being passive, subservient and basically happy with his employment in "paternalistic" work organisations. Sarariman manga [sic], as perceptive social commentators, present indications that this image is far from accurate.³⁵

Amongst Anglo-American commentators the portrayal of sex and sexism in manga has been a theme of continuing interest. In 1991 Adams and Hill made a Freudian analysis of boys' manga magazines. They found that oral, anal, and Oedipal fantasies, with misogynous overtones, were common in boys' manga magazines, and suggested that:

Japanese comics are probably the dominant force in Japanese popular culture today and virtually all forms of vicarious protest and rebellion can be found in them. The dominant fantasy themes seem to be associated with the stage of the life cycle during which unresolved conflicts were encountered.³⁶

In 1994 American academic, Kinko Ito echoed Japanese feminists' arguments against manga. Ito found that sexist stereotypes of women prevailed in adult manga magazines and low-circulation pornographic manga, and suggested that this was responsible for inculcating sexist attitudes towards women in Japanese society.³⁷ Finally in 1994 Günter Nitschke presented a social geography of manga in an essay entitled 'Manga City':

In manga and cityscape alike, the "new visual generation" is exposed to a treat of the left and

³⁵Skinner, K. (1979) 'Salaryman Comics in Japan', in the Journal of Popular Culture, 13: 1. 141-60.

³⁶Adams, K. & Hill Jr., L. (1991) 'Protest and Rebellion: Fantasy Themes in Japanese Comics', in the Journal of Popular Culture, 25:1. 99-111.

³⁷Ito, K. (1994) 'Images of Women in Weekly Male Comic Magazines in Japan', in the Journal of Popular Culture, 27:4. 81-95.

right sides of the brain simultaneously: to a stimulation of its verbal, discursive, and deductive as well as spatial, holistic and intuitive faculties.³⁸

This comprehensive literary survey reflects the limited range of previous research on boys' and adult manga. It might also be pointed out here that the quality of the research displayed in some of these articles, published in a leading academic journal, is sub-standard. The lack of actual knowledge about Japanese society amongst Anglo-American academic institutions and editors appears to have exacerbated a tendency towards publishing articles which would probably be recognised as inadequate, if they were about equivalent aspects of European or American culture.

1.5 Research methodology

The research fieldwork for this thesis was based in the editorial office of a high-circulation adult manga magazine, *Morning*, in a major publishing company, Kôdansha, in Tokyo. The methodology used was geared to the study of cultural production, rather than that of cultural reception, or cultural content. A combination of suitable ethnographic and sociological research methods were employed, including participant observation, extensive interviewing, and short self-completion questionnaire surveys. Ethnographic methods are more typically associated with anthropology than sociology or popular culture studies. However,

³⁸Nitschke, G. (1994) 'The Manga City', in Ueda, A. & Eguchi, M. (eds.) The Electric Geisha: Exploring Japan's Popular Culture, London: Kodansha International. 237.

examination of the sociology - the social relations - of cultural production, can only be dealt with by ethnographic methods, which are tailored to examining specific social relations between inclusive groups of people. Sociological surveys, content analysis, and economic analysis were also used to develop a broader picture of manga in Japanese society. A more detailed exposition of this research, and a biographical list of 63 interviewees, has been attached to the main body of this text in a Methodological Appendix. Many of the individuals interviewed during the research and quoted in this text are either powerful or famous, and readers can benefit from being aware, if they wish, of the relative social significance of otherwise anonymous and interchangeable Japanese names.

While the history and general ethnography of the manga industry are described in Chapters Two to Four of this thesis, it is based primarily on an analysis of the adult manga industry. Adult manga is arguably the most interesting category of the commercial manga industry, in that it is the most rapidly developing and dynamic section of mainstream manga publishing. Several adult manga magazines, which became low to medium circulation publications, were launched during the late 1960s, but the renaissance of adult manga publishing took place between 1986 and 1994. As the number of adult manga magazines increased, then so new genres of social and political adult manga developed within the adult manga medium. In the recently expanding category of adult manga, trends which affect the whole of the manga industry are concentrated. To quote Raymond Williams:

It is in these difficult transitional areas that most questions about the social organisation of culture are confronted.³⁹

In 1994, Morning magazine was at the vanguard of developing the adult manga medium and ran an international programme through which it pioneered contracts with foreign comic artists, and attempted to raise its profile, both in Japan and internationally. As a researcher based in Morning editorial offices I was an unexpected visitor whose presence, it was formally decided, might contribute in some way to raising Morning's public profile and the general phase of experimentation focused on raising editorial creativity, already being conducted inside Morning editorial office. Thus although an outside presence in Morning editorial, from the perspective of senior editors I was there for a purpose which ultimately they knew more about than I did. As Dale outlines, one of the well-known problems of ethnographic research is the disturbing effect of the social researcher on the subject of enquiry:

Eliciting information does more than draw out neutral data; the foreign presence of the anthropologist as interrogator prods, spurs and conditions his informants to objectify and reflect upon their world in a way perhaps formally alien to them.⁴⁰

In the case of this fieldwork, however, I did not occupy the typical position of a social researcher. I was enthusiastically encouraged to interview editors, the majority of whom required no prodding, and who were more inclined to guide me as to what I may and may not think, than to allow themselves to be guided.

³⁹Williams, R. (1981) Culture, London: Fontana Press. 212.

⁴⁰Dale, P. (1988) The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness, London: Routledge. 5.

In short, I was treated as a normal aspect of an extraordinary office, an unusual situation that was enhanced further by the presence of a French contract editor and visits from other foreign (white) visitors and comic artists. In return for researching Morning, I contributed to the editorial by taking part in electing the winners of manga competitions, writing proposals for new manga series, translating and advising on the use of English slang and other English words in Japanese texts, and showing foreign comic artists around the office.

Not only Morning, but other manga editorials and related organisations which I visited also tended to be receptive to the idea of a foreigner researching manga. Figure 1 shows a sample of manga in which I featured - as a foreign student with strange Japanese, asking stupid questions at a manga artists' cherry blossom viewing party. Although I am portrayed in a slightly sarcastic light, the fact that such a trivial event was recorded and published at all, clearly indicates that the staff of the magazine in question, Comic Box, were 'flattered' by my visits and keen to advertise this association to their readers too.

The particular receptiveness of Morning editorial to becoming the subject of a foreign research project was both a great advantage, and a disadvantage. As the object of Morning's experiment in internationalisation, I was encouraged to research certain aspects and develop certain opinions about manga. It was assumed that I would study the manga medium itself and present a positive image of manga in my work. As I began to take a greater interest in the process of producing manga and the social

Figure 1

A published manga in which I, the researcher, am featured asking questions at a manga artists' party

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

Source: 'Henshûbu Nikki', in Comic Box, 1994-5.

relations between manga editors and manga artists which I saw around me, Morning editors became less enthusiastic about my enquiries. By September 1994, when I left the editorial office, I had the distinct feeling that I had overstayed the welcome of senior editors. Culture industries in general have developed a reputation amongst researchers for being highly secretive organisations. In an American Ph.D. on the video music industry Banks noted that:

Several researchers have noted that MTV executives have been notoriously reluctant to provide interviews. Denisoff contended that "practically no decision makers at MTV were directly accessible."⁴¹

With regard to information about the industrial production of manga, including details about contracts, profit statistics, artist/editor relationships, and executive decisions, Morning editorial was also highly secretive. On several occasions when I attempted to interview editors, particularly chief editors, I was forced to terminate and abandon the interview, due to the persistently evasive or abstract answers I was given to my questions.

The disadvantage of being based in Morning editorial was the difficulties this created when I attempted to interview manga artists. In many cases editors enthusiastically invited me to meet and interview artists who were under their supervision but remained present throughout the proceedings. Occasionally editors appeared to be responding to an unspoken criticism that

⁴¹Banks, T. (1991) 'The Historical Development of the Video Music Industry', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Univeristy of Chicago. 28.

artists were not free to speak openly and seemed to almost challenge me aggressively to interview their artists, with encouragement of "Go ahead. Ask the next question!". The presence of editors at interviews sometimes created farcical situations in which neither the artist nor I felt comfortable and yet were effectively forced to go on with our interview. It was a difficult situation to resolve, given the fact that manga artists who are not famous are not generally traceable as individuals either, and manga artists who are famous tend to be surrounded by editors most of the time. This problem was eventually overcome as I made more contacts in the manga industry and found other ways to meet manga artists independently from Morning editorial office.

CHAPTER TWO: The History and Political Economy of Manga

2.1 The History of contemporary manga

Just as there are film critics, art critics and literary critics, in Japan, there have come forth manga critics. Many manga critics argue that the origins of contemporary manga lie in caricatures and cartoons produced in ancient Japan.⁴² Zealous manga fans have even suggested that cave paintings are manga and that therefore manga are the oldest form of expression.

Responding to the interest in linking manga to remnants of pre-historic Japanese culture, Iwanami Shoten published a paperback translation of Lancelot Hogben's From Cave Paintings to Comic Strips, in 1979.⁴³ Other manga disciples have candidated the vulgar caricatures of people, animals and phalli discovered on the back of wooden panels of two seventh century Buddhist temples, Tōshodaiji and Hōryūji near Nara, as the first Japanese manga.⁴⁴ In truth these caricatures are a form of antique graffiti and beyond the unremarkable fact that they are also drawings, they have no relationship to modern manga at all. Manga are the specific product of contemporary Japanese society and mass media. The prevalence of analyses which suggest that manga should be comprehended, no matter how tenuously, in terms of Japanese ancient history, is the result of a recently popular

⁴²The only Anglo-American manga critic and scholar, Frederik Schodt, considers manga to be a 1000 year long phenomenon. Schodt, F. (1988). Manga! Manga! The World Of Japanese Comics. New York: Kodansha International. 28.

⁴³Hogben, L. (1979) From Cave Paintings to Comic Strips (Dōkutsu Kaiga Kara Rensai Manga Made), Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.

⁴⁴Tsurumi, S. (1987) A Cultural History of Postwar Japan 1945-1980, London: KPI. 30.

trend to make manga appear more categorically Japanese, and as such a more respectable medium within Japanese society.

Humorous narrative picture scrolls drawn in the early twelfth century and attributed to the wayward Buddhist bishop, Toba, are widely considered to be Japan's first cartoons. Toba's scrolls are stories composed of scattered text written over a series of overlapping, unframed illustrations. These include the Animal Scrolls (Chôjûgiga), Hungry Ghost Scrolls (Gaki Zôshi), Disease Scrolls (Yamai Zôshi), Farting Contests (Hôhigassen), and Hell Scrolls (Jigoku Zôshi). The Animal Scrolls, which feature anthropomorphised animals broadly similar to Walt Disney's animation, are believed to be a satire on the Buddhist clergy and contemporary society.⁴⁵ Scrolls and humorous Zen pictures such as these were almost certainly drawn for the entertainment of the clergy alone, if they were exposed to anyone at all.⁴⁶ Any relationship between Toba's Buddhist cartoons and contemporary manga clearly resides in its artistic form, rather than its sociological and historical significance. Of the latter, there is no relationship whatsoever between the specific circumstances which encouraged one individual priest to draw cartoons satirising his profession in the twelfth century, and the specific circumstances which encouraged the development of an immense manga industry in post-war Japan. Manga magazines and books did not become widespread until after the Pacific war.⁴⁷ It is possible that there are continuities, albeit distant,

⁴⁵An article about Toba Sôjô's Animal scrolls. Nippon Tsûshin 'Rabbits and Frogs' (Usagi to Kaeru), January 1995. 3.

⁴⁶Swann, P. (1958). 107-108.

⁴⁷Kure, T. (1990). 23.

between the internal devices and artistic techniques of the scrolls and of contemporary genres of manga. Unfortunately, whether this continuity exists is also unproved as introductions to manga which arrogate that there is a stylistic tradition do not also demonstrate where it can be observed.

A crude form of wood block printing was introduced to Japan from China in the ninth century. In the early seventeenth century wood block printing technology was improved allowing mass-reproduced literature and entertainment to flourish in the rapidly growing cities of Tokugawa Japan. The earliest illustrations known to be made for ordinary towns-people were *Ôtsu-e* (*Ôtsu* pictures) produced by artisans in the town of *Ôtsu* situated to the north of Kyoto, from the mid-seventeenth century.⁴⁸ *Ôtsu-e* were produced as Buddhist amulets for pilgrims but quickly turned into secular prints of warriors and beautiful women, for travellers and locals:

Unpretentious and generally anonymous, they are full of rustic good-humour and broad, sometimes bawdy, wit.⁴⁹

Later *Ukiyo-e* ("floating-world picture") prints became an extremely popular form of entertainment and a prototype of twentieth century mass-cultures. *Ukiyo-e* prints commonly portrayed samurai as city dandies, beautiful geisha, Kabuki actors, ladies fashion, lovers in courtship and sex scenes, and scenic beauty spots. General similarities might be observed

⁴⁸Swann, P. (1958) An Introduction to the Arts of Japan, Oxford: Bruno Cassiner. 179.

⁴⁹Swann, P. (1958). 179.

between the typical content of *ukiyo-e* prints, and that of the contemporary Japanese media, especially television and fashion magazines. Thus Marilyn Ivy writes:

An extraordinarily vibrant popular culture flourished in Edo and Osaka during the Tokugawa period (1603-1868), and we can find many thematic and formal precedents of later popular culture in the productions of the urban bourgeoisie of that period.⁵⁰

Ukiyo-e prints were produced by teams of artisans. With occasional exceptions, such as that of Kitagawa Utamaro (1753-1806) who produced a series of prints for a noted experimental publisher, Jûsaborô, *ukiyo-e* print artists were more properly artisans.⁵¹ Artists were responsible for the design aspect of print making and this was not accorded any particular individual autonomy or special status. After further refinements to wood block printing technology in 1740, nearly all prints which had been produced in black and white only, were produced in full colour. As the quality of the prints increased then so did their popularity, while in the eighteenth century wood block print runs were limited to around 300 copies per design, in the nineteenth century up to 3000 copies were made from each wood block design.⁵² As the quality and sophistication of subject matter in *ukiyo-e* increased, the work of some *ukiyo-e* artists became distinctive, recognisable and sought after. Hiroshige Ichiryûsai (1797-1858) and Hokusai Katsushika (1760-1849) were amongst the most popular artists in the first half of the nineteenth century, and have become, today, the best known of

⁵⁰Ivy, M. (1993) 'Formations of Mass Culture', in Gordon, A. (ed.) Postwar Japan as History, Oxford: University of California Press. 242.

⁵¹Swann, P. (1958). 181-194

⁵²Swann, P. (1958). 194.

the *ukiyo-e* print artists in Japan and internationally. Hokusai Katsushika invented the term 'manga' to describe his humorous books of illustrations, by putting together the two Chinese characters, *man* and *ga*, which mean 'loose' or 'irresponsible' and 'picture' respectively.⁵³

Currently, Japanese manga are regularly compared to *ukiyo-e*. In terms of form, *ukiyo-e* do not bear any comparison to manga at all, the former being single page illustrations and the latter being stories with speech bubbles, which may extend for thousands of pages. In terms of content, *ukiyo-e*, a large proportion of which portrayed flattering drawings of real people, appear to more closely pre-date fashion photography and movie stills, than manga stories and characters. Whether there are especially strong stylistic and technical similarities between *ukiyo-e* and manga remains for technically rigorous art historians to demonstrate, though the extreme variety of styles found amongst contemporary manga genres would suggest that the stylistic similarity between *ukiyo-e* and manga must be rather general. The principal similarity between the *ukiyo-e* and manga is sociological. Art scholar, Peter Swann asks:

What gave the Japanese colour print its unique character? Above all it was a cheap form of reproduction within the means of all, created in order to meet an insatiable demand, among the plebeian classes of Edo, the people who could not aspire to *Kanô* products even if they had appealed to them. In short it was art for the masses... ⁵⁴

⁵³Schodt, F. (1988) Manga! Manga! The World Of Japanese Comics. New York: Kodansha International. 35.

⁵⁴Swann, P. (1958). 181.

During the period of the Meiji restoration in the 1860s, Japanese society was in turmoil. The *ukiyo-e* market disintegrated as urban societies of the Tokugawa period were dissolved. *Ukiyo-e* publishers and artists faced a novel form of competition in European style newspapers. The same European style newspapers which undermined the *ukiyo-e* industry provided a new vocation for unemployed *ukiyo-e* artists. *Ukiyo-e* artists converted their design skills to produce single-box political cartoons for newspapers.

European style cartoons, typically caricatures of political figures accompanied by captions, attracted an extraordinary and unexpected interest amongst the Japanese public in the late nineteenth century. A Japanese version of Punch magazine, entitled Tokyo Punch, was founded in 1862 and there the best cartoonists of the day were able to develop their talent.⁵⁵ European cartooning influenced the drawing styles of a new generation of internationally-minded Japanese cartoonists, many of whom apprenticed with Yokohama-based English, American and French cartoon magazines such as Box of Curios and Tobae (Toba pictures).⁵⁶ British cartoonist, Charles Wirgman, was amongst other Europeans residing in Tokyo who passed on their professional skills. In the following two decades a whole series of Japanese news and caricature magazines such as Marumaru Chimbun, the Sunday comic supplement of Fukuzawa Yukichi's famous newspaper the Jiji Shimpô, and Tokyo Puck, were launched. Established newspapers also began to hire artists to write

⁵⁵Lent, J. (1989). 225.

⁵⁶Schodt, F. (1988). 38-41.

serialised cartoon strips as their power to attract audiences was recognised.

In the 1920s in particular, newspaper comic strips flourished. A number of American comic strips such as George McManus's *Bringing up Father*, Bud Fisher's *Mutt and Jeff* and Pat Sullivan's *Felix the Cat* were translated and carried in Japanese newspapers such as the *Hôchi Shimbun* and *Asahi Graph*. These gentle American cartoons became the consciously sought-out prototypes for the first serialised children's comic strips.⁵⁷

In the early 1920s Suzuki Bunshiro, chief editor of the *Asahi Graph*, conceived an idea for a children's comic strip whilst touring Europe and America. On returning to Japan with samples of American comics, Suzuki arranged for his story about a little boy and a squirrel to be scripted and drawn by two members of his staff. *The Adventures of Little Shô (Shô Chan no Bôken)* became the first highly successful children's comic strip.⁵⁸

Kôdansha also published children's magazines. In 1914, Boys' Club (*Shônen Gorakubu*) was launched, followed by Girls' Club (*Shôjo Gorakubu*), and Kids' Club (*Yônen Gorakubu*). These colour magazines featured stories, photographs and illustrations as well as serialised comic strips which gradually extended in length throughout the 1920s.⁵⁹ Collected editions of these serialised comic stories reached about 150 pages in length. Tagawa Suiho's *Black Stray (Norakuro)* and Shimada Keizô's *Dankichi the Adventurer (Bôken Dankichi)* serialised in Boys'

⁵⁷Schodt, F. (1988). 45.

⁵⁸Tsurumi, S. (1987). 28-29.

⁵⁹Schodt, F. (1988). 51.

Club, are still being reprinted by Kôdansha today.⁶⁰ Childrens' magazines produced by Kôdansha publishers, and the collected editions of comic stories published in their wake, constitute the first recognisable beginnings of the contemporary manga industry.

During the Pacific war manga were considered, if not politically dangerous, then intolerably indulgent. Through official purges of the publishing industry, the role of the media sector and manga production decreased sharply:

Censorship, already strict in the 1930s, became more severe after the outset of the Pacific war. The police had the power to ban or withdraw any book, which, in their judgement, was harmful to public security. As a result, books of Marxist or Pacifist leanings, or those including favourable opinions of the US or Britain, were withdrawn from the stacks. Often parts of books or magazines were cut with scissors or blotted out with ink.⁶¹

Manga were subject to particularly strict censorship.⁶²

Eventually only one officially sanctioned cartoon magazine, entitled, simply, Manga, remained. Manga strips were banished from newspapers entirely in 1944.⁶³ Manga series also disappeared from the pages of childrens' magazines, which had become increasingly preoccupied with the task of educating children in national moral and political goals.⁶⁴

⁶⁰Kôdansha employee's manual: Chronik of Kôdansha 1909-1989.

⁶¹Shillony, Ben-Ami. (1981) Politics and Culture in Wartime Japan, Oxford: Clarendon Press. 121-122.

⁶²Havens, T. (1986) Valley of Darkness: Japanese People and World War Two, London: University Press of America. 23.

⁶³Tsurumi, S. (1987). 32.

⁶⁴Schodt, F. (1988). 51.

In the immediate post-war years what remained of the already centralised electronic mass-media, including the single NHK radio station, came under the direct control and reverse censorship of the American occupation forces.⁶⁵ Nonetheless, there was a demand for cheap entertainment and this encouraged a revival of previously declining local 'popular' cultural activities.⁶⁶ Principal entertainment became storytelling (*rakugo*),⁶⁷ and street picture card shows (*kamishibai*) for children.⁶⁸ Picture card show artists drew picture cards for companies which then distributed picture cards to picture card show men (*kamishibai ojisan*). Frequently, picture card artists also worked for publishers linked to book loan shops (see below), and some of the most successful, including Mizugi Shigeru and Shirato Sanpei,⁶⁹ graduated to producing published manga books during the 1960s. Picture card men performed primitive animation on the street for children, using cards and oral story-telling.⁷⁰ The mobile, miniature theatres in which these picture card shows were framed are reminiscent of English Punch and Judy shows. Frederick Schodt estimates that until 1953 there were as many as ten thousand artists contracted to numerous small picture card companies to write picture card stories, and that as many as five million people a day watched a street picture show.⁷¹

⁶⁵Ito, M. (1978) Broadcasting in Japan, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 16.

⁶⁶Tsurumi, S. (1987). 34.

⁶⁷Morioka, H. & Sasaki, M. (1990) Rakugo and the Popular Narrative Art of Japan, London: Harvard University Press. 264.

⁶⁸Tsurumi, S. (1987). 34.

⁶⁹Schodt, F. (1988). 62.

⁷⁰Tsurumi, S. (1987). 33-34.

⁷¹Schodt, F. (1988). 62.

Alongside the picture card shows various minor forms of manga publishing began to flourish. In Osaka manga pamphlets referred to as red books (*akabon*) on account of the red ink in which they were printed were sold to children by street vendors. Japan's most famous manga artist, Tezuka Osamu began his career in an inauspicious manner, in the late 1940s, by producing these cheap manga books. In 1947, however, he produced New Treasure Island (*Shin Takarajima*) in red book form, which became a national craze amongst children and a great influence on preceding generations of artists.⁷² By the mid-1950s a small manga industry produced manga booklets which were sold in discount book shops (*zokki*) and children's toy shops. During 1955 there were approximately one thousand of these discount book stores and five thousand toy shops, where these cheap manga booklets, priced between ¥25 and ¥60, sold between 5 and 30 thousand copies per issue.⁷³ Expensive manga books, costing between ¥100 and ¥200, with print runs of five to ten thousand were also sold at ordinary retail book stores.⁷⁴

The most important form of early manga publishing however was that of manga loaned to the public from book loan shops (*kashihonya*). During the 1950s there were five thousand of these shops, which loaned hard bound books and magazines for a daily fee.⁷⁵ A high proportion of these books were manga rather than

⁷²Schodt, F. (1988). 62.

⁷³Hatano, K. (1959) 'Children's Comics in Japan', in Kato, H. (ed.) Japanese Popular Culture. Tokyo: Tuttle. 104-105.

⁷⁴Hatano, K. (1959). 104-105. Indeed ¥100 - ¥200, which is only about half the average price of a manga magazine in 1996, must have been a great sum for children's entertainment in the mid-1950s.

⁷⁵Tsurumi, S. (1987). 34. Confusingly, Frederik Schodt suggests that there were anything up to 30 000 book loan shops in this period. (1988). 66. I have chosen Tsurumi's more conservative estimate however, as his source is a reputed Japanese specialist of *kashihonya*, and, moreover, it is a figure

literature. Many young and unknown manga artists eked out an existence writing manga series for Osaka-based publishers which distributed manga books and magazines to book loan shops. These included two popular monthly manga magazines: Shadow (Kage) and The Street (Machi).⁷⁶ During this period in the 1950s the population of Japanese cities became swollen with freshly migrated Japanese from rural regions, the majority of whom had become badly-paid factory hands. The clientele of the book loan shops began to age as these impoverished urban youth began to read manga as one of the only available sources of cheap entertainment.⁷⁷

The increasingly adult readership encouraged the artists, who began to develop a more realistic and political form of manga, orientated towards adults. Artist Shirato Sanpei was at the forefront of developing a new adult manga medium.⁷⁸ In the early 1950s, Tatsumi Yoshihiro, a popular book loan shop artist named the new genre *gekiga*.⁷⁹ The term *gekiga* was invented by replacing *man* - the first Chinese character of the term manga, meaning 'irresponsible', with the character *geki* - meaning 'dramatic'. The term *gekiga* was therefore a deliberate revision of the term 'manga' invented by Hokusai Katsushika one hundred years earlier. *Gekiga* artists felt that the term 'manga' had not described adequately enough the importance and seriousness of the new genre of realist adult manga. In the early 1950s, cinema

substantiated by discussions with manga artist Nagashima Shinji, who reported that only 5000 copies of his early manga produced for book loan shops were ever printed.

⁷⁶Schodt, F. (1988). 67.

⁷⁷Tsurumi, S. (1987). 32-33.

⁷⁸Tsurumi, S. (1987). 34-36.

⁷⁹Schodt, F. (1988). 67.

and black and white television began to make picture card shows obsolete. Many picture card show artists turned first of all to manga publishers serving book loan shops, and later to commercial manga magazines. In 1959 the manga magazine industry was launched by large publishers and this in turn undermined the attraction and popularity of book loan shops and street picture shows.

Meanwhile childrens' magazines, the production of which had been stopped entirely during the war years, was re-established. In 1947 Katô Kenichi, former editor of the pre-war children's magazine, Boys' Club, who had been purged from his job by the occupation authorities, launched a new magazine entitled Manga Boy (Manga Shônen).⁸⁰ In this magazine Katô dedicated a large space for serialised manga stories. Manga Boy also introduced reader's manga competitions, an institution which has become central to the process of recruiting new manga artists in the contemporary manga industry. Readers were invited to send their own attempts at manga writing to the magazine and have their work judged by the editorial staff. Work of promise was awarded with little badges and excellent work occasionally earned the young artist a commission to create a new manga series for the magazine. In Manga Boy, the early works of artists such as Tezuka Osamu, Fujio-Fujiko, Ishinomori Shôtarô, and Matsumoto Reiji, who have since become household names, were first published.⁸¹

⁸⁰Kôdansha employee's manual: Chronik of Kôdansha 1909-1989.

⁸¹Schodt, F. (1988). 64-66.

In contrast to the adult-orientated *gekiga* style developed by poorer, lower-status manga artists working for picture card and book loan companies, manga stories inserted inside quality children's magazines were generally rendered in a cute, gentle style. This child-oriented manga writing style, reminiscent of Disney, was pioneered in Japan by Tezuka Osamu - a man now widely considered to be the original and most influential artist of contemporary story manga. Today, though all Japanese comics are known by the generic term 'manga', they are also loosely divided into two main categories - *gekiga* and 'manga', in which case 'manga' refers specifically to cute, fantastical, and often child-oriented manga of the style pioneered by Tezuka Osamu, which tends to contain a large amount of the simple *katakana* script. Cute manga genres are also considered to be more middle class⁸² and less political, as opposed to adult-orientated *gekiga*, which is associated with historical and social dramas and anti-establishment politics.⁸³ Ishinomori Shôtarô, an artist intimately involved with COM and the manga movement, recently pointed out how GARO and COM were essentially "old enemies".⁸⁴ (See some basic samples of manga and *gekiga*, by Tezuka Osamu and Mizugi Shigeru in Figure 2.) During the 1950s important innovations, in particular the introduction of serious themes and film-like effects, and the extension of simple manga strip stories into much longer scripts were made in both main currents of the medium. Long manga stories, which later became known by the general term *story manga* invented by Tezuka Osamu, and long

⁸²Yuri Kôichi, an accomplished senior editor in Young Magazine and later in Afternoon, described manga and *gekiga* as *middle class* and *working class*, respectively. Interview. April 1994.

⁸³Ishikô, J. (1980) Notes on Postwar Manga History (Sengo Mangashi Notes), Tokyo: Kinokuniya Shoten. 11-13

⁸⁴GARO Mandara, (GARO Interviews), Tokyo: TBS Britanica. 1992. 229.

Figure 2

GEKIGA

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

Source: Mizugi Shigeru (1965) Ge Ge Ge Kitarô, Vol. 7. Tokyo: Chikuma Bunko, 1994.

MANGA

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

Source: Tezuka Osamu (1947) Lost World, Tokyo: Kadokawa Bunko, 1994.

gekiga dramas, became the staple product of the contemporary manga industry. In 1947, Tezuka Osamu's manga story New Treasure Island (Shin Takarajima) was published in one 200 page volume. Between 1959 and 1962 Shirato Sanpei's *gekiga* story The Fighting Record of the Invisible Organisers (Ninja Bungeichô),⁸⁵ was published in a sixteen volume series distributed to book loan shops.⁸⁶ As the manga magazine industry expanded during the 1960s, children's manga series produced for high-quality children's magazines and adult-oriented *gekiga* series began to merge in the new weekly manga magazines.

Within the manga industry 1958 is referred to as the "Eve of the expansion of commercial manga" (*Manga tairyô shôhi jidai no zenyô*).⁸⁷ In 1959 Kôdansha, which had hitherto dominated children's monthly magazine publishing, launched a new children's magazine, entitled Magazine (Shûkan Shônen Magazine), which contained a high proportion of serialised manga stories and became the flagship publication of the new manga publishing industry. Magazine set new standards for manga production because it was published on a weekly instead of a monthly basis, and this created an enormous pressure to speed up and re-organise production methods.⁸⁸ Rather than continue to publish within the narrow boundaries of gentle, children's stories, Magazine editorial sought to broaden the readership of its new manga-based publication by bringing new subjects and new genres

⁸⁵The Fighting Record of the Invisible Organisers is the English translation of Ninja Bungeichô chosen by Tsurumi Shunsuke, (1987). 34.

⁸⁶Tsurumi, S. (1987). 34.

⁸⁷Modern Popular History 1945-1985 (Gendai Fuzokushi Nenpyô 1945-85), Tokyo: Kawashutsu Shobo Shinsha. 1986. 116.

⁸⁸Second interview with Uchida Masaru. August 1994.

onto its pages. These were realistic social drama and *gekiga*. Uchida Masaru, the chief editor of Magazine from 1965, invited marginal and low-paid *gekiga* artists to begin working for his highly respectable children's manga magazine. This experiment in fusing manga and *gekiga* was extraordinarily successful and central to attracting manga magazines to a large, perhaps unexpectedly large, new readership of adolescents, students and young workers.⁸⁹ The readership of Magazine expanded rapidly and by 1966 its circulation had passed one million.⁹⁰ This was the beginning of the contemporary manga industry, based on weekly manga magazines and characterised by extremely high circulation figures. Between 1965 and the early 1970s the number of manga magazines multiplied rapidly. A decade later in 1974 there were 75 different types of specialised manga magazines with a total circulation of more than twenty million per month.⁹¹

2.2 Radical politics of the 1960s and the rise of the contemporary manga industry

The inclusion of social dramas into manga magazines greatly aided the commercial take-off of the contemporary medium, and at the same time germinated in manga a distinct political orientation. Manga has been prone to receiving and provoking political controversy throughout its history. The tremendous size to which the contemporary manga industry has grown, and the important role manga has played as a cultural bank for other mass media, including film, television, and computer games, has not, until recently, dampened its contentious and political

⁸⁹Uchida Masaru. August 1994.

⁹⁰Schodt, F. (1988). 67.

⁹¹Ishikô, J. (1980). 5.

reputation. During various periods since the expansion of the contemporary manga industry, intellectuals, citizens' organisations, the PTA, and politicians, have condemned manga as a vulgar and tasteless medium, which is damaging to public morality and children's education. Many dissident intellectuals and disaffected urban youth have simultaneously regarded manga as a critical, taboo-breaking and progressive medium. It would be difficult to embark on a serious study of any aspect of the manga medium without being aware of the political associations and cultural status of manga.

Western-style satirical cartoon and comic magazines established in the early Meiji period introduced a new forum for social and political discourse. Fukuzawa Yukichi, a prominent public figure enthusiastically involved in Japanese modernisation and the owner of the Jiji Shimpô newspaper, reportedly advised Kitazawa Rakuten, the premier cartoonist of the Meiji period that:

In the West they have pictures that parody and criticise both government and society. These cartoons are the only type of pictures capable of moving the world.⁹²

The civic authorities, unaccustomed to having their actions lampooned in public, by unappointed individual artists, were less appreciative of the progressive potential of the new medium and subjected editors and artists of the new magazines to police action and scrutiny.⁹³ The governing authorities' rapidly

⁹²Schodt, F. (1988). 42.

⁹³Schodt, F. (1988). 40-41.

established discomfort with the manga medium persisted throughout the twentieth century and manifested itself in recurrent bouts of desire to censor manga. Persistent and active disapproval of manga by government ministries and agencies has meant that, notwithstanding briefer moments of reconciliation - such as during the Pacific War - antagonism has punctuated the relationship between the manga artists and the political authorities. This antagonism has, at points, been exacerbated by broader social conflicts taking place in Japanese society, and at these times many manga publications have become extremely polemical.

The 1920s were a dizzying decade in Japan, when unprecedented social and political freedoms led to experimentation with ideology and lifestyle. New literary, working class, cultural, Marxist and feminist trends emerged from Japanese society. At the same time contemporary economic inequalities became more obvious and the source of increasingly political criticism. In the 1920s and 1930s a variety of manga and cartoon artists' associations were established, such as the Japan Manga Artist's Federation (Nihon Mangaka Renmei), to promote and recognise the work of different groups of artists. The most political of these associations was the Proletarian Artists Movement (Proletarian Geijitsu-Kei), which was a pro-working class organisation, a leader of which, Kobayashi Tokiji, was tortured to death in a police station in 1933.⁹⁴ In the 1920s many artists were interested in writing manga and cartoons which criticised the

⁹⁴Tsurumi, S. (1987). 36.

political establishment.⁹⁵ Most artists were avowed Marxists and of these many were also members of the Japan Communist Party. Radical manga, such as Masamu Yanase's *A Capitalist's Education* (*Kanemochi Kyoiku*), serialised in the Yomiuri Sunday newspaper, was printed in even main stream publications.⁹⁶ In addition to radical artists' associations, a range of dissident manga publications including Proletariat News (*Musansha Shimbun*), War Banner (*Senki*), The Labourers' Manga (*Rôdô Manga*), and The Peasants' Manga (*Nômin Manga*), were established by radical artists.⁹⁷

In 1925, the Japanese government passed the Peace Preservation Law (*Chian Iji Hô*) which marked the beginning of a long reversal of the liberalising political and cultural developments of the first quarter of the twentieth century. The 1930s, particularly following the Manchuria Incident of 1931, was a decade of increasingly powerful social regulation and control of the media and opposition political movements in Japan. Intellectuals, writers, artists, publishers and also manga artists were placed under pressure to conform to government preferred moral and political messages. In this period several Marxist manga artists were imprisoned and even tortured and killed by the police.⁹⁸ Long lists of romance, manga, antiwar and pro-democracy writers and artists whose work was not to be published were presented to publishers by the government.⁹⁹ From 1941, censorship and

⁹⁵Schodt, F. (1988). 51.

⁹⁶Schodt, F. (1988). 50.

⁹⁷Lent, J. (1989). 227.

⁹⁸Lent, J. (1989). 227.

⁹⁹Havens, T. (1986) Valley of Darkness: The Japanese People and World War Two, London: University Press of America. 22-23.

control of the media escalated under the political New Order. Increasingly publishing companies and editors met military and political officials to discuss the content of each issue of their publications and the number of magazines and books published declined rapidly throughout the war period. In 1937 there were 16,788 officially sanctioned magazines in Japan, but by 1944 there were only 942 registered magazines left.¹⁰⁰

In 1932 the government dismantled all manga artists' associations and reformed them into a single umbrella organisation known as the New Japan Cartoonists' Association (Shin Nippon Mangaka Kyôkai) which cooperated closely with the military and political authorities. Between 1941 and 1945, almost all manga production was forbidden, with the exception of one manga magazine bearing as its title, the generic term, Manga. Manga magazine was a publication instigated by the Japanese government and produced by the New Japan Cartoonists' Association under the editorship of Kondo Hidezô. It featured propaganda material in which British and American leaders were portrayed as vampires, devils, and other monsters.¹⁰¹

During this period of repression comic artists adapted their product to keep their livelihoods either by turning to non-political genres such as childrens' stories, to the newly developed *nonsense manga* genre, or else by making a complete political conversion to nationalism, in the style referred to in

¹⁰⁰Kasza, G. (1988) The State and the Mass Media in Japan 1918-1945, London: University of California Press. 223-224.

¹⁰¹See the front cover of Manga in 1946, after Japan's defeat, inside the front cover of, Tsurumi, S. (ed.) (1970) Post-war Manga. Vol. 1 (Manga Sengô Shi I), Tokyo: Iwanami Hen.

Japanese as *tenkô*. Key artist of the pre-war period, Yokoyama Ryûichi, assisted the Japanese military by writing propaganda cartoons for Asian colonial subjects, which attempted to convince local populations of the positive nature of Japanese military occupation.¹⁰² Censorship continued for several years after the war under the new ideological guidelines stipulated by the US-led allied occupation authorities. Many manga artists reverted to their pre-war socialist political allegiances and took work advertising the new American 'democratic' Japan. After the war the New Japan Cartoonists' Association dismantled itself and became the Japan Cartoonists' Association (Nippon Mangaka Kyôkai).¹⁰³ Interestingly, this organisation, although increasingly marginal to the corporate organisation of the manga medium, has continued to be the principal manga artists' organisation throughout the post-war period. It is clear from an examination of this historical period that manga and manga artists have not always been bound to anti-establishment politics. Where the Japanese government has been prepared to accept or even use the manga medium for its own ends, manga artists have been glad and cooperative.

In the 1960s the contents of manga swung to the left. New weekly manga magazines began to carry a whole range of socialist political themes and individualistic expressions. Anti-establishment politics were first fed into the manga books produced by book loan shop *gekiga* artists in the 1950s. In 1964 the left-wing trend was made more concrete with the launch of a

¹⁰²Discussion with manga artist, Yokoyama Ryûichi, at a garden party held in his home in Zushi. March, 1994.

¹⁰³The current official English-language title of the Nihon Mangaka Kyôkai is the 'Japan Cartoonists' Association'.

monthly magazine, devoted to opposing war and fighting oppression. In 1964, Nagai Katsuichi, a young veteran of Japan's war with China, launched GARO manga magazine for children, specifically in order to expose them to the class politics and Marxist perspective of Shirato Sanpei.¹⁰⁴ Children, however, were apparently not amused by Shirato's story about peasant revolts and class war in the eighteenth century, *The Legend of Kamui (Kamuiden)*. *The Legend of Kamui* tells the story of a *burakumin* (Japanese under-caste) boy, who fights against the poverty and oppression of his people. However, it has frequently been suggested that Shirato's story which was serialised in GARO throughout the latter half of the 1960s, and which became popular amongst young people and students, was partly responsible for the huge increase in the adult manga audience at this time.¹⁰⁵ By the height of its popularity and circulation in 1970, GARO was intimately involved with the culture of revolutionary students. The historical themes of Shirato's series converged with the themes of the contemporary *zengakuren* student's movement. (See the cover of GARO in 1970 in Figure 3.)

During the late 1960s commercial publishers sought to draw political and social themes in their manga. By introducing *gekiga* into commercial weekly magazines and concocting radical manga stories, the editors of magazines such as Magazine politicised their product to suit the interests of the readers. Between 1969 and 1971 Sunday published by Jitsugyôsha, serialised a historical drama about the Chinese cultural

¹⁰⁴Interview with the founder of GARO magazine, Nagai Katsuichi. June 1994.

¹⁰⁵Lent, J. (1989). 229.

Figure 3

The front cover of GARO magazine in December 1970

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

Source: Seirindô Shuppan.

revolution by Fujiko Fujiô, entitled *Mao Tse Tung*. (See Figure 4.) In 1971, *Jump*, published by Shûeisha, carried a story by Abe Kenji entitled *The Human Condition (Ningen no Jôken)*, which protested against the presence of American army bases in Japan. (See a scene from *The Human Condition* in Figure 5.) The presumed political orientation of Magazine was described in a phrase, first coined by Waseda University student newspaper, which has since become myth amongst manga fans: "In the right hand the Asahi Journal, in the left hand Magazine." Between 1968 and 1973 Magazine serialised a story by Chiba Tetsuya and script writer, Kajiwara Ikki entitled *Tomorrow's Joe (Ashita no Joe)*, about a poor boy who fights to the top through boxing. *Tomorrow's Joe* is reputed to have been extremely popular with radical students who read the series to put themselves in a fighting mood before joining street demonstrations.¹⁰⁶ (See *Tomorrow's Joe* in Figure 6.) *Jump* magazine went further in supporting the students' cause and even published encouraging photographs of student demonstrations on its inside pages. In 1971, issue 8 of *Jump* featured a section of photographs of student demonstrators campaigning for B52 bomber planes to go back to the USA and leave Okinawa Islands, entitled 'Nation-wide Sit-in'. Manga was paid the ultimate political tribute by the Japanese Red Army. The Japanese Red Army, which represented the radical extreme of the largely middle-class student movement, hi-jacked a plane to North Korea in 1968. To the press and media they proclaimed "We

¹⁰⁶Aramata suggests that *Tomorrow's Joe* captured the "never give in spirit" of the baby-boom generation in this period. (1994) Aramata's Grand 'Magazine' Retrospective (Aramata no Shônen Magazine Daihakurankai), Tokyo: Kôdansha. 110-111.

Figure 4

1969 Gekiga series, Mao Tse Tung, by Fujiko Fujio

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

Source: Manga Sunday (Shûkan Manga Sunday), published by
Jitsugyô no Nihon Sha, 14 July 1969.

Figure 5

Gekiga series *The Human Condition (Ningen no Jōken)* by Abe Kenji

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

Source: Jump (Shūkan Shōnen Jump) published by Shūeisha, 1971.

Figure 6

Tomorrow's Joe by Chiba Tetsuya and Kajiwara Ikki

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

Source: Ashita No Joe Vol.1, Tokyo: Kôdansha, 1968. 177.

are Tomorrow's Joe!", thereby attempting to identify themselves with students and young workers via a manga character.¹⁰⁷

Many top manga artists of this period who were contracted to produce series for the leading weekly manga magazines also lent their talents to producing political materials produced in manga form for organisations such as the Japan Labour Union (Nihon Rôdô Kumiai). There is no literary documentation about the involvement of leading artists, such as Fujiko Fujio, and Mizugi Shigeru, in non-commercial political organisations during this period and its extent is therefore unknowable. However, copies of several left-wing political pamphlets produced in manga form exist in the archives of the Japan Diet Library (Nihon Kokkai Toshôkan) in Tokyo, providing evidence of a trend towards such activities. Figure 7 shows the cover of a pamphlet entitled Manga AMPO and subtitled an Introduction to the Japan Labour Union, published in 1969 by the Rôdô Junpôsha (Labour Report Company). In this pamphlet, manga artists Ishinomori Shôtarô, Fujiko Fujio, Mizugi Shigeru, and Asaoka Kogi, identified their cause with students and workers fighting against factory exploitation and more prominently against the extension of AMPO, the post-war Peace Treaty between Japan and America. An unannotated front cover of what appears to be a serialised derivation of this pamphlet, entitled Weekly AMPO (Shûkan AMPO), published in 1970, also appears inside the front cover of Post-war Manga Volume I: Politics.

¹⁰⁷First interview with Uchida Masaru. April 1994.

Figure 7

Manga AMPO, a political manga pamphlet published by the Japan Labour Union in 1970

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

Left wing politics and experimental student culture absorbed into weekly manga magazines between 1965 and 1972, is closely linked to the exceptional growth of the manga industry in post-war Japan. The effect of the student movement on commercial manga was further magnified by the fact that the 1960s generation was the original post-war baby-boom generation (*dankai no sedai*). Commercial boys' manga also absorbed experimental new artistic forms stimulated during this period. Between 1970 and 1971 the front cover and colour pages of Magazine was frequently designed by Tadanori Yokoo, who was later to become an internationally famous artist and illustrator. The results were an exciting mix of manga and innovatory graphic design. (See some of Yokoo Tadanori's distinctive manga magazine covers in Plate 1.)

Conservative sections of society reacted strongly against the student demonstrations and against what they considered to be the inappropriate reading of childrens' manga by young adults. The fashion among students for reading weekly boys' manga magazines did not go unobserved. Manga was blamed for inciting students to get involved with immature and violent activities. As comic expert, John Lent, put it - manga provided the "intellectual vitamins for Japan's ultra leftist movement."¹⁰⁸ Between 1968 and 1970 attempts to ban the sale of manga were orchestrated by local citizens' organisations. 'Do not buy' (manga) demonstrations (*fubai undō*) were orchestrated outside

¹⁰⁸Lent, J. (1989). 229.

Plate 1

Front covers of Magazine designed by Yokoo Tadanori
between 1970-1971

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

Source: Aramata's Grand 'Magazine' Retrospective
(Aramata no Shōnen Magazine Daihakurenkai), Kōdansha.
1994. 16.

publishing companies' offices in Tokyo, by citizens' organisations, stemming from Chiba-ken in particular.¹⁰⁹

The charge that manga was responsible for inflaming the political passions of youth was challenged by contemporary journalists however:

During the student riots manga magazines were read devotedly by students on the barricades. This gave rise to the idea that the *zenkyōto*¹¹⁰ has a strong relationship to manga reading. It has become a kind of myth. Shirato's manga has recently been re-published by a major publishing company and now occupies a large space on Kinokuniya book (shop) shelves. When this happens it should be obvious that reading manga has no connection anymore to students attitudes towards society.¹¹¹

In 1971, Asahi Journal published a three part series titled 'Marx and Manga', in which contributors put forward the critical opinion that the commercialisation of manga, its publication by large companies, meant that it no longer contained any political or social meaning. This view is clearly linked to Adorno and Horkheimer's negative conceptualisation of the mass media, which was becoming widely read and influential amongst new left intellectual movements at precisely this time, around 1970. To say simply that manga were commercial was a one-sided critique of the connection made between manga and student politics however. We can assume that students did not buy manga simply because it was on sale. Rather, manga became popular and

¹⁰⁹Interview with senior editor of Magazine, Iishi Tohru. May 1994. Mention of the *fubai undō* is generally a taboo subject amongst manga artists and editors.

¹¹⁰*Zenkyōto* is the National Federation of Student Self-governing Associations, but it has come to mean the student movements of 1965-1970 in general.

¹¹¹'Marx and Manga' (Marx to Manga), Asahi Journal, 9 April 1971. 31.

increasingly widely read because it provided, for a time, a cultural forum that flattered and accommodated the anti-establishment views and interests of a large section of Japanese youth. Manga magazines became a commercial mass-culture precisely because they allied themselves with the huge Japanese student movement.¹¹²

The genres of commercial boys' manga while continuing to derive mostly from the realist *gekiga* graphic style, moved towards love-comedy, science fiction, (more) sports, and campus manga - based on high school and university campus adventures. As a whole, these genres focused on the struggles of individual characters and their personal relationships. Nevertheless the notion of manga as a left-wing medium has persisted throughout the late post-war period until the present.

The content of manga has varied radically in different historical periods and in different publications. Manga has been radically progressive, and radically conservative too. It has also been extremely nihilistic, vulgar, absurd, romantic and escapist. The striking capacity of manga for extremism and political radicalism generally, has remained constant throughout the twentieth century and has not been altered by the commercial expansion of the medium in the post-war period. The true source of the fascination manga has held for different groups of people in Japanese society is its characteristic responsiveness to subjective movements in society.

¹¹²See Dowsey, S. (1970) Zengakuren: Japan's Revolutionary Students, Berkeley: The Ishi Press.

2.3 The contemporary manga industry

In March 1959 Kôdansha launched the first weekly manga magazine, entitled Magazine (Shûkan Shônen Magazine). This was rapidly followed by the launch of Sunday (Shûkan Shônen Sunday) weekly manga magazine by Shôgakukan in November of the same year.¹¹³ In 1963 Shônen Gahôsha launched King (Shûkan Shônen King) manga magazine and throughout most of the 1960s Magazine, Sunday, and King, continued to be the three most popular manga magazines. The period between 1956 and 1961 was a period a massive growth in Japanese publishing. The launch of news magazines and manga magazines anticipated the spread of television by several years.¹¹⁴ In the same month that Magazine was launched, March 1959, Asahi journal weekly news magazine was also launched. Asahi Journal was to become the "modern-layout, progressive, cultured individual's top magazine throughout the 1960s".¹¹⁵ In April 1959 Shûkan Gendai and Shûkan Bunshun news magazines were launched; in May they were joined by Shûkan Heibon; in July another manga magazine, Manga Sunday (Shûkan Manga Sunday), was launched; and in November another weekly news magazine, Shûkan Kôron was launched.¹¹⁶

The audience for manga increased rapidly at the same time as the audience for television. Television entered most Japanese homes from 1957 onwards when NHK and NTV television companies began to

¹¹³Modern Popular History 1945-1985 (Gendai Fuzokushi Nenpyô 1945-85), Tokyo: Kawashutsu Shobo Shinsha. (1986), 118.

¹¹⁴Japan Update 'Weekly Magazines: Keys to Information Society', Spring 1988. 9-10.

¹¹⁵Modern Popular History 1945-1985. 1986. 118

¹¹⁶Modern Popular History 1945-1985. 1986. 116-118.

sell colour licenses and broadcast in colour.¹¹⁷ Between 1959 and 1965 the number of television receivers increased rapidly, from two to five million households.¹¹⁸ In 1959, Japan acquired the four television broadcasting stations - Nippon Education Television, Fuji Telecasting Corp., Tokyo Broadcasting System. Inc., and Asahi National Broadcasting Corp. - which have continued to dominate broadcasting throughout the post-war period to the present.¹¹⁹ Rather than finding a formidable competitor in television, however, the manga and television industries expanded alongside each other. Acceleration of manga distribution from monthly to weekly allowed manga publishers to keep up with the electronic pace of television broadcasting. Sociologist, Soeda Yoshiya, makes the straightforward observation that:

Manga is the dominant force in Japanese popular culture, the way television is in the USA.¹²⁰

To some degree the manga medium and television became two symbiotic mass media. A pattern rapidly developed whereby serialised manga stories were adapted into televised animation, which served to advertise further the original manga stories and inflate manga book sales. In the 1980s manga stories were used as scripts for serialised television dramas, such as Tokyo Love Story and Hotel, - originally written by veteran manga artist Saimon Fumi and Ishinomori Shôtarô respectively. Film, though popular in the early post-war period, lost a significant part of

¹¹⁷Ito, M. (1978). 20.

¹¹⁸Ito, M. (1978). 21.

¹¹⁹Ito, M. (1978). 92.

¹²⁰Soeda, Y. (1987) quoted in 'Grown Men in Japan Still Read Comics and Have Fantasies', in The Wall Street Journal, 21 July. 1.

its audience to manga and television during the 1960s. By the 1990s the domestic manga market procured three times the revenue of the domestic film industry.¹²¹ The rapid decline of the film making industry in post-war Japan has often been linked to the rise of manga, which is commonly perceived as a poor man's film industry. The increases and decreases in popularity and dissemination of film, television and manga in the 1955 to 1981 period are compared in Figure 8.¹²²

Like television the contemporary manga industry is controlled by a very few large companies. Unlike television there are also numerous smaller publishing companies producing manga. Four publishing companies, Kôdansha, Shôgakukan, Shûeisha and Hakusensha control 75.3 percent of the total market.¹²³ Rather like the different television channels in Britain, the manga of each of these companies tends to have certain loosely definable characteristics determined in part by the age of the company and their specific relationship to other established institutions of Japanese society. Kôdansha tends to produce more 'traditional' (*dentôteki*), masculine (*otokoppoi*) , *blue collar* manga; Shôgakukan tends to produce slightly more *white collar*, 'feminine' (*onnarashii*), 'soft' (*motto yawaraka*) or 'liberal' (*sukoshi shimpoteki*) manga; and Shûeisha tends to produce highly market researched (*data-shûgi*), 'commercial' (*shôhiteki*) manga, and produces magazines with the highest circulation figures in

¹²¹Nikkei Business (1993) 'Manga Industry Special Report', September. 115-117.

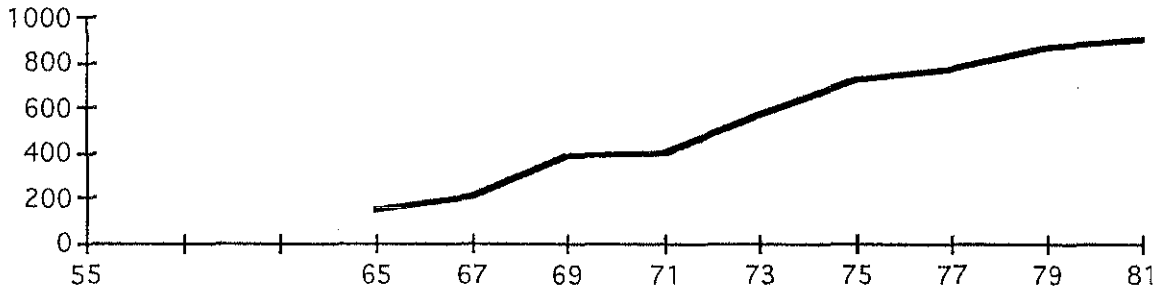
¹²²Tabular data used to prepare these graphs published in Soeda, Y. (1983) Manga Culture (Manga Bunka), Tokyo: Kinokuniya Shoten. 32.

¹²³Nikkei Business, 9. 1993.

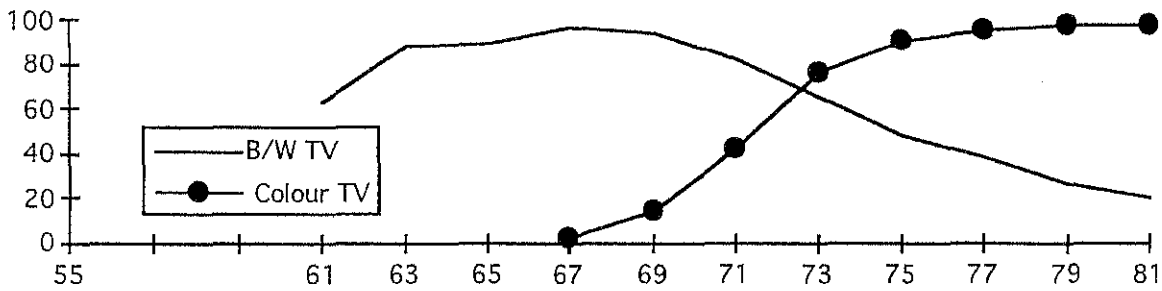
Figure 8

The relative popularity of Manga, Television and Film in Post-war Japan

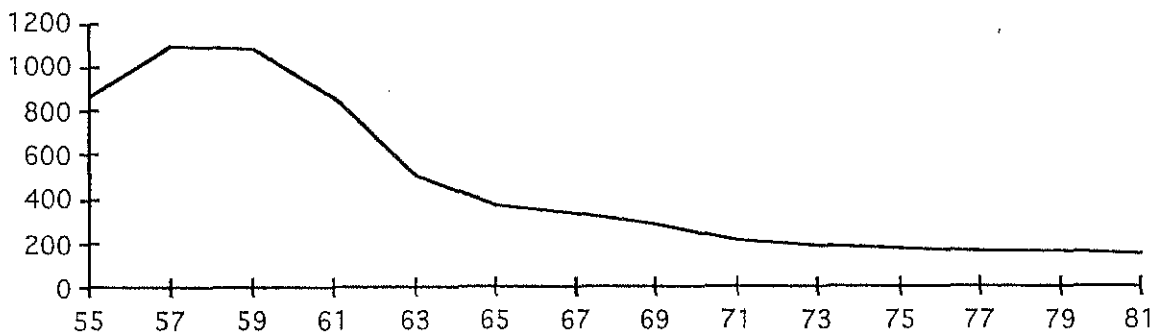
8a. Popularity of manga between 1965-1981 according to total annual sales of manga magazines in units of 1 million



8b. Popularity of television according to annual viewing rates as a percentage of the total population between 1961-1981



8c. Popularity of film measured by cinema seat sales per annum between 1955-1981 in units of 1 million



Source: Tabular data published in Yoshiya, S. (1983) Manga Culture (Manga Bunka), Tokyo: Kinokuniya Shoten. 32.

Japan.¹²⁴ Whilst the division of the manga market between the largest manga publishers is firmly maintained, preventing the entry of new companies into their share of the market, continual competition persists between the leading manga publishing companies. While large companies have become settled in the market, numerous small manga publishing companies, once devoted to catering for specialised public tastes not fed at the mass culture table, have gradually become bankrupt and disappeared (in the 1970s especially).¹²⁵ The cultural specificity of the manga medium to Japan has also provided publishers with powerful cultural protection against competition from foreign publishers. Reed Comic, which was launched in 1971 by Reed Sha, a branch of Reed International - currently subsumed under the business interests of the late Robert Maxwell - is the only manga magazine to have been owned by a foreign corporation. Launching a new manga magazine is a high risk project typically involving extensive capital losses spread over several years even if the magazine eventually manages to secure a reasonably regular market and revenue. These losses are even greater if the magazine is eventually dismantled because it fails to attract a regular audience. The trajectories of even well-established manga magazines are unstable and annual profit and loss margins may fluctuate greatly. Only large powerfully-established companies are capable of absorbing the losses as well as the gains of manga production.

¹²⁴Discussions with staff editor of Comic Box, Miyoshi Kan. April 1994.

¹²⁵Interview with manga artist and biographer Ishikawa Jun. June, 1994.

The circumstances in which manga production is highly lucrative are specific. The circumstances are those of maximising the audience size, preferably by producing hugely popular manga series referred to as 'big hit' (*dai hit*). Selling one manga magazine or book to an entire audience is regarded as preferable to selling several manga magazines or books to the same audience because in this situation the same cultural product is reproduced and sold many times at no additional cost to production. Large publishers' profits were notched up at an average of 68 percent of their incoming revenue by Nikkei Business in 1993. This represents a higher profit margin than the two leading companies on the Tokyo stock exchange in 1993, Ushio Denki (electrics) and Kensu (shipping).¹²⁶ In 1992 the total revenue accrued from the sale of manga books and magazines totalled 539.2 billion yen, representing a 4.6 percent increase from 1991. The total revenue from sales of all published matter increased by 3.4 percent in the same period, illustrating the faster rate of growth in manga publishing than in publishing in general. Manga represented 39.2 percent of all published material, and 23 percent of all publishing revenue in 1994.¹²⁷ The profitability of manga publishing has meant that the temptation to try their hand at producing manga is intense for even the most culturally refined or inexperienced of companies.

Competition between companies producing manga magazines also extends inside certain large publishing companies. In Kôdansha Morning editorial had an extremely competitive relationship

¹²⁶Nikkei Business, 9.1993.

¹²⁷Publisher's Month Report: 3.1994 (Shuppan Geppô 3.1994), Tokyo: Shuppan Ryôgaku Kenkyûjô. 5.

with Magazine editorial. The principal competitor of Morning is Shôgakukan's Big Comic Spirits, but Morning also competes with Magazine, Monthly Magazine, and Young Magazine, all published by Kôdansha.¹²⁸ This inner competition is a function both of the structure of large Japanese companies, including Kôdansha, which is said to be run more by management factions than by a single executive, and also of the heterogeneous nature of manga magazine readerships. Practice has shown that manga magazine readers cannot be tightly categorised and therefore large sections of a magazine's actual readership may overlap with the target readership of another magazine published by the same company, although categorisation by taste has become more important since the late 1980s, as the manga readership in Japanese society has both spread and fragmented.

In the manga industry the most vital statistics to know are the circulation figures. These simultaneously measure the revenue and the popularity of any magazine. The table in Figure 9 depicts the circulation figures of the 15 highest selling manga magazines in Japan in 1994.¹²⁹ *First rate* magazines are generally defined as those with circulation figures which exceed 1 million. Of these there were 12 in 1994, while a further 50 magazines had still considerable circulation figures of between 150 000 and 990 000.

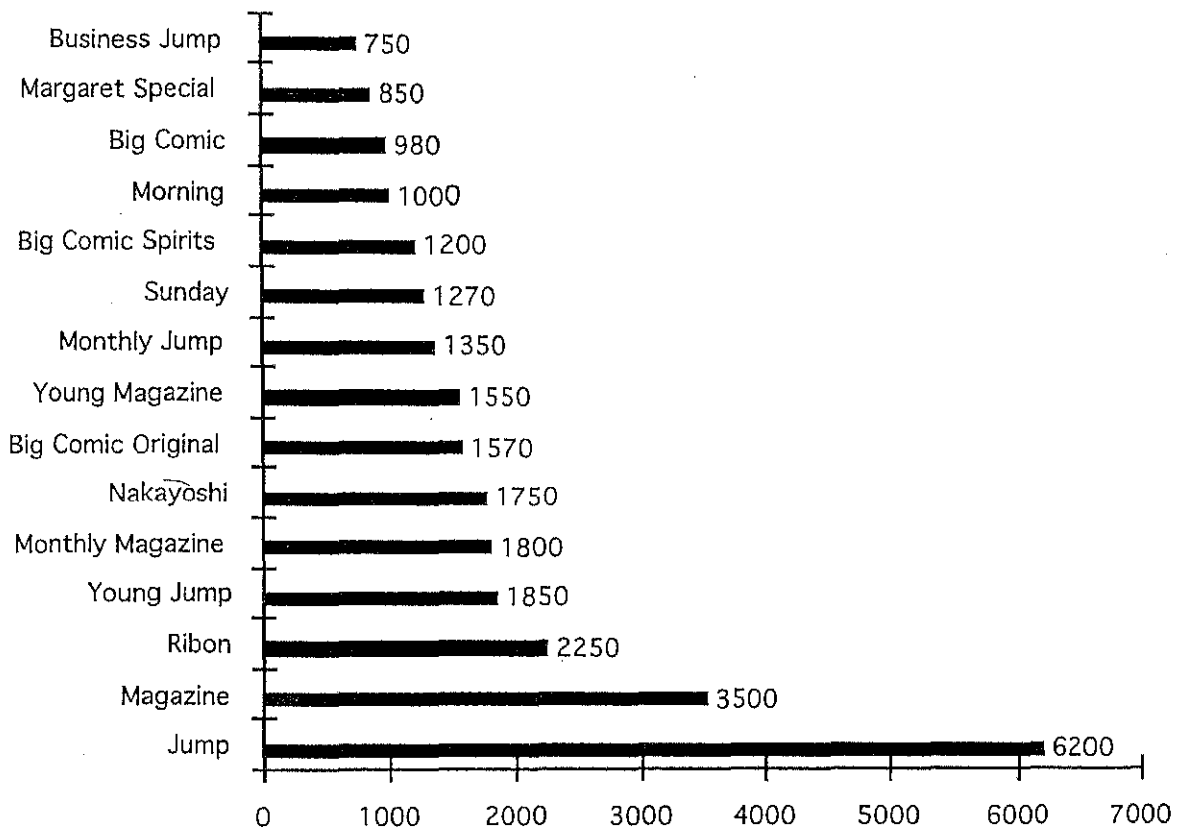
The circulation figures of top weekly manga magazines far exceed the circulation figures of the most popular non-manga weekly

¹²⁸Morning Readers' Survey 1994, Kôdansha internal document.

¹²⁹Publisher's Year Report 1994 (Shuppan Nenpô 1994), Shuppan Ryôgaku Kenkyûjô. 191.

Figure 9

The actual circulation figures of the 15 most popular manga magazines in 1994 in units of 1000



Source: raw data in Publisher's Year Report 1994 (Shuppan Nenpô 1994), Tokyo:Shuppan Ryôgaku Kenkyûjô. 191.

magazines. *First rate* circulation figures for weekly news magazines hovered just below 100 000 in 1994. In the early 1990s the top position was generally occupied by the serious general interest magazine *Shûkan Bunshû*, which had an average weekly circulation of 900 000 in 1992.¹³⁰ The domestic audience for manga has more in common with that of television, pop-music and national newspapers. *Jump* is the best selling manga magazine, which had a circulation of 6.2 million copies per issue in 1994 (a figure which is strongly rumoured to have fallen to around 4.5 million in 1996).

Actual readership figures of manga magazines are 2 to 3 times higher than the circulation figures based on shop and kiosk sales. In common with many other self-contained cultural goods such as records, videos, computer soft-wear and books, socially acceptable 'piracy' of manga magazines is a common activity. Manga is consumed at no cost by individuals browsing through pages or entire magazines in convenience and book store aisles, after school, or in work breaks. Train commuters customarily leave manga magazines they have finished reading on train seats and luggage racks for other commuters to pick up and read. Some commuters also use openable bins, which are situated on many train platforms for the purpose of recycling manga paper, as free manga banks. The most common form of passing on magazines, however, is between friends, in the office, or at school, or between family members. *Jump*, sold 6.2 million copies a week through 1994, but had an actual estimated readership of approximately 20 million - approximately one fifth of the total

¹³⁰Nikkei Business, 9.1993.

population of 124 million, of Japan. In 1994 the readership rate of Morning was 3.1 per copy, meaning that the actual audience was approximately 3.1 million people.¹³¹

Manga magazines are generally sold at the lowest sustainable price and generate very little revenue for the publishers. In 1994 they cost ¥230 to ¥250, for a standard A5 size, 300 page magazine. The large profits involved in manga publishing are generated from the sale of manga books referred to as *tankōbon*, *manga books*, or *comics*. Manga books are made from compilations of stories serialised in manga magazines. Standard manga books are smaller - size A6 - and higher quality than magazines. Manga books are broadly comparable to the compilation videos made of popular British television series. Manga books cost about ¥500, between 20 and 30 percent of this price covers production costs, the rest is revenue for manga publishers and royalties for manga artists. In 1993 manga books accounted for 11.2 percent of all published material, and 9.7 percent of all publishing industry revenue. Bulkier, disposable magazines accounted for 28.1 percent of published matter but only 13.3 percent of revenue.¹³² The contemporary manga industry relies on this system of producing magazines and books in tandem - a commercial structure which has not been adopted in comic industries of USA or Europe. With rare exceptions the compilation of manga series into manga books by publishers is an automatic process, which both manga artists and manga audiences expect.

¹³¹Morning Readers' Survey 1994, Kōdansha internal document.

¹³²Publisher's Month Report: 3.1994, 5.

Both these forms of publishing exert an influence on the internal structure of contemporary manga. Manga is produced in long continuous series that can be split into episodes and compiled. This has the immediate effect of extending, sometimes it would seem almost infinitely, the length of manga stories. As long as a manga series continues to attract what is considered by a manga editorial to be a reasonable level of popularity, and the manga artist continues to be tractable, a story is prolonged. Manga stories frequently run to ten or more volumes before being brought to an end, and series which retain popularity over a long period may accumulate over 20 or even 30 volumes. Prolonging popular series facilitates not only the highly desirable production of manga books but also helps to stabilise the notoriously unstable manga market. Through story serialisation publishers hope to attract the same audience to return to their magazine each week in order to continue reading stories with which they have already become involved. However, the popularity of even first rate magazines may rely on the continuation of a small number of series. Qualities of addictive readability which may excite readers to continue reading the same series, and therefore magazine, every week, are consciously defined and sought after in manga editorials. While story elongation helps to stabilise product distribution over time, manga is a cultural good dependent on interaction with the changing trends in society. In order to survive external social change, which may undermine an established audience whilst producing another quite different potential one, the manga industry perpetually diversifies and adjusts its products.

2.4 Manga distribution

Manga publishing companies produce manga. Once produced it is reproduced, distributed and sold. Finished drafts of manga magazines and books go first to one of several large printers (*insatsu*). Printed manga is picked up from the printers by a book binding company (*seihonsha*), who cut and bind the manga books. Lastly, bound manga magazines and books are picked up from book binders by distribution companies (*toritsugiyasan*). In the pre-war period book binding and printing had been combined in single enterprises. During the allied occupation of Japan between 1945 and 1951 Japanese industries were re-organised and large family holding companies split up. Under the Anti-monopoly Law of 1947, the two processes of printing and binding books were divided into two separate enterprises, and separate book binders were established.¹³³ Publishers pay outright for the services of the printers and book binders, while the distributors claim a fixed percentage of the total sales revenue of the manga. In this sense distributors are actually sales (*hambai*) companies, although they are not formally referred to as such. The total revenue of manga is also its total cost price as publishers control the prices at which their manga is sold, and prevent competing retail outlets from lowering their prices, by printing them clearly on the covers of books and magazines.

In 1994, Kôdansha sold its manga to its distributors for 67 percent of the total revenue and the distributors sold the manga to retail outlets for 77 percent of the total sales revenue. The

¹³³Ito. T. (1992) The Japanese Economy, London: The MIT Press. 54.

distributors thus took ten percent of total manga sales revenues as its own revenue and retail outlets took a further 23 percent of the revenue of all stock sold. Retail outlets did not have to cover the costs of unsold stock within this percentage as manga publishing companies are obliged to buy back unsold stock from retail outlets, via distributors. Frequently, unsold manga books are given new covers or dust jackets and returned to retail outlets at a later date.

In 1994, seven distributors delivered 80 percent of manga magazines and 98 percent of manga books. The two largest manga distributors are Tôhansha and Nippansha, which each delivered 40 percent of Kôdansha manga books and magazines. Chûôsha, Taihansha, Ôsakaya, Kurita, Kyôwa Shuppan, and Taiyôsha, delivered a further 8 percent of manga. Train station kiosks where large quantities of manga are sold are supplied by a separate range of delivery companies. Although it does not allow economy of scale, all the main delivery companies deliver manga to all the main areas of Japan. However, the large delivery companies do not deliver manga directly to retail outlets. The number of outlets for manga are supernumerary and it must be delivered on a weekly cycle. Beneath large distribution companies there is an extensive hierarchical network of progressively smaller and more locally based distribution companies, which each take a small slice of the distributors' percentage to transport manga to other local distribution sites. These companies are referred to as the trading child-companies (*eigyô kogaisha*). Each large distributor has fixed arrangements with patron retail outlets, to which it regularly has manga

delivered. Smaller companies cannot use distributors because they cannot afford the percentages that the distributors demand. In return the distributors will not deliver small numbers of magazines. These companies, such as Seirindô and Fusion Production, have to deliver their magazines and books to retail outlets themselves, by hand.¹³⁴

In 1994 large publishers were concerned that distributors had become more powerful during the 1990s and might be able to demand increasingly higher percentages to deliver books and magazines. These concerns were borne out by a recent increase of 1.5 percent in the payment charged by distributors. In September 1993, distributors began buying manga at 67 percent of its revenue, instead of 68.5 percent.

Manga producers were particularly concerned about the power of distribution companies as the relatively bulky proportions, large volumes and weekly production cycle of manga magazines means that distribution is a relatively large part of its total production cost. Moreover the extremely low profit margins of manga magazine production means that any change in the percentage charged by distributors has to be offset immediately by manga editors, either by raising the cost of their manga magazines or by attempting, more problematically, to increase the appeal and popularity of their magazines.

However, manga readers are very sensitive to the price of manga magazines, a sensitivity that increases the younger the target

¹³⁴Interview with Seirindô staff editor, Yatabe Shûji. January 1994.

age group of the publication. Magazine prices are extremely competitive. In 1994, there was a general pattern whereby the Jump range of magazines published by Shûeisha were cheapest, followed by the Sunday and Spirits range of magazines published by Shôgakukan which occupied the middle price range, while the Magazine range, and Morning and Afternoon magazines published by Kôdansha were the most expensive. However the variation in prices of magazines was limited as publishing companies generally could not compete over prices without making losses. In 1994 the range was limited to the extremes of ¥230 (£1.53) for a copy of Jump, and ¥250 (£1.67) for a copy of Morning. Distributors not only threatened to take a higher percentage from publishers than they claimed to be able to afford, but in the same process exerted pressure on publishers to keep the prices of manga magazines low. Large publishers claimed that they could not raise the prices of their magazines because if they did so the larger part of this increased revenue would immediately be demanded by distributors, thus making the price rise pointless and perhaps even damaging if it discouraged readers from buying the magazine.

Major publishers also tend to send all categories of their publications, including manga, to several different competing printing companies, such as Nihon Insatsu and Toppan Insatsu. Tôhan printers is in fact part-owned by all of the large publishing companies, though this does not seem to have made them any less concerned about monopoly in the printing industry.

Publishers buy and arrange for the transport of paper to printing companies themselves.¹³⁵

The cost of paper for printing manga is relatively high, approximately one third of the total costs of printing. During paper shortages, including the period during and immediately after the Pacific war and a briefer period in 1973, the high cost of paper forced manga publishers to produce slimmer magazines with fewer pages. The relatively high cost of paper in manga production has meant that ordinary high or low circulation manga magazines are produced on extremely coarse, low quality paper. It is produced chiefly from cheap wood pulp directly imported by publishers from Scandinavia, Russia, Malaysia, and Australasia.¹³⁶ This paper is often dyed in pastel shades to improve the quality of its appearance and the attractiveness of manga magazines. In some urban areas households give bundles of used manga to recycled paper collectors, to be turned into cheap recycled paper products such as toilet rolls, of which a small number are returned in exchange. Recycling bins for used manga are also situated on the train station platforms and near news kiosks where large quantities of manga are sold.¹³⁷

¹³⁵A large proportion of the details in this section were received in discussions with the vice chief of Kôdansha Comic Sales and Coordinating Division, Yasuda Michio. February 1994.

¹³⁶In June 1994 the president of Hakusensha, Konagai Nobumasa, had just returned from an apparently highly enjoyable visit to Norway, where he and his wife had been shown around the country as the VIP guests of a Norwegian wood company. Interview with Konagai Nobumasa. June, 1994.

¹³⁷The production cycle of paper in the manga industry was outlined in a popular adult manga parody of the manga industry: Even a Monkey Can Draw Manga Classroom (Saru demo Kakeru Manga Kyôshitsu) by Akihara Kôji & Takekuma Kentarô. Tokyo: Shôgakukan. 1991.

2.5 The new adult manga magazines

In Artist and Patron in Post-war Japan, Thomas Havens, describes manga as a medium with a standardized form that epitomises cultural uniformity.¹³⁸ This opinion is representative of the widespread myth amongst Western observers that all manga conforms to a narrow genre, which rarely varies from its themes of sex and violence. In fact, genres and forms within the manga medium have diversified to such a degree that it is hard to observe any graphic similarities at all between certain master-genres, such as girls' manga and *gekiga*. Manga has demonstrated a capacity to capture both universal interests and highly specialised tastes. With regard to this diversity contemporary manga is similar to contemporary television and radio broadcasting.

In the period of calm and disillusionment following the student riots, which is sometimes referred to as the *shirake*, overtly political stories rapidly disappeared from popular manga magazines. In the early 1970s the *gekiga* movement entered its final phase, producing a highly distinctive genre of manga referred to as *new wave gekiga*. The themes of *new wave gekiga* tended to be non-conformist in personal, rather than political, terms. Instead of social issues, *new wave gekiga* stories brooded about the psychology of the individual. A large amount of *new wave gekiga*, which was produced throughout the 1970s, relayed strange and obscure narratives about people living on the edge of civilised society. Themes and scenes tended to be dark,

¹³⁸Havens, T. (1982) Artist and Patron in Postwar Japan, US: Princeton University Press. 17.

obscure and despairing and display strong influences from surrealist, and avant garde art generally. One of the most famous new wave *gekiga* series is *The Screw Ceremony* (*Nejishiki*) by Tsuge Yoshiharu, which is an atmospheric account of a dream Yoshiharu experienced, and which includes surreal references to war and the US occupation of Japan. (See *The Screw Ceremony* in Figure 10.) New wave *gekiga* was not incorporated into commercial manga magazines during the 1970s, but was produced instead in small quantities of exceptional quality for non-commercial purposes. The great majority of new wave *gekiga* was published in *GARO*, a low circulation specialist manga magazine, considered to represent the Japanese *gekiga* underground. While new wave *gekiga* was not incorporated into commercial manga magazines, it was an important development because it represents the stylistic continuation of the *gekiga* tradition, which reflects, in an intense form, the decline of interest in political and social issues amongst manga artists and the concentration on the psychological world of the individual instead. Moreover, the limited distribution of new wave *gekiga* does not measure the density of the stylistic and thematic innovation it encapsulated. (See samples of new wave *gekiga* work by artists, Tsuge Tadaô and Shinoharu Katsuyuki, in Figure 11.)¹³⁹ New wave *gekiga* has secured a classic status in preceding Japanese student youth cultures and has provided a source of new ideas and graphic styles which continued to be released in *GARO* magazine, and which were later absorbed into commercial adult manga. We will return to touch on the latter development in Chapter Nine. New wave *gekiga* attained a lasting status in post-

¹³⁹Shinoharu Katsuyuki later became a successful sculptor.

Figure 10

New wave gekiga: The Screw Ceremony by Tsuge Yoshiharu

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

Source: Nejishiki to Akaihana (1968), Tokyo: Shôgakukan, 1988.

Figure 11

New wave gekiga: Tsuge Tadaô and Katsuyuki Shinoharu

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

Source: *Seigan Ryôkichi no Shi* by Tsuge Tadaô, published in GARO, Issue 112. December 1972.

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

Source: *Nioi Yokochô* by Katsuyuki Shinohara, published in GARO, Issue 155. August 1976.

war student culture, akin, perhaps to the popularity of Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* or Herman Hesse's *Steppenwolfe*, among English students.

During the 1980s female artists rose to prominence and the sales of commercial girls' manga (*shôjo manga*) magazines and books increased. In the same period, girls' manga which is originally based on the cute childlike styles pioneered by Tezuka Osamu, have gradually influenced the styles of boys' and adults' manga. (See a sample of girls' manga in Figure 19.) The commercial manga industry, which was founded on manga magazines produced specifically for young boys, is divided into publishing categories which have been delineated almost entirely by gender and age. This is a system of categorisation which has been particularly powerful in marketing systems developed within the Japanese mass media, advertising and consumer culture.¹⁴⁰ Commercial manga is divided into girls' manga (*shôjo manga*); boys' manga (*shônen manga*); ladies' comics (*ladies comics*), youth manga (*young-shi*); and adult (literally "grown-ups") manga (*seinen-shi*). The only ambiguity in this sturdy categorisation system is that of the difference between young manga magazines and adult manga magazines. Young manga, which include all weekly magazines with the word 'Young' in the title (e.g. *Young Sunday*, *Young Jump*) and which are aimed at teenage boys, do not have a strong stylistic identity and are not often referred to as a specific category in discussions within the manga industry. In effect young manga is a marketing category,

¹⁴⁰See Skov. L. & Moeran, B. (1995) 'Hiding in the Light' in Women, Media and Consumption in Japan, London: Curzon Press.

which is listed separately in publishing market statistics but is not a genre category in the manga medium. In stylistic terms young manga is a mixture of boys' and adult manga. Far more confusing, young and adult manga magazines are referred to together as youth manga (*seinen-shi*) - which has the same pronunciation as adult manga (*seinen-shi*) in Japanese. This thesis is focused specifically on adult manga, with some references to young, and occasionally, boys' magazines. Unlike womens' magazine publishing, contemporary boys', youth, and adult manga magazines, whose original adolescent readership was involved precisely in constructing a new culture for themselves by political reinterpretations of the meanings of childrens' manga series, tend to have loosely defined and heterogeneous readerships. The most heterogeneous manga readership is that of Jump (Shûkan Shônen Jump) published by Shûeisha, whose regular readers vary in age from the under-tens to the over-sixties.¹⁴¹

However, as the original generation of student manga readers began to grow older, then commercial manga publishers began to serialise stories of interest to successively older readers, in a bid to keep their original baby-boom generation readers. In this way commercial manga has aged at the same rate as the Japanese population. The adult manga category has grown as its original readership has matured. This process of a culture industry pursuing its ageing audience with progressive new repertoires, is comparable to the production of 'adult oriented rock' (AOR) music, in Britain for the 1960s generation who are

¹⁴¹Morning Reader' Survey 1994, Kôdansha internal document.

now approaching middle age.¹⁴² Each of the large publishing companies has created one or more series of linked magazines, targeted at progressively older sections of the public. These series bear related recognisable titles, in order to encourage audience loyalty to the magazine series of one particular company. Kôdansha for example, produces Magazine, Monthly Magazine, Young Magazine, and Mr Magazine. The Magazine range of magazines are all produced by Division 3 of Kôdansha. Shûeisha produces Jump, Monthly Jump, Young Jump, and Business Jump. Shôgakukan produces Big Comic, Big Comic Original, Big Comic Spirits, and Big Comic Special. Each magazine is aimed at a progressively older audience and in Kôdansha, all the magazines of one series are produced in one editorial department. Morning and Afternoon, the two manga magazines with which this thesis will be most concerned, form a small atypical series, made in separate manga editorial offices in Kôdansha, otherwise recognised as Division 7.¹⁴³ The distinction between these two magazines is based more on editorial tastes and imagination, than reader categorisation. During the 1990s the creation of *silver manga* for pensioners has been the buzz word in the manga industry. Figure 12 shows a diagram of the evolution of post-war manga publishing categories, originally composed by the prominent manga critic, Kure Tomofusa.¹⁴⁴

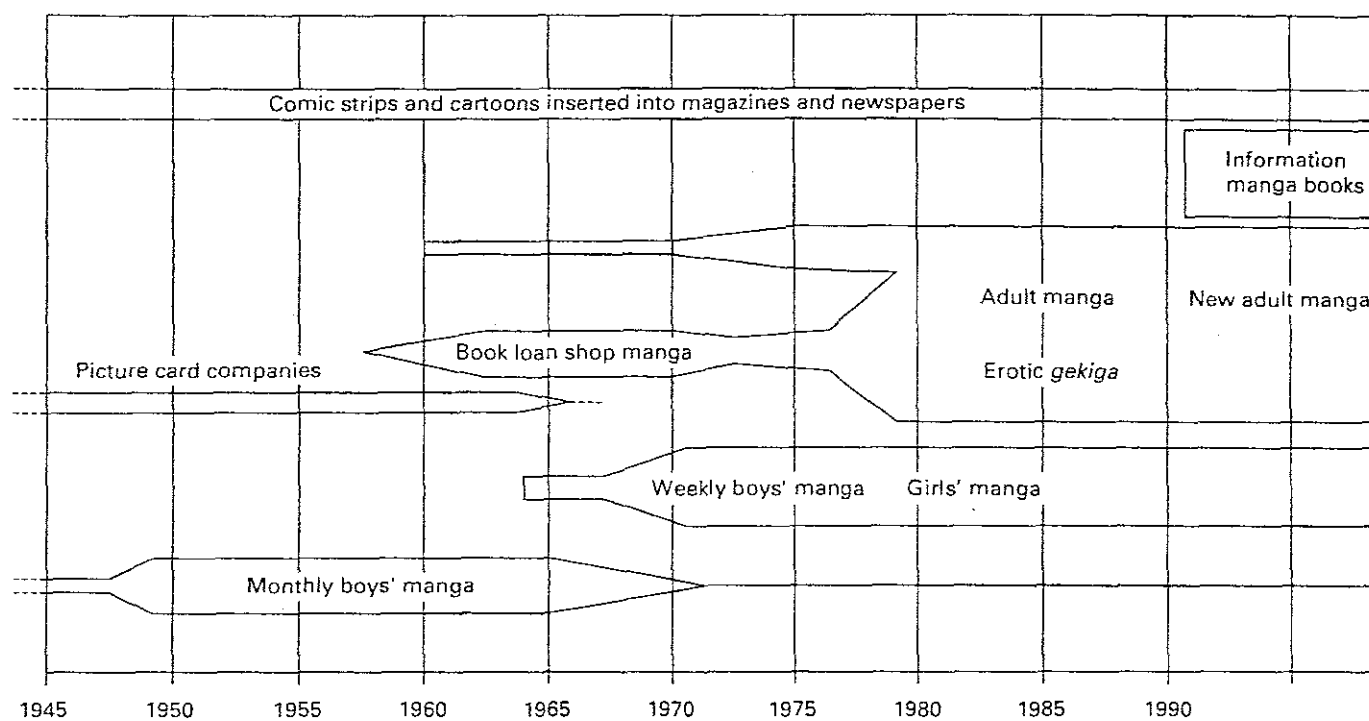
¹⁴²About rock music Frith states: "The massive future potential of rock's global audience is not only in new markets in near virginal rock territory (China, The Soviet Union, The Eastern Block, Africa) but in the obvious hold over its original generation which is getting older and, like pre-rock generations, sinking into political complacency born of material affluence the further it drifts from its youthful past." Frith, S. (1978) A Sociology of Rock Music, London: Constable. 21.

¹⁴³Morning and Afternoon are therefore linked magazines which operate from two conjoined offices. Morning is the principal magazine of this pair, and both magazines are ultimately managed by the chief editor of Morning.

¹⁴⁴Kure, T. (1990). 117.

Figure 12

The Evolution of Manga Publishing Categories in the Post-war Period



Source: Adaptation of a diagram published by Kure Tomofusa in Contemporary Manga: The Complete Critique (Gendai Manga no Zentai Zô), Tokyo: Shiki Shuppan. 1990.

Adult manga magazines are targeted at mature adults, typically men in their thirties and forties - though publishers aim to capture older readers in their fifties too. A few adult manga magazines, including Big Comic, launched by Shôgakukan in 1968, and Manga Action, launched by Futabasha in 1967, represent early publishing experiments carried out during the initial period of rapid manga industry growth between 1965 and 1972. However the majority of the 32 adult manga magazines on the market in 1994, were launched during the late 1980s and early 1990s. See a table depicting the number of new adult manga magazines launched each year between 1950 and 1993 in Figure 13.¹⁴⁵

By 1993 the adult manga category accounted for 38.5 percent of all manga published, while boys' manga accounted for 39 percent; girls' manga accounted for 8.8 percent; and ladies' manga accounted for 7.9 percent.¹⁴⁶ The graph in Figure 14 illustrates the total annual circulation figures of boys' and adults' manga magazines between 1979 and 1993. Adult manga publishing grew steadily through the 1980s, before contracting slightly in the most recent period between 1992 and 1994.¹⁴⁷

While adult manga magazines represented over a third of the manga market by 1994, the circulation figures of adult magazines have been lower than those of the *first rate* boys' magazines. In 1994 Big Comic Original was the most popular adult magazine with a circulation of 1.57 million, followed by Young Magazine with a

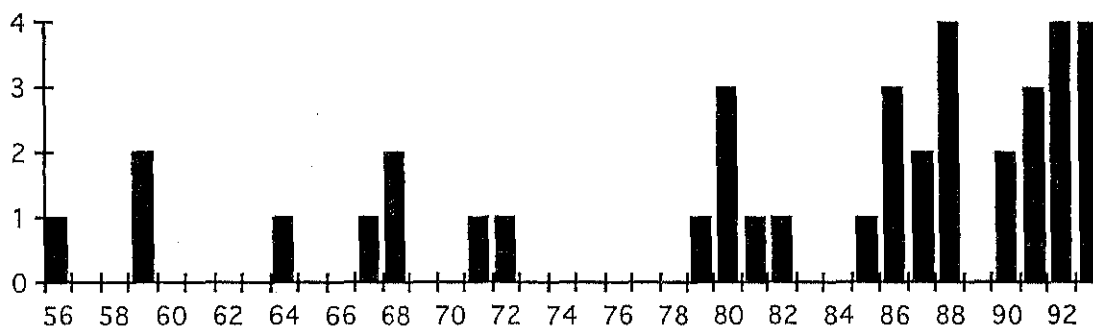
¹⁴⁵Data derived from tables published in Publisher's Year Report 1994. 190.

¹⁴⁶Manga Mania, July 1993. 6.

¹⁴⁷Publisher's Year Report 1994. 188.

Figure 13

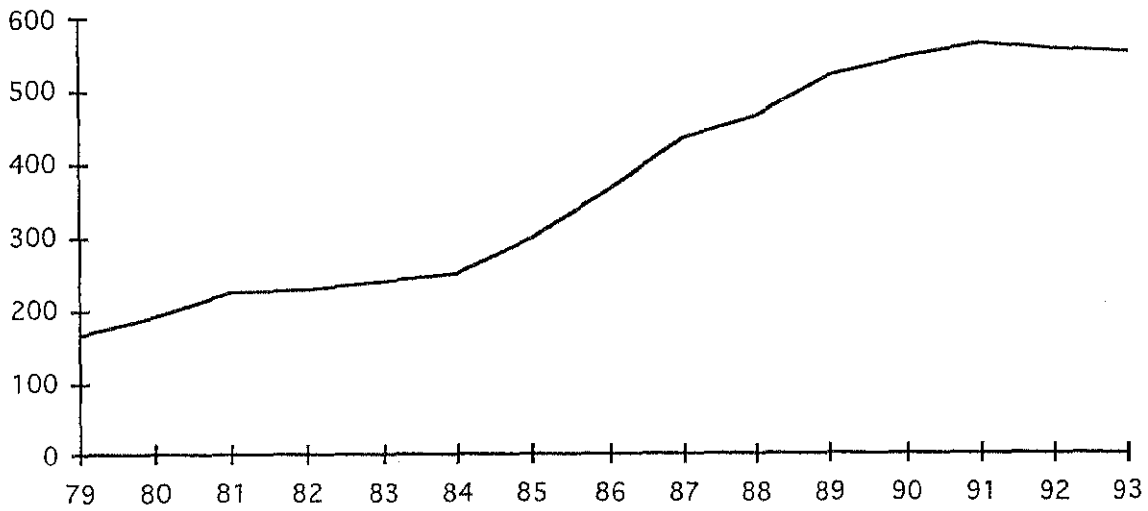
The number of adult manga magazines launched each year
between 1956-1993



Source: tables published in the Publisher's Year Report 1994
(Shūppan Nenpō 1994), Tokyo:Shūppan Ryōgaku Kenkyūjō. 190.

Figure 14

The total annual circulation figures of adult manga magazines, between 1979-1993 in units of 1 million



Source: raw data in Publisher's Year Report 1994 (Shuppan Nenpô 1994), Tokyo: Shuppan Ryôgaku Kenkyûjô. 188.

circulation of 1.55 million, then Big Comic Spirits with a circulation of 1.2 million, and lastly, Morning with a circulation of 1 million.¹⁴⁸ The circulation figures of these magazines are also compared in the table in Figure 9. Since 1992, however, the popularity of adult manga magazines has declined slightly and this has been reflected in decreasing total circulation figures. In 1990 the circulation of Morning was 1.2 million, in 1993 this had diminished to 1 million and according to rumours within Morning editorials, circulation figures shrank again to around 800 000 between 1994 and 1995.¹⁴⁹ Figure 15 illustrates the annual profits of Morning and Magazine between 1983 and 1993, which demonstrates the continued profitability of boys' manga, but also the recent decline in profitability of adult manga.¹⁵⁰

The actual age of adult magazine readerships is 'sticky' - persistently younger than the audiences targeted by magazine editors. The average age of adult manga readers in 1994 was 30 years and 2 months. The average age of Morning readers was 30 years and 1 month, and the average age of Afternoon readers was 28 years and 4 months.¹⁵¹ Despite the inclusion of many middle-aged characters in its series, the actual readership age of Morning was not significantly higher than that of Afternoon - in which the age group of the target audience was not defined at all. Half of Morning magazine's audience was in fact composed of young company employees. Young company employees comprised

¹⁴⁸Publisher's Year Report 1994. 190.

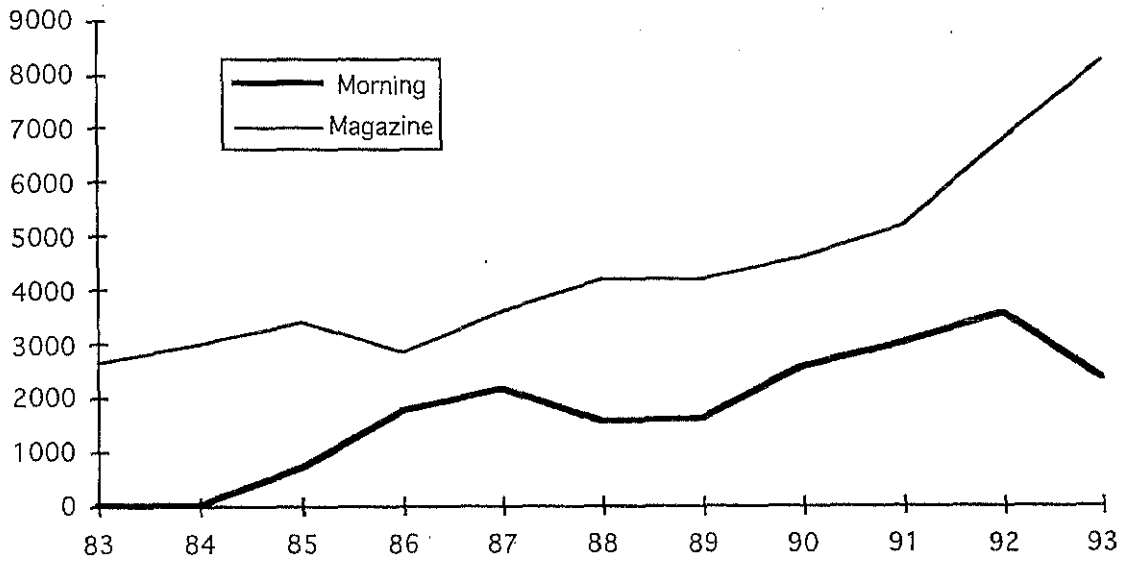
¹⁴⁹Discussion with Morning editor, Pierre-Alan Szigeti, June 1996. Email.

¹⁵⁰Figures derived from a Kôdansha internal document given to me by members of Magazine editorial.

¹⁵¹Morning Readers Survey 1994

Figure 15

Annual Profits of Morning and Magazine between 1983-1993 in units of ¥1 million



Source: Kôdansha internal document.

47.4 percent of Morning readers in 1994, followed by housewives who constituted 18 percent, and low-grade civil servants who constituted 9.8 percent. Despite the mature, managerial and professional image projected by Morning, only 4.1 percent of readers are professional workers.¹⁵² Thus, like the popularity of girls' manga among young men, new adult manga magazines are only partly defined by the age-range of their readership.

2.6 Conclusion: Characteristics of the manga medium

Manga are made by publishing companies. Other mass media such as newspapers, radio and television programmes are mostly produced by mass media conglomerates which began life as newspaper companies and diversified into television broadcasting during the post-war period. Publishing companies differ from these multi media conglomerates in a significant sense in that they are not obliged to receive broadcasting licenses from the government in order to operate. Multi media corporations such as Asahi, or the Fuji-Sankei Group, have to consider the possibility of having their broadcasting licence confiscated by the government. For this reason material which might be frowned upon by the civil service and the government has generally been conveyed by small independent media and film companies, or publishers. Publishing companies are freer than the other industries which constitute the mass media. On the other hand manga contains very little advertising. The large readerships of high-circulation manga magazines have been heterogeneous in composition, making them unsuitable for advertisers wishing to

¹⁵²Morning Readers Survey 1994

target products at specific groups of consumers. The absence of advertising in manga has meant that manga editing is free from the influence of advertisers which can influence considerably the editorial selection of content in non-manga magazines.¹⁵³

Liberated from immediate accountability to either government policy or advertising interests, the manga publishing industry has thus had a far greater freedom to determine the contents of its magazines. In the 1965 to 1972 period of student and labour unrest, publishing companies were able to capitalise on their new readerships among students and young workers by publishing manga stories which supported the students and ignored the concerns of the anxious authorities. In weekly news magazines, publishers have discovered a similar freedom, resulting in the rise of scandalous and sometimes critical weekly magazines, such as Friday published by Kôdansha, and Weekly SPA! published by Fusôsha, which have become most unpopular with civil servants and politicians. It is the freedom of the manga industry which is the source of its popularity and of its radicalism.

The sensitivity of manga to new social trends has made it a medium well suited to the transmission of propaganda. During the 1930s the manga industry was a "loose cannon" among the multi media and communications industries, and one which the Japanese government made strenuous efforts to harness to its own political ends. When the Japanese wartime government successfully appropriated the manga publishing industry for the

¹⁵³Brian Moeran (1991) notes the distinctive lack of advertising in the most popular manga magazine, Jump, in Media and Advertising in Japan, NIAS Report 4. 7.

purpose of transmitting propaganda, it had taken for its own uses a medium particularly familiar to the public. Under government control during the Pacific War, manga became highly militaristic and chauvinistic. The unestablished and free position of the manga medium in peace time had contributed to its vulnerability to censorship and government control in periods of political repression. Unlike the newspaper printing industry, for example, the manga industry lacked a respectable and established patronage inside the political establishment and cultural institutions, which could act as a protection against overt political control. In this sense the dissident radicalism of manga in the 1960s is structurally linked to the chauvinistic radicalism of manga during war-time. In the recent period since 1986 however the position of the manga medium in Japanese society has begun to shift towards a closer and more established relationship with cultural and political authorities. This change in the position of the adult manga medium in Japanese society is one of the key focuses of this thesis.

SECTION ONE: THE PRODUCTION OF COMMERCIAL ADULT MANGA

Introduction: The Ethnography of Manga Production

The take-over of small scale manga production by large publishing companies during the late 1960s also involved the organisation of a fast, extensive and systematic method of manga production, and reproduction. Publishers wanted to produce manga at such a rate that manga magazines would be able to compete for audiences with television programmes broadcast in weekly episodes. In 1959 Tokyo Tower, and the television transmitting station it holds aloft, was completed. Several new commercial television channels, such as Fuji television, began broadcasting a whole new range of entertainment. For publishing companies it was imperative that artists were made to produce far more manga, far more quickly, and along improved themes which would attract the largest possible audiences. Towards the end of the 1950s the imperative of publishers with some experience in manga publishing was to put out weekly manga magazines. Manga artists of this period, who were accustomed to relatively leisurely production cycles for monthly magazines or book loan shop publishing companies, were persuaded to work far more rapidly in order to produce new episodes every week. Manga artists who made the switch from producing book loan shop manga to weekly episodes for weekly manga magazines describe the change as a traumatic one.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴Veteran artist Yokoyama Ryûichi compared the transition manga artists faced to the difficulties faced by Hollywood actors forced to adapt to sound-tracked movies after careers starring in silent movies. Discussion with Yokoyama Ryûichi at a garden party held in his home in Zushi. March, 1994.

In order to achieve this new scale of production a new 'manga division of labour' (*manga bungyô*) was apportioned within manga publishing companies. Not only did editorial offices develop huge networks of artists and complex systems for the ongoing recruitment and training of new artists (*shinjin*) but within large publishing companies the specific job of a manga editor as opposed to any other company editor began to emerge. Manga editors began to work far more closely with artists to produce the original product. By carrying out functions such as checking the first drafts before they are drawn in ink, or preparing speech parts for printing, editors removed some of the more mechanical and time-consuming functions from artists and helped to speed up manga artists' rate of production. This new form of production was named by the long-time chief editor of Magazine - who describes himself as one of the early pioneers of commercial manga - as 'editorial production' (*henshû saisan*).¹⁵⁵ In each manga editorial the form of editorial production varies.

In chapters three and four, we will look at the two main arenas of 'editorial production' - the organisation and recruitment of manga artists in society at large *outside* of the manga editorial office; and the organisation of weekly manga production based inside the editorial office. We shall examine the activities and social relationships of manga artists and manga editors in these two areas in what can be seen as an ethnography of the production of a commercial culture.

¹⁵⁵Interview with Uchida Masaru nearby the offices of his own new company Manga Gallery in Shinbashi, Tokyo. August, 1994.

While a few examples used in this section are taken from research on the artists and editors of *ladies' manga* magazines, most of the research on which these chapters are based was carried out on the editors and artists of high-circulation boys' and adult manga magazines, especially the latter. Together, boys' and adult manga categories constitute the largest section and mainstream of commercial manga production.

CHAPTER THREE: The Recruitment of Manga Artists

3.1 Outline of the social organisation of manga production

It is not possible to look in detail at the inter-relationships between manga artists and manga editors in making commercial manga without first knowing the basic method of production used in the commercial manga industry in Japan. In this brief section the various categories of worker and stages of production of commercial manga will be briefly outlined.

The essential organisation of the manga industry is similar to that of the book publishing industry in Britain.¹⁵⁶ Manga is drawn by freelance manga artists.¹⁵⁷ Each professional manga artist enters into one or more formal or informal contract of varying lengths of time and conditions of copyright, with one or more manga publishing company. Contracted artists work under the supervision of manga editors who are the regular employees of manga publishing companies. With regard to the independence of manga artists from the manga publishing companies, the organisation of manga production is quite different from that of comic production in the United States, for example, which has

¹⁵⁶For a critical analysis of the British book publishing industry see Lane, M. (1980) Books and Editors: Commerce Against Culture in Post-war Britain, USA, Mass.: Lexington Books.

¹⁵⁷There are exceptions which prove the rule. Sonoda Kenichi is a top-class artist now working for Afternoon who produced his first three best-seller series, *Gall Force*, *Bubble Gum Crisis* and *Riding Bean* as a regular employee of Art-Mic design company between 1985 and 1990. Art-Mic did not award Sonoda the royalties to his highly profitable work and after an extended struggle Sonoda left the company and became a free-lance artist. Interview with artist, Sonoda Kenichi, in restaurant close to Kôdansha buildings. March, 1994.

generally been based on teams of anonymous and interchangeable manga artists employed to draw company-owned series such as *Superman* and *Spiderman*.¹⁵⁸ Manga production is also quite different from the normal methods of comic production in Europe. In Europe comic artists frequently work entirely independently from publishing companies and only contact publishing companies to submit completed drafts of entire comic books for publication.

Manga series are planned through 'work meetings' (*uchiawase*) between artists and editors. Work meetings take place in almost any location - in manga editorial offices, the artist's studio or home, cafés and bars, or even in hotel suites.¹⁵⁹ 'Newcomers' (*shinjin*) and other less important artists usually have to travel to the editorial offices for work meetings with their editors. Manga editors travel to the studios or homes of more popular artists, which are liable both to be more highly valued

¹⁵⁸American comic artists employed by comic companies to draw comic series have also been separated from the copyrights and royalties attached to company comic series they have jointly created. Jane Gaines, author of Contested Culture: the Image, the Voice, the Law, explains, "Thus it is that any legal entity can stand in as author, just as DC Comics has stood in for Superman's creators, Jerry Seigel and Joe Shuster, who tried for forty years to reclaim their work after having sold the rights to it in their youth." Gaines, J. (1992) Contested Culture: the Image, the Voice, the Law, London: BFI publishers. 211.

Yamane Shôji, Research producer of Pia Research Centre, believes that it is the unusual free-lance status of Japanese manga artists which has encouraged the manga industry to expand: "Looking at the rest of the world it is evident that countries where the artists' rights have been recognised as in Japan are rare. The ownership right of the popular American character *Superman*, for instance, belongs to the company. For decades the same character has been used in stories, and character goods produced by a division of labour and from which the artist receives no royalties." In a 'Manga Industry Special Report', Nikkei Business. 13 September 1993. 118.

¹⁵⁹I attended two work-meetings between Morning artists and editors held in luxury hotel suites. The first being an all-night work-meeting between Aoki Yûji, artist of the series *Osaka Streets of Gold* (*Naniwa Kinyûdô*) and his editor, and the second being a 'research' meeting between Narita Akira, artist of the series *Super Lover* (*Chôai No Hito*) and an editor, in a private orgy organised by the artist in a hotel suite.

by editors, and more tied to their studios by extensive work commitments. All manga publishing companies are situated in central Tokyo, mostly in Otowa district- where the Kôdansha group of publishers is based, or Hitotsubashi - where both Shôgakukan and Shûeisha publishers are based. Well-established manga artists usually live in the suburbs of Tokyo or further afield. Small towns in North-west Tokyo, including Kichijôji, Hachiôji, Ogikubo, Asagaya and Chôfu, and which previously bore large populations of craftsmen and artisans, have become particularly common areas for manga artists to live and set up studios. Rather than live in the city centre highly successful manga artists, such as Yahagi Takako, tended to live in remote rural regions such as Aichi or Nagano prefecture. In one extreme case, the editor of the popular series *Naniwa Kinyûdô* (*Osaka Streets of Gold*), serialised in Morning magazine, flew between Tokyo and Osaka every week to hold work meetings with the Osaka-based artist, Aoki Yûji, in his studio.

Plate 2 shows a work meeting between a young newcomer artist (*shinjin*) and the chief editor of Afternoon magazine in Afternoon editorial office. Plate 3 shows a scene in the editorial office of a boys' magazine in which a meeting between an artist and an editor is taking place in the foreground. The number of editors working with each artist and present in work meetings varies between each editorial. With adult manga, script writers are sometimes employed by manga editors to develop story lines and write the speech-parts of manga series. Editors meet script writers for work meetings on a similar though less frequent basis to manga artists. In general artists of currently

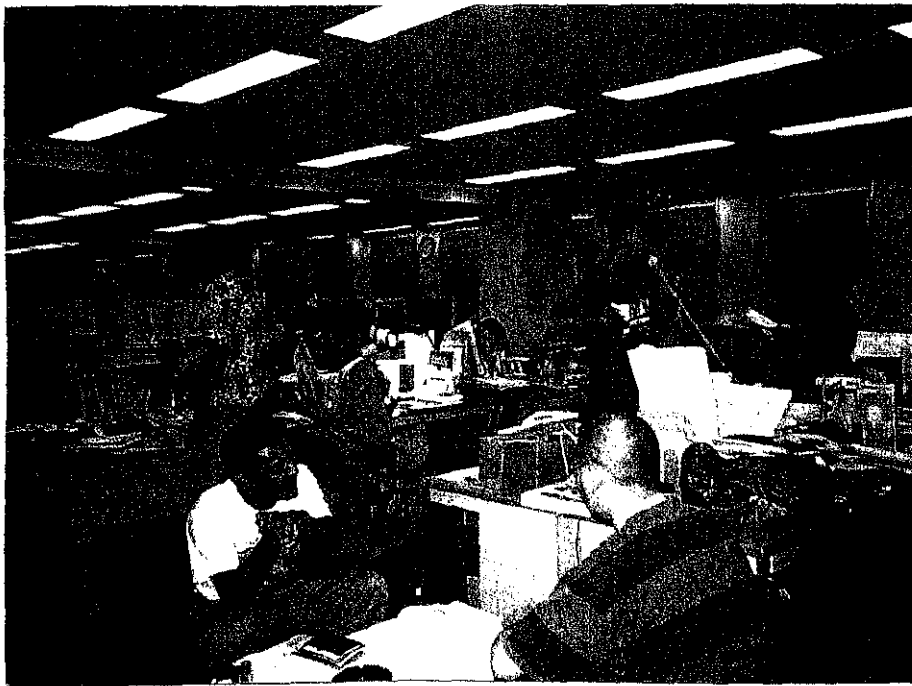
Plate 2

A meeting in an editorial office between a young newcomer artist and the chief editor of a manga magazine



Plate 3

An adult manga magazine editorial office



Source: photographs by S. Kinsella, 1994.

running series meet editors between two and three times a week for around thirty minutes to two hours. Work meetings in some manga editorial offices were more variable. Yamanaka Yūsuke, editor of the series *Tetsujin Ganma (Iron Man)*, communicated with the artist of the series, Yamamoto Yasuhito, almost entirely by facsimile and telephone. Shin Kasuyuki, the editor of *Silent Service (Chinmoku no Kantai)*, spent long stretches of time each week in the artist's studio-home.

After the first work meeting(s) artists produce a first draft in pencil and then generally meet editors again to discuss this work. The length of each draft (*genkô*) depends on the type of series the artist produces. A typical draft would be one episode of a serialised story, about 16 to 40 pages in length. In other cases a draft might be 1 to 6 pages of short cartoon strips referred to as *gag manga*. After completion of the first draft, editors might request that anything between a few pages to more than half of the draft is re-drawn. This stage of drawing and checking and re-drawing is referred to as *name suru* or 'naming', a term specific to the manga industry.¹⁶⁰ The number of times alterations are made to drafts varies greatly between each manga editorial.

Final drafts of each episode are drawn in ink, whilst background areas and the skin parts of lead characters are frequently shaded-in using cut-out pieces of 'screen tone' - professional manga transfer sheets. Busy manga artists who employ artists'

¹⁶⁰The term 'naming' sounds very much as though it might have a revealing epistemological origin. However, no manga editors to whom I spoke in 1994 knew the origins of the term.

assistants will often draw only the outline of the characters' faces of their series and leave the bulk of shading, background detail, and characters' clothing for their assistants to draw. The majority of manga artists employ between 1 and 10 assistants to help them complete episodes of their contracted series in time for weekly publication deadlines.

Editors prepare the speech parts of drafts for printing. The final details, correct spelling, and font-type of the speech parts is decided by the editor. Finished scripts are typed-up and sent to a photosetting company (*shashokuya*) by editors, to be photoset on photographic paper. Either the editor or part-time office workers (*arubaito*) will then cut out the photoset-letting when it returns to the editorial from the photosetting company and stick it into the appropriate speech bubbles and spaces on the pages of the finished draft.¹⁶¹ Plate 4 shows an editor in an editorial office sticking photoset lettering into the speech bubbles of a finished draft and Plate 5 shows part-time office workers in an editorial office checking photoset lettering on drafts. This stage of production is referred to by the general term *kôryô sagyô*, or 'work under consideration'. Ordinary editors in an editorial office will typically have meetings with their chief editors to review and check their edited work, and may be asked to execute final alterations either to the speech-bubbles or drawn parts. Spelling mistakes -

¹⁶¹In Morning editorial office between one and ten young women worked on a part-time basis in rotation. The tasks of part-time workers include sorting and categorising postcards sent into the editorial from readers, checking drafts for spelling mistakes, and cutting and pasting sheets of photoset lettering into speech bubbles. In other editorial offices, such as that of Young Sunday in Shôgakukan, this type of more routine, office work was given to a manga editorial sub-contracting company to carry out off the premises.

Plate 4

An editor sticks speech-parts onto a finished manga draft

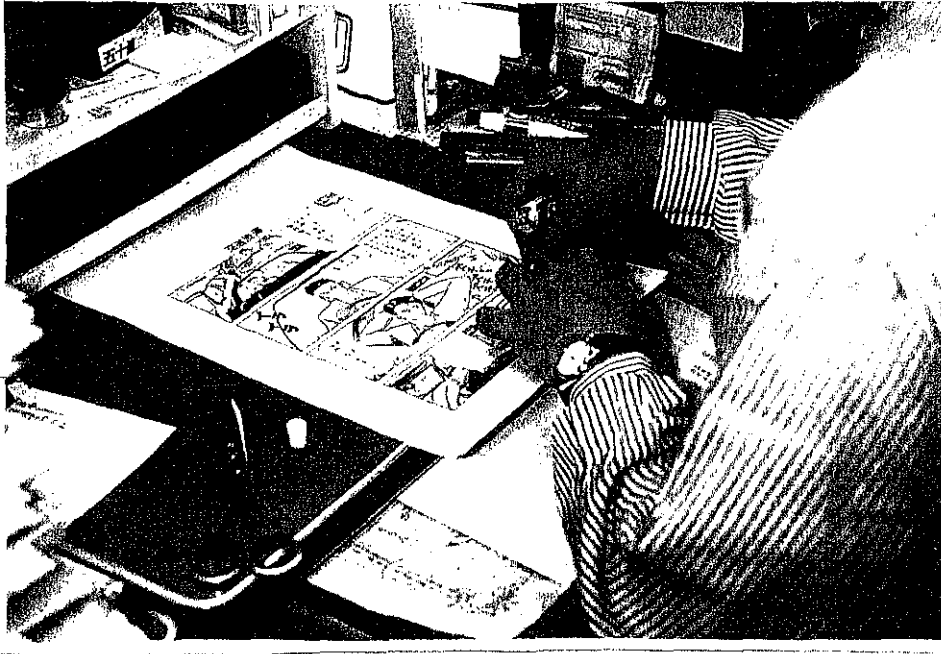


Plate 5

Part-time office workers in the corner of an editorial office check the spelling of speech-parts



Source: photographs by S. Kinsella, 1994.

the use of incorrect Chinese characters - and low quality drawing appear to be the chief problems at this stage. Whilst in some manga editorials drafts are produced up to a year in advance of publication, in others a typical episode took one week to produce and was completed in as little as three weeks in advance of the publication date.

Completed episodes making up one issue of the manga magazine are sent together to one of several large printing companies such as Tôhan Insatsu and Dai Nihon Insatsu. Printed pages are then cut and bound by a book binding company (*seihonsha*) and from there collected by large book distribution companies (*toritsugiya*) such as Tôhansha and Nippansha for distribution to sales outlets across the country.

3.2 Manga competitions

Manga publishing companies attract artists to work for them by holding manga competitions with large monetary prizes. The manga competition system both attracts the maximum possible number of amateur artists to contact manga editorials, and encourages youth to practise drawing manga in order to become manga artists. Winning a manga competition or having work published in a magazine is described as the 'début' (*début suru*) of a professional artist. The date and location of an artist's début is an important event in his career. Through the manga competition system free-lance manga artists are attracted to publishing companies, which, as executors of the manga competitions, are placed in a position of authority to judge

what is 'good manga'. Entrance to manga competitions is entirely open: members of the oppressed *burakumin* caste, women, children, middle-aged salary men, non-Japanese, and handicapped people may compete as equals.¹⁶² In a way the manga competition echoes the nation-wide system of educational competition and it has sometimes been perceived as a back-up competition system for people who fail in the education system. Like the now clearly mythical system of social equality based on nation-wide educational meritocracy, which has become central to the belief in post-war Japanese democracy, the manga competition is perceived as democratic, because it is based on fair competition between equal individuals. Nishimura Shigeo, the long-time chief editor of *Jump* magazine describes the manga competition system as an alternative route to the top of society for those who had been failed by the official channels of educational meritocracy:

It is said that boxing is a 'hungry' sport. No matter what kind of low social position they come from boxers get to the top using their arms alone. The keener their hunger the more tenacious their struggle to win a championship belt. Amongst the hallowed champions, the number who were raised on full stomachs is said to be few. It is possible that the same thing could be said about the boys' manga. In the manga world lack of education is an additional anxiety. The only necessary thing is to draw manga. If that manga is popular with the readers then the manga artist's name could be entered on the list of the highest income earners in the country. It was never possible to know which of the youths with their faces buried in a bowl of food in the Shûeisha company dining hall would become popular manga artists. If manga is a genre of art then it is without doubt a 'hungry' art.¹⁶³

¹⁶²Veteran manga artist Murano Morimi has been physically handicapped and confined to a wheelchair since his childhood. Murano explained to me that as a young boy he had decided to become a manga artist because it seemed to him to be a job that a cripple could do as well as an able-bodied person. Needless to say, Murano's social and financial success as a manga artist was a pleasant surprise for his shop-keeper parents. Interview with Murano Morimi, after a Manga Japan meeting on 22 July 1994.

¹⁶³Nishimura, S. *My Youth and Jump* (Saraba waga seishun no Shônen Jump), Tokyo: Asukasha. 1994. 81.

The true picture of change in the social origins of manga artists is extremely difficult to ascertain. Whilst many editors referred to the well-known and romantic figure of the uneducated manga artist from a poor family, no actual research has been carried out on the social origins of manga artists.¹⁶⁴ Descriptions of the impoverished, itinerant and isolated lifestyles of early *kamishibai* (picture show) and *kashihonya* (book loan shop) artists on the other hand, seem to suggest that many of the earliest manga artists and their forbears, may have originated not simply from the lower classes, but more controversially, from the oppressed *burakumin* caste.¹⁶⁵ The powerful taboo against public discussion of social-class and caste in Japan, however, has created a difficult situation in which no concrete evidence has been collected which could either support or refute this proposition.¹⁶⁶ Menjô Mitsuru, a well-

¹⁶⁴On one occasion in 1994 when I inquired whether I could circulate a brief self-completion questionnaire survey, asking basic questions about socio-economic origins, amongst manga artists contracted to or working under the supervision of Morning and Afternoon magazines, I was quickly prevented from doing so by anxious editors. Morning editors were reluctant to discuss the social background of manga artists. This may have been because editors felt that discussion about the socio-economic backgrounds of artists might have led towards unwelcome discussions about artists' current wages and contracts. More probably, the actual social origins of most manga artists was either much lower or much higher than those with which their readership could identify and enjoy.

¹⁶⁵Tsurumi Shunsuke describes the broader socio-economic background of early post-war manga and *kamishibai* artists in a way which implies that they were connected with the contemporary *buraku* social caste which emerged in the Meiji period from the previous *hinin* social caste, which had also frequently been involved with popular dramatic and oral culture. Tsurumi says for example, "Of course, together with this there has been an increase in the standard of living and also a rise in educational standards, which have been the basis for social discrimination in Japan since the Meiji period. ... No society moves forward in a uniform manner. There were segments of society which were left behind and hard hit by this change. To this group belonged the generation of young cartoonists who made their debut in the 1960s, and they greatly appealed to readers who were frustrated by this smug social milieu of the 1960s." (1987) A Cultural History of Post-war Japan 1945-1980, London: KPI publishers. 32-33.

¹⁶⁶While specific strains of Marxist thought had a great influence upon Japanese intellectuals during the 1920s and 1930s, and again in the 1960s,

known editor of the late Tezuka Osamu between 1967 to 1971, for example, dismissed questions about the social origins of artists as absurd in the context of Japan:

Any talk of artists coming from poor backgrounds, or from *burakumin* ghettos, or something else, is meaningless because there are no social classes in Japan.¹⁶⁷

What is more ascertainable is that adult manga artists employed in high-circulation, commercial manga magazines since the late 1960s, are not frequently from the glamorised working class origins with which they are associated. Most manga artists had received some form of higher education and had come from the families of small shop-keepers; independent professionals such as doctors or teachers and civil servants, which can be broadly characterised as middle class.¹⁶⁸ In spring 1994, I distributed 38 self-completion questionnaires asking questions about the basic socio-economic background of well-known veteran artists who had become professional artists during the 1950s and who had

the dominant discourse about the structure of Japanese society in the late post-war period has strongly rejected the view that society in Japan is composed of classes - cultural or economic. Contemporary social researchers attempting to explore aspects of social class in Japan are liable to be perceived in an negatively because: "The term class has been out of usage in Japan since the 1960s except among leftists and professional sociologists." Kosaka, K. (1994) Social Stratification in Contemporary Japan, London: Kegan Paul International. 95.

¹⁶⁷Interview with the now elderly manga editor, Menjō Mitsuro. August, 1994.

¹⁶⁸While these occupational categories together can be described as middle class, small shop keepers occupy the bottom end of this category; school teachers and civil servants occupy the lower-middle range; and both company salary men and occupations which might be categorised as upper middle class are not represented. In Classes in Contemporary Japan (1983), Rob Steven states that between 1974 and 1979, 30 percent of that which he defines as the middle class in Japan were teachers and a further 13 percent were doctors (127). In Japan's New Middle Class (1963), Ezra Vogel describes doctors and other independent professionals as attaining a less secure but ultimately higher living standard than those of either ordinary salarymen or shop-keepers, while during the 1960s many small shop keepers suffered relatively low living standards compared with the present. (26-31)

subsequently become members of Manga Shûdan (The Manga Society). Of the surveys, distributed with stamped addressed reply envelopes, 31 were returned completed.¹⁶⁹ All respondents were aged 55 years old or over in 1994 and the majority said that their fathers had been local shop keepers. They answered that their fathers had owned fish, sake, rice and haberdashery stores, but not meat or leather shops - which would have implied that their fathers were probably members of the *burakumin* caste. The remaining minority of respondents claimed that their fathers had been; a doctor, a local civil servant, a school teacher, a local trader, and a farmer.

Well-known artists currently working for adult manga magazines had received university education in high-status state universities. Leading adult manga artist, Kawaguchi Kaiji, graduated from Meiji University, whilst Kobayashi Yoshinori another popular adult manga artist graduated from Tsukuba University. Other artists such as Watase Seizô and Aoki Yûji had previously run their own businesses. Other top adult manga artists such as Hirokane Kenshi and Ishikawa Jun had previously been employed as management level salary men in large prestigious companies, Mitsubishi and Toyota respectively.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹These single-page, self completion questionnaire surveys were distributed with stamped envelopes at a large garden party of well-known veteran manga artists held in the spacious Zushi home of the now elderly manga artist of the 1930s comic strip (*Little Fuku*) *Fuku-Chan*, Yokoyama Ryûichi. A seasonal members' meeting of the Manga Shûdan was convened at this party. March, 1994.

¹⁷⁰Ezra Vogel describes the social and cultural background of salarymen and also managerial level salarymen, entering large manufacturing companies during the early 1960s in Vogel, E (1963) Japan's New Middle Class, London: Cambridge University Press.

Manga competitions were first introduced in the mid-1960s by publishing companies keen to attract artists in order to produce new manga magazines. For Shûeisha publishing company in particular manga competitions were crucial to the establishment of Jump magazine in 1968. In this period most of the established manga artists willing to work for large publishers had already entered contracts with Kôdansha and Shôgakukan and in order to produce new manga Shûeisha had to find new artists. As the manga industry expanded during the 1970s, the administration of manga competitions became integral to the operation of the majority of high circulation adult and boys' manga magazines. Low circulation magazines are unable to hold competitions, however, because they cannot afford to give large monetary prizes to winners, and neither are large numbers of amateur artists eager to establish links with low circulation magazines which generate low royalties on work.

Manga competitions and money prizes are regularly advertised on the pages of manga magazines. (See Figure 16.) In 1994, Shôgakukan which holds company wide manga competitions divided by genre rather than magazine, held its 37th joint annual competition in which prizes ranged from ¥2 000 000 to ¥300 000 (£13,334 to £2,000). Morning held two competitions a year with a single top prize of ¥900 000 (£6000), and lower prizes of between ¥600 000 (£4000) and ¥150 000 (£1000). Afternoon magazine held a seasonal manga competition four times a year with prizes of between ¥1 000 000 (£6667) and ¥100 000 (£666). The highest prize money has traditionally been awarded in Jump

Figure 16

Manga competition advertisement

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons



Source: Morning magazine, 1995.

and Magazine boys' manga magazine competitions for which the top prizes in 1994 were ¥2 000 000 (£13 333).

Manga competitions are an important event in Morning and Afternoon editorials. Each entrant represents a potentially successful and potentially wealthy, new manga artist. In one Afternoon magazine competition held in February 1994 the editorial received drafts from 190 entrants, a number reduced to 54 after an initial screening process. All members of the editorial read, graded and commented upon these 54 drafts before attending a three hour long discussion about the merits and demerits of each draft. During this discussion editors formally requested to supervise artists in which they were particularly interested. Of the 54 screened works 32 were selected by editors and the remaining 22 drafts were disregarded. From amongst artists selected for supervision a number of prize winners were selected by editors. The selection of artists for supervision is a significant stage in competitions because these artists will enter supervisory relations with editors and may be commissioned to produce work at a later date.

Though editors elect the winners of manga competitions, Kôdansha and Shôgakukan manga competitions are officially judged by experienced manga artists rather than editors. The various submission categories within the Shôgakukan manga competition - infants, boys', girls', young, and general (*ippan*) - are formally judged by well-known artists such as Fujiô. F. Fujiko, Adachi Gen, Saitô Chiho, Saimon Fumi, and Shirato Sanpei,

respectively. Chiba Tetsuya is a famous veteran artist who is the official judge of all Morning manga competitions.

In April 1994 I visited Chiba Tetsuya's home with senior members of the Morning editorial staff to observe the final selection of winners (*saikô senkô*) for the Morning 1994 Chiba Tetsuya manga competition. A list of prize winners had already been selected by the election of new artists held in Morning editorial held during the course of every manga competition. Chiba had been asked to place the list of eight pre-elected prize winners in a hierarchical order based on his own preference and judgement. In 1994 the order of prize-winners chosen by Chiba was politely rearranged by Morning editors so that the final selection of prize winners were not those chosen by Chiba at all.¹⁷¹ A junior editor explained that Chiba was paid for providing his services as the official judge of competitions because he fulfilled the two requirements - he had "name value" and he was still active making manga despite his advancing age.¹⁷² Editors remain in control of artists and manga competitions inspite of the cross-company rule which stated that all literary and manga competitions run by the company must be judged externally.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹The editorial thought that a draft entitled *Kamikaze Japonaise* was the best and a draft entitled *3D Wife (3D Tsuma)* was the worst out of the eight prize winning works. Chiba Tetsuya's ranking of prize winners placed *3D Tsuma* 1st, and *Kamikaze Japonaise* near to the bottom. However following a light discussion between Chiba and the editors the draft entitled *3D Tsuma* was awarded 4th place and *Kamikaze Japonaise* was determined to be the winner.

¹⁷²Discussion with junior Morning editor, Ichihara Shinji, in Morning editorial. April, 1994.

¹⁷³Famous artists are prominently advertised as the judges of Kôdansha manga competitions. A statement written in small print at the bottom of Morning and Afternoon manga competition advertisements in 1994 read, however, that "prize winners are selected by [manga artist] + the manga editorial".

Manga competitions operate primarily as recruitment mechanisms to draw artists into the organisational orbit of the magazine editorial and in this regard they are less competitive than they appear. Many entrants to manga competitions are already known to members of the editorial staff and some artists are encouraged by editors to submit previewed work to competitions after previously winning lower prizes in the same competition. In these cases manga competition prizes are indirectly understood to be down-payments on future work. By asking artists to submit their work to competitions to win monetary prizes the manga editorial minimises the amount of money it is obliged to give to its periphery of yet unpublished artists in order to persuade them to continue practising their techniques under the supervision of editors.¹⁷⁴ In this way the manga competition resembles a simple model of a competitive labour market in which many people may work hard in education, training or employment, but only a few will be fortunate enough to secure jobs with good wages. The competition system justifies the financial independence of manga artists from manga editorials. Many editors subscribe to the belief that free competition is the best means of stimulating artistic creativity. A senior editor of Morning explained that:

¹⁷⁴Newcomer artist, Takahashi Shinji, won the top prize of the Spring 1994 Morning Open competition for his work *Kamikaze Japonaise*. Takahashi immediately acquired a Morning editor to supervise his work and was asked to re-draw his winning draft for publication. Takahashi complained that he could not afford to stay at home and work on the script because he had no money. To this Takahashi's editor replied that he would win at least a low prize in the competition and would be able to live on this prize-money for the time being. Moreover Takahashi was told that if he managed to survive on very little money now in order to keep drawing manga he might become a millionaire artist in the future. This example is culled from observation of the first encounter between artist Takahashi Shinji and company editor Doi Takashi, in Morning editorial office. May 1994.

Manga artists are not invited to join the company like editors. There is no system where the manga artist is a salary man employed by the company. Manga artists with low ability might want to join the company but we wouldn't want them would we? 175

In addition to manga competitions held by individual magazines, manga publishing companies hold annual awards, broadly similar to the Oscar nominations of the film industry, in which large monetary prizes are awarded to manga artists and published series voted the best in their category, at ostentatious media gatherings. Bungei Shunjû and Shôgakukan publishing companies each established manga awards as early as 1955 for cartoonists and early children's magazine manga artists, while Kôdansha did not establish Kôdansha manga awards until 1978. The categories of these highly prestigious manga awards are girls' manga (*shôjo*), boys' manga (*shônen*), and 'general' (*ippan*) - which includes both adult and specialist manga. In 1992 Aoki Yûji won the highest award of the 'general' category for his series *Naniwa Kinyûdô* (Osaka Streets of Gold) serialised in *Morning*. In 1994 the same award was given to artist Iwaaki Hiroshi for the series *Parasite* (*Kiseijû*) serialised in *Afternoon* magazine.

The 1994 Kôdansha annual awards, attended by two thousand guests, were held in the Imperial Hotel, one of Tokyo's most expensive and opulent venues. At the Kôdansha manga awards great emphasis was placed on the conservative opulence of the event. Guests were greeted with fresh roses for their lapels; large quantities of exclusive foods, such as fresh turtle soup in

¹⁷⁵Interview with senior *Morning* editor, Kihara Yasuo, in a restaurant nearby Kôdansha buildings. January, 1994.

silver tureens, were available on trestles for guests to see and eat; and state-of-the-art video-monitors were used to project the image of manga artists speaking on a stage, around the room. Morning and Afternoon editors were exhorted during the editorial meeting proceeding the 1994 awards to make sure they wore their smartest suits to the event and to attempt to persuade their manga artists to do likewise. Many younger manga artists appeared to annoy their editors by arriving in scruffy, punky and individualistic attire. These artists however described the Kôdansha Manga Awards as an excessively "showy" and "tasteless" event! ¹⁷⁶Guests included senior editors and publishers of most other manga publishing companies; famous manga artists working for a range of companies; newly popular younger manga artists; foreign guests; journalists; cultural critics; and a few representatives of government institutions.

Editors generally elect prize winners from amongst company-produced manga but occasionally prizes are awarded to artists whose work is published by rival publishing companies. Such awards can become lures to gain influence over valuable artists, or new artists with great potential who are contracted to other companies. In spring 1993 Shôgakukan awarded a general category prize to artist Arai Hideki for the story serialised in Morning, *From Miyamoto to Her (Miyamoto Kara Kimi E)*.¹⁷⁷ By the end of 1994 Arai Hideki had cut his series in Morning and started a new

¹⁷⁶Manga artist, Morizono Milk, contract editor Torigae Takushi, and several Kôdansha employees from non-manga departments described the 1994 manga awards as embarrassingly ostentatious. A number of younger manga artists could be found skulking outside the main hall of the manga awards grimacing and moaning about how awful the manga awards were.

¹⁷⁷Interview with Shôgakukan editor Tachikawa Yoshitake, August 1994, and a separate interview with Arai Hideki's editor in Morning, Takashima Tsuneo, March 1994.

series, *Eileen*, in the adult manga magazine, *Big Comic Spirits*, published by Shôgakukan.

Artists recruited through manga competitions are predominantly young and inexperienced. Entrants to Magazine's manga competitions range between approximately 15 and 25 years of age whilst the youngest winner of recent competitions was a mere 12 years old.¹⁷⁸ Throughout the 1970s new artists, especially women, often submitted first drafts to manga competitions on leaving middle or high school. Thus they often began careers as manga artists during their mid to late teenage years. Throughout the 1980s however the median age of new artists has risen as an increasing proportion of manga artists are university-educated and therefore submit their first works to manga competitions after graduating from, or abandoning, higher education courses. The number of university-educated manga artists has risen within the adult manga category and amongst artists working for *Morning* magazine in particular. The rise in the age of *début* and rate of attendance of higher education institutions has been linked to the need for more mature and intelligent manga artists to produce adult as oppose to childrens' manga. Despite this explanation, in an industry which was once proud of the lack of education amongst its stars this is a big change - at least at the level of image.

The case of Aoki Yûji, a bankrupt business-man, who *débuted* at *Morning* in 1992 at the age of 48, is extremely rare. Many top adult manga artists working for *Morning* in 1994, including

¹⁷⁸Interview with deputy chief editor of Magazine, Iishi Tohru. May 1994.

Kawaguchi Kaiji, Hirokane Kenshi, Watase Seizô, and Fukuyama Yôji, were aged between forty and fifty. However, these well-established artists did not win manga competitions run by Morning magazine but moved to Morning many years after their initial début. The majority of older manga artists have trained for many years before getting contracts with the limited group of top-rate magazines. The most common form of training and making initial contact with company editors is through working as a manga artist's assistant. Other routes are through university manga clubs and professional manga courses at Further Education colleges.

3.3 Manga artists' assistants

Being an artist's assistant is the most widely accepted form of training and the first step towards becoming a professional manga artist. If manga artists become successful they also become extremely busy. In order to meet deadlines for work successful artists frequently work long hours every day and are seldom able to take holidays. Producing enough pages (around 20) for one weekly episode of a serialised manga story - and many popular artists produce 2 series simultaneously - generally requires manga artists to employ anything up to 10 artists' assistants to help them in their studio. Assistants' jobs are highly sought after, the competition for vacancies rising according to the popularity and status of the manga artist. Assistants' wages, which are the responsibility of the artist alone, vary according to the artists.¹⁷⁹ Assistants however, see

¹⁷⁹Artist, Kawaguchi Kaiji, employs 10 assistants to help him produce weekly episodes for his two leading manga series. The assistants work with

their jobs as valuable routes into the manga industry or as the pursuit of private interests, rather than as a way of earning a living.¹⁸⁰

As assistants, young artists receive a rigorous and lengthy training in the practicalities of professional manga drawing, and are able to establish a valuable circle of professional contacts. Assistants may show their own work to company editors on the occasions when they visit the studio to meet the manga artist, or may be contacted by editors on the basis of their position working with high-ranking artists. The incidence of assistants debuting in the same magazine or with the same company as their employers is high.¹⁸¹

Young people wishing to become artists may work for one or more artists for between 2 to 4 years before debuting as independent manga artists themselves, or possibly failing to develop this far.¹⁸² In this time assistants must learn to draw exactly in

Kawaguchi in his studio and may also sleep in his studio since a working day frequently extends beyond 15 hours. Kawaguchi claimed that his assistant's wages were approximately ¥10 000 to ¥15 000 (£67 to £100) per day, though this estimate seems a little generous. Morizono Milk claimed to pay her assistants "better than average". Her assistant's wages varied from ¥160, 000 (£1067) a month to ¥300, 000 (£2000) a month, for her most experienced assistant.

¹⁸⁰In any case artist's assistants of well-known artists generally worked such long hours that they did not have much remaining opportunity or desire to spend larger amounts of money.

¹⁸¹Examples: Takahashi Tsutomu, a previous assistant of Kawaguchi Kaiji, produced the series *Jiraishi* for Afternoon in 1994. Winner of the top prize in the Morning Chiba Tetsuya 1994 competition, Takahashi Shinji, was the assistant of Tanaka Makoto who produced the series *Plucky Racer* (*Ganbarre Racer*) in Morning in 1994.

¹⁸²One top adult manga artist explained his policy on this subject: "I take anyone who likes drawing, they have the potential to be able to draft my manga. It really depends on the individual assistant what they get out of working for me. The really good ones will stop and go off and do their own thing as soon as possible. Others with no real talent will just carry on working for me for years." Interview with adult manga artist Kawaguchi Kaiji, in his studio/home. March, 1994.

the style of the manga artist employing them in order to assist in writing his manga series.¹⁸³ Assistants felt that there was an optimum length of time to remain an assistant because after 3 years working for one manga artist, they ran the risk of being unable to recall or distinguish their 'own style' of drawing anymore and this would make success as a manga artist unlikely.¹⁸⁴ The conditions of employment of assistants however varied according to the policy of each manga artist. Kawaguchi Kaiji forbade his assistants to continue working for him after they had their own first works published, whilst artist Morizono Milk was less concerned about this issue. Three of her eight assistants also produced their own minor manga series.

Whilst some artists preferred to recruit assistants using their own social connections and initiatives, the majority of popular artists requested company editors to find new assistants for them. Nôjô Junichi and Kawaguchi Kaiji, for instance, both hired assistants selected by their editors from a pool of newcomer artists. Editors in Morning occasionally placed small advertisements for artist's assistant vacancies on the readers' pages of the magazine and selected assistants for their artists from amongst the applicants. Clearly the reliance of some artists on editors to provide assistants was an advantage to editors in managing the training of new artists. Other artists, such as Morizono Milk, did not entertain such close relations with publishing companies and preferred instead to recruit new

¹⁸³Top artists Kawaguchi and Nôjô Junichi both felt that training assistants fully took approximately one year.

¹⁸⁴Discussion with two anonymous assistants working for the female artist Morizono Milk in her absence, in Morizono's studio - Milky World. June, 1994.

assistants from their own social circles or from amongst students of manga training courses convened at Higher Education colleges. (See an artist's assistant in a studio in Plate 6.)

3.4 Manga courses and manga circles

Before becoming artists' assistants or entering manga competitions the majority of newcomer artists have already spent years of their youth devoted to drawing manga or developing related skills in areas such as sketching, oil painting or design.¹⁸⁵ In high schools and universities or technical colleges young people with an interest in manga join manga circles, otherwise known as *manga kenkyûkai* or *manken* for short, which are devoted to learning how to draw manga.¹⁸⁶ The majority of professional manga artists participated in manga circles during their youth. The oldest well-known manga circle is the informal group of young manga artists which moved to Tokyo between 1954 and 1956 to live and work with Tezuka Osamu. Tezuka, who was living in a run down apartment building, Tokiwasô, was joined by Ishinomori Shôtarô, Fuijimoto Hiroshi, Akatsuka Fujio, Abiko Motoo, and Tsunoda Jiro, and others, who together formed a destitute but dedicated manga artists' colony.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Examples of manga artists who were originally trained in other types of visual art are: Yahagi Takako who was trained in fine art at the prestigious Fine Arts university, Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkô; and two artists Sonoda Kenichi and Morizono Milk who studied Design at technical colleges. Amongst artists of the 1960s generation, including Shiratô Sanpei and Nagashima Shinji, a number were self-taught oil-painters before becoming manga artists.

¹⁸⁶ Manga clubs are discussed in greater detail in section 5:1.

¹⁸⁷ Schodt, F. (1988) Manga! Manga!. 66.

Plate 6

Manga artist's assistant in a manga studio

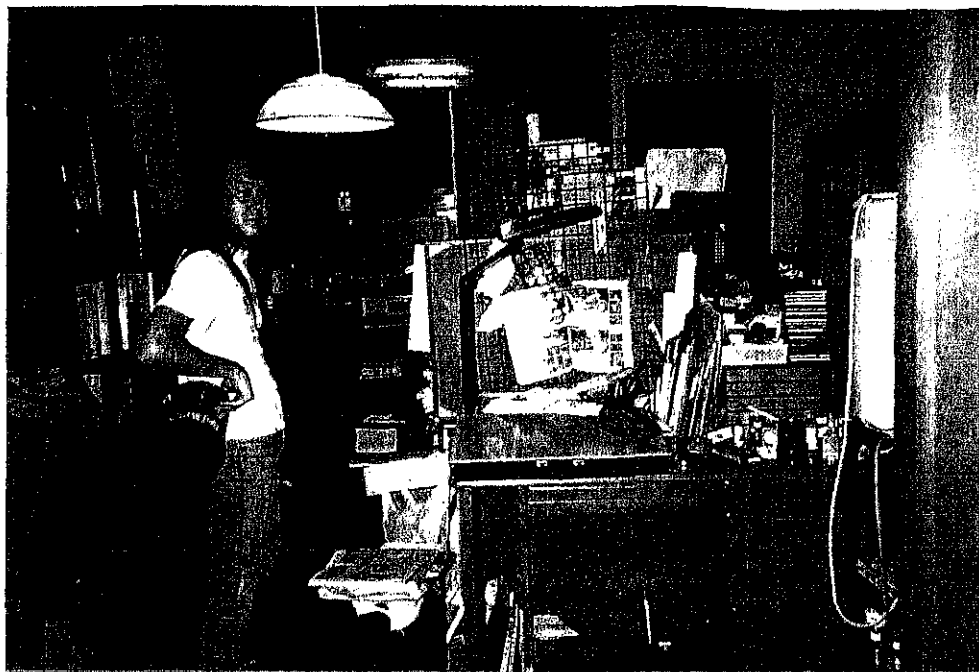


Plate 7

Girl performing costume play (cosplay)



Source: photographs by S.Kinsella, 1994.

For young artists who want to become manga artists manga circles can operate as a preliminary step in their training and a valuable first introduction to the industry. This is particularly the case in older manga circles based in universities such as Meiji, Hôsei and Waseda.¹⁸⁸ While the oldest manga circles were formally established in the 1950s, no more than a handful of these exclusive manga clubs existed until the early 1970s, when the popularity of drawing manga amongst Japanese youth increased rapidly. In 1994 there were estimated to be approximately 30-50,000 manga clubs across the country. While the great majority of these were small informal circles set up in high schools and colleges throughout the country, a small number of more unusual manga circles were established by young manga artists, independently of any other institutions. In 1981, at the age of 17, a now highly successful manga artist, Sonoda Kenichi placed an advertisement in a manga fans' magazine *Animeju*, calling on other young manga artists to join a new manga circle. Sonoda's circle in Osaka gathered around one hundred members during its three year span of existence, 3 of these members - Sonoda Kenichi, Yumeno Rei, and Takezaki Toni, later became successful manga artists.¹⁸⁹

Through manga circles, students may be able to make contact with previous members who have since become artists, as well as develop strong relationships with their peers who might succeed in debuting as artists or become manga editors in the future, and thus become valuable professional contacts. The 1994 to 1995

¹⁸⁸Interview with manga artist and media figure, Ishikawa Jun. July, 1994.

¹⁸⁹Interview with manga artist, Sonoda Kenichi. March, 1994.

president of Meiji University Manga Club, aimed to submit his work to Jump manga competition after graduating from university. He explained to me that:

Some ex-members, minor artists, still come back to Meiji University manga circle to see us and recruit assistants. Four of our current members heard about their assistants' jobs through this club. We generally try to organise links with publishers and ex-members to help students get jobs in the manga industry.¹⁹⁰

Many editors also make occasional visits to university manga clubs and other likely locations, to search for new artists. One deputy chief editor of Magazine recalled his experiences recruiting artists in this way:

I pick up artists from all over the place. Once I was walking along in Shinjuku district when I spotted a guy squatting on the floor selling amateur manga. I picked them up and had a look and thought 'Hey this is good'. I took him off the street said 'I want you to write a manga series for me'. I have been to all the manga circles at the universities and colleges to look for new manga artists. Most circles have their own room or meeting place within the university. Once I went to Hôsei University and I opened the wrong door and found a room full of revolutionary students with helmets on. Scary ! The manga circle was next door. I found Motojima Yukihiisa, who did the horse racing story *Kaze no Shirufudô*, in a room at Seijô University. Meiji University manga circle is a good source of artists but they seem to go to Shôgakukan.¹⁹¹

Young people who do not have access to manga circles in universities are more likely to attend professional manga drawing courses after middle or high school instead. The largest professional manga courses are run over two years at Yoyogi

¹⁹⁰Interview with the 94-95 president of Meiji University Manga Club, in the club meeting room on Meiji University campus. July 1994.

¹⁹¹Interview with deputy chief editor of Magazine, Iishi Tohru, in Magazine editorial office. April, 1994.

Animation College (Yoyogi Animation Gakuin) and Tokyo Design College (Tokyo Design Gakuin). Chiyoda Electrics College (Chiyoda Denshi Gakuin) and Tokyo Animator College (Tokyo Animator Gakuin) also ran manga courses. In 1994, 310 students attended Yoyogi Animation College's manga course (Comic, Gekiga, Pro Yôseiryô) a figure that has risen progressively each year since its launch in the academic year 1988-89. On this course approximately 40 percent of the students have been women and 60 percent men. In 1994 the cost of attending the first year of this manga course was ¥660 000 (£4400). The course included still life drawing classes, information about contracts and relationships with publishers, and training in professional 'screentone' and 'naming' techniques. What is possibly most interesting to the students of manga courses, however, is a series of lectures on drawing techniques generally delivered by extremely famous manga artists. In the case of the course run by Yoyogi Animation College, lectures were delivered by artists as famous as Uchida Shungiku, Satô Sato, Monkey Punch, Nagai Go, Nagashima Shinji, and Satonaka Machiko.

Sumi Chiaki, one of two convenors of the Yoyogi Animation College course, estimated that approximately 30 percent of his students got work as artists' assistants after graduation and approximately 10 percent went on to win manga competitions.¹⁹² Graduates of manga courses rarely appeared amongst newcomer artists submitting their work to Morning editorial, however, and there is evidence to suggest that manga course graduates tended to début in low-status, low-circulation magazines (*hakobusu*

¹⁹²Interview with Sumi Chiaki, the joint convenor of the manga course taught on site at Yoyogi Animation College. May, 1994.

zasshi) if they debuted at all.¹⁹³ While the great majority of students on manga courses had not received any other form of higher education and were not therefore able to join the more institutionalised manga circles based on college campuses, Sumi Chiaki estimated that approximately 90 percent of his students were, nevertheless, active in independently organised manga circles which produced amateur unpublished manga.

Manga editors of major publishing companies tend to view manga courses with condescension and claim that manga course graduates hold no advantage in debuting in their magazines. Another opinion of manga courses held by editors was that they were at best a cheap form of training for young people without sufficient talent or professional contacts to get work as artists' assistants directly, and at worst a form of gratuitous entertainment for manga fans, established in the interests of profit.

3.5 The movement of artists around the hierarchy of adult manga magazines

The corporate organisation of the manga publishing industry is hierarchical. Typically, manga artists make their first debut as professionals in low-circulation, low-status magazines and continue to submit their work directly to editors or into manga

¹⁹³The 1994 course prospectus booklet of the Yoyogi-based course includes case studies of previous students who have since succeeded either in debuting as manga artists, or getting work as the artist's assistant of a well-known artist. The scarcity of examples provided and the low status of the publications in which exemplary ex-students appear to have debuted, suggested that in general graduates of manga courses do not become best-seller manga artists. Yoyogi Animation Gakuin, Manga, Gekiga, Pro Yôseiryô: course prospectus 1994.

competitions run by different magazines in an attempt to 'move upwards' and get contracts with high-circulation magazines with higher status, a larger readership and greater financial rewards. Successful manga artists may win prizes in more than one manga competition, although frequently manga artists get promoted to better magazines by contacting editors directly or by being spotted by editors on a search for talent in lower circulation magazines. The upward movement of popular artists through the hierarchy of magazines has created a situation in which low-circulation magazines cannot keep or initiate relationships with popular artists and their position as low-circulation magazines is perpetuated.

Many famous adult manga artists producing work for top-rate magazines in 1994 had spent their youth working in relative anonymity for low-circulation adult magazines before achieving greater fame and status later in their career. This pattern is partly influenced by the recent expansion of the current new adult manga category from the mid-eighties. Artists who specialised in writing for adult audiences before this period were largely confined to writing for second-rate adult manga magazines such as Sunday, Action, or Manga Times; low-circulation erotic magazines such as Erotopia and Erogenica; or specialist adult games (Golf, Mah-jong) manga. By following the career of several of the most popular adult manga artists in 1994, it is possible to illustrate the pattern of their recruitment.

Kobayashi Yoshinori is a high-profile artist producing the politically controversial manga series *The Manifesto of Arrogance (Gômanism Sengen)* for the news magazine Weekly SPA! In his youth Kobayashi deliberately attended a technical school instead of a university-stream high school in order to gain time to practise drawing manga. Although holding the ambition to become a manga artist from this early age, Kobayashi entered Tsukuba University nevertheless. During his last year of studies in 1976 he won the Akatsuka manga competition run in Jump magazine published by Shûeisha. The prize winning work, *Tokyo University Single Lane! (Tôdai Ichichokusen)*, was a parody of the Japanese university entrance examination system, and became a regular series in Jump magazine. In 1986 Kobayashi switched company and began producing a series, *Obôchama Kun*, for a low-circulation magazine, Goro Goro Comic, published by Shôgakukan. In 1992 Kobayashi took the unusual route of producing an adult manga series for a leading news magazine, since which he has achieved the fame and status of a top adult manga artist.

Kawaguchi Kaiji is another equally famous adult manga artist. Kawaguchi went to Meiji University and contributed manga to amateur magazines such as MORE - Meiji University manga club annual anthology in 1967, and Yakkô (Night Train) an amateur manga magazine circulated by hand. In 1968 Kawaguchi, aged 21, debuted in Young Comic published by Shônen Gahôsha company. He did not enter or win a manga competition but had a three-episode series published. In 1970 Kawaguchi moved to another 'second-rate' magazine, Weekly Manga Times, published by Takeshôbo. Not until 1983 when Kawaguchi was recruited by a new magazine

entitled *Morning* to write the series, *Actor*, and simultaneously recruited by *Big Comic* published by Shôgakukan to write another new series, *The Gama*, did Kawaguchi work for high-circulation or 'first-rate' magazines.

Nôjô Junichi failed his university entrance exams and so aimed to be a manga artist instead. He debuted in 1972 after getting work published in an extremely minor pornographic magazine. Nôjô continued to produce pornographic manga for the low-circulation erotic magazine *Erotopia* published by KK Bestsellers which is well-known amongst serious manga fans. After several years of drawing pornography Nôjô was spotted by editors and switched to producing low-circulation Mah-jong (board game strategy) manga for *Kindai Mah-jong* magazine in 1982. In 1987 Nôjô had the first proper break of his career when editors of *Morning* magazine recruited him and he began producing a school-boy yakuza series entitled *Shômaru* for *Morning* magazine. Despite being recruited to *Morning* magazine Nôjô chose in 1990 to produce a short series about love for *Sinbad*, a low-circulation magazine published by Futabasha company.

In 1968 Hatanaka Jun attended a just-established professional manga course at Tokyo Design School, after finishing local high school in the small mining village in Kyûshû where he was brought up. Between the ages of 19 and 29 Hatanaka worked as a builder's labourer after failing to win any manga competitions or debut as a manga artist. At 22 Hatanaka contacted *Big Comic* published by Shôgakukan, but editors declined to place him under their supervision until he was 25 years old. After two years in

this supervision Hatanaka approached Manga Sunday published by Jitsugyô no Nihonsha and spent a further 2 years under the supervision of different editors. When Hatanaka was 29 years old the chief editor of Manga Sunday changed and under the influence of a new chief editor sympathetic to Hatanaka's distinctive style, Hatanaka finally debuted. Over the next 10 years Hatanaka continued to produce 500 episodes of the series *Mandara no Ryôtarô* in Manga Sunday. In 1990 Hatanaka was finally recruited to a top-rate magazine, Morning, where he produced the series *108 Temptations (Hyakuhachi no Koi)* for 2 years, before being dropped from Morning, and returning to Manga Sunday magazine.

There is a tendency which works against the hierarchical structures of magazines and artists' careers. Some popular artists whom editors feel could work for the high-circulation magazines such as Ribbon, Jump, Big Comic Spirits and Morning, choose instead to work for lower-circulation magazines. The reason for this preference is the greater control artists are able to exert over what they produce when they work for second-rate magazines. These magazines are unable to exert control over popular artists as doing so would simply push them towards other magazines also keen to employ them. The effect of the movement of popular artists to lower-circulation magazines was an increasing variety of expression in the content of second-rate magazines, as artists produced manga which editors were unable to control properly, leading to the imminent revival of some of these magazines.¹⁹⁴ During 1994 many Morning and Big Comic Spirits editors noticed with alarm the growing circulation

¹⁹⁴Interview with a senior editor of Afternoon, Watanabe Kyô, in a restaurant near Kôdansha buildings. July 1994.

figures of the ostensibly second-rate adult magazine *Manga Sunday* published by *Jitsugyô no Nihonsha*, for which several talented artists, including Uchida Shingiku and Hatanaka Jun were then working.¹⁹⁵

Examining the careers of famous artists gives the impression that success is more or less automatic for individuals prepared to spend years working towards the goal of becoming first-rate artists. This impression is perpetuated by the invisibility of anonymous, unsuccessful artists and it is an impression helpful to the manga industry. The sense that 'I too can make it' encourages youth to become manga artists and manga artists to work hard to get their work published. In fact, the majority of manga artists are relatively unsuccessful and unable either to produce series for publication after winning manga competitions, or to graduate from producing occasional works (*yomikiri*) or minor series in low-circulation magazines. Shôji Riaka was one of the large pool of unsuccessful artists who are rarely seen in manga editorial offices. In order to keep practising drawing manga under the supervision of manga editors, Shôji had no paid employment between 1987 - the year he graduated from higher education - and 1994. Instead Shôji had managed to live using small sums of money earned producing short pieces of work which

¹⁹⁵The elder brother of the famous veteran artist Shirato Sanpei, and a manga expert in his own right, Okamoto Makoto, felt that the editors of second-rate magazines work with more conviction than those of top magazines: "It is now common in the industry to say that if a magazine does not sell a million copies an issue then it just is not a magazine. Magazines which sell below a million copies a week, say 500 000 copies a week, are not in a good position. But these magazine editorials struggle hard to make their magazines survive and the energy in their manga magazines like *Manga Sunday*, is very high." Interview with the boss of Ginnansha contract manga editing company, Okamoto Makoto, in a restaurant near Shôgakukan buildings.

had been published in low circulation magazines, and Morning magazine on rare occasions when popular artists had failed to produce episodes of their usual series. Shôji had been attached to Morning editorial for 5 years and produced drafts as long as 200 pages for potential new series, none of which had been accepted for publication. Winning manga competitions is not a guarantee of success as a professional manga artist either. Takahashi Shinji, winner of the top prize in the spring 1994 Chiba Tetsuya manga competition run by Morning, was subsequently re-evaluated by the editorial staff and not contracted to produce work for publication.

The deputy chief editor of Morning estimated that there were approximately two thousand professional artists working in Japan in 1994 and a large periphery of perhaps over four thousand less successful artists with part-time, occasional or no employment.¹⁹⁶ Morning and Afternoon editorial offices together received the drafts of over 300 newcomer manga artists each year - a figure similar in other manga editorials. At any one time approximately 200 newcomer artists are working under the supervision of Morning and Afternoon magazine and each year approximately half of this number are dropped entirely and succeeded by new newcomer artists. Despite the great number of people wishing to become manga artists, the large demand for new artists amongst manga editorial offices continues. Editors feel that the majority of new artists are incapable of producing publishable work. The words of the chief editor of Afternoon

¹⁹⁶Discussion with Fukumoto Hiroyuki, deputy chief editor of Morning. March, 1994.

magazine represent the opinion of the great majority of manga editors:

A lot of people want to become manga artists, but the number who will write what we want them to is very few. When it comes to the crunch few of the new artists will be able to write a whole story.¹⁹⁷

The large pool of unsuccessful manga artists operates to the advantage of manga editors, however, by providing an implicit threat, in the form of professional unemployment, with which to persuade new manga artists to write more exactly what manga editors demand.

3.6 Conclusion

The openness of the manga medium to young people with no educational or cultural advantage has no immediate equivalent in the British pop-music, television, or film industries. Writing manga requires no more than a pen and paper and is engaged in by hundreds of thousands of manga fans and ordinary Japanese youth. The variety of individuals likely to become accomplished manga artists and find employment in the manga industry is broad. This stands in stark contrast to the production of music and film, for example, which require expensive machinery, most of which is owned by media companies, and the use of which is determined by highly selective social filtering processes. The recruitment pattern of manga appears most similar to that of British football, which is based on extensive networks of school teams,

¹⁹⁷Interview with the chief editor of Morning, Ogawa Haruo, in Afternoon editorial offices. March, 1994.

work teams, and local amateur teams, which feed into professional and national teams. In a tradition similar to that of young British boys dreaming of becoming footballers, the common and well-documented aspiration of many Japanese children has been to become manga artists. Similar to footballers, too, the dream of success as a manga artist is also a dream about becoming fabulously wealthy. The handful of manga artists who create huge national hits are likely to become extremely rich. In 1989, six of the ten wealthiest individuals listed in Japanese newspapers were young manga artists.¹⁹⁸ Perhaps it is more than a coincidence that sports, and in particular stories of youngsters who become great sportsmen and team-members, have featured so strongly in boys', girls' and adult manga.¹⁹⁹ In 1986, NHK television broadcast a 2-part television drama, The Manga Road (Manga Michi), based on an autobiographical manga story of the same title by the 2-man manga artist team, Fujiko Fujio. Manga Road highlighted the history of social aspiration attached to manga world. In The Manga Road two youngsters walk all the way from their hometown in the country to the city, in order to pursue their dream of becoming manga artists.²⁰⁰

In the post-war period, individuals seeking employment in the culture industries in order to be able to express themselves in their work have turned to manga, both because of the broader range of expression manga has appeared to tolerate, and because

¹⁹⁸Sabin, R. (1992) Adult Comics: An Introduction, London: Routledge. 209.

¹⁹⁹Manga about sports' achievements form a broad genre referred to as *sports-konjô* (*suppokon* for short) or 'sports-feeling' manga.

²⁰⁰Duus, P. (1988) Introduction to Ishinomori, S. Japan. Inc. A Manga Introduction to the Japanese Economy, Berkeley: University of California Press.

of the relative ease of access to the industry. Uchida Masaru, the long-time chief editor of Magazine pointed out that:

The route for any artist who wants to produce something good of his own has been into manga and then into film afterwards if they are successful.²⁰¹

Successful manga artists have gone on to become film animators (e.g. Otomo Katsuhiro), playwrights (e.g. Ishikawa Jun), sculptors (e.g. Katsuyuki Shinohara), artists (e.g. Yokoo Tadanori), television celebrities (e.g. Morizono Milk) and authors (Yamada Amy).

While recruitment into the manga industry is a distinctively large-scale and open process, the organisation of manga artists and their assistants in the manga artists' studio appears to be similar to a craft guild mode of cultural production and regulation.²⁰² Within the perimeter of the artist's studio, this impression of artisanal production is, to some extent, accurate. Manga, like other contemporary mass cultures such as pop-music or popular literature, is made by hand by small specialist teams, in a manner not far removed from that of a mediaeval craft guild.²⁰³ Moreover, the most widely acceptable means of learning the techniques of manga composition, through working as an artist's assistant for one year or more, is a form of artisan's apprenticeship. This stage of recruitment and training

²⁰¹Interview with Uchida Masaru, in a restaurant near the offices of his new manga magazine, MANGA BOY, in Shinbashi. April 1994.

²⁰²See Raymond Williams (1981) 'Formations'; Chapter 3 of Culture, London: Fontana Press.

²⁰³Raymond Williams refers to this frequently overlooked and peculiar aspect of the production of mass culture in (1981) Culture: Chapter 3, London: Fontana Press. 45-47.

which takes place in artists' studios seems significantly less open.

However, to compare the organisation of artists' studios with a particular contemporary form of Japanese craft guild, the schools of the traditional arts which use the *iemoto* system, would be a category mistake.²⁰⁴ In each of these schools, 'traditional arts',²⁰⁵ such as the Tea Ceremony, playing the Koto and Shakuhachi, or studying Ikebana flower arranging, are taught in the specific, formalised style of the master of the school. To learn an art, pupils must imitate the style of the master perfectly and pay large sums of money to graduate formally to different levels of artistic proficiency. The *iemoto* system expanded greatly in the post-war period, as learning an 'art' became a form of personal hobby. The *iemoto* school system has been widely criticised for its hierarchical structure of learning which penalises and apparently excludes the individual expression of the pupils. While the organisation of manga artists' studios may superficially resemble the schools of the arts, there is not in fact any deep structural similarity. Whereas schools of the arts are independent entities and enterprises, manga artists and their studios are entirely contingent upon the organisation of powerful manga publishing companies. The manga publishing industry as a whole runs open-door competitions because it requires large amounts of 'individual expression' and lots of new artists.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴Havens, T. J. (1982) Artist and Patron in Postwar Japan. London: Princeton University Press. 21-27.

²⁰⁵These are referred to as the 'traditional arts' simply because this is an adequate means of identifying them.

²⁰⁶Closer examination of the *iemoto* schools of the arts themselves might suggest that if any loose comparison can be made, they are in fact closer

Manga artist recruitment and training is not organised along similar lines to the schools of the arts, but despite the open character of manga competitions, it is nevertheless hierarchical. Young people unable to have a university education are also unable to join well-known manga circles, which are established in high-ranking universities. In these universities students have a chance to get good assistants' jobs and meet manga editors. University educated manga artists fare better in the manga industry and, as social research has consistently confirmed, Japanese university education is a good indicator of a privileged social and economic background.²⁰⁷ Youngsters unable to enter good universities were forced to attend professional manga courses in order to obtain the training and knowledge necessary to début as a professional artist. However, manga course graduates, who lacked university education, were not favoured but perceived as inferior by the major publishing companies. Most non-university-educated aspiring manga artists tended out of necessity to go on to work for low-circulation magazines, become perpetual artists' assistants, or to be sidelined into a deeper involvement in the unpublished, amateur manga subculture. Chapter Five focuses on the amateur unpublished manga subculture.

To summarise, the manga industry has been a relatively open medium, which has provided a route into cultural production for

in structure to the academies of the arts of early modern Europe, than to craft guilds.

²⁰⁷See Rohlen, P.T (1977) 'Is Japanese Education Becoming Less Egalitarian?' in Journal of Japanese Studies, 3;1, 37-71; Azumi, K. (1969) Higher education and Business recruitment in Japan, New York: Teacher's College Press. 90-91.

a broad spectrum of young people with talent and aspirations. (See Plate 13.) At the same time, the relatively democratic process of recruiting artists has grown within, and, indeed, is in some senses a reaction to, a contemporary capitalist society which is criss-crossed with multiple forms of social and educational inequality. Thus the recruitment of manga artists into different magazines too, is stratified according to education and social background. Furthermore, once recruited to the manga industry, professional manga artists are tightly constrained and cannot act as equals of the publishing companies with which they enter into contracts. The power of the manga publishing companies will become more apparent in Chapter Four, the next chapter of this section, which examines the supervision of manga artists by manga editors.

Within the ranks of manga artists there is a clear divide between so-called *veteran* manga artists, the majority aged over 50 years old, who were active at the time of the earliest manifestations of the manga industry in the 1950s and even the pre-war period, and other manga artists who emerged after the contemporary manga industry had already been established. These first sparse generations of manga artists are tightly organised into self-formed associations, the Manga Society (Manga Shûdan) and Comic Artists' Association (Nihon Mangaka Kyôkai), and sub-groups of old colleagues within these organisations. While these organisations have no external power in society, the continuation of their internal vigour is quite evident.²⁰⁸ The

²⁰⁸I attended several parties held by elderly manga artists in their homes and several Manga Society meetings. The majority of these veteran manga artists were eccentric, individualistic old men, who appeared to have deep friendships with their fellow manga artists. In addition to attending house

independent social organisation of veteran manga artists is itself a separate subject, but serves here to throw into relief the complete lack of organisation, and even communication, between manga artists working in the contemporary manga industry. Manga artists work as individuals and have little contact with other manga artists other than their assistants. The mainstream contemporary manga medium is organised entirely by manga publishing companies.

parties and gatherings, middle-aged members of the Manga Society even went on holiday abroad together each year.

CHAPTER FOUR: The Management of Production By Publishing Companies

4.1 Manga editors

Apart from occasional and deliberate exceptions, all company editors join Kôdansha or Shôgakukan after graduating from a prestigious university. A university such as Tokyo, Waseda, Keiô, or Kyoto has been widely recognised throughout post-war Japanese society as occupying a place at the top of the status hierarchy of universities. Entry into one of these prestigious institutions has been shown to be powerfully, and since around 1970, increasingly, dependent upon a privileged social background.²⁰⁹ The offspring of wealthy families which can afford expensive private education for their children are far more likely to be able to pass rigorous examinations and enter a prestigious university than those from families of more typical and limited financial means. Large and prestigious companies, including Kôdansha and Shôgakukan, have historical relationships with top-ranking universities, from whom they recruit, on the 1st of April each year, the great majority of their new employees.²¹⁰ These companies are considered to be highly desirable and prestigious places of employment for two now slightly old-fashioned but still important reasons: they are large companies which provide employee welfare programmes, life-time employment and wage rises with seniority (the *nenko*

²⁰⁹Rohlen, P.T (1977) 'Is Japanese Education Becoming Less Egalitarian?' in Journal of Japanese Studies. 3:1. 37-71.

²¹⁰See Azumi, K. (1969) Higher education and Business recruitment in Japan, New York: Teacher's College Press. 90-91.

seido system); and in the case of Kôdansha, it is also an old and deeply-rooted company with a highly prestigious 'name value.'²¹¹

A high proportion of Kôdansha employees are recruited from Waseda university, which is one of the most prestigious universities in the country. In July 1995 Kôdansha had 1171 employees, the great majority of them being editors, of which 894 were men and 277 were women. In April 1996, 322 of these Kôdansha employees were graduates of Waseda University; 95 were graduates of Keiô University; 47 were graduates of Chûô University; 46 were graduates of Tokyo University; 37 were graduates of Sophia University; 36 were graduates of Meiji University; 34 were graduates of Rikkyô University; 30 were graduates of Tsukuba University (previously Tokyo Education); 23 were graduates of Tokyo Gaigo University; 21 were graduates of Nihon University; 16 were graduates of Aoyama Gakuin University; and 14 each were graduates of Kyoto and Hôsei Universities, and so on, in order of decreasing numbers.²¹² Of the 16 Morning editors aged between 22 and over 50 years old whom I interviewed in 1994, 9 were graduates of Waseda University; 2 were graduates of Keiô University; and each of the rest were graduates of Tokyo, Kobe, Chuô, Nihon and Tsukuba Universities. These

²¹¹Junior Kôdansha employee and manga editor, Ichihara Shinji, described finding himself an employee of Kôdansha as "paradise". For more information about the prestige of large white-collar companies see Bowman, J. M (1981) Educational Choice and Labour Markets in Japan, London: Chicago University Press. 240-244.

²¹²All of these universities are prestigious institutions and this list illustrates that, in general, the more prestigious the university, the greater its graduates number amongst Kôdansha employees. Details from Kôdansha personnel department via Kôdansha employee, Suga Tomoko. Email correspondence. July 1996.

proportions were representative of the overall breakdown of Kôdansha employees by university.

Thus before they are manga editors, the employees of large publishing companies are company employees and salary men in prestigious employment. A number of editors in Kôdansha were able candidly to categorise their social status as "élite". Within Kôdansha, company employees were generally separated into two distinct streams within the company. A minority of company employees were posted in specific departments within the company and stayed in those departments, accumulating highly specialised experience, throughout their careers, while in most cases rising to managerial positions within those departments. The chief editor of Morning, Afternoon and Magazine manga magazines in 1994 had all spent their entire careers as manga editors of those magazines or other manga publications. The majority of company editors were circulated around different departments of the company according to managerial decisions about changes in department staffing figures and needs, which they claimed not to be party to or able to predict. These editors spent anything from between 2 and 8 years - 8 years was considered about the maximum length of stay - in one department, before being moved elsewhere. Thus in any manga department in Kôdansha there was a core group of individuals in management positions, and aspiring to them, who through their accumulated specialism lent continuity, stability, and 'character' to the editorial, and a larger group of more mobile editors who moved in and out of the editorial according to its changing requirements, and for other less explicit reasons, such as the machinations of internal

company (and company faction) politics. Manga editors in Kôdansha might previously have worked in publishing departments concerned with literature before moving to Morning editorial. One company editor in Morning had spent most of his career producing the serious-minded intellectual journal, *Gunzô*,²¹³ while another had been involved with foreign childrens' books in translation.²¹⁴

While virtually all company employees were generally ignorant about manga before being moved into a manga editorial, they did have, in many cases, highly sophisticated personal tastes and interests in culture. The interests of editors during their student days, for example, suggested that they had come from privileged social backgrounds not only in terms of financial capital, but also in terms of educational history (*gakureki*), and cultural capital. In Morning and Young Sunday editorial, male company editors in their forties described the major interests of their university days as drama and play writing, contemporary dance, avant garde cinema, and surfing on different beaches around Japan. Other manga editors in Kôdansha had come from unusual social backgrounds which appeared to have been transformed into a specialised form of cultural capital in their later life. These included a senior editor in Morning editorial who came from a poor close-knit community in the coal mining village of Hakata on Shikoku island, and an unmarried

²¹³Discussions with Morning editor Ishizaka Hideyuki about his career editing the periodical *Gunzô* before being transferred into Morning editorial offices in April 1993. June, 1994.

²¹⁴Interview with Morning editor Takanaka Yukiko about her previous work overseeing the translation and publication of European childrens' literature before being transferred into Morning editorial in April 1993. December 1993.

professional geisha in Hokkaidô, respectively. Another senior editor of Morning editorial was generally rumoured not only to be the direct relation of one branch of the wealthy and renowned Tsutsumi family, but also to be an ex-revolutionary student leader of the late 1960s. Some company editors attempted to feed some of their personal cultural interests into manga or, in the case of more flexible individuals, to bend their sophisticated cultural interests towards a highly intellectual interest in the processes of youth, society and popular culture such as manga.

Large publishing companies such as Kôdansha and Shôgakukan have also attempted to employ university graduates who already have a personal expertise and interest in manga, since the 1970s and possibly earlier. Such recruits were quickly placed into manga editing departments to increase the level of manga editorial expertise. Watanabe Kyô, who was recruited to Kôdansha in 1979 because of his personal interest in manga, reports that even during this period, twenty years after the publication of the first weekly manga magazine, the level of knowledge about manga amongst manga editors was still lower than that of the average university student. Graduates with a personal interest in manga were sought to strengthen the interaction between the manga editorial, staffed by ordinary company employees, and the manga medium.

Watanabe Kyô, now working in Afternoon editorial, was recruited to Kôdansha because of his then esoteric personal interest in manga and his equally unusual ambition to become a manga editor. He had studied Physics at Nihon University but professes that

during his student days he was more active in the new university manga circle than in the physics laboratories.²¹⁵ In Morning editorial one of Watanabe Kyô's regular jobs was reading the drafts of manga sent into the editorial by newcomer artists and making his assessment of their potential. Due to the frequently poor quality and repetitive nature of these numerous drafts, this was an arduous and unpopular job which Watanabe was able to carry out far more effectively than ordinary editors. Watanabe Kyô mixed in circles of unknown and amateur manga artists in his private life and deployed these private experiences in the editorial in his undefined role as a specialist of new trends in the work of newcomer artists and minor magazines.

Other adult manga editors had been employed by large publishing companies because of their personal enthusiasm for manga borne of their view that manga is a progressive medium. These manga editors, which might be characterised in Japanese terms as "people interested in social problems" (*shakai mondai ni kyômi no aru hito*), tended to enjoy the sense of being practically involved with society and 'in touch' with readers, and artists. Several, including senior Morning editor's Yuri Kôichi and Tsutsumi Yasumitsu, now in their forties and in senior positions in manga editorials, had developed their sympathies for adult and boys' manga during the period of student unrest in the late 1960s when they had been observers or activists in student demonstrations.

²¹⁵Interview with senior Morning editor, Watanabe Kyô, in a restaurant nearby to Morning editorial offices. July 1994.

A number of editors had been involved in manga circles at university and had hoped at some stage during their youth to become manga artists. Becoming a manga editor had often been a second career choice for these editors when it became apparent to them that they lacked the necessary talent to become manga artists. A senior editor of Young Sunday magazine was one such individual. Tachikawa Yoshitake had married a female manga artist and claimed to identify more closely with the world of manga artists than that of publishing companies:

I became an editor because I liked manga. I wrote amateur manga when I was at university. At that time manga were not of very high quality but they had power! I became an editor because I was not so good at drawing manga. But recently I have been feeling like it must be my karma to be an artist after all. I have thought of quitting the editorial, and getting a job in the civil service that finishes at five every day, so that I could have time to draw manga in a way that I do not now.²¹⁶

The tendency for a minority of adult manga editors in large companies to declare that they became editors because of their populist social ideals or private love of manga, was conspicuous enough to have contributed to a general characterisation within the manga industry of adult manga editors as social outsiders struggling with society through the pages of manga. The image of the 'progressive' manga editor conflicts strongly, however, with the type of managerial role which manga editors carry out.

²¹⁶Interview with a senior editor of Young Sunday, Tachikawa Yoshitake, in a restaurant near the Shôgakukan building. August, 1994.

4.2 The supervision of artists

The main role of editors is the supervision of manga artists producing weekly or monthly series. Manga editors are described as the supervisors (*tantô henshûsha*) of manga artists producing work under their guidance. Methods of supervision vary greatly between manga editorials and between individual series written by artists of varying temperament and experience. While supervision is the main function of editors it is also a highly covert activity within the manga editorial and tends to take place away from the centre of editorial offices and the gaze of other editors and visitors. In Young Sunday and Big Comic Spirits published by Shôgakukan a large proportion of supervision took place in purpose built 'boxes' composed of panels on three sides and containing a bench and table, where editors and artists could face each other and carry out supervisions in relative privacy.²¹⁷ In other editorials such as Magazine published by Kôdansha manga artists and editors would meet to discuss series' in separate rooms or reception areas. In the case of Morning and other manga editorials such as Hime and Sakura produced by Aoba, almost all supervision was carried out in the artist's home or studio, or in public places such as cafés. The precise contents of each supervision meeting (*uchiawase*), and in particular the power relations between artists and editors, and the nature of the discussion between them, was both the most critical aspect of manga editing and yet the most hidden from view. During my research I was allowed to

²¹⁷These 'boxes' for supervising artists were similar in design to customer interview areas constructed in the foyers of some British banks and DHSS offices.

go along and observe a large number of supervision meetings between artists and editors and on many such occasions I was asked to leave the presence of the artist and editors at some point during their discussion.²¹⁸

Adult and boys' manga artists are typically edited by teams of editors responsible for different aspects of the production process. In 1994 Magazine published by Kôdansha, for example, had 22 manga editors who were divided into 4 large teams responsible for supervising and selecting new artists together.²¹⁹ Each month a different editorial team in Magazine chose the winners of the Magazine Trophy Manga Competition. Newcomer artists who were awarded low prizes were placed under the supervision of a single editor; second prize winners were placed under the joint supervision of two editors; and top prize-winners and newcomer artists or the artists of popular series, were placed under the supervision of three or more editors. Igarashi Takao, the chief editor of all eight of the 'Magazine range' of magazines published by Kôdansha, described how manga stories were planned through a series of supervisions:

Before we begin publication of a series we do a year of preparation. The artist and editors meet regularly for months and the artist produces one book of manga (about 14-20 episodes). Then all the editors read the book and decide if they think it is good enough to publish or not. We already know exactly how each story will develop and we know in advance that it will be interesting for the readers.²²⁰

²¹⁸Generally I was not asked to leave directly but asked if I would not rather leave at that point because I might find the ensuing discussion "long and tiring", or "boring".

²¹⁹One week of observation of editorial meetings and meetings between editors and artists in Magazine editorial office. April, 1994.

²²⁰Interview with the Chief editor of Magazine, Igarashi Takao, in Magazine editorial offices. May 1994.

Individual manga artists met their teams of editors several times a week to discuss their work and each team was responsible for the joint supervision of several popular manga artists and series. Igarashi Takao was influenced by a domestic social discourse which suggests that Japanese people are at their most creative when they work in groups, and claims to operate team-supervision of magazine artists for that reason.²²¹

Morning editors, on the other hand, did not work in teams but met and supervised artists as individuals. As in Magazine editorial, so within Morning editorial, too, editors believed that their methods of supervision were the most conducive to creative manga production:

Magazine is more business-like than Morning. In Morning and Afternoon we have one-to-one relationships between the editors and artists so there is trust between them. You can only have that kind of deep relationship between individuals.²²²

Morning editors also spoke in terms of two different types of editor who corresponded to two separate stages of editing manga:

There are two types of editors, the ones who can start stories, the pioneers, and the ones who maintain stories. There is a mutual division of labour in the office. The 'pioneer' is selfish and likes to make things himself. The 'raiser' has to be good at publicity.²²³

²²¹Igarashi Takao. May 1994.

²²²Interview with senior Morning editor Shin Kasuyuki, in Morning editorial offices. May 1994.

²²³Discussion with Morning editor, Fujisawa Manabu, whilst travelling to artist Yumeno Kazuko's home. March 1994.

The editorial role of selecting and priming manga artists and developing story plots with them through supervisions is disguised as far as possible from the readers. Ordinary readers buy manga with the understanding that it is the manga artist who originally conceived the manga series they are reading, and whose personality expression they are enjoying. Adult manga artists become famous and their names appear in manga magazines as the apparently unequivocal creators of their stories. Whilst some editors have become well known within the manga industry and even published autobiographies, they have not become famous people and are unknown to ordinary readers.²²⁴ The role of editors in managing the production of the commercial manga medium is elusive, allowing some editors to claim that the role of editors is minor, and for other editors to claim that the role of editors is the main force in the production of manga:

In a sense the editor is a puppeteer behind the scenes of a show. The editor is behind the stage moving the parts but the audience is not meant to be able to see him. In puppet theatre (*bunraku*) the story teller is always hidden. In manga the artist is the puppet. If the readers could see the whole process by which the manga is made they would not enjoy the story but just start thinking about how it is made - which is no good. In manga, only the artist's name is public; unlike with film, the producers don't try to get public acclaim or attention.²²⁵

²²⁴A few editors have written biographies of their lives in manga publishing in which they stake a claim in creating manga, but these are individuals crucial to the manga industry who have founded magazines. For example, Nagai Katsuichi long-time editor of subculture manga magazine GARO had his book, The Chief Editor of GARO (GARO Henshūchō) published in 1993 (Tokyo: Chikuma Bunko), and Nishimura Shigeo, long-time editor of Jump magazine, had his book, My Youth and Jump (Saraba waga seishun no Shōnen Jump) published in 1994 (Tokyo: Asukasha).

²²⁵Interview with Morning editor, Doi Takashi, in a restaurant near the editorial office. June 1994.

4.3 Market research

One development central to editorial production was the introduction of readers' surveys (*dokusha ankêto*) of manga magazines. The first readers' surveys were developed out of readers' letters' pages which were included in the first new weekly manga magazines, along with manga competitions. Readers' surveys which collect information about readers and their feelings about various manga series every week are a form of on-going market research.

Jump produced by Shûeisha is the highest selling manga magazine in the country. The common characterisation of Jump as a crude commercial magazine - "no one really likes Jump they just pick it up without noticing when they buy groceries"²²⁶ - was linked to the reliance of Jump manga editors on market research production techniques. The conscious use of information provided in readers surveys to determine Jump editorial policy, was an editorial technique referred to as 'data-ism' (*datashugi*) throughout the manga industry. In order to maintain the popularity of Jump, editors applied a simple production technique by which every three months the three manga series which came lowest in readers popularity ratings would be automatically axed. The implication of market research-led editorial techniques was that it was more important to satisfy the current tastes and interests of readers than to allow manga artists or manga editors to determine the themes of manga series.

²²⁶This typical opinion of Jump was expressed by manga critic, Kure Tomofusa, in an interview at his home. June, 1994.

While Jump magazine represents one extreme in the position manga editorial offices may take on the use of readership surveys, all commercial manga magazines used some form of readership survey.²²⁷ A readers' survey is printed inside the back pages of every issue of Morning and all other high-circulation manga magazines. Readers are asked to complete and return their answers to multiple-choice questions by post, which, in the case of most magazines, involves readers providing their own stationery and postage stamps. In 1994 Big Comic Spirits published by Shôgakukan, ran a readers' survey in which readers were able to win the following list of prizes from Big Comic Spirits; 10 000 yen (£67) to 5 people, 5 000 yen (£33) to 10 people, and 50 unit telephone cards to 50 people. Regular questions asked in the Morning readers survey in 1994 were 'What is your favourite (single box) illustration in this issue?'; 'What is your favourite word in this issue?'; 'Without thinking, who is your favourite character in Morning?'. In return for completing surveys, readers names are entered into monetary prize draws. During 1994 some variation on the following list of prizes was offered to readers: 10 000 yen (£67) to 10 people, 5 000 yen (£33) to 20 people, 'original wrist watches' to 15 people, and 50 unit (£3.50) telephone cards to 155 people.

Each week readers returned to Morning approximately 10 000 surveys. Morning surveys are analysed by two different specialist editorial research companies, MIC and Deru Deru DATA

²²⁷In fact the interest in reader-response is generally so intense in contemporary Japanese culture that many young people even incorporate readers' surveys addressed to themselves into their own amateur printed booklets of manga or creative writing.

Sha. MIC made a detailed weekly report on readers' tastes and interests for the internal use of the manga editorial. Deru Deru DATA Sha provided interesting facts for readers, which were published in the page margins of the magazine. These "readers' facts" include humorous and interesting data such as the following, "In the previous readers' survey we asked you, if you were re-incarnated as an animal, which animal would you like to be? The most popular choice was a sloth!", or "Amongst all our readers, those in their twenties are most likely to believe in an afterlife."²²⁸

4.4 Script writers

Editors occasionally contract script-writers (*gensakusha*) to write the plot and conversation parts of serialised stories. In samples of magazines published in summer 1995, 4 out of 26 series in Morning Open magazine were written by a script writer, in Manga Sunday this proportion was 5 out of 21, in Morning this was 3 out of 28, in Afternoon this was 2 out of 44, and in Young Sunday 2 out of 19 series. Script writers were introduced to manga production by editors during the initial period of expansion of the manga industry and work directly under editorial instruction. There are no precise routes by which individuals become manga script writers and there is a generally acknowledged shortage of individuals capable of doing the job.²²⁹

²²⁸Examples taken from Morning. 2. 11. 1995. 286-288.

²²⁹One vice chief editor in Morning, felt there were no more than five top-class manga script writers in circulation in the manga industry. Interview with Fukumoto Hiroyuki, in a restaurant with other Morning editors. August, 1994.

The industrial initiation of script writing has meant that there is no historically grounded assumption that script writers are independent artists. Rather, script writers have helped editors to increase their control over manga artists. The classic manga story *Tomorrow's Joe* (*Ashita no Joe*) serialised in Magazine between 1968 and 1972 was drawn by top class artist Chiba Tetsuya, but written by one of the first manga script writers, Kajiwara Ikki. Chiba purportedly fought with editors over the plot for *Tomorrow's Joe* and succeeded in making significant adaptations of his own to the scripted plot.²³⁰

Morning editorial recruits script writers from amongst experienced journalists and new writers who have won prizes for novels submitted to Kôdansha literature departments. Morning series *Kokumin Quiz* is written by Sugimoto Reiji who was contacted by an editor after Sugimoto won a Kôdansha novel competition in 1986. The winning novel was a story about the spiralling cost of living in Tokyo. Another script writer working for Morning is Robert Whiting, an American journalist living in Japan who has written many domestic Japanese series including *Foreigners* (*Ihōjin*), and *REGGIE* (a baseball story). Morning series *Rely on Her* (*Kono Hito ni Kakeru*), about a successful female bank manager, is drawn by artist Yumeno Kazuko but written by a script writer, Shû Ryôka. Shû won a Kôdansha prize in 1990 for his novel, *Bankers*, about the inside world of banking which was based on his experience working for Fuji bank. The editor of the series approached Shû about becoming a manga

²³⁰Interview with veteran artist, Nagashima Shinji, in a cafe in Asagaya, Tokyo. February 1994.

script writer after reading this novel and relating it to his own interest in the politics of bank scandals. Using a script writer increased the degree to which this Morning editor was able to exert his ideas on the artist, Yumeno Kazuko, who not only listened to ideas her editor wanted to include in each episode, but also had to draw each episode around speech parts already written by a script writer. Yumeno explained that working with a script writer increased her sense that writing manga was "just a business" and her "feeling of distance and disinterest in the events of the series."²³¹ In Morning editorial, script writers and artists producing the same series were prevented from meeting each other in order to stop them from conferring about the series and, together, evading the control of the editor.²³² Using manga script writers is also helpful to editors as a means of externalising their intellectual control of manga artists and in dissipating potential conflict between artists and editors.

4.5 Contracts

Editors aim to get the manga artists they want to produce the series they want. This encourages them to control the external movement of manga artists around the exclusive manga labour market. The main means of controlling the movement of artists between companies is through their work contracts. Manga artists are in theory freelance individuals able to form fixed-term

²³¹Discussion with artist Yumeno Kazuko after observing a work meeting between Yumeno and Morning editor Fujisawa Manabu at the artists home. March 1994.

²³²Interview with Morning editor, Doi Takashi, in Morning editorial offices. June 1994.

contracts with any publishing company they wish. As manga artists are not regular employees, they receive no job security, welfare or pension provisions from publishing companies. In practice, however, their movements are restricted by all three of the large, powerful publishing companies. A high proportion of artists, in particular new artists with no particular popular following or power, are held in virtually fixed arrangements with single companies.

Of the 3 large manga publishers, Shûeisha has been the most independent from traditional relationships with political authorities and traditional business standards. Shûeisha operates an explicit exclusive contract (*senzoku keiyaku*) system. Shûeisha magazines do not use artists who have previously been published in the magazines of other companies. All new Shûeisha artists sign exclusive contracts which forbid them to work for other companies. By this method, their most popular artists become exclusive brand names and styles which can only be found in Shûeisha magazines such as Young Jump and Jump. Through monopoly contracts Shûeisha editors are able to exert greater control over artists and pressure them to produce exactly what they want. As a result of this monopoly contract system Shûeisha artists are generally even more isolated than other manga artists.²³³ The private and studio addresses of Shûeisha artists are company secrets and Shûeisha artists are barely available for interviews or public comment. Few artists are ever able to leave Shûeisha and continue successful careers elsewhere as being dropped by a Shûeisha magazine implies

²³³The lonely position of artists will be discussed in 4.7.

absolute failure in the top-selling magazines. The case of artist Yanagisawa Kimio is an exception that proves the rule. Yanagisawa was cut from Jump magazine in the mid-1980s, after which he went to Magazine published by Kôdansha and succeeded in making a hit series. Yanagisawa subsequently became famous precisely because he had managed to make a career in manga after being rejected by Jump.²³⁴

In order to keep them in monopoly contracts Shûeisha pays artists large annual bonuses. Another famous ex-Shûeisha manga artist, Kobayashi Yoshinori, informed me that Shûeisha pays annual bonuses of between ¥1 million and ¥5 million (£7000 to £35 000) to each of its artists in return for the exclusive rights to their work.²³⁵ However, highly successful artists become so wealthy that even huge financial bonuses cannot stop them from breaking contracts. In June 1994, Tobashi Yoshihirô, the 26 year old artist of Jump's leading series *Diary of the Ghost World* (*Yûyûhakusho*), fled from his studio over-night in order to escape from his editors and escape from writing the series. Tobashi had been entered on to the list of the top 10 wealthiest individuals in Japan that year but according to Tobashi's artist friends he could not bear to continue writing the series any longer and had wanted to stop for some time. An editor of Young Sunday explained to me how he suspected the incident had occurred:

Every week he had to write another episode of the series that was more exciting than the last, that

²³⁴Interview with deputy chief editor of Magazine, Iishi Tohru, in Magazine editorial offices. April, 1994.

²³⁵Interview with artist Kobayashi Yoshinori at his studio in Ogikubo. August 1994.

would become a talking point amongst his readers yet again. But he got bored with it, it did not satisfy his desire to express his own ideas and feelings so he tried to quit.²³⁶

Editors of other companies strongly criticised the monopoly contract system on the basis that controlling artists to such an extent was counter-productive and irretrievably weakened the manga medium. One editor in Morning compared the process of cultivating a new generation of stronger manga artists to fish farming:

The other magazines do not let their newcomer artists win the competitions and then just move to other companies, but at Morning we have no restrictions. If you are a fish farmer then you have to free the fish you raise into the open sea, in order to increase their numbers and strengthen the wild stocks of fish. It is not necessarily profitable for Morning to let artists be free, but it is good for raising the level of manga culture in general.²³⁷

The first part of the following explanation about non-monopoly contracts by one senior editor suggests however that the primary motivation of other publishing companies not to use monopoly contracts might in reality be simply economic:

Shôgakukan has never had fixed contracts with artists, we could not afford it. In any case it is not a good idea to monopolise artists. They ought to be free to move around. A monopoly contract means that the artist cannot naturally find the best editor through moving between companies and editorials. Monopoly contracts can break an artist and ruin their future career by trapping them in unfruitful relationships. I've seen it happen.²³⁸

²³⁶Interview with contract editor of Young Sunday magazine, Torigae Takushi, in a restaurant near the Shôgakukan company building. June 1994.

²³⁷Interview with Morning editor, Kaneda Akitoshi, in the editorial offices. January 1994.

²³⁸Interview with a senior editor of Young Sunday, Tachikawa Yoshitake, in Young Sunday editorial offices. August, 1994.

Whilst editors of Kôdansha and Shôgakukan do not issue monopoly contracts they do take measures to limit the movements of artists away from their editorials by other means. Morning editors keep the locations of artists as secret as possible, and deal with most journalists and business representatives wishing to meet the artists themselves. In the case of some artists, editors spend long periods of time in their studios in an attempt to keep editors from other companies away from their living property. It is possible that editorials in Kôdansha and Shôgakukan also give undeclared amounts of money to extremely valuable artists in secret arrangements, or in the case of Morning editorial, bribe artists by providing them with holidays under the guise of research trips. Several manga artists working for Morning were unhappy with their experience of editors who had prevented them from working for other companies:

All the companies try to monopolise the artists. I have to struggle to balance myself between them. I have to say "Look I'm not your 'thing', there is more than one manga company you know." It is very difficult to find a good balance between all the editors and all the companies.²³⁹

Contracts issued by Shôgakukan and Kôdansha are individual agreements made separately with each manga artist that typically stipulate that the artist must continue to work for a magazine producing a certain series for a set length of time and that the series and the lead characters in that series are for the sole use of that company. These contracts do not exclude artists from working for other magazines although it is generally understood

²³⁹Interview with artist, Hatanaka Jun, at his home in Chôfu. May, 1994.

that artists should not do so. Artists are also prevented from moving to other magazines on a practical level, by their agreement not to produce the same characters for another company.

Artist Aoki Yûji working for Morning magazine, for example, expressed a strong desire to leave and work elsewhere. Aoki publicly declared that he "hated" his current editor.²⁴⁰ In practice, however, he was prevented from moving to another magazine because he had become famous on the basis of his only series, *Osaka Streets of Gold* (*Naniwa Kinyûdô*). If Aoki moved to another magazine he would not have been able to use the same characters or similar story lines to those which he used in his Morning series. Thus breaking a contract and working for another magazine carries a high risk for artists: they may be unable to develop a distinct new series as successful as their previous one.

Manga editorials also use contracts to reject manga artists who will not conform to editorial demands. In one well-hidden case Taneko Fumiko, a female artist rated extremely highly by all the large manga publishing companies, has been refused a contract with either of the 2 top manga publishing companies for five years, as a punishment for her repeated refusal to draw what editors requested. Not only did this secret disciplinary behaviour illustrate the power which large publishing companies

²⁴⁰After hearing this embarrassing criticism made of him by the artist, his editor dismissed the artist as "mad." Whilst artist and editor cooperated with each other in order to carry out their jobs an open conflict existed between them. Observation of a work meeting between artist Aoki Yûji and Morning editor Doi Takashi, in a hotel suite. February 1994.

could wield by refusing to give contracts to manga artists, but this particular case illustrates a closed-shop agreement between Kôdansha and Shôgakukan.²⁴¹ Another well-known female artist, Morizono Milk, experienced similar problems with large publishing companies:

I had big arguments with Kôdansha and Shôgakukan. Eight years ago I wanted to write for Shôdensha as well as Shôgakukan. When I told my editors at Shôgakukan they were very angry and said, "OK you can go but you can never work here again if you do!" But I don't think of myself as a contract company employee. I think I am free to do as I please. Then 4 years ago I had more trouble with Kôdansha. I wanted to move to Shôdensha again, because Kôdansha would not let me draw sex-scenes in girls' manga. But they told me that I had signed a one year contract and I had to give them work every week. In the end it was not true, so they made Shôdensha sign a form to get me and said I could not work for them ever again.²⁴²

Thus although manga artists sign specific fixed-term contracts to produce certain series for manga editorials, informal practices exert far greater power on artists to keep contracts and not start new contracts with other companies.

4.6 Conflict with artists

The processes of editorial management in manga production cause editors to come into direct conflict with artists over both the common commercial aspects and the exceptional cultural aspects of their employment. At an experiential level shared by most employers and contract employees, manga artists may conflict with editors over the basic issue of their working conditions

²⁴¹Interview with a Kôdansha International employee who wishes to remain anonymous. January 1994.

²⁴²Interview with artist Morizono Milk, in her studio. May 1994.

and income. In 1992 Hara Takao, ex-assistant of the late Tezuka Osamu, established Manga Japan, the first organisation which claims to defend artists' rights against the power of publishing companies. Hara complained that publishing companies severely underpaid manga artists for their work:

At the moment manga artists write the manga and the companies buy it and make big profits from it. Companies should be forced to support artists more and pay them over half of the profits from their work, instead of a tiny percentage as at present. Editors pick artists up, use them and then throw them away again; we think they should support them and treat them better than that.²⁴³

However, artists far more regularly come into conflict with editors over the issue of who should have artistic control of their manga series. Conflict with artists poses a public relations problem for editors because it could indicate to readers that manga is not created by the artists they admire, in quite the way they imagine and expect. Conflict is hidden as far as possible and discussion about conflict between specific artists and editors is generally a taboo subject amongst editors. Newcomer artists tended to be in a weak position in Morning and other manga editorial offices and were strongly inhibited from speaking openly about their editors. Speaking about the editors of large publishing companies generally, however, the majority of manga artists held the view that they were 'arrogant' (*gôman*) 'superior' (*erasô*) or 'teacher-ish' (*sodarippoi*)²⁴⁴ - and determined to relate to them as

²⁴³Interview with Hara Takao, president of Manga Japan, in his offices. June 1994.

²⁴⁴The closest literal translation of the slang term *sodarippoi* used by some manga artists is 'like raising [a child]' and refers to editors who treat artists as if they were children.

though they were small children in need of discipline and guidance. Rodriguez is the pen name of a young artist who began producing a series for Young Sunday in 1994 whilst still a university student. Of his relatively recent encounter with manga editors, Rodriguez observed that although they tended to dress in casual trendy clothes, and seemed quite unbusiness-like, editors' appearances were misleading:

Really the publishing companies are more hard-nosed than I imagined. That is because manga is business for them, whereas for me it is just a part-time job. My impression of editors before was that they were really alternative people. Their clothes are cool and their work is flexible. But when you start working with them you realise that they are quite worldly and business-minded after all. They do not compromise on anything. If the work is not 100 percent fine by them then they will not publish any of it. The series I do now for the Young Sunday is completely different to the work for which I won the manga competition. My story was about rock and roll gang and now it is about sex. In the beginning my editor asked me to practise drawing generally by doing a sex story. At first it was gross and I refused to do it. I phoned up my editor and said, "I don't want to be an artist after all". But he persuaded me to do it and it has been an interesting experience in some ways. They said that new artists like me usually refuse to write what they get asked to do at first.²⁴⁵

Amongst well-known older artists too the feeling that editors interfered in how manga was written and reduced the input of artists in planning manga series was strong. Manga artist and media celebrity, Ishikawa Jun, told me:

I don't really like editors. I don't like being ordered to do things. I want to do everything myself, produce myself. But the big company editors want to produce you. Editors are useful people for artists who don't really know what they ought to write and what they want to do, but they are a hindrance to artists

²⁴⁵Private interview with newcomer artist, Rodriguez, in a cafe outside the Shōgakukan building. June 1994.

who know exactly what they want to write, like me. I don't always know if I want to draw what they ask me to draw. Meeting and discussing with editors narrows my inspiration and what I am able to do.²⁴⁶

Hatanaka Jun, an older adult manga artist described how, for him, the very basis of the relationship between artist and editor is one which undermines the artist's role:

The editors get in the way. They ask you to re-write pages and pages and in that way they break your rhythm and make it very hard to write. It is hard to get the story to progress when editors keep stopping you and telling you what pictures you can put where. But I guess there are not many young artists like me who find it so hard to get on with editors.²⁴⁷

The older manga artists were, the more likely they were to mention conflicts and grievances with publishing companies. Nagashima Shinji, an ex-assistant of Tezuka Osamu and veteran artist who was most active in the 1960s, was one of the few outspoken critics of manga publishing companies in 1994. Nagashima, who regularly complained to me about the enormous power that publishing companies had accumulated and their ill-treatment of manga artists, was unpopular amongst manga editors.²⁴⁸ Younger male manga artists I spoke to in 1994 did not voluntarily raise the issue of the power of publishing companies or contest the terms on which they were employed. They, who had not experienced the sudden expansion of the commercial manga medium in the 1960s, seemed to accept the

²⁴⁶Interview with artist, Ishikawa Jun, in his studio in Kichioji. July, 1994.

²⁴⁷Interview with artist, Hatanaka Jun, at his home in Chôfu. May 1994.

²⁴⁸Discussions with veteran manga artist, Nagashima Shinji. Jan-May 1994.

control of manga production by company editors as a matter of fact.

4.7 Artists' personalities

In order to overcome the problem of coming into conflict with artists through their attempt to impose their own ideas into manga stories, editors manage their relationship with artists carefully. The nature of artists' personalities was important to manga editors because 'difficult' artists could not be forced to do anything. Consideration of artists' personalities and the ideal personality for an artist was therefore an important issue in manga editorials. During editorial discussions of manga series and new artists in particular Morning and Magazine editors tended to comment on manga artists' personalities, and their work, simultaneously. For example, in a long report on new artists they had tried to recruit at the 1994 San Diego annual comic convention, Morning editors returning from the United States, made the following personal observations of American comic artists:

Jeff Dahlo - He over-slept everyday. He had short, fat legs but seemed keen.

George Grada - This guy was strange and scary. He put on a friendly expression, and looked quite nice at first glance, but deep inside you could see the expression in his eyes was really hard.

Tony Luke - He has got big round eyes in a cute little face. I could be friends with this guy though he is a little bit scatter-brained.

David Mazzucchelli - He arrived looking very cool and confident and wearing urbane clothes. He is a good guy.

Carl Baker - He is a black guy with long legs and dreadlocks. While we were talking to him we noticed how sharp he was.²⁴⁹

The majority of editors tended in private to be either scathing or patronising in their attitudes towards artists. One opinion expressed by a senior Afternoon editor was that the best personality an artist could have was simply "compliant and talented like geniuses" (*sunao to tensaimitai*).²⁵⁰ Another Morning editor felt that artists did not need any genius or individuality at all, but simply needed not to be stubborn, so that they could easily accept what editors told them to draw.²⁵¹ Still another contract editor responsible for the series *Rely on Her!* (*Kono Hito ni Kakeru!*), felt that artists who argued with editors over the content of their series were immature and ignorant:

Artists like X are good to work with because they understand the difference between business and private affairs. X is mature enough to realise that her work for the company is nothing but business and she should not expect to put her personal ideas into it. The problem with young artists is that they are immature and they expect to be able to write about what they are interested in.²⁵²

Manga editors paid great attention to artists' actual characters in order to communicate well and successfully persuade them to produce good work. Through the necessary discussion of artists' characters manga editors had also generated several stereotypes

²⁴⁹Morning editorial internal report on the 1994 San Diego Comic Convention.

²⁵⁰Interview with Senior editor of Morning, Kihara Yasuo, in a diner near Kôdansha editorial offices. January, 1994.

²⁵¹Discussion with Morning editor, Doi Takashi, in the editorial offices. June 1994.

²⁵²Discussion with Ginnansha contract editor, Fujisawa Manabu. March, 1994.

of the ideal manga artist's character. The ex-chief editor of Magazine, described to me how:

Manga artists' characters often become a problem. Artists are very silent and strange but they have great internal power. Sociable artists are no good. There is no such thing as an artist who likes parties and golf. Artists are dark, sharp and sensitive.²⁵³

It is clear from this description that the standard characterisation of an artist within the manga industry was one which romanticised the isolated and powerless position of artists in society, one which would make them more amenable to manga editors. Experienced artist Kobayashi Yoshinori recognised an element of truth in the characterisation editors made of manga artists, but also suggested that editors sought to exacerbate artists' social inexperience:

Artists and editors are basically enemies: they have a business relationship. An editor makes you keep writing something when you don't want to do it because it is popular. In that kind of situation artists should stop writing their series and leave the magazine. But artists are childish and unworldly so they just carry on writing. Which is very convenient for the editors. They pick artists up when they are young and innocent and they make sure they never get a chance to develop any business sense.²⁵⁴

Editors deal with artists' business interests and public relations. If artists wish to deal with journalists, publishers and business representatives directly they must make themselves into private companies. Many ladies' manga artists have protected their business interests in this way, but amongst

²⁵³Interview with Uchida Masaru, in a restaurant near his new company, Manga Gallery, in Shinbashi, Tokyo. August 1994.

²⁵⁴Interview with artist Kobayashi Yoshinori at his studio in Ogikubo. August 1994.

adult manga artists few took responsibility for their own professional administration. Only two artists working for Morning, Watase Seizô and Nôjô Junichi, had made their studios into private companies. Many editors felt that their role included being 'the public face' (*shakaiteki na kao*) of manga artists who were 'unworldly' (*shakaijin ja nai*) and unable to keep their own accounts. Many manga editors acted as the 'public face' of artists under their supervision and one distinctive indication of this was the very small number of manga artists who carried their own business cards.²⁵⁵

Due to the nature of their work and the managerial role of editors, artists tended to become extremely isolated and socially dependent on their editors. I observed a work-meeting between artist, Fujishima Kôsuke, producing the popular series *Aa! My Goddess* (*Aah! Megami Sama*) for Afternoon, and his editor, in Fujishima's apartment in a suburb of Yokohama. Fujishima was a shy person. He told me that he was going to Okinawa (a Japanese island located several hundred kilometres south of Tokyo) to give a live radio interview, but added that he was frightened about this trip and was glad his editor was going with him. Fujishima's editor urged him not to worry because they would go together. Fujishima described to me the isolation that had led him to become so reliant on his editor:

²⁵⁵Beside artists who had made themselves into small companies none of the artists working for Morning, Afternoon, or Young Sunday magazine carried personal business cards. This included several extremely famous individuals. Business cards are a standard and universal form of personal introduction and communication amongst the Japanese middle classes. They are used by all white-collar company employees, and also by students, artists and musicians, and self-employed individuals.

Manga artists have a dark, unsociable (*kurai*) image in the media, and in general it is true that manga artists are rather unsociable. Because my job is done at home, I don't really have to go out at all and I have to actively struggle to force myself to leave my apartment. The television comes into my home and I get all my new information and ideas from it. Manga artists do not even talk to other manga artists very much. All their relationships outside those with assistants and editors disappear. Artists I know have reached the point where they are bored of meeting other people entirely by the time they are 40 years old. I am scared of isolation, that's why I bought a motorbike to get out and about on.²⁵⁶

The chief editor of Morning had developed a metaphor for the ideal relationship between an artist and an editor and their respective ideal personality types, which he used in editorial meetings to lecture junior editors on how to treat artists under their supervision. Kurihara Yoshiyuki proposed that manga artists could be compared to women, and editors to men, and that their relationship should be like a marriage. The editor should be strong and worldly and provide advice, protection and guidance to the ideally vulnerable, but creative artist, so that 'she' could create manga - the 'offspring' of the union between editors and artists. In the context of the unequal social power of men and women in Japan, as elsewhere, this metaphor inadvertently implied that manga artists should not only be treated like ladies but also, perhaps, controlled like women. The metaphor was highly representative of the way in which artists' characters were portrayed both by artists and editors. Common descriptions of manga artists as naive, unworldly, quiet and meek, or dark, inward-looking and neurotic, were similar to those frequently applied to Japanese women in Japan -

²⁵⁶Interview with artist Fujishima Kôsuke in the presence of his editor, in his apartment. February 1994.

inexperienced, childlike and secretive, with a potential for magical power and mental derangement.

4.8 Persuasive editors

Editors and artists described how the editor/artist relationship frequently became quite intimate, even problematically so. The relationship was intimate in the first instance because artists are isolated and see their editors more often than other people. From here the level of intellectual and spiritual communication required for editors to encourage artists to draw series according to their ideas and encouraged them to develop close relations with artists. Older editors, in particular, consciously employed the metaphor of the artist/editor relationship as a romantic liaison between a man and a woman, as a guideline for approaching artists. During editorial meetings Kurihara Yoshiyuki, Chief editor and publisher of Morning, entreated less confident junior editors to "woo" and "seduce" valuable artists properly. Editors generally used their company entertainment allowances to cover bills accrued in meeting artists in bars and cafés. I attended many meetings between artists and editors which were extended to long entertainment sessions in which editors escorted artists by taxi between restaurants and bars. More experienced editors were personally informed about the locations of exclusive bars and impressive restaurants where they could attempt to influence artists under their supervision.²⁵⁷ After being taken to expensive locations,

²⁵⁷Observation of work meetings between relatively successful artists and the deputy editor of Afternoon, Yuri Koichi, between April and August 1994. Two artists, Sugimura Shinichi and Okada Yukyô, wined and dined by experienced editor Yuri Kôichi, remained extremely quiet and awkward

artists would often become receptive to editors' proposals for their series through a combination of feelings including, possibly, awe, fear, obligation, excitement, contentment and drunkenness. In a large number of other cases editors established 'chummy' relationships with artists as a means of persuading them to cooperate properly. A senior editor of Young Sunday explained to me how he worked:

When an editor meets an artist he has to be very enthusiastic about the artist's manga and the project in hand. He has to say, "Look I've got this plan for a great manga story and only you could draw the pictures for it!" Generally editors speak fast and enthusiastically, talking is their trade, they are like car salesmen. As you know, there is no guide to perfect editing but there is a famous car salesman's guide book about how to sell. I read it. It is really good. The author says that every time he goes to the door of a customer they turn him down, whatever he says to them. The customers give him excuses. What the author does then is listen to them. He listens to everything they say and when they have finished he goes away. But then he goes back to the same door later, and perhaps again they make up excuses and he listens to them all again. Eventually the customers run out of excuses so that when he calls for them once again they have to consider buying the car. It is really true, that technique works. I do it with artists. Every time I invite them to do something and they refuse, I listen to their complaints and then I ask them again later. If you repeat your request and listen to everything they complain about, eventually with time, they will consider producing a few pages of manga. They begin to worry that perhaps you will stop asking them to work or that maybe they ought to do a few pages of work to keep up the relationship. I use that method with older, shrewder artists. In the case of younger, inexperienced artists I encourage and flatter them a lot to start a good relationship.²⁵⁸

Editors found that it was important to make or at least to affect close relationships in order to persuade artists to

throughout the evening, and both later told me that they were "frightened of editors". Okada Yūkyō subsequently began a new series, *Rentaro no Ai*, in *Morning Open* magazine.

²⁵⁸Interview with senior editor of Young Sunday, Tachikawa Yoshiake, in a restaurant near Shōgakukan buildings. August, 1994.

produce work of value. Although popular artists could earn large amounts of money from the royalties on manga series, financial incentives alone could not generally induce them to produce high quality drafts. Editors felt that artists only became excited and imaginative about their work and thereby surpass the minimal technical requirements of drafts, if they felt they were producing manga for another person who understood and appreciated their talent. Some artists have their readers, friends or other artists in mind whilst producing drafts, but most artists are isolated from the wider manga medium and have few personal relationships based on an interest in manga or its contents. Most contemporary professional manga artists are not connected with any group of people they are trying to communicate with and impress with their manga, and in this context artists' relationships with their editors have become more important. A contract editor working for Young Sunday explained how editors try to affect private rather than commercial relations with artists:

It is necessary to be friends with the artist to make good manga. Most editors try to be friends with the artist and win them like a lover with expensive presents. Editors act just like a young man chasing after a girl towards artists. This aspect of the relationship is considered necessary because money alone is not enough to make artists stay with the editorial. Artists have to want to please their editors and try hard for them. The degree to which the artist will work hard and produce good work depends a lot on the warmth of the relationship between themselves and their editors so the editors affect a friendship where there is none really.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁹Interview with contract editor of Young Sunday magazine, Torigae Takushi, in a restaurant near to the Shôgakukan company building. June 1994.

At the same time that editors try to develop harmonious and fruitful relationships with artists they also attempt to avoid talking directly about contentious issues. Rather than talking about the inconvenience of artists' attitudes, editors focused discussion on their talents. Questions about artists' social backgrounds, education and personal life were avoided by editors in an attempt to seal the editor/artist relationship within narrow parameters and prevent it from being challenged.²⁶⁰ The strength of this informal but powerful taboo was demonstrated to me repeatedly by the frequency of awkward silences on the part of artists I was forced by circumstance to attempt to interview in the presence of their editors. Editors often invited me to meet and interview artists under their supervision, but it was clear that the majority of artists felt uncomfortable and unable to answer my questions properly in front of their editors. On two such occasions artists jokingly told me that "editors are scary" and in this way communicated that they could not really discuss their relationships with their editors in front of them.

4.9 Conclusion: The importance of editors in the industrial production of manga

It is clear from this examination of the industrial production of adult manga that editors play a central role in the

²⁶⁰In March 1994 I designed a brief 1-page questionnaire about artists socio-economic background and their opinions about the manga publishing industry. I was, however, refused permission to distribute this questionnaire amongst artists connected to Morning and Afternoon editorial office. I received a note of explanation from a junior editor on behalf of the chief editor of Morning which stated (in English) that, "Editors never want to ask artists those questions. Artists compete as equals. We judge artists only on their talent. We never want to ask them questions about their family and education."

production of commercial manga magazines. Editorial production begins with the selection of young newcomer artists in manga competitions. Although manga has been relatively open to young artists, unless they are selected by an editorial, a manga artist's career can not begin. Editors are then responsible for the disciplining and priming of artists to produce work suitable for publication. Editors not only choose and guide artists to produce material which conforms to publishable standards but in many cases they also employ scriptwriters to provide the entire plot and speech parts of artists' series. Artists who want to exercise complete control over the characters and themes of their series are forced to produce these series for low-circulation magazines and accept greatly diminished financial returns from their work.

The industrial production of manga does not hinge on the mass-production of manga scripts by cultural producers, but on the regulation of their mass-distribution by editors. Thus commercial manga is not created by the mere reproduction of cultural production but by two distinct and complementary functions: the artistic and the editorial. The chief editor of Morning had thought a great deal about the relationship between editors and artists and compared these two functions to those of "God" and "Christ" respectively. Whilst he compared the originating creative role of manga artists to that of God, Kurihara Yoshiyuki also felt that if artists were like God then editors were like Christ, spreading the Word of God on earth.²⁶¹ In fact Kurihara Yoshiyuki was impressed by the apparent

²⁶¹Interview with chief editor of Morning, Kurihara Yoshiyuki, in Morning editorial offices. June 1994.

editorial abilities of Jesus Christ, and suggested that he was probably the world's best ever editor, because he had managed to spread the word of God to an incomparable number of people and maintain this 'popularity' for two millennia.

In previous research into mass culture the role of editors in shaping mass or popular-culture has been largely overlooked. Even within theoretical discussions of popular-culture there are very few references to the function of editors or similar types of cultural managers. Within the manga industry, however, selecting and managing the themes and content of each manga series, and ultimately supervising the entire manga medium, is a specific editorial function. It is arguable that the role of editors is as important as that of the primary cultural producers, in this case manga artists, in the production of contemporary culture.

The case of adult manga confirms an unusual analytical emphasis on editors made by Nicholas Garnham, a chief proponent of the contemporary 'political economy' school of cultural analysis:

We need to recognise the importance, within the cultural industries and within the cultural process in general, of the function which I shall call, for want of a better word, editorial: the function not just of creating a cultural repertoire matched to a given audience or audiences but at the same time of matching the cost of production of that repertoire to the spending powers of that audience. These functions may be filled by somebody or by some institution referred to variously as a publisher, a television channel controller, a film distributor, etc. It is a vital function totally ignored by many cultural analysts, a function as creative as writing a novel or directing a film. It is a function, moreover, which will exist centrally within the cultural process of any

geographically dispersed society with a complex division of labour.²⁶²

Garnham's chosen term "editorial" could not of course be more appropriate in the case of this particular research.

However, Garnham's point appears to be over-generalised on several accounts. The role of editors, though necessitated by industrialized mass-reproduction and mass-distribution, is not mechanically determined by the nature of geographically dispersed societies. The degree to which a commercial mass-culture is orchestrated by editors depends on two historical factors as much as any geographical factor. The particular stage in development of the culture industry in question, and broad changes in the social and political structure of society, which directly affect the balance of power between cultural producers and cultural managers - in this case editors employed by publishing companies and manga artists. In Section Three, we shall return to examine in detail how the role of manga editors has developed both qualitatively and quantitatively, in complex and unpredicted ways between 1986 and 1994.

²⁶²Garnham, N (1990) Capitalism and Communication: Global Culture and the Economics of Information, London: Sage. 162.

SECTION TWO: THE CHANGING STATUS OF MANGA IN JAPANESE
SOCIETY 1986-1995

Introduction

In Chapters Three and Four we examined the basic social relations between the producers of commercial manga. The systematic production of manga by manga artists and editors in publishing companies represents the narrow world of commercial manga production. Although exclusive, this is not a self-contained world: manga production does not only take place within the context of the social, political and economic life of Japanese society, it is - as we observed in Chapter Two - particularly sensitive to social and political trends.

During the 1960s large sections of Japanese youth, both university students and poor migrant workers in urban areas, began to rebel against existing political, social and cultural arrangements. Youth expressed their aspirations through radical political movements and a broad range of new popular cultural activities. The activities of this generation of youth contributed to the rise of large culture industries in the 1970s, which made a market of their intellectual interests and aesthetic tastes. While the explicitly political dimension of youth dissent quickly melted away, from the early 1970s to the present, youth, youth culture, the mass media, and later - in the 1980s - young women, have been a major focus in social and academic discourse about the decay of Japanese society and tradition. The underlying theme of these discourses has been a

critique of individualistic behaviour and psychology, encouraged by the mass media and culture industries, which threatens to fragment Japanese society. Contemporary Japan is not founded on social and political theories of the individual, and individualism amongst Japanese youth and popular culture has been associated with the West, as well as negatively equated with self-indulgence, childishness, sexual inadequacy, subjectivity, passivity, identity confusion and, in its most recent manifestation, femininity. In 1981 the psychoanalyst and social critic, Okonogi Keigo, published an influential critique of Japanese youth.²⁶³ Okonogi's main point was that Japanese youth - a loose category which ultimately incorporated all generations of Japanese born in the post-war period - had no social consciousness or interest in civil society:

Present day society embraces an increasing number of people who have no sense of belonging to any party or organisation but instead are orientated towards non-affiliation, escape from controlled society, and youth culture. I have called them the moratorium people.²⁶⁴

From the mid-1980s the perception that Japanese society and culture was fragmenting, as younger generations became absorbed in consumer culture and particularistic hobbies, increased amongst critics. Fujioka Wakao suggested that mass-society was decomposing into micromasses:

What will become of Japan... if society continues to fragment into these self-satisfied, complacent micromasses? The grasshoppers (contemporary Japanese) live in tiny cabins on a huge ship. They do not care if the sea is rough or calm, nor do they care what

²⁶³Okonogi, K. (1981) Age of the Moratorium People (Moratorium Ningen no Jidai), Tokyo: Chûô Kôronsha.

²⁶⁴Okonogi, K. (1978) 'The Age of Moratorium People', Japan Echo. 5:1. 17.

direction the ship is taking. Their only desire is for life to remain pleasant in their cabins.²⁶⁵

Between 1986 and 1995 the manga medium became the object of several more specific social and cultural debates. Increasing attention was paid to manga as a form of Japanese culture. Manga was subjected to a new level of scrutiny, interference and conscious manoeuvring from social organisations and cultural institutions, the government and government agencies, citizens' groups, the media, the public, and eventually foreign institutions and media too. Manga became a significant cultural marker in social and political discourses and an important indicator on new visions of Japanese society and culture. It is possible that it is the domestic origins and the authenticity of manga to Japanese society and no other, in combination with its association with the most important social and political trends of the post-war period, which endowed manga with great potency as a cultural symbol. From 1986 to 1995, different sections of Japanese society strived to place manga culture in a new position in society, to serve, perhaps, as an expression of their new social and political orientations.

The manga medium became the object of both a powerful anti-manga censorship campaign, and a less centred movement towards the promotion of manga to a higher cultural status than it had previously been allotted throughout the post-war period.

Political and realistic manga derived from *gekiga* and used by commercial magazines, in particular, became strongly favoured. At the same time cutting-edge fantasy and science fiction

²⁶⁵Fujioka, W. (1986) 'The rise of the micromasses', Japan Echo. 13:1. 38.

genres, derived from girls' manga, and currently popular amongst amateur artists and manga fans, were condemned and censored. These two trends had an extensive and combined influence on the form and content of commercial manga and the overall structure of the manga medium. In this period the manga medium became divided between 'good' and 'bad' manga. So much so that in the public eye, amateur and commercial manga became perceived as separate cultural phenomena, bearing quite disconnected cultural statuses.

In this section we will examine how these trends were manifested. Chapter Five examines the emergence of a large amateur manga movement during the 1980s and the period after 1989 when the amateur manga world became the target of what might be provisionally categorised as a 'moral panic'. The result of this panic about amateur manga was the widespread vilification of amateur manga styles and genres, and amateur manga artists. Chapter Six looks at the anti-manga censorship movement which gained momentum in Japanese society between 1990 and 1992. The result of this censorship campaign targeted at commercial manga was the re-categorisation of commercial manga into 'good' and 'bad' manga and the incorporation of strict self-regulation within the manga industry. Chapter Seven looks at the promotion of other forms of manga to the status of high-quality and respectable 'culture', and the influence this had on the form and content of weekly adult magazines such as Morning - where my fieldwork was based.

CHAPTER FIVE: The Amateur Manga Movement and the otaku Panic of 1989-1994

5.1 The emergence of contemporary amateur manga

The gradual usurpation of the book loan shop and other minor manga publishing industries such as Osaka red books (*akabon*) by the new manga magazine industry meant two things for manga artists. They had to work much harder, and faster, and the style and content of artists' work became more tightly regulated and directly commissioned. Book loan shop manga companies paid notoriously low wages, but manga artists experienced a great deal of leniency over the details of the series they produced.²⁶⁶ By the early 1960s, experienced manga artists began to feel that the new form of work arrangements were having a corrosive effect on the internal development of the manga medium and on manga artists' liberty. In particular, it was felt that the personal space in which manga artists could to some degree express themselves within their work had decreased.

Several non-commercially oriented manga magazines were established during the 1960s, with the goal of providing an alternative space for the publication of manga. In 1966 Tezuka Osamu established COM, a monthly manga magazine devoted to embracing the free expression of its contributing artists. In a founding statement published in the first issue of COM, Tezuka

²⁶⁶Uchida Masaru, chief editor of Weekly Boy's Magazine from 1965 through the 1970s, told me that during the early 1960s large publishing companies such as Kôdansha offered artists piece work rates at least 10 times as high as those paid by book loan shop manga companies. Interview in April 1994.

Osamu explained to readers why he had wanted to establish an alternative, non-commercially oriented magazine:

It is said that now is the golden age of manga. So shouldn't works of outstanding quality be published? Or isn't the real situation one in which many manga artists are being worked to death, while they are forced into submission, servitude and cooperation with the cruel requirements of commercialism? With this magazine I thought I would show you what real story manga is. COM is a magazine for comrades who love manga.²⁶⁷

Though surviving only 6 years before going bankrupt in 1972, COM has been well remembered amongst manga artists and fans, and, in fact, manga publishing companies too, as an exciting, and influential story-manga magazine. COM magazine was established as an adult manga magazine in which any form of artists' expression, including sexual expression, could be published. However Tezuka Osamu and the core group of manga artists, including Nagashima Shinji, Ishinomori Shôtarô, and Fujiko Fujiô, who contributed to COM were mostly childrens' story-manga artists who used cute, rounded drawing styles.

Alongside COM another non-commercially-oriented magazine, GARO, was established in 1964, and continues to exist today. GARO was devoted to publishing the personal work of *gekiga* artists, and in particular the work of Shirato Sanpei, and other noted *gekiga* artists²⁶⁸ such as Yoshiharu Tsuge, many of whom refused to make the transition from book loan shop manga companies to working

²⁶⁷Statement of intention made by Tezuka Osamu in, 'A Word From the Creator' (Kansô no Kotoba) published inside the front cover of the first issue of COM magazine, December 1966.

²⁶⁸Interview with Nagai Katsuichi, the founder and long time owner of GARO magazine. August 1994.

for large publishing companies.²⁶⁹ In return for retaining freedom over what they produced, contributors to GARO received no wages.

COM and GARO magazines existed on the boundary between professional and amateur manga.²⁷⁰ Whilst they were not commercially-oriented, and they purportedly allowed full freedom to manga artists, many of their contributors were also top professional artists, when the magazines were published. During the 1960s however, before the development of cheap offset printing machines, these magazines were virtually the only alternative to wholly amateur unpublished manga, which was written by hand.²⁷¹ What the establishment of these non-commercially-oriented magazines implies is that the rapid ascendancy of the commercial manga magazine industry over the entire manga medium during the 1960s encouraged the development of an organised sphere of non-commercial or amateur manga production amongst manga artists. To some degree, the flourishing of amateur manga was a reactive formation to the growth of commercial manga production.

No official records or collections of hand-written manga, which was necessarily produced in single copies, exist. Hand written

²⁶⁹According to veteran manga artist Nagashima Shinji, a personal friend of Yoshiharu Tsuge, he and Yoshiharu both refused to work for large publishing companies when they were approached by editors in the mid-1960s. January 1994.

²⁷⁰In 1992 GARO changed ownership for the first time. According to my discussions with the editorial staff of GARO, the new owner, Yamanaka Jun, intends to increase the commercial viability of the magazine. March 1994.

²⁷¹In fact Meiji University Manga Club (*Meiji Daigaku Manga Kenkyūkai*), established as early as 1954, has records which suggest that the club's annual anthology of amateur manga was produced through the 1960s. Source: discussions with members and the student president of Meiji University Manga Club. March 1994.

amateur manga known as *nikushitsukaitenshi* were passed around circles of friends, many of whom would also have been manga artists or fans. Older artists, now famous for producing great quantities of commercial manga, such as Ishinomori Shôtarô and Akatsuka Fujio, produced amateur manga of this very painstaking kind until the end of the 1960s.²⁷² Although historical evidence revealing the extent of early amateur manga production is difficult to find, the existence of several printed amateur manga magazines devoted to criticism of amateur and professional manga, does imply that there must already have been a considerable amount of amateur manga in circulation from the mid-1960s onwards. Between 1967 and 1974 an amateur, unpublished magazine entitled *Mangashugi* (Manga-ism) was produced on an intermittent basis, and carried the opinion pieces of new, underground manga critics such as Gotô Shin, Ishiko Junzô, Kikuchi Asajirô, and Kaji Jun.²⁷³ During the mid-1970s, following the demise of *Mangashugi*, another amateur manga magazine entitled *Yakkô* (Night Train), began circulation.²⁷⁴

5.2 Mini communications and Comic Market

At the beginning of the 1970s cheap and portable offset printing and photocopying facilities rapidly became available to the public.²⁷⁵ Amateur manga and literature of any kind could now be reproduced and distributed cheaply and easily, creating the

²⁷²Yonezawa, Y. (1989) 'Comic Market' (Comiket) in *The Nerd Book* (Otaku no Hon), Tokyo: Takarajimasha. 77.

²⁷³Kure, T (1990) *Contemporary Manga: The Complete Picture* (Gendai Manga no Zentai Zô), Tokyo: Shiki Shuppan. 26

²⁷⁴Kure (1990). 26.

²⁷⁵Yonezawa (1989). 77.

possibility of mass participation in unregistered and unpublished forms of cultural production. During the early 1970s the new possibilities opened up by this technology also meant that it was relatively easy for individuals to set up small publishing and printing companies. Many ex-radical students who had ruined their chances of joining a good company through their political activities, or who were turning their energies to youth culture, set up one-man publishing companies producing small, erotic or specialist culture magazines, many of which also contained sections of more unusual manga.

On another level, individuals in all walks of life could now print and reproduce their amateur works, without publishing at all, using the services of these new, mini printing companies. This twilight sphere of cultural production became known as the *mini komi* (mini communications), existing beneath the superstructure of mass communications.²⁷⁶ One of the most extensive forms of mini communications was to become printed amateur manga.

Contemporary printed amateur manga are known as *dôjinshi*, or *kojinshi*. The transliteral meaning of *dôjinshi* is 'fraternity-magazine' and it was previously used to refer to pamphlets or magazines distributed within specific associations or societies. As this term has become less appropriate to describe printed works which have now become available to hundreds or even thousands of disassociated manga fans, some amateur artists have

²⁷⁶A similarly amateur and largely unregulated culture and mode of communication popular in Britain and the United States today is the computer 'internet'.

begun, instead, to categorise their works *kojinshi*, meaning 'individuals'-magazine'. Alongside the growth of the commercial manga industry, and following the development of cheap offset printing and photocopying facilities, the number of manga artists and fans printing and distributing editions of their own amateur manga began to increase, first slowly in the 1970s, and then rapidly during the 1980s.

In 1975 a group of young manga critics founded a new institution to encourage the development of unpublished amateur manga. The institution was *Comic Market* (also abbreviated to *Comiket* and *Comike*), a free space for manga distribution in the form of a convention held several times a year where amateur manga could be sought and sold. The manga critics were Aniwa Jun, Harada Teruô and Yonezawa Yoshihiro, the current president of Comic Market. Yonezawa Yoshihiro explained to me:

We set up Comic Market because I felt that we needed a place to circulate underground manga that could not get published. I wanted to make a network to keep all the radical, erotic, and exciting new expression in manga flowing. All the independent comics and meeting places of the 1960s were disappearing by 1973 to 74, and then COM magazine folded. It was a regression, from being able to publish all kinds of stuff in mainstream magazines to only being able to publish unusual stuff in *dôjinshi* underground magazines. But what else can you do, but start again from the underground ?²⁷⁷

Large publishing companies ceased to produce radical and stylistically innovatory manga series around 1972-3, because they no longer matched sufficiently closely the interests of

²⁷⁷Interview with Yonezawa Yoshihiro, president and founder of Comic Market. July 1994.

their growing audiences. New manga artists and fans, interested in developing new forms of expression in manga, were forced to turn to amateur production and *dōjinshi* as an outlet for unpublishable matter on a more systematic basis. After this point of transition in the first half of the 1970s, the amateur manga medium rapidly developed an internal momentum, partially independent of developments in commercial manga publishing.

Between 1975 and 1984, Comic Market was held on three days a year, after which point attendance grew so large that it was rescheduled to two weekend conventions held in August and December.²⁷⁸ At the first Comic Market held in December 1975, thirty two amateur *manga circles*, and six hundred individuals, attended.²⁷⁹ These figures grew slowly between 1975 and 1986, and then rapidly between 1986 and 1992. Comic Market became the central organisation of the amateur manga medium, the existence of which encouraged the formation of new amateur manga circles, in high schools, in colleges and between amateur manga artists with similar interests, across the country. Attendance figures of Comic Market provide a useful illustration of the proportions and growth of the amateur manga medium, which is otherwise a remarkably invisible subculture in Japanese society. Figure 17 and Figure 18, show the annual growth of individual attendance, and of manga circle participation in Comic Market respectively, according to the attendance figures of December events, over the

²⁷⁸Comic Market 46 Participant Application Form and Brochure Set (Comic Market 46 Sanka Moshikomusho Set), Tokyo: Comiket Junbikai. December 1993. 15.

²⁷⁹As above.

period of Comic Market's existence.²⁸⁰ Since 1993, sixteen thousand separate manga circles, distributing one or more amateur works produced by their members, have participated in each Comic Market convention, although in fact there were twenty nine thousand applications from manga circles wishing to attend these conventions.²⁸¹ These figures give an accurate indication of the number of amateur manga circles across the country, which is currently estimated at anywhere between thirty and fifty thousand.²⁸² Figure 18 illustrates that the amount of amateur manga being produced and distributed has increased greatly since around 1988, and may now total anything from about twenty five thousand separate works a year upwards.²⁸³

5.3 Amateur manga related businesses

Comic Market is ostensibly a voluntary, non-profit making organisation, but a range of other commercial enterprises have begun to grow on the margins of the amateur manga pool. In 1986 specialist amateur manga printer Akabubu Tsushin launched Wings amateur manga conventions, and later Tokyo Ryûko Centre (TRC) set up Comic City conventions. Both of these companies hold small to medium sized conventions in towns across the country

²⁸⁰Data used in Figure 17 and Figure 18 is printed in the Comic Market 46 Participant Application Form and Brochure Set. December 1993. 14-15.

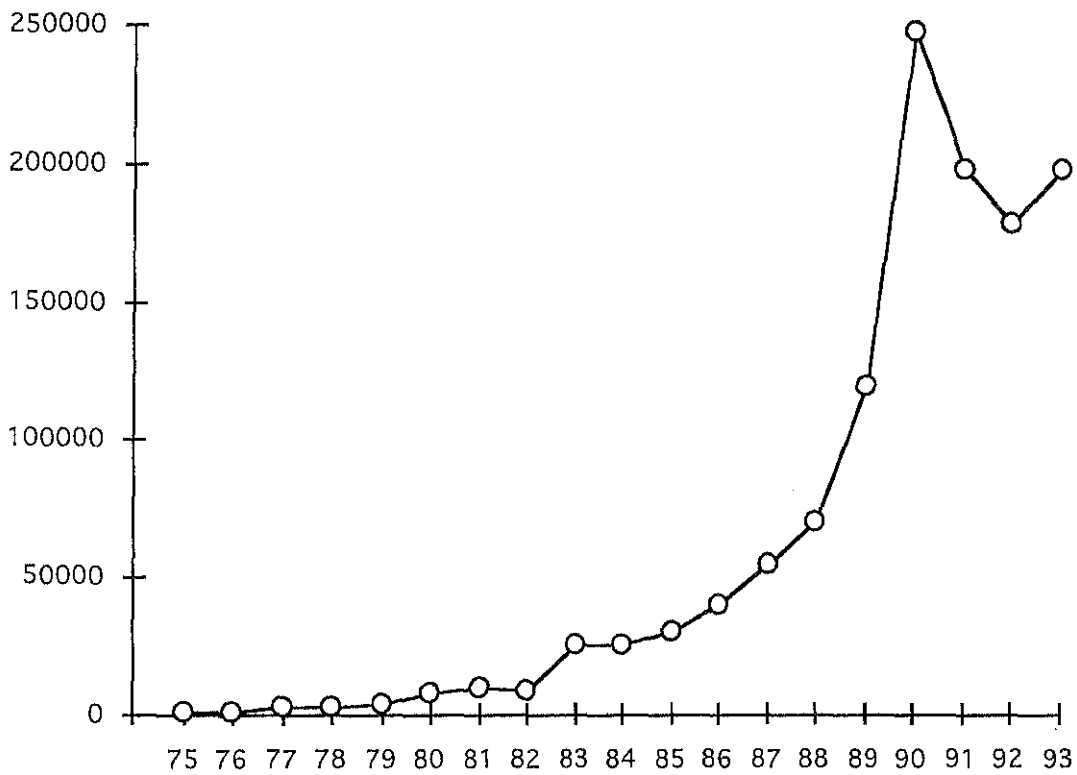
²⁸¹Interview with Yonezawa Yoshihiro. July 1994.

²⁸²Imidasu 1993, Tokyo: Shûeisha. 1992. 1094.

²⁸³This figure of 25 000 is calculated on the basis that there are currently two Comic Markets conventions a year, each attended by 16 thousand circles, of which 74.1 percent, or 11,856 circles produce manga per se (rather than music, costumes, or CD ROMs). Each of the former 11,856 circles distributes at least one new work, twice a year. Thus at Comic Market alone approximately 23,712 amateur works are distributed each year. In addition to which there are many other smaller amateur manga conventions across the country where different manga works are distributed. Finally, some amateur manga artists who do produce work may not attend and distribute their work at conventions at all.

Figure 17

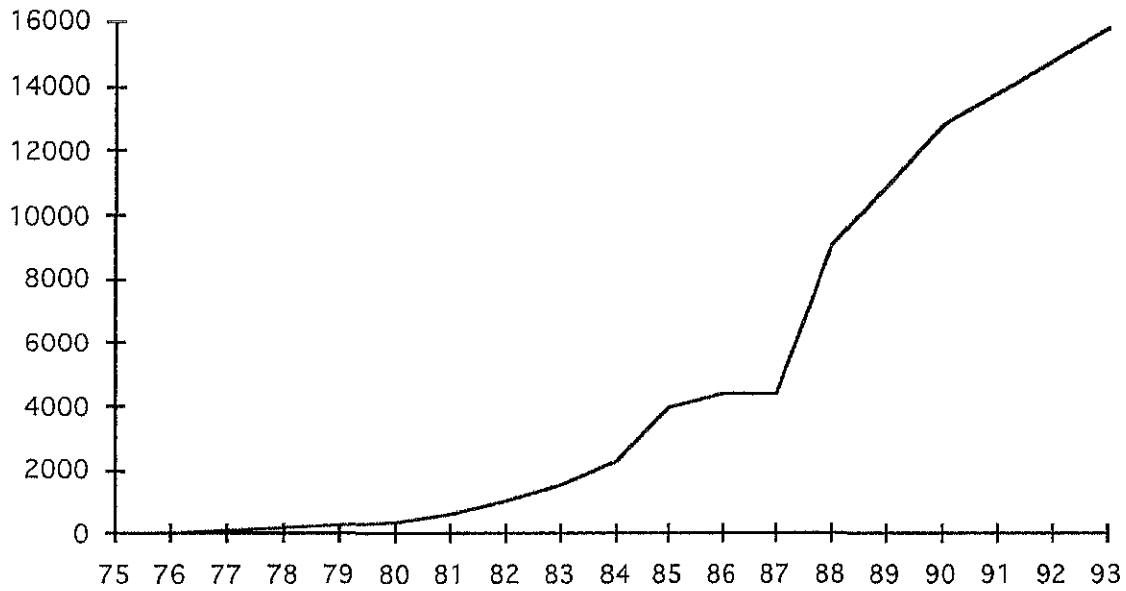
The Increase of Individuals Attending December Comic Market between 1975 and 1995



Source: data in Comic Market 46 Participant Application Form and Brochure Set (Comic Market 46 Sanka Moshikomusho Set) (December 1993) Tokyo: Komiketto Junbikai. 14--15.

Figure 18

The Increase of Amateur Manga Circles Participating in Comic Market between 1975 and 1993



Source: data in Comic Market 46 Participant Application Form and Brochure Set (Comic Market 46 Sanka Moshikomusho Set), December 1993, Tokyo: Comiket Junbikai. 14--15.

every few weeks. It is possible for amateur manga artists and fans to visit a convention to find contacts and friends or to search out new amateur manga every other weekend, though in fact many smaller conventions are limited to specific genres of amateur manga of interest to just one particular section of amateur manga artists.

Timetables of convention dates and locations are advertised in several monthly magazines devoted to the amateur manga world. In the mid-1970s low-circulation magazines such as June (San Shuppan), Peke (Minori Shobô), Again, Tanbi and Manga Kissotengai sprang up around the growing amateur manga world.²⁸⁴ The first of these magazines, entitled Manpa (Manga Wave) was launched in 1976 with the intention of supporting the work of a new group of female artists working within amateur manga, known as the 1949 group (*nijûyon-nen-gumi*).²⁸⁵ In 1982 this magazine split into: Puff which began and continues to specialise only in amateur girls' manga, and Comic Box, which covers all amateur manga and continues to exert a partially leftist political bias.²⁸⁶ These magazines also carry adverts for small *dôjinshi* publishers, *dôjinshi* books and anthologies, meetings places for amateur artists, and small specialist manga book shops which may also sell some *dôjinshi*. Comic Box magazine also publishes manga criticism, interviews with manga artists, and otherwise unrecorded indexed records of all published manga matter.

²⁸⁴Interview with Yonezawa Yoshihiro. July 1994.

²⁸⁵As above.

²⁸⁶As above.

In addition to magazines which function as organisational centres of the amateur medium, an increasing number of companies have begun to publish amateur manga itself. Fusion Productions company, which makes Comic Box magazine, also publishes Comic Box Jr. a three hundred page monthly magazine in which collections of already printed and distributed amateur manga organised by specific genre or sub-genre is published. This same company specialises in publishing collected anthologies of *dôjinshi*, which so far include a now infamous, erotic, three-volume series entitled The Lolita Syndrome (Bishôjo Shôkôgun) published in 1985. In addition to small publishers, the growth of the amateur manga medium has provided custom for a large number of small printing shops such as P-Mate Insatsu, and Hikari Insatsu, many of which specialise solely in the production of *dôjinshi*.

Another commercial venture directly linked to the amateur manga medium consists of large manga shops, which cater to the specialist requirements of amateur manga artists and fans. In 1984 a chain of manga shops entitled Manga no Mori (Manga Forest), sprang up in the Shinjuku, Takadanobaba, Kichijoji, Higashi Ikebukuro, sub-centres of Tokyo.²⁸⁷ In 1992, Mandarake, a multi-storey manga superstore, opened in another centre of Tokyo, Shibuya, in which staff wear costumes fashioned after those of better-known manga characters.

In addition to these 'mini communications' industries servicing the amateur manga medium, for a small minority of amateur

²⁸⁷The Nerd Book. (1989) 246.

artists *dōjinshi* production itself may have become a commercial enterprise. Amateur artists and the organisers of tax-exempt manga conventions deny that *dōjinshi* printing is ever a profit-making activity,²⁸⁸ but within the commercial manga industry there are accusatory rumours that certain artists, who have become famous in the amateur manga world, or even as professional artists, are attending manga conventions with tens of thousands of copies of their latest *dōjinshi*, eager to make big profits. Comments about "some amateur artists (who) have bought mansions with the profits they made on *dōjinshi*"²⁸⁹, are quite common amongst professional manga artists and editors. They worry that individual amateur artists might be able to tap the commercial potential of their products, directly. Manga critic, Kure Tomofusa, calculated, that if a well-known artist sold 10 thousand copies of a *dōjinshi* at a convention attended by up to two hundred thousand people they would make a personal revenue of 1 million yen.²⁹⁰ However, if printing and transportation costs are deducted from this possible total revenue, actual profits would be approximately 5 hundred thousand yen.²⁹¹ Whilst a few professional artists, such as

²⁸⁸In the Comic Market Application Brochure, rules banning all profit making activities are clearly stated, though it is possible the organisers of Comic Market are aware that in practice these rules are being broken. Comic Market 46 Participant Application Form and Brochure Set. December 1993. 5-6.

²⁸⁹Discussions with Tanaka Hideyuki, Senior Editor of Morning magazine.

²⁹⁰Interview with Kure Tomofusa. June 1994.

²⁹¹Printers charge around ¥500 per copy in a typical print run of 100 to 200 *dōjinshi*. Amateur artists generally sell each copy of a *dōjinshi* at ¥1000, and make a profit of ¥500 yen per copy. For the vast majority of amateur artists, this profit barely covers their losses made through unsold stock, and the costs of their transport and convention attendance. The price of larger print-runs is proportionately lower, but the cost of hiring private removal and packing services to transport the *dōjinshi* from the printers to a convention, removes any advantages over economy of size in printing costs. If an artist could sell 10 000 copies of their *dōjinshi*, they might expect to make about ¥500 000 (£3333) in profits. Moreover, it

Ozaki Minami and Sonoda Kenichi, do follow this practice, most do not bother, confirming the actually rather low potential for profit-making by sales of amateur manga. Rather than being a "black market," the existence of an amateur market has encouraged the amateur manga medium to flourish, by providing a means by which young artists of no particular financial means can cover some of the costs of their private productions.

However, even modest sales of *dôjinshi* do imply that the meaning of the concept 'amateur' has changed in its emphasis. Rather than meaning 'non-commercial' in the absolute sense of a product not entering a market, *amateur*, which is the precise term still used to describe *dôjinshi*, now means 'unpublished', with a secondary meaning of not commercially inspired. A wide but shallow amateur manga market has emerged, a shadow beneath the much more profitable official market for professional, published manga.

5.4 Amateur manga artists

In the second half of the 1970s when Comic Market was still a relatively small convention, a large number of early *dôjinshi* artists graduated from amateur to professional status. Ishii Hisaichi, Saimon Fumi, Sabe Anoma, Kono Moji, Takahashi Hakkai, and Takahashi Rumiko, all printed *dôjinshi* and distributed them at Comic Market, subsequent to becoming famous, professional artists.²⁹² As the size of the amateur medium grew in the 1980s

is extremely unlikely that a manga artist could physically tender even a fraction of 10 000 books in one day.

²⁹²Yonezawa, Y. 1989. 78.

this flow of artists 'upwards' into commercial production decreased sharply.

It is evident from the graphs presented in Figure 17 and Figure 18 that the amateur manga movement reached its peak size in 1990 to 1992, when a staggering quarter of a million amateur artists and fans attended Comic Market. In fact manga conventions are the only truly mass public gatherings in contemporary Japan, and in this regard, combined with the low social class of the majority of the participants, they bear a sociological significance similar in some senses to that of football in the UK. Most of these contemporary artists and fans are aged between their late teens and mid-twenties. Although no statistics have been recorded, Yonezawa Yoshihiro has also observed that young Japanese from low-income backgrounds, typically raised in large suburban housing complexes (*danchi*), and attending low-ranking colleges (*senmongaku*), or without higher education, are in the majority at Comic Market. The significance of this observation is not straightforward. Despite the academic and media attention given to the extensiveness of Japanese higher education and the emergence of a universal middle-class society in contemporary Japan, the majority of young Japanese do not receive higher education, and of those that do, a large proportion attend low-ranking colleges, while the majority of Japanese people now live in suburban housing estates. While this could be taken to suggest that the sociological composition of Comic Market was therefore 'standard' and 'representative', the significance of Yonezawa's observation is, perhaps, that this is one of the few cultural and social forums in contemporary Japanese society

which is not dominated by more privileged sections of Japanese society. In discussing how Comic Market had changed towards the end of the 1980s, Yonezawa Yoshihiro also reported that:

After 1987 there was a sudden surge of young people going to Comic Market. It was the teenage children of the baby boomers, with ex-student-radical parents. Many of them come from quite a high social class, so amateur manga fans now tend to be from either low or high-status positions in society.²⁹³

Thus part of the rapid expansion of the amateur manga medium at the end of the 1980s is accounted for by the breaking wave of a teenage baby-boom generation, one whose parents' generation may have passed on some of their positive attitude towards manga, cultivated in their student days. The huge proliferation of *dōjinshi* production in the wake of the mini communications boom which allowed many ordinary Japanese youth to begin producing amateur manga meant that by the 1980s virtually all amateur manga was being made, not by professional artists seeking alternative outlets for their personal work, but by young artists who had no relationship with the manga publishing industry at all. Of the tens of thousands of *dōjinshi* writers joining the medium during the 1980s, only a handful went on to become professional artists.²⁹⁴ The originally tight relationship between amateur and professional manga production became looser. In an attempt to direct some of these amateur artists towards commercial production, the Comic Market Preparation Committee began publishing an annual journal

²⁹³Interview with Yonezawa Yoshihiro. July 1994.

²⁹⁴Case examples of *dōjinshi* artists who transferred to commercial manga production after the late 1980s are cited in the section 5.10 of this chapter.

designed to promote amateur manga artists. In this journal, published every summer and entitled Comiket Origin, 15 to 20 amateur artists of the best selling *dōjinshi* of the previous year are reviewed and introduced to the public.²⁹⁵

Early in the development of Comic Market it became evident that printed amateur manga was providing an unexpected new gateway into the manga medium for Japanese women. Although Disney animation, and the cute childrens' manga characters created by Tezuka Osamu, had long been popular with young women, very few women had become manga artists before 1970. Commercial manga was dominated by boys' and adults' magazines, and these publishing categories continue to represent the mainstream of the medium and the publishing industry today. The number of women making *dōjinshi* increased quickly after the establishment of Comic Market, so that the first result of the sudden increase in the general accessibility of the manga medium was a new amateur manga movement engendered by women. In the mid-1970s a group of female artists producing "small quantities of extremely high-quality manga"²⁹⁶ emerged, and became known as the 24-group (*Nijūyon-nen Gumi*), after the year, 1949, in which a number of them were born.²⁹⁷ These artists, including Hagio Moto, Takemiya Keiko, Oshima Yumiko and Yamagishi Ryoko joined other earlier *dōjinshi* artists who had become professional manga artists, when they filtered 'upwards' into commercial girls' manga magazines.

²⁹⁵Interview with Yonezawa Yoshihiro. July 1994.

²⁹⁶Interview with Saitani Ryō, chief editor of Comic Box, and amateur manga expert. April 1994.

²⁹⁷Interview with Saitani Ryō. April 1994.

Until 1989, approximately 80 percent of *dôjinshi* artists attending Comic Market were female, and only 20 percent male. Since 1990, however, male participation in Comic Market has increased to 35 percent. The girls' manga genre continues to dominate amateur production but, and this is a point of great interest, it has now been partially adopted by male *dôjinshi* artists. The increase in male attendance of Comic Market after 1988, which was one contributing factor in the rapid proliferation of the amateur medium at this time, is connected with the adaptation of girls' manga styles by young men. (See a sample of early girls' manga in Figure 19.)

5.5 Genre evolution within amateur manga

The dramatic, realistic, adult-oriented *gekiga* form, which arose out of the anti-establishment manga subculture of the late 1950s, and which was subsequently absorbed into commercial adult manga production during the 1960s, has not been a big influence on contemporary amateur manga. Girls' manga, which has exerted a strong influence in amateur manga production, has far greater stylistic continuity with the less politically controversial tradition of child-oriented, cute, sometimes fantastical, manga style pioneered by Tezuka Osamu.²⁹⁸ Not only have amateur and commercial manga artists become increasingly separate social groups, but the stylistic development of amateur manga has diverged from that of commercial manga entirely. From amateur

²⁹⁸Here, I use 'manga' not in the generic sense of all Japanese comics, but in the more specific secondary sense of the 'manga' style, as oppose to the *gekiga* style.

manga have emerged new styles which are distinctly recognisable as amateur in origin.

In the early 1980s *dōjinshi* artists began to produce not only new, original works, but a new genre of *parody* manga. *Parody* is based on revised versions of published, commercial manga stories and characters. While often radically altering the content of original stories, and implicitly criticizing original themes, *parody* does not always imply a strongly ironic or humorous re-rendering of texts as it might do in the English use of the word. In some senses the Japanese meaning of 'parody' is closer to the English sense of 'kitsch'. The first commercial manga series which attracted a whole wave of amateur parodies in the first half of the 1980s, was *Spaceship Yamato (Uchū Senkan Yamato)*.²⁹⁹ As the amateur manga medium expanded in the 1980s, the proportion of *dōjinshi* artists producing *parody* instead of original works increased too. By 1989 45.9 percent of material sold at Comic Market was *parody*, whilst only 12.1 percent was *original* manga. Figure 20 illustrates the proportions of the different genres of amateur manga, including *parody* and *original*, distributed at Comic market in the recent period.³⁰⁰

Most *parody* manga have been based on leading boys' manga stories serialised in commercial magazines. Stories in the top-selling magazine, *Jump (Shūkan Shōnen Jump)*, such as *Dragon Ball*,

²⁹⁹Yonezawa Yoshihiro. 1989. 79.

³⁰⁰Data used in this pie chart was originally published in 'A Fifteen Year History of Comic Market' (Comic Market 15 Nenshi) published in (November 1989) *Comic Box*, Tokyo: Fusion Production. The original data contained an inaccuracy however. The total percentage of all the genres added up to 100.5 percent. In order to compensate for this error 0.5 percent has been deducted from the largest category, 'other', in Figure 20.

Figure 19

Girls' manga: The Glass Mask by Miuchi Suzue

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

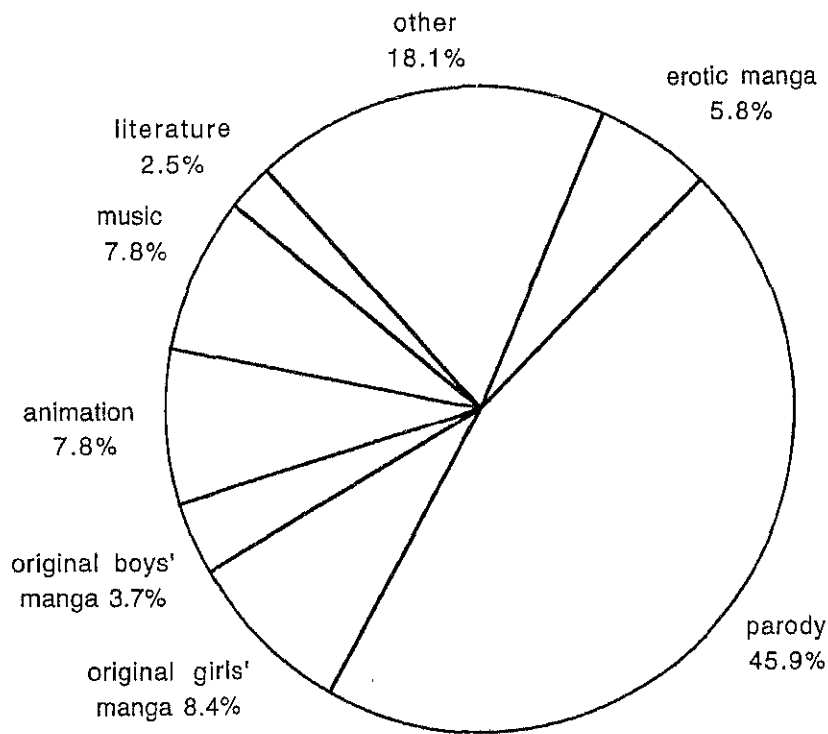
Yûyûhakushô, *Slam Dunk*, and *Captain Tsubasa*, have been particularly frequent sources of *parody*. *Parody* based on animation rather than manga series, and referred to as *aniparo* (an abbreviation of *animation-parody*), became more popular from the mid-1980s onwards. In the same period *cosplay* (an abbreviation of *costume-play*), where manga fans dress up in the costumes of well-known manga characters and perform a form of live *parody* at amateur manga conventions, also became widespread. (See a girl at Comic Market in August 1994 performing *cosplay* in Plate 7.)

Female *dôjinshi* artists categorised their style of manga, which is dominant in both *parody* and *original* work, as *yaoi*. This word is a three letter acronym, *ya-o-i*, composed of the first syllable (here printed in bold) of each of the following three phrases; "**y**ama nashi, **o**chi nashi, **i**mi nashi". These phrases mean "no build-up, no foreclosure, and no meaning", and they are frequently cited to describe the almost total absence of narrative structure which has been typical of amateur manga from the mid-1980s onwards.³⁰¹ In *yaoi* manga the symbolic appearance of characters, and emotions attached to characters' situations, have become far more important than the traditional 'plot'. The 'narrative' or story-line, which in many ways is the only remaining link between manga and works generally understood as high-literature, has been very much abandoned to commercial manga publishers, for whom it continues to be of varied but generally substantial importance. *Yaoi* is also characterised by its main subject matter, which is homoerotica, and homosexual

³⁰¹The original meaning of *yaoi*, common knowledge amongst manga fans, is defined on paper in *Imidasu 1993*, Tokyo: Shôgakukan. 1094.

Figure 20

Genre distribution of amateur manga at Comic Market in 1989



Source: 'Comic Market 15 Nenshi', Comic Box, November 1989.

romance, typically between lead male characters of the parodied or original work. There are extensive and well researched traditions of transvestism and homoerotism in both modern Japanese culture and Anglo-American comic and television fanzine subcultures.³⁰² (Plate 8 depicts a sample from a homoerotic *yaoi dôjinshi*.)

Towards the end of the 1980s the number of men producing *dôjinshi* and attending Comic Market increased. Many of these men had become interested in writing girls' manga. A type of very cute girls' manga written by, and for, men was adapted from the styles of manga pioneered by female artists and used in small girls' manga story magazines, such as *Ribbon* published by Shûeisha, and *Margaret* published by Kôdansha. Male girls' manga, features little girls as heroines, and increased its presence at Comic Market from the end of the 1980s. Most of this girls' manga falls into the new genre category of *Lolicom* (an abbreviation of *Lolita complex*).³⁰³ (See a sample of published *Lolicom* manga in Figure 21.)

In 1991 *Comic Box Jr.* published an anthology of original amateur manga entitled "*Original manga is not beaten by parody yet!*", confirming that amateur manga production has become dominated by *parody*. The predominance of *parody* in amateur manga is frequently cited by company editors, professional artists, and

³⁰²See, for example, Buruma, I. (1984) 'The Third Sex', in *A Japanese Mirror: Heroes and Villains of Japanese Culture*, London: Penguin. 113-135. And Jenkins, H. (1992) *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*, London: Routledge.

³⁰³The term *Lolicom* is an abbreviation of 'Lolita complex', which is a reference to Vladimir Nabukov's *Lolita*, and the theme of older male obsession with innocent, pre-pubescent girls.

cultural critics, as evidence of the inferiority of amateur manga to commercial manga, in which all stories are "*original*". The basis of this differential evaluation is that originality of style - if not of the actual story line and type of character - is the principal criterion of commercial viability. Many *parody* artists have come to accept the view that *parody* is quantitatively less original, and therefore culturally inferior to *original* work. Thus even in amateur manga circles commercial viability has been implicitly accepted as a measurement of objective quality.

Original amateur manga writers produce manga with the potential for commercial exploitation, and many of them may measure themselves in relation to commercial manga magazines. This is either an antagonistic relationship in which they feel they have rejected the constraints of commercial manga writing, or a complementary relationship in which they aim ultimately to get their work published, or, most frequently, both of these at once. As *parody* manga production began to outweigh *original* manga production in the mid-1980s,³⁰⁴ *original* amateur artists have begun to keep away from Comic Market and form their own much smaller, and less organised, cliques of amateur manga artists. Both in stylistic influences and self-perception, many contemporary *original* artists are more directly related to the amateur manga of the early 1970s than the massive amateur medium of the 1980s and 1990s. Amateur artists producing *gekiga* rather than girls' manga-inspired work were less likely to attend Comic Market and more likely to try to get their work published in

³⁰⁴Interview with Yonezawa Yoshihiro. July 1994.

Plate 8

Homoerotic amateur yaoi manga dôjinshi

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

Source: Return to the Nile (Nile o Sakanobotte) (Front cover)
by Yahagi Takako, 1989.

Figure 21

Lolicom manga

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

Source: *Gunsmith Cats* by Sonoda Kenichi, serialised in *Afternoon*, 1994.

GARO magazine, or in low circulation commercial manga magazines. One such young, *original*, amateur artist with connections to GARO magazine, and to the famous artist Nagashima Shinji, explained her position to me:

Manga culture is pathetic at the moment because it is all *parody*. It all looks the same. I don't go to Comic Market and neither do my friends. We have small conventions for *original* manga artists. The only reason why everyone produces *parody* is because they do not have the skills to write *original* works, they cannot understand any characters apart from those they have been reading for years.³⁰⁵

In a survey that I distributed at random to 40 amateur manga artists at Comic Market in August 1994, the respondents were divided in their opinions about this issue.³⁰⁶ A total of 29 respondents returned the survey, and of these, 19 respondents said they preferred *parody* to original manga. Of these people, 10 respondents cited it was "more interesting", as their reason for either producing or buying *parody* manga. Another 9 of the 19 respondents who claimed to prefer *parody* to *original* manga, cited that it was either "easier to understand" or that they were "not capable of making *original* manga". The remaining 10 respondents claimed not to like *parody* manga at all, because it was "not interesting".³⁰⁷ Thus, approximately one third of respondents, who were all Comic Market participants, did not

³⁰⁵Interview with Romi, a 26 year old female amateur artist, at a house party held by famous male manga artists of the 1950s generation. May 1994.

³⁰⁶This was a single-sheet, self-completion, postal-reply, questionnaire survey written in the style of informal, cute handwriting popular amongst amateur manga artists.

³⁰⁷The questions included on this single-sheet, self-completion, questionnaire survey cited here were:

2a) Do you prefer *parody* or *original dōjinshi* ?

(Answer: *parody/original/both/other*.....)

2b) Why is that your favourite ?

(Answer:.....)

like *parody* manga at all, another third said they liked *parody* manga because it was more interesting, and a final third said they liked *parody* manga because it was easier to understand and write than *original* manga. The huge expansion of the amateur manga medium, which has allowed a great number of ordinary, proportionately less-talented individuals access to producing manga, may have had the effect of encouraging the expansion of the *parody* genre. Despite this quantitative change, it is clear that *parody* manga has nevertheless developed as a qualitatively separate master-genre in its own right, in which the traditional and commercial understanding of originality has less meaning.

Comic Market president, Yonezawa Yoshihiro, interprets the expansion of *parody* in manga as an attempt to struggle with and subvert dominant culture, on the part of a generation of youth for whom mass culture, which has surrounded them from early childhood, has become their dominant reality. In this context Yonezawa interprets *parody* as a highly critical genre which attempts to remodel and take control of 'cultural reality'.

Manga critic Kure Tomofusa believes that the highly personal (*jiheiteki*) themes of *parody* manga represent not a further decay of artistic standards, but a return to narrow themes about the internal world of the individual and immediate personal affairs, which have dominated twentieth century Japanese literature:

In 1980 people once again began to forget about dramatic social themes and manga began to move towards petty, repetitive personal affairs, rather like the 'I-novels' (*shishōsetsu*) of the pre-1960 period. In the 1980s a new genre of love-comedies, often within

parody, began in and dominated the amateur printed manga world.³⁰⁸

The implication of Kure's view is that formal 'originality' is not an objective standard of good or bad culture, but a reference to a specific kind of culture. In the case of manga, 'originality' implies works or genres which deal with broad social issues and historical change.

5.6 The amateur manga panic

In 1989 amateur manga artists, and by implication the amateur manga medium, became the subject of what might be categorised as a contemporary 'moral panic' of the sort first highlighted at the end of the 1950s by British sociologist, Stanley Cohen.³⁰⁹ Cohen defined a moral panic in the following manner:

A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylised and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions...³¹⁰

A very similar process of violent reaction took place around amateur manga subculture from autumn 1989. In fact post-war Japanese society has been characterised by a seemingly endless succession of 'moral panics'. Scarcely has one panic about individualism, consumerism, the breakdown of Japanese tradition,

³⁰⁸Interview with Kure Tomofusa. June 1994.

³⁰⁹Cohen, S. (1972) Folk Devils and Moral Panics, London: Granada.

³¹⁰Cohen, S. (1972). 9.

wayward young women, single mothers, new religions, or returnee schoolchildren, spread through the media and the public consciousness, than it has been superseded by another. The typical character of such panics in contemporary Japan has been more social than moral. Panics have tended to be more concerned about changing social habits than the lack of moral fibre of certain groups of individuals. The particular 'social panic' which was generated around amateur manga however was immense and the media and public attention long-lasting.

The sudden genesis of interest in amateur manga artists, *dôjinshi* and Comic Market in the media began with the arrest of a male serial-infant-girl-killer and the linkage of his crimes with girls' manga. Between August 1988 and July 1989, 26-year old printer's assistant, Miyazaki Tsutomu, at the time lodging with his parents in the town of Hannô in Saitama prefecture - a home county of Tokyo - abducted, murdered and mutilated four small girls, before being caught, arrested, tried and imprisoned.³¹¹ The Japanese media treatment of this murder case was, in many ways, similar to that which developed in the British media around the child murder of a toddler, James Bulger, by two young Liverpool boys, in 1993.

A large number of camera crews and reporters arrived at Miyazaki's parents' home before Miyazaki's arrest, whilst Miyazaki was held in police cells on grounds of suspicion. They discovered that his bedroom was crammed full of girls' manga, *Lolicom* manga and animation videos, and a variety of soft

³¹¹Whipple, C. (July 1993) 'The Silencing of Lambs' in Tokyo Journal.

pornographic manga materials. One reporter later put into words the apparent horror he had felt at the sight of so many manga books:

Miyazaki's room, with videos and manga books stacked to the ceiling along every wall gave a strong impression, - a lot of people felt it was very eerie.³¹²

In fact, this was not actually a surprising discovery. The absence of permanent storage space and standing furniture - which is related to the typically limited dimensions of Japanese housing, in combination with the high rates of consumption of mass cultural goods, by young people with large disposable incomes, does mean that the private room of any Japanese youth is extremely likely to be a crammed to the ceiling with open stacks of books, magazines, manga, animation, videos, CDs, electronic hardware, and clothes. A comprehensive photographic survey of the rooms and apartments of Japanese youth living in and around Tokyo in the late 1980s and early 1990s, entitled Tokyo Style, confirms the 'normality' of Miyazaki's circumstances.³¹³ Nevertheless Miyazaki was a fan of girls' manga and in particular *Lolicom* manga and animation. Miyazaki owned many manga *dôjinshi* and it was revealed that he had written some animation reviews in *dôjinshi* and attended Comic Market. As a child Miyazaki had wanted to become a manga artist,

³¹²Nonaka Kyôtarô, 'The forest where Miyazaki Tsutomu's perversion lost its way', (Miyazaki Tsutomu ga Mayoikonda tôsaku no mori), Shûkan Bunshun. 7 September 1989. 34.

³¹³Tsuzuki, K. (ed) (1993) Tokyo Style, Tokyo: Kyoto Shoin.

but since failing in this ambition he had hoped to become a manga critic or related manga specialist instead.³¹⁴

In the media a heavily symbolic debate ensued Miyazaki's arrest, in which the recent death of Miyazaki's grandfather, with whom he had apparently had his only deep adult relationship; the apparent lack of attention given to him by his mother and father; and his subsequent immersion into a fantasy world of manga, were posited as the true causes of his serial killings. Emphasis on the death of Miyazaki's grandfather implied that the decline of traditional Japanese social relations represented by older generations of Japanese had contributed to Miyazaki's state. Emphasis on Miyazaki's careless upbringing hinted at the same time that there were no real social relations between modern, liberal parents of the 1960s generation and their children. Lastly, heavy criticism of manga, became a general attack on the destructive role of the mass media and mass culture in contemporary society. Professor Okonogi Keigo, a highly respected psychoanalyst and social commentator, emphasised the link between manga and family breakdown:

The danger of a whole generation of youth who do not even experience the most primary two or three way relationship between themselves and their mother and father, and who cannot make the transition from a fantasy world of videos and manga to reality is now extreme.³¹⁵

³¹⁴Otsuka, E. (1989) 'The me in Mr. M. and the Mr. M. in me' (M. Kun no naka no Watashi, Watashi no naka no M. Kun), in Chûô Kôron. October 1989. 438.

³¹⁵Okonogi, K. quoted in Shûkan Post. 25: September 1989. 33.

Several journals explained how Miyazaki's mother had neglected her son so that even as an infant the neglected child turned to manga and animation:

By the time he was two years old he would sit alone on a cushion and read manga books.³¹⁶

The media did not entirely deride Miyazaki for his crimes, but took a vaguely sympathetic view, whilst blaming his mother and manga instead. Despite the evidence of repeated psychological examinations conducted by the defence, in which Miyazaki displayed no tangible schizophrenic traits, the view that Miyazaki was incapable of distinguishing between fantasy and reality, that is between manga and the real world, became a prominent theme of media reportage. One headline exclaimed:

The little girls he killed were no more than characters from his comic book life.³¹⁷

Following the Miyazaki case, reporters and television documentary crews visited Comic Market, smaller *dôjinshi* conventions, and specialist manga shops. Amateur manga culture was repeatedly linked to Miyazaki's case, creating what has become a new public perception that manga fans and amateur artists are psychologically-unbalanced, dangerous perverts. Yonezawa Yoshihiro believes that manga and *dôjinshi* artists were made into public "scapegoats" for Miyazaki's anti-social behaviour.

³¹⁶Shûkan Bunshun. 9 September 1989. 36.

³¹⁷Whipple, C. Tokyo Journal, July 1993. 37.

5.7 The social debate about manga otaku

The word, *otaku*, was quickly adopted within the media to describe Miyazaki and label other young people who were also fans and producers of amateur girls' manga. *Otaku*, which translates to the English term 'nerd', was a slang term used by amateur manga artists and fans themselves in the 1980s to describe 'weirdoes' (*henjin*) and overly obsessive manga artists. The term derives from the formal Japanese term, *otaku*, which can mean "you", "yours" or "your home", depending on the situation. It works as a witty slang reference, *parodying* someone who is not capable of having close relationships, and therefore communicates with his peers using this formal, and esoteric form of address. This slang was invented by *dôjinshi* artist, Nakamori Akio, in 1983. He used the word *otaku* in a series entitled 'Your Investigations' (*Otaku no Kenkyû*) which was published in a low-circulation manga magazine, *Manga Cutie-Pie* (*Manga Burikko*).³¹⁸

After the Miyazaki murder case, the concept of an *otaku* changed its meaning at the hands of the media. *Otaku* came to mean, in the first instance Miyazaki, in the second instance, all amateur manga artists and fans, and in the third instance all Japanese youth in their entirety. Social anthropologist, Otsuka Eiji, pointed out that all amateur manga artists and fans were potential murderers:

Youth involved in animation, Lolita complex manga magazines, and other obsessive hobbies, in Japan, all have a similar mental state. Mr. M.'s crime of serial-infant-girl-murder was a direct continuation of his

³¹⁸The Nerd Book (*Otaku no Hon*), Tokyo: Takarajimasha. 1989. 252.

pastimes. It might sound terrible, but there are over one hundred thousand people with the same pastimes as Mr. M. - we have a whole standing army of murderers.³¹⁹

The Weekly Post (Shûkan Post) feared that not just one hundred thousand, but several entire generations of Japanese children were half-baked *otaku*:

TODAY'S ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS STUDENTS: THE OTAKU TRIBE IS ECLIPSING SOCIETY 320

The young *otaku* generation was one so socially incompetent and maladjusted that they were "isolated people who have no sense of isolation."³²¹ Rather than relating to people, and in a wider sense, society, *otaku* could relate only to manga and inanimate objects. In late 1989, the editorial board of Takarajimasha publishing company put together a book of articles on the subject of *otaku*, entitled The Nerd Book (Otaku no Hon). They observed that:

According to the media and the weekly magazines *otaku* are manga and animation fans who have no interest in love or fashion, in short, they are dark, ominous youth.³²²

Throughout the early 1990s the frightening concept of 'manga *otaku*' - socially-incompetent, manga-writing sexual-perverts - spread across Japanese society, and became a widely recognised and referred to new social category. Senior Editor of Afternoon

³¹⁹Otsuka, E. (1989) 'M. Kun no naka no Watashi, Watashi no naka no M. Kun', in Chûô Kôron. October 1989. 440.

³²⁰Headline from Shûkan Post. 25 September 1989. 32-33

³²¹Headline in Shûkan Post. 1 October 1989. 32.

³²²Journal editorial. The Nerd Book (Otaku no Hon), Tokyo: Takarajimasha, 1989.

magazine, Watanabe Kyô - himself often dubbed *otaku* on account of his enthusiasm for manga - described to me what he felt was understood by *otaku*:

The stereotype of an *otaku* is a man who is rather perversely unfashionable wearing a rumpled shirt, with a collar curling under, and slacks. He is liable to wear thick glasses and have a double chin and hair plastered down over his forehead, instead of combed back. He always carries a shoulder bag bulging with his personal gadgets and manga, worn with the strap across his chest. And *otaku* are very polite and distant with each other. ³²³

Figure 22 shows a humorous caricature of the stereotyped manga *otaku*. Negative stereotyping of amateur manga artists as nerds extended beyond a media fad, and involved several of Japan's foremost intellectuals in debate. Already well-developed concepts employed in the ongoing debate about youth and social change in post-war Japan were strongly evident in the terms within which *otaku* were analysed. The most frequent point made about manga *otaku* was that they were suffering from 'Peter-Pan syndrome', or more simply - an inability to grow up. This is an idea which has been stated about various sections of Japanese youth since the early 1970s.

In 1979 Okonogi Keigo, a professor of psychology, developed a highly influential theory that Japanese youth seek to exist in a state of moratorium or indefinite youth, in order to avoid the parental and societal responsibilities and obligations that arrive with maturity. Saitani Ryô, chief editor of Comic Box, referred to this theory in his comment that, "Amateur manga

³²³Interview with Watanabe Kyô, senior editor of Afternoon magazine. May 1994.

artists suffer from arrested development, Comic Market is the moratorium space of today."³²⁴ About the manga *otaku*'s childishness, feminist theorist, Ueno Chizuko, asked "Do the *yaoi* girls and *Lolicom* boys really have a future?"³²⁵ Ueno employed psychoanalytic theory to analyse manga *otaku*, and she found them to be suffering from infantile narcissism and associated schizophrenic tendencies. This psychological condition was reflected in male *otakus*' fixation with cute, pre-sexual, girls' manga, and female *otakus*' fixation with male, homoerotic manga. Their cultural tastes illustrated that *otaku* were averse to adulthood and adult sexuality, and desired instead to be perceived as the child-like, sexually unrealisable characters they objectified in their *dôjinshi*. Ueno seems unable to distinguish between a cultural taste and an individual psychology; cultural tastes are complex and intelligent social expressions of individuals' attitudes to society which may respond to already existing social debates, rather than crude indications of the literal and immediate desires of simple individuals.³²⁶

A more liberal strain of analysis, seeking to place causality in social institutions rather than individuals' behaviour, posited the combined influence of a highly-pressured education system and a media-saturated society for the emergence of a so called 'otaku generation'. Asaba Michiaki, writing in The Nerd Book,

³²⁴See Okonogi, K. (1981) Age of the Moratorium People (Moratorium no Ningen no Jidai), Tokyo: Chûô Kôronsha.

³²⁵Ueno, C. (1989) 'Kyûjû Nendai no Sexual Revolution' (The Sexual Revolution of the Nineties), in The Nerd Book. Tokyo: Takarajimasha.

³²⁶For more details on the social debate about infantilism see Kinsella, S. (1995) 'Cuties in Japan', in Skov, L. & Moeran, B. (eds.) Women, Media and Consumption in Japan, London: Curzon Press.

Figure 22

A humorous caricature of an otaku

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

MAGIC HAND
(For pinching
little girls
bottoms)

OTAKU EYES
(Can spot useless
information at
1000 metres)

OTAKU HEART
(Very hardy)

FAITHFUL CARRIER BAG
(Contains plastic mo
of pop-idols,
and *dōjinshi*)

Source: Illustration with commentary (my translation) published in
Taku, H. (1992) Viva! Otaku Heaven (Ikasu! Otaku no Tengoku),
Tokyo: Tada Shuppan. 190.

suggested that children who had been isolated from their friends and made to study relentlessly in their bedrooms, have grown-up in an environment where their only source of social interaction and experience is with the media, and with characters in manga and television animation. Accordingly, Asaba sees *otaku* as the subculture denizens of a media-raised generation:

Since the mid-1970s, qualitative development within subculture has been in the area of animation, manga, science fiction, and similar things that share a common information system, and in the arrival of a new generation with a related consciousness. *Otaku* - which had their genesis only yesterday - have already become part of popular culture...³²⁷

With the divergence of this debate away from the Miyazaki murder case and into a more general discussion about amateur manga artists and contemporary youth generally, some positive conceptions of *otaku* surfaced. *Otaku* were redefined in certain sections of the media as a fashionable description for a new kind of media-literate modern youth, or more specifically, youth marketing category. Ôtsuka Eiji, described *otaku* as "the key word of post-modern society."³²⁸ In 1990 a media-friendly 'celebrity *otaku*', Taku Hachiro (Taku as in *otaku*), appeared on television screens and was the ostensible author of a gimmick book entitled Viva! Otaku Heaven, in which Taku stated:

Amidst the rapid flow of events following the serial-infant-girl-killer incident the term *otaku* has become a negative keyword. In the 1990s however this meaning has changed. Now *otaku* refers to a high-information handling élite. On closer examination it is evident that *otaku* are deeply rooted in the current times.³²⁹

³²⁷Asaba, M. (1989), in The Nerd Book 251.

³²⁸Ôtsuka Eiji (1989), in The Nerd Book. 241.

³²⁹Taku, H. (1992) Viva! Otaku Heaven (Ikasu! Otaku no Tengoku), Tokyo: Tada Shuppan. 6.

The exaggerated categorisation of amateur manga artists in the media as *otaku*, nerd youth (*otaku seishōnen*), nerd-tribes (*otaku-zoku*), or a nerd-generation (*otaku-sedai*), is highly reminiscent of the moral panics about new youth cultures, propagated through British society in the post-war period, which Stanley Cohen identified in research on British mods and rockers during the late 1950s. The portrayal of amateur manga artists as obsessive (*mania no aru*) and fanatical also links *otaku* to a more specific anxiety about pop-culture fans. Henry Jenkin's description of the way in which fans have been perceived in the United Kingdom and United States is also applicable to the case of *otaku* in Japan:

...the fan still constitutes a scandalous category in contemporary culture, one alternatively the target of ridicule and anxiety, of dread and desire. Whether viewed as a religious fanatic, a psychopathic killer, a neurotic fanaticist, or a lust-crazed groupie, the fan remains a "fanatic" or false worshipper, whose interests are fundamentally alien to the realm of "normal" cultural experience and whose mentality is dangerously out of touch with reality.³³⁰

The manga *otaku* became a modern bogey man in Japanese society. The main result of the *otaku* moral panic has been the humiliation, vilification, and marginalisation of amateur manga artists, *dōjinshi* and styles of manga emerging out of the *dōjinshi* medium. Yonezawa Yoshihiro believes that it was ultimately the unauthorised, self-appointed and independent nature of the activities of sections of Japanese youth which had stirred social anxiety and hostility:

³³⁰Jenkins, H. (1992) Textual Poachers, London: Routledge. 15.

The term *otaku* is being used to single out certain kinds of people for regulation and removal from the public eye. On the other hand the broadening of the concept of *otaku* has provided certain fastidious individuals with a term to describe the condition apparently common to academic book-worms, film buffs, rock music fans, manga artists and animation fans.³³¹

An indication of the extent to which amateur manga artists and *dôjinshi* have been stigmatised within Japanese society is the resistance to this trend which has been expressed by *dôjinshi* artists who have been labelled as *otaku*. Many *dôjinshi* artists reject the validity of the term entirely. One contract manga editor working for Afternoon magazine, who had been involved in editing his friends' *dôjinshi* over a number of years, expressed to me what is a common sentiment amongst serious *dôjinshi* artists:

If I get called *otaku* it is an insult, the word *otaku* is derogatory. Amongst ourselves, we do not think each other as these strange *otaku* people. At the time of the Miyazaki murder incident we got picked on by the media. People do not like things they cannot comprehend, or ugly things, so they call us *otaku* and it helps.³³²

Yahagi Takako is a currently popular, professional manga artist who first became well-known within the amateur manga medium in the second half of the 1980s for her sexually-explicit, original, homoerotic *dôjinshi*. Yahagi, her amateur works, and the style of some of her commercial series are now classified as

³³¹Yonezawa, Y. (1989) 'Comiket' in The Nerd Book, Tokyo: Takarajimasha. 84.

³³²Interview with Nonoguchi Takeshi, contract editor at Afternoon magazine. March 1994.

otaku. About this label, Yahagi defensively asserts that it has no real meaning:

I don't know if I am *otaku* or not really. What is *otaku*? Isn't everyone *otaku* really? I am not living in a fantasy world of my own, I live in the real world. How about you? Do you think you might be *otaku*?³³³

The *otaku* panic and the irritated response it has inspired amongst amateur manga artists has not been expressed in a political form, but chief editor of Afternoon manga magazine, Ogawa Haruo, felt that:

If Japan was stricter about the freedom of expression, it is likely that *dōjinshi* artists would become anti-establishment, but they aren't right now - apart from a few individuals.

5.8 Police action against amateur manga

The practical results of the new and hostile attention directed to amateur manga were partial attempts by Tokyo metropolitan police to censor sexual images in unpublished manga and prevent their wider distribution at conventions and in specialist book shops. In 1993 guidance about the appropriate contents of *dōjinshi* was distributed at Comic Market for the first time. Takahashi Isao of the Comic Market Preparation Committee explained to me that since the *otaku* panic the committee had enforced public bylaws prohibiting the sale of sexually explicit materials to minors - despite the fact that a large proportion

³³³Prepared telephone interview with manga artist, Yahagi Takako, in August 1994.

of amateur manga is produced by minors before it is purchased by them:

If people do not draw the extremely explicit sex scenes involving the lower half of the body then anything is fine at Comic market. But we have to stop explicit manga being sold. After 1991 people who participate in Comic Market started drawing sexy manga in new ways, sex with clothes on, and so on. I think that the fact that people were forced to try out new ways of drawing sex actually made the means of expression in amateur manga advance. The specialist book shops that sell *dôjinshi* wouldn't take them if they were really perverse or explicit, so we can't stretch the law either. ³³⁴

In the August 1994 participant application brochure, the organisers of Comic Market included a special statement directed at amateur manga artists which warned them that:

Comic Market is not an alternative society, it is a vehicle orchestrated by you which thinks about its useful role in society. It has become necessary for us to seek social acceptance.³³⁵

Ultimately manga fan culture and amateur unpublished manga also became the target of extensive harassment by metropolitan police forces in 1991. In 1991 metropolitan police forces began to investigate amateur manga artists and remove their printed works from specialist manga book shops. During 1991 police arrested the managers of five specialist manga book shops where unpublished or amateur manga was available for sale. This activity began when 6 officers broke into Shinjuku, Manga Forest (Manga no Mori) manga book shop in central Tokyo, and

³³⁴Interview with Comic Market Preparation Committee volunteer, Takahashi Isao. December 1993.

³³⁵Comic Market 46 Participant Application Form and Brochure Set, printed in Tokyo: Comiket Junbikai. December 1993. 12.

confiscated copies of unpublished manga, including a volume entitled MINIES CLUB. Tokyo metropolitan police stated that they were not interested in the undeclared business of selling unpublished manga, but about the possibility that amateur manga circles producing unpublished manga were actually front organisations for Japanese urban terrorist organisations. Police obtained the addresses of 15 amateur manga circles including the manga circle responsible for producing MINIES CLUB, a then popular amateur manga booklet, and subsequently took them into police stations and questioned them about the legal status of the printing shops where their manga booklets had been printed. Amateur manga artists were subjected to repeated investigations and harassment throughout the rest of the year. In total police took in 74 young people for questioning over their activities making amateur manga and removed 1880 volumes of manga by 207 authors from Kôyama, Manga no Mori book shop; and 2160 volumes of manga by 303 different authors from Shinjuku, Manga no Mori manga book shop.³³⁶ This scale of direct police activity represents a significant curtailment of the distribution of unpublished manga. Other than in specialist manga book shops in large cities, amateur manga is rarely on sale and is not usually available outside the social circles of young manga fans and artists. Moreover amateur manga is often produced by artists who are themselves minors under the age of 18, and in this regard, too, restriction of amateur manga production has dubious legal foundations. The restriction of amateur manga directly by local police forces suggests that it was not only the perceived problem of the generalised 'harmful' effects of manga on young

³³⁶Thoughts on the Dangerous Manga Problem (Yûgai Comic Mondai o Kangaeru), Tokyo: Tsukuru Shuppan. 1991. 18-21.

people which concerned the police, but also the independent and unregulated role of manga artists in disseminating new forms of culture.

5.9 The adult manga industry and amateur manga

The negative stereotype of the manga *otaku* did not affect all manga and manga artists equally. Whilst *dōjinshi* artists and Comic Market were perceived as an anti-social, dangerous subculture, professional manga artists, producing only commercial work for large publishing companies, were protected from this stigma. The generalised stereotype of all manga artists as unsociable (*kurai*), strange people (*henjin*), which had prevailed alongside the general prejudice against all forms of manga throughout the post-war period, dissolved. The negative perceptions of all manga artists and the belief that manga was a crude, low form of culture (*gehin*), were redirected against amateur artists and *otaku* manga. Kihara Yasuo, Deputy Chief Editor of Morning, discussed with me how professional manga artists had actually become more socially acceptable in the same period in which amateur manga had been isolated and denigrated:

About ten years ago, in the early 1980s the idea that manga artists were 'different' was at its peak. At that time they were called weirdoes (*henjin*). But now they are not stigmatised so much, they are not considered to be like *otaku*.³³⁷

In an interesting twist of fate, other strands of non-commercial manga, with no historic or stylistic relationship to

³³⁷Interview with senior Morning editor Kihara Yasuo. February 1994.

contemporary *otaku* manga, have been labelled such by default. *New wave gekiga*, produced by artists such as Yoshiharu Tatsumi, Yoshiharu Tsuge, and Shinohara Katsuichi, in the early 1970s, which was not directly absorbed into commercial manga production, is now belatedly referred to as *otaku* manga. Although these *gekiga* works were produced over a decade before the concept of *otaku* emerged, contemporary artists influenced by their styles, such as Kuroda Iou writing in *Afternoon* magazine, are also categorised by many readers and manga editors today as *otaku*. Hence the extended meaning of *otaku* manga signifies unusual or non-commercial manga in general.

Manga magazines such as *Morning*, *Young Sunday* and *Spirits*, and *Magazine* have reacted to the *otaku* panic by publicly distancing themselves from the amateur manga medium and amateur manga styles. Amongst publishing company manga editors, *dōjinshi* are generally described with derision and distaste. In one editorial meeting of *Morning* manga magazine, editors were asked to comment in turn on what they thought about certain *otaku*-style manga scripts which had been sent to the editorial office by amateur artists hoping to become professional artists. The responses made were that the manga scripts in question were, "in its own world" (*jiheiteki*) "childish" (*kodomoppoi*), "boring" (*tsumaranai*), "awful" (*osoroshii*), "warped" (*doku ga tsuyoi*), and "gross" (*kimochiwarui*). Female editors were particularly repulsed by Lolita Complex *otaku* manga styles, which they considered to be perverted and sexist.

Company editors frequently criticise *dôjinshi* artists on the grounds that they lack original talent, and "can only copy other peoples' work", "can't do anything more than talk to themselves"³³⁸, or "cannot produce anything more than masturbation pictures."³³⁹ Company editors explained that they do not go to Comic Market to look for new manga writing talent because they are unlikely to find any new artists with commercial potential there. Many successful professional artists also criticised *dôjinshi* artists and made particular offensives against *otaku*. About Comic Market, a well-known female artist, Morizono Milk, told me:

You are brave if you go there. I went there only once, just to look round. It is scary, full of really weird people, and so many thousands of them all around you.³⁴⁰

Another artist, Kawaguchi Kaiji, currently producing two top-selling adult manga series, explained to me how being an amateur artist no longer meant having true talent:

I started writing manga when I was about 7 or 8 years old, then when I went to university I was in a manga circle for six years until I was 24 years old. Nowadays the people with talent all go into animated film clubs or other medium, the manga clubs have changed. They are full of *otaku* and less talented people now. When I was in a manga club we were considered a bit different, because we did not want to join a company, but now the amateur manga artists are not just different, they are weird and obsessive.³⁴¹

³³⁸Interview with a contract editor at Morning editorial, Nishimura Hiromi. April 1994.

³³⁹Interview with senior editor of Young Sunday magazine, Tachikawa Yoshiaki. May 1994.

³⁴⁰Interview with a manga artist famous for erotic 'ladies' manga, Morizono Milk. February 1994.

³⁴¹Interview with manga artist, Kawaguchi Kaiji. February 1994.

Professional manga artists with a history of involvement in the amateur manga medium are also careful to distance themselves from their past. Since 1989 professional manga artist Fujishima Kôsuke has been contracted to produce what has become an extremely popular series, *Aah! My Goddess (Aaa! Megami Sama)*, for *Afternoon* magazine. Before becoming a professional artist, Fujishima was a member of a manga circle at high school, produced five books of original *dôjinshi*, and after leaving school became an editor of the leading *dôjinshi* information magazine, *Puff*. This information suggests that Fujishima was intimately involved with the amateur manga medium throughout his youth. Asked about his previous amateur manga works however, Fujishima was clearly unwilling to associate himself with the amateur origins of his work at all:

There might be some kind of aesthetic influence in my work from *dôjinshi*. I have read a few *dôjinshi*. I went to Comic Market a few times in the early 1980s, but I have not been again since I became a professional artist. People say my work is *otaku-ish*, but I do not deliberately write in an *otaku* style. I do not see what they mean. I do not mind if my fans are *otaku* but I dislike the kind of letters and mail I get from fans, which are creepy. I think those people might go into manga and animation because it is not the real world. They are not really bad, they seem kind of lonely.³⁴²

Highly respected publishing companies, such as Kôdansha and Shôgakukan, prefer not to be associated with amateur manga, and by extension with *otaku*. This is clearly a bias which professional artists working for these companies understood and cooperated with regardless of the actual style and origins of their work.

³⁴²Interview with manga artist, Fujishima Kôsuke. January 1994.

On the other hand, manga editors and artists felt that *dôjinshi* artists did not want to work for commercial manga magazines. The existence of an alternative means of printing and distributing manga meant that proportionately far more young people were attracted to the manga medium, while at the same time proportionately fewer of these young amateur artists attempted to make the transition to professional status. Kure Tomofusa reports that:

Fifteen years ago it was much more common to become a professional manga artist after producing *dôjinshi*. Then the young artist trained for 10 to 15 years with a professional artist and may have written *dôjinshi* before he became professional. Now becoming professional is a far faster process because there are more magazines to work for. But amateur manga artists don't choose to work for the big companies, they can avoid them and make *dôjinshi* instead.³⁴³

Kure's suggestion that many *dôjinshi* artists do not want to become professional manga artists is a common one in the manga industry. Rather than aiming to become professional artists, it is asserted, amateur artists now prefer and are able to work as artists' assistants, produce *dôjinshi*, or work in *dôjinshi* related industries, on an indefinite basis. Manga artist, Morizono Milk's assistant, Nakajima Atsuô, echoed a common viewpoint when he told me:

People are not as hungry as they used to be. There are an awful lot of people who can make a living in manga just being an artist's assistant and making *dôjinshi*. A lot of them are artist's assistants because they like drawing and manga, but they are not interested in going to work for big publishing companies.³⁴⁴

³⁴³Interview with Kure Tomofusa. June 1994.

³⁴⁴Interview with manga artist Morizono Milk's assistants. February 1994.

Employment within *dōjinshi*-linked 'industries' is considered preferable by many young artists because of the absence of restrictions over what artists produce, and the accompanying perception amongst many amateur artists that the *dōjinshi* medium is more genuinely concerned with manga culture itself, rather than business. An article strategically entitled 'Active Citizenship through Girls' Manga' (*Shōjo Manga de Katsuyaku no Shakaijin*), and thereby rejecting the view that involvement in amateur or girls' manga is a way of escaping from society, was published in the Yomiuri Newspaper in 1992. The article featured an interview with an amateur manga artist, who explained about himself:

I write manga late into the night after I return home from work. I do not tell other people around me that I write manga. I do not expect everyone to understand. Actually, the other day I got a phone call from a large publisher about starting a series for them. Maybe it is my chance to become a professional manga artist. But I wonder what that entails, giving up on society and doing manga for a living. It is more interesting to continue writing manga in a fully engaged way like I do at present.³⁴⁵

Large manga publishers, however, claimed to want to recruit amateur manga artists about as little as amateur manga artists claimed to wish to be recruited by commercial manga producers. One Senior Editor at Afternoon magazine told me that the extensive freedom of writing amateur manga meant that amateur artists were undisciplined and unable to write manga of a quality suitable for publication:

³⁴⁵ Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 'Active Citizenship Through Girls' Manga' (*Shōjo Manga de Katsuyaku no Shakaiin*), in the regular column: 'Contentment in Tokyo?' (*Tokyo wa Shiawase desu ka?*). 13 August 1993.

The problem with Comic Market is that when it was small and minor it made anything, lots of good things, and we could see everything there ourselves. Now, it is so big that any good new artist is completely buried. Besides the majority of amateur artists are just making manga for themselves and their friends, they do not make anything we could publish.³⁴⁶

The personal taste of editors, and publishing companies fear of being associated with *otaku* subculture have strongly limited the entry of *otaku* manga genres into commercial manga magazines. Until around 1990 *otaku* manga, which represents, for better or worse, the cutting edge of the manga medium's stylistic development, was only published in low circulation specialist magazines such as Penguin Club (Pingin Club) published by Tsutsumi Shuppan, Boys' Fairground (Otoko no Yuenchi) published by Reed Shuppan, CANDY published by Fujimi Shuppan, and Sukora magazine published by Sukora Shuppan. As early as 1988 however Morning editorial began to break the general bar against the use of *dōjinshi* manga genres in magazines produced by large commercial publishers. While Morning magazine itself has never published *otaku* manga - and indeed has published very little in the girls' manga genre generally - its sister monthly magazine, Afternoon, produced in Morning editorial offices, began to publish *otaku* manga series.

Between 1994 and 1996 approximately half of Afternoon magazine's thousand pages were devoted to six *Lolicom* manga stories. These series, featuring either cute and pre-sexual, or voluptuous and sexy, female heroines were, *Discommunication*, *Aah! My goddess*

³⁴⁶Interview with a senior editor and manga expert in Afternoon editorial, Watanabe Kyō. May 1994.

(*Aaa! Megami Sama*), *Gun Smith Cats*, *Assembler OX*, *Seraphic Feather*, and *Aqua* - a series of cute computer-graphic illustrations. The most long-running of these series was *Aah! My Goddess* by Fujimshima Kôsukey, which began serialisation in 1988. *Gun Smith Cats* by Sonoda Kenichi began serialisation in 1991, while the rest of these series were launched later in 1993 to 1994. Afternoon editors openly admitted that 4 of these 6 series could be described as *otaku* manga.³⁴⁷ The popularity of these series has encouraged the editors of Afternoon magazine to continue publishing so-called *otaku* manga, and to consciously search for talented manga artists with amateur manga styles. The chief editor of Afternoon magazine, Ogawa Haruo, explained to me that the motivation for this scandalous innovation was in the first instance commercial:

A lot of *otaku* collect manga too, so they are a very big market for us. It is possible that already up to one third of Afternoon's readers are *otaku*.³⁴⁸

The artists of these series are individuals who have developed their skills and become well-known in the *dôjinshi* artist circuit, and possibly worked for low circulation magazines, before being recruited by editors to work for Afternoon magazine. Sonoda Kenichi, writes the leading series 'Gun Smith Cats' for Afternoon magazine, and has already produced three hit commercial manga series, *Gall Force*, *Bubble Gum Crisis*, and *Riding Bean*, employing a similar blend of science fiction and *Lolicom* styles. Sonoda, who grew up in Osaka city, started

³⁴⁷Written correspondence with the ex-chief editor of Afternoon magazine, Ogawa Haruo. 18 September 1995.

³⁴⁸Interview with Ogawa Haruo, chief editor of Afternoon magazine. May 1994.

writing amateur manga as a teenager. At the age of 17, whilst still a high school student, Sonoda placed an advertisement in *Animeji* (Tokuma Shoten), a specialist *dôjinshi* artists' magazine, to found a new manga circle. Since his mid-teens Sonoda attended Comic Market and produced original and parody *dôjinshi*, and reviews of amateur manga. The latter is an activity Sonoda perceives as one aspect of his artistic commitment to manga, and continues to be involved with in the present.³⁴⁹

Another artist, Yahagi Takako, was previously a famous *yaoi* *dôjinshi* artist who was recruited to work for *Afternoon* magazine in 1993. Yahagi, aged 44, is a graduate of the prestigious Japanese School of Fine Art (Nihon Geijitsu Daigaku), and began producing her amateur manga for Comic Market in 1984, when she could not get work as a professional manga artist. In 1989 Yahagi was spotted at Comic Market by an editor of a low-circulation ladies' manga magazine, *Hime*, made by a small production company, Aoba. Despite her reputation as an *otaku* artist, company editors of commercial magazines were extremely keen to employ Yahagi, as her popularity became apparent. Yahagi explained to me how she began her professional career:

I wanted to get into commercial magazines when I left college but there was nowhere to go. There were no ladies manga magazines then, so there was nowhere that I could publish my work and I printed it as *dôjinshi* instead. Then all the offers came at the same time, suddenly *Mystery Ladies*, *Amour* and *Hime* wanted me to work for them. I fought them off and said I could not do so much work, but in the end I did do it. That was 1989 and it was the ladies erotic manga boom, my series were selling very well. Then an editor of *Afternoon* contacted my editor at *Hime* in 1992, and

³⁴⁹Interview with manga artist, Sonoda Kenichi. March 1994.

asked me to write a kind of military story for men at Afternoon.³⁵⁰

While attaining a stable circulation of around 200 000, including a cult following of manga fans, Afternoon magazine has exceedingly low circulation figures by large publishers' standards. Between its launch in 1987 and 1994, Afternoon magazine did not generate any revenue at all for Morning editorial. (See Chapter Nine section 9.5 for more details about this.) Afternoon's *Lolicom* series' generated minor revenues from the sales of collected edition books, CDs, and other related merchandise, but these had not, then, offset the overall losses sustained by the publication of the magazine. By continuing to publish ex-*dōjinshi* artists' work, the chief editors of Afternoon magazine, who are responsible for final decisions about these magazines' contents, were implicitly admitting that they believed that *otaku* manga, whatever its reputation, must be important to the development of the continued development of commercial manga. Vice chief editor of Morning magazine, Tsutsumi Yasumitsu, explained the presence of *otaku* manga styles in Afternoon, not in terms of their popularity or commercial viability, but in terms of a more vague and even honourable patronage of experimental artistic forms:

Morning uses manga to express ideas and write stories. Afternoon, of course, is similar, but it is also about manga itself, and experimenting and developing forms of expression in manga.³⁵¹

³⁵⁰Prepared telephone interview with manga artist Yahagi Takako, supported by written correspondence in which Yahagi asked to change certain words and dates she had used "in a rush" during the telephone interview, which I adjusted accordingly. August 1994.

³⁵¹Interview with Morning editor, Tsutsumi Yasumitsu. June 1994.

Moreover, the *otaku* manga published in *Afternoon* magazine was rendered less identifiable, and perhaps less controversial, by the insertion of stronger narrative structures, and the complete absence of sexual scenes from *Lolicom* stories. The graphic styles of *dōjinshi* manga were used with stories which were developed by editors. Tsutsumi Yasumitsu also explained that:

The form of the manga is the same, but the narratives have been changed to make them easier to read and understand for lots of people. *Aah! My Goddess* is a good example. It looks like *otaku* manga, but the content is different, the story has been changed, and it is read by wide audiences.³⁵²

This reworked form of *otaku* manga is distinguished from the raw amateur product by the term *otaku-style* (*otaku-kei*) by which it is referred.

Whilst *otaku* manga refers to actual amateur manga, *otaku-style* manga refers to manga which looks stylistically like *otaku* manga but is less intense and more distant. Artists of *otaku-style* manga might not themselves be *otaku*, they might just make manga for *otaku* readers, or be only partly *otaku*.³⁵³

Despite the editorial emasculation of *otaku* manga series and their containment within a low-circulation monthly magazine, *Afternoon* was relatively controversial within the manga publishing world in the mid-1990s. President of Hokusensha, the fourth largest manga publishing company, Konagai Nobumasa, frankly described *Afternoon* to me as a "maniacs' magazine".

³⁵²As above.

³⁵³Interview with a contract editor at *Morning* magazine, Nishimura Hiromi. April 1994.

5.10 Conclusion: The marginalisation of otaku manga

In Chapter Two we looked briefly at the commercial expansion of the manga medium. During the 1960s large publishing companies were able to capitalise on the incorporation of popular subcultural styles and themes into mass distribution, weekly manga magazines. The popularity of manga was the driving force behind the expansion of the manga publishing industry.

Publishing companies actively recruited the most innovative and recently popular manga artists to work for their magazines and manga represented one of the most radical, open, 'democratic' media.

By the mid 1970s the nature of popular engagement with the manga medium had changed, becoming larger and more active. After the development of cheap offset printing, and the establishment of an alternative distribution mechanism in the shape of Comic Market, avid readers of manga were able to access directly the manga medium and engage in producing their own manga books. The manga medium, which now offered no barriers to participation at all, became entirely open and immensely democratic in nature. The unregulated access to, and common ownership of, the manga medium meant that publishing companies could no longer channel the creative direction of the movement, and capitalise on the popular enthusiasm for this medium. The popular expansion of the medium became a swamp of uncontrolled production, thematic influences and stylistic development, over which the manga industry no longer had a central control.

At this point from the mid-1970s publishing companies disengaged from the popular thrust of the manga medium and struggled to maintain internal standards and controls in commercial production by means of the editorial production system discussed in Chapters Three and Four. The incorporation of new styles and themes into commercial weekly magazines petered out during the 1970s - the third wave of the *gekiga* movement, *new wave gekiga*, did not even pass into commercial magazines. Whilst commercial magazines continued to use a high proportion of story manga with strong narrative structures and realistic drawing styles drawn from the ageing *gekiga* tradition, *dōjinshi* were predominantly produced using rapidly-evolving cute, fantastical, girls' manga styles, without much narrative structure.

The disengagement of the publishing industry from what became the contemporary amateur manga movement left the latter disorganised. Central organisation carried out by publishing companies and company editors disappeared and no alternative centralised system of valuation, artistic discipline, or quality control, replaced it. Artists who could not get their work published in manga magazines took advantage of this unregulated sphere to produce and distribute their work in amateur form, and new genres of manga, driven by the strength of their popular appeal alone, emerged from the amateur manga medium. The same popularity which fuelled the commercial expansion of manga magazines in the 1960s encouraged the medium to divide into two separate media by the 1980s. The massive expansion of the amateur manga medium demonstrates again that the most salient characteristic of the manga medium in Japanese

society has been the degree of its popularity and accessibility, confirmed in the extent of active engagement with the medium by young people.

Moreover it is precisely the widespread engagement of youth with the manga medium and its democratic structure which has stimulated the repeated concern amongst political and educational authorities in Japanese society. Concerns which were raised about the commercial propagation of manga between 1965 and 1975 resurfaced and were redirected towards the most uncontrolled and free area of the manga medium in the recent period after 1989. The escalating debate about manga *otaku* which spread across society from the popular media to the salaried intelligentsia expressed a sense of anxiety and insecurity about the uncontrolled, independent, and democratic nature of the amateur manga medium. Concluding upon the *otaku* panic, Yonezawa Yoshihiro remarked that:

The city, the lost zone of Japanese society, exists here at Comic Market. Without any interference or hindrance from outside, this abandoned and forgotten section of society has started to produce its own culture. The sense of being one body, of excitement, of freedom, and of disorder exists inside this single unified space. If anything frightful has come into being it is no doubt the existence of this space itself.³⁵⁴

³⁵⁴Yonezawa, Y. (1989) The Nerd Book (Otaku no Hon). 88.

CHAPTER SIX: The Manga Censorship Movement of 1990-1992

6.1 Manga censorship and the post-war constitution

Historically the Japanese publishing industry has enjoyed a peculiar degree of formal freedom from state institutions; a freedom which became particularly relevant in relation to the manga publishing industry. This freedom, based on the structural difference between large mass media corporations and publishing companies, is a relative one. Typical large mass media corporations in post-war Japan have been built around newspaper publishing companies which branched into radio and television broadcasting and other media during the 1950s. This type of mass media conglomerate including Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK), Fuji Sankei Group, and Asahi National Broadcasting Company Limited,³⁵⁵ have been subject to direct political control by the government through the broadcasting licence system. In Japan, as in the United Kingdom, companies producing television and radio programmes must receive annually a government licence signalling the official approval of their broadcasting agenda. The need to guarantee official approval and receipt of a licence has influenced these corporations to moderate not only the content of their broadcasts but the

³⁵⁵Japan Broadcasting Corporation was concerned with radio until it launched the first television broadcasts in 1950. Asahi National Broadcasting Company was also launched during the 1950s from the Asahi Shimbun newspaper company founded in 1879. The Fuji Sankei Group is based on the merger of the Fuji Television Network and the Sankei Shimbun newspaper company, which merged in 1967. Data provided by public relations representatives of these companies. There appears to be no English language material which traces the history of these 3 large mass media conglomerates. Fragments of information about broadcasting can be found throughout the following books, however: Kasza, G. (1988) The State and the Mass Media in Japan. Berkeley: University of California Press, and Ito, S. (1979) The Historical Development of Media Systems. UNESCO.

content of the newspapers they publish too. The publishing industry is free from this organised form of political constraint.

However, whilst manga publishing has not been constrained by formal regulation at a national level a number of other institutionalised checks on the content of manga books and magazines have been in operation since the 1960s. Manga has been the persistent and vulnerable target of institutional control and particularly so during the late 1960s to mid 1970s and early 1990s. Though detailed research would be necessary to ascertain conclusively this connection, it could be argued that it is the freedom of the Japanese publishing industry from formal regulation, which has precipitated recurrent bouts of anxiety amongst governing bodies throughout the latter part of the twentieth century. Bouts of bureaucratic concern about the moral, educational, and political content of manga have been resolved through the construction of alternative methods of regulation of the products of the manga publishing industry.

Attempts to regulate manga publishing have faced a barrier in the shape of the post-war constitution which categorically bans government censorship of the press and publishing industry. As a result of this internal constitutional wall, near impossible to knock down within the post-war period, governing bodies seeking periodically to regulate manga have been forced to operate through indirect routes, mainly through the legal capacities of local government and internal industrial regulation. Inevitably these indirect means of regulating manga have been persistently

problematic. It is possible however that the recent renewal of the manga regulation 'lobby' between 1990 and 1992 has succeeded in putting into place a firm regulation system which is ultimately national and which may serve effectively to regulate manga content until any likely future overhaul of national legal and political structures.

Clause 21 of the constitution disallows all forms of state censorship and protects the freedom of speech of all organisations, newspapers and publishing.³⁵⁶ Since 1967 however certain manga has been effectively censored and banned entirely by means of several different legal loopholes. Initially, article 175 of the national Penal Code, otherwise known as the Indecency Act states that *waisetsu* or 'indecent' materials may not be sold to minors aged 18 years or under. Whilst the constitutional freedom of speech has not been challenged legally, in practice the Indecency Act has prevailed over Clause 21 by allowing certain manga to be removed from open shelves in book shops on the basis that they constitute the illegal exposure of minors to 'indecent' material. Manga which can be categorised as 'indecent' represents a financial risk to book shop owners who can be fined up to 300 000 yen (£2000) for appearing to sell indecent material to minors. Consequently such manga is in the first instance a commercial liability³⁵⁷ to manga publishers who may stop producing it if they are not able to find willing sales outlets.

³⁵⁶Ishimura, Y. 1990 Genron Hô Kyôka (Genron Law Text), Tokyo: Shinyamasha. 166-175.

³⁵⁷As we shall see later, the commercial potential of producing manga defined as 'indecent' or 'harmful' has generally been less important to large publishers than the risk of damaging their political and public relations.

Clearly it is the process of defining manga as 'indecent' which is central to the regulation of manga through the Indecency Act. Precisely how the meaning of 'indecent' has been interpreted in law has shifted throughout the post-war period and in the early 1990s in particular the general definition of 'indecent' became more lenient. Previously the presence of any images of pubic hair or sexual parts in an item or 'repertoire' of culture, such as a film or manga book, an episode of television or manga, or the lyrics of a pop-song, signified that the whole item was 'indecent'. In fact this system of defining 'indecent' is well-known and has made Japan the buttress of many jokes about the "absurdity" of Japanese pornography in which 'indecent' scenes are allowed - so long as pubic hair and sexual parts themselves are obscured from view by various devices. During the first half of the 1990s this essentially systematic approach to defining which materials could be considered 'indecent' gave way to a more flexible quantitative means of interpretation in which the overall amount and style of sexual imagery in a cultural repertoire could be used to determine whether or not it should be categorised as 'indecent'. Increasingly the presence of a few scattered sexual images and even images of pubic hair and sexual parts are being tolerated within cultural repertoires.³⁵⁸

Moreover, the technical evasion of the criterion for 'indecent' extrapolated from the Indecency Act has become an integral

³⁵⁸The unhindered publication of a book of completely nude photographs of the teenage starlet, Miyazawa Rie, posing in South America, caused extreme controversy in 1991-1992, and marked the beginning of a new leniency with regard to the depiction of pubic hair and sexual parts. The photo book in question was Shinoyama, K. (1991) Santa Fe, Tokyo: Asahi Shuppan.

aspect in the development of most contemporary commercial manga genres. Stylistic devices such as drawing objects - such as snakes or fruit - which 'stand in' for sexual parts, drawing sexual parts as silhouettes or obscure but suggestive shadows, or - which is most common - portraying sexual scenes through facial expressions and suggestive body gestures, have rendered the previous definition of 'indecent' ineffectual. Despite the tongue in cheek celebration amongst professional photographers and manga artists of the new freedom to portray sexual parts and pubic hair, the shift in the legal definition of 'indecent' may in fact signify the emergence of a stricter code of 'decency' which bypasses the technical devices used by manga artists to evade censorship.

In addition to the Indecency Act, manga has been effectively censored at a local level by the application of local prefectorial law. During the 1990 to 1992 manga regulation movement in particular manga was removed from book shops at a prefectorial level. Local prefectorial councils are able to make local laws to prevent specific manga books from being sold in book shops which children frequent. Local Ordinance 756 for the Protection of Youth (Seishônen Hogo Ikisei Jôrei 756) states that materials defined as 'harmful' may not be sold to minors of 18 years or under. The Local Ordinance Act 94 states that local governments may pass local laws to define specific cultural items as 'harmful' (*yûgai*) so long as the local laws conform to the general direction of national law. In the case of manga censorship the Indecency Act has provided the 'general direction of national law' within which local councils are able to create

new local laws. Thus the crucial definition in the recent manga regulation movement has been that of 'harmful' rather than 'indecent'. Local law based on local organisation has been another means by which censorship, which is unconstitutional has, nevertheless, been widely institutionalised. While manga has been censored according to local laws, the organisation behind the local level censorship is national and the cumulative effects of local manga regulation have been national.

The presumed existence of 'harmful' manga has no actual legal meaning at all unless it is defined and this definition is acted upon, and it is these processes that have been central to the activities of the anti-manga lobby particularly during the 1990s. The content of manga has been monitored by an internal audit of the publishing industry since 1963 and more systematically by a government body since 1967. Primarily in response to fears about the effect of manga on radical students, the Youth Policy Unit (Seishōnen Taisaku Honbu) of the Ministry of General Affairs (Sōmuchō) began compiling a regular report on the moral content of manga, including lists of series considered to be 'harmful' in 1967. A report entitled 'Lists of material categorised as 'harmful' according to local laws in each prefecture' (Tōdōfuken jōrei ni yoru yūgai shitei ranhyō), is printed by the government and distributed to publishers in quarterly compilations. While the government report lists manga categorised as 'harmful' in each prefecture, the list is organised by a central governmental body. The organisational existence of this central report itself encourages local prefectures to contribute to the official lists of 'harmful'

manga. This is a revealing legal and organisational relationship between national government and local prefectures.

6.2 Manga censorship past

Throughout the twentieth century manga series have been prey to occasional censorship and bans for reasons specific to each period. Whilst very little story manga was produced in the pre-war period one early series, Tagawa Suihō's *Norakuro*, about a dog who becomes a captain of a doggy army serialised in the non-manga magazine Boys' Club (Shōnen Club), was banned by military authorities in 1941 for appearing to trivialise the Imperial Army.³⁵⁹ In the post-war period there have been two historical junctures during which manga has been attacked by powerful anti-manga lobbies. These are clustered at the beginning of the period of rapid expansion of the commercial medium in late 1960s to early 1970s, and during the early 1990s, which some publishers have already defined as the "end of an era in manga publishing".³⁶⁰ Concerns of the authorities about the influence of *gekiga* stories on adolescents were prefigured in the so-called 'brutal book loan shop *gekiga*' (*kashihon gekiga no zankoku byōsha*) incident of 1959 in which Shirato Sanpei's book loan shop *gekiga* series *Ninja Bungeichō* was banned.³⁶¹ Between 1967 and 1973 an ongoing debate (the *gekiga ronsō*) about the violence and coarseness of the new commercial *gekiga* series' was

³⁵⁹Schodt, F. (1988) *Manga!Manga!*, Tokyo: Kōdansha. 52-53.

³⁶⁰Personal correspondence with an editorial advisor to NHK's COMIC PROJECT and ex-editor of the late Tezuka Osamu, Menjō Mitsuru. February 1996.

³⁶¹*Reader's Civil War* (Shigaisen), the hand book of the The Society for the Protection of the Freedom of Expression in Manga (Comic Hyōgen no Jiyū wo Mamoru Kai), Tokyo: Tsukuru Shuppan. 1991. 220.

conducted within the Japanese media. In 1968 strong criticisms were targeted at a Sunday series entitled *Dawn Combat (Akatsuki Sentôtai)*, which portrayed realistic war-time experiences. The debate about *gekiga* and its growing popularity, especially amongst revolting students, finally resulted in the categorisation of Kajiwara Ikki and Chiba Tetsuya's top-selling series *Tomorrow's Joe (Ashita no Joe)* as 'indecent'. The series was subsequently cut from Magazine at the height of its popularity in 1973.³⁶² Meanwhile in 1970, Nagai Go's new style of love-comedy manga about precocious high school students became the centre of a struggle between the publishing industry and a political lobby, known as the 'Harenchi Gakuen disturbance' (*Harenchi Gakuen sôdô*). *Shameless School (Harenchi Gakuen)* was banned from Jump magazine on the grounds that it was too raunchy.³⁶³

In 1978 the censorious debate about *gekiga* re-surfaced, this time focused on low-circulation specialist erotic *gekiga* magazines, in particular three of the leading avant garde *gekiga* magazines of the period; *Manga Erogenika*, *Manga Dynamite*, and *Manga Alice*. This debate was referred to as the 'erotic *gekiga* magazine prohibition problem' (*ero gekigashi hakkin shôbun mondai*) and resulted in the cutting of many erotic series by *gekiga* artists such as Dirty Matsugi.³⁶⁴

³⁶²Reader's Civil War. 223.

³⁶³Interview with the ex-chief editor of Jump (Shûkan Shônen Jump), Nishimura Shigeô. June 1994.

³⁶⁴Reader's Civil War. 224.

In 1988 problems of a less typical but in other senses more contemporary kind began again for the manga publishing industry with the establishment of an Osaka based pro-Afro Caribbean group which heavily criticised classic manga series by Tezuka Osamu. The Association to Stop Racism Against Blacks (ASRAB) was founded by a local Osaka civil servant, Arita Toshijiri, and subsequently supported by a variety of US black civil rights organisations. ASRAB received high levels of publicity between 1988 and 1993 in Japan, for its attempts to force either the government or Tezuka Production Co. Ltd. to stop the distribution of stories such as; *Kimba the White Lion (Jungle Taitei)*, *Atom Boy (Tetsuwan Atom)*, and *New Treasure Island (Shin Takarajima)*, in which black people are portrayed in a derogatory racist style typical of the 1950s to 1960s when these stories were drawn. The degree to which the late Tezuka Osamu has been viewed as a highly respectable and 'friendly' cultural figure in contemporary Japan - a subject we shall return to in Chapter Seven - meant, however, that this independent 'international' campaign against his works presented an awkward contradiction with nascent patterns of evaluation of different manga genres and was not supported by government authorities.³⁶⁵

6.3 The anti-manga movement, 1990-1992

In late 1989, headlines about 'harmful', 'violent' and pornographic manga began to appear with increasing regularity in national newspapers. These headlines identified and gave great

³⁶⁵Mainichi Daily News, 'Tezuka manga museum going ahead despite protest'. 9 August 1992.

prominence to a conflict of interest between manga artists and publishers and the nation's housewives, mothers, and feminists:

PORNOGRAPHIC MANGA BOOKS WITH PARTIALLY-ERASED NUDES
ARE SELLING OUT FAST AT LOCAL BOOK SHOPS 366

NO GIVING IN: LEGAL RESTRICTION OF SEX PICTURES 367

Many newspapers, such as the Asahi Shimbun quoted in the two different headlines above, were relatively sympathetic towards manga publishers and manga artists. Perceiving perhaps that as journalists and newspaper publishing companies they ought to defend freedom of speech and its visual equivalent, freedom of expression, many newspapers gave space to articles about manga artists and intellectuals campaigning against the possible removal of manga from book shops. However, exactly what the anti-manga lobby's argument against manga was remained unfocused.

Kamimura Bunzô, the president of the National Assembly for Youth Development (Seishônen Kenzen Ikisei Kenkyûshûkai) which was highly active in the anti-manga lobby in 1990 to 1992 represents well the reasons given for opposing manga amongst conservative intellectuals and politicians. Manga appears to be disliked by many critics merely because they have an irrational and old-fashioned dislike of the new media. However, beneath this apparently habitual conservatism lies a more covertly held, rational suspicion that people may question and reinterpret

³⁶⁶Asahi Shimbun ('Sugata kesu porn comic, gai no honyasan kara tsugitsugi to'). 11 December 1992.

³⁶⁷Asahi Shimbun ('Yurusuna, seibyôsha no hôkisei'). 16 August 1993.

history and politics too far through manga. This concern was apparent in an unusually transparent statement made by Kamimura Bunzô in which he questioned the right of manga artists to draw history:

Adults who read manga are like children; they should read books. History, politics and classics like The Tale of Genji are all released in manga form now and I think that is bad, that is a problem. Readers do not have to imagine the scenario themselves, the manga artist draws the entire scene and nothing is left to the imagination. So in manga there is no challenge to the reader to think and imagine. It is bad to have history and politics in manga because the reader just takes in the imagination of the manga artist without thinking. So really, what I am saying is that there are two things that are strange about manga, firstly that it is full of perverse sexual images and violence that is bad for children, and secondly that I think it is very peculiar to see a forty year old salary man and his wife reading manga.³⁶⁸

The 1990 to 1992 anti-manga movement was also joined by several feminist groups and women's 'citizens' organisations' who had a variety of opinions about manga, ranging from more radical views that manga was full of sexist images and in this way disseminated sexist attitudes to children or adult male readers, to more conservative views that manga was full of pornography which was damaging to children. It should be mentioned that the original reason for carrying out the following research into the issue of manga censorship was the fact that I could not accept either of the arguments which suggested that manga was damaging to children or was sexist, and I wanted to understand better the context in which they were being voiced. Furthermore, although Japanese manga is strongly equated with sexism and violence, in

³⁶⁸Interview with Kamimura Bunzô, executive director of NAYD, the National Assembly for Youth Development (Seishônen Kenzen Ikisei Kenkyûshûkai). July 1994.

particular with rape and the degradation of women, I have to candidly admit that I have never myself found manga to be particularly shocking. It is quite possible that in the course of my research I have become accustomed to a wide variety of sexual expression in manga, so that I have become entirely inured to the 'reality' of its themes. In any case the point remains that while having no particular interest in defending manga or manga artists, I have nevertheless perceived events very much from their point of view, in the following section.

Local women's groups tended to present their concerns about manga as those of 'mothers' or 'housewives'. Thus the majority of citizens' groups against manga carried titles such as the Tokyo Mothers' Society (Tôkyô Haha no Kai); Parents' Society for the Protection of Children (Kodomo wo Mamoru Oya no Kai); Society for the Protection of Children from Pornographic Manga (Porn Comic kara Kodomo wo Mamoru Kai); and the Society for the Protection of Children from Manga (Comic Hon kara Kodomo wo Mamoru Kai). They protested that reading manga disrupted children's school studies, was not conducive to developing children's mental capacities, and contained a lot of violence and pornography damaging to children's psychological development.

From 1990 women's organisations such as the Osaka-based, Letters from Japan (Nihon kara no Tegami), and the Society for the Protection of Women (Josei wo Mamoru Kai), complained about the negative portrayal of women in sex scenes (*seihyôgen*) in manga stories. As many professional Japanese women have commented

upon, there was in fact little else on the Japanese feminist agenda, but campaigning against manga, during the first half of the 1990s. Feminist arguments that pornography in manga was demeaning to women were connected to the international discourse of (new) 'political correctness'. Feminist oppositions to manga were therefore contemporary and sat awkwardly alongside more old fashioned censorious arguments put forward by other citizens' organisations. Following a brief mention of the 1990 to 1992 manga regulation movement Kinko Ito, an American academic with feminist sympathies, concluded that:

Comics (sic) provide a sort of haven for Japanese men who want to keep the present male power hierarchy.³⁶⁹

Muramatsu Yasuko, a professor of Sociology at Tokyo Gakugei University, made the position of many more sophisticated feminists on manga clearer, in a newspaper article in which she differentiated feminist opinions from those of women's groups concerned about the amount of sex in manga:

The problem with these manga books is their sexism. A detailed survey demonstrates that these manga often depict violent sex and, more important, that they imply violent sex satisfies women. The major problem with these manga is that they violate basic human rights - the problem is not just with the number or explicitness of sexual descriptions.³⁷⁰

In either case these organisations campaigned against manga by lobbying local diet representatives, councillors and town mayors to make formal complaints against manga on their behalf. On

³⁶⁹Ito, K. (1994) 'Images of Women in Weekly Male Comic Magazines in Japan', in Journal of Popular Culture 27: 4. 93.

³⁷⁰Muramatsu, Y. 'Comic Book Problem is sexism not sex', in Nikkei Weekly. 9 September 1992.

several occasions in 1991 Liberal Democratic Party members spoke in the national diet on behalf of citizens' organisations in their wards. Between October 1990 and June 1991 the issue of 'harmful' manga was raised twice in the Upper House by Upper House representatives Nagata Yoshio and Takai Kazu of the LDP and Rengô respectively; and thrice in the Lower House by ruling LDP Lower House representatives, Watanabe Shôichi, Kaneko Kazuyoshi, and Maeda Tadashi.³⁷¹ Whilst most representation of the anti-manga lobby was based on previously established relationships between politically conservative women's and citizens' organisations and the LDP, the major opposition parties also engaged in lobbying against manga. The Socialist Party Housewives (Shakaitô wo Ôenshite iru no Shufu) for example, were particularly active in calling for action against manga and sending letters of complaint to publishers and individual manga artists.

Many of these organisations also contacted their local police forces to make complaints about specific manga books which they believed could be considered 'harmful' and should therefore be removed from book shops. Police forces in most prefectures were sympathetic to complaints about manga and wrote warning letters to publishers responsible.³⁷² Police authorities become increasingly vocal themselves in calling for a revision of the local laws which would enable them to remove 'harmful' manga

³⁷¹Thoughts on the Dangerous Manga Problem (Yûgai Comic Mondai wo Kangaeru), Tokyo: Tsukuru Shuppan. 1991. 22-23

³⁷²Interview with Tsuchiya Yukio, vice-head of Kôdansha General Affairs Department 2 (Kôdansha Dainibu Henshû Sômu). Tsuchiya, who had been responsible for domestic public relations over the previous decade, reported that there had been a sudden increase in the number of complaints since 1991. Letters had been received from "women's organisations" and from police departments warning publishers about public complaints. March 1994.

from book shops immediately, rather than after a lengthy local legal process to determine the status of each offending manga book in question. Police argued that the current system of law regarding 'harmful' materials was inadequate because in the time it took for material to be legally defined as 'harmful' by a local prefecture it had already sold out and disappeared for ever from the book shops.³⁷³

In early 1990 diet members of the Liberal Democratic Party attempted to draw up a revision bill (Seishônen Kenzen Ikisei Jôrei Kaiseian) to increase the powers of the existing local law for the protection of youth.³⁷⁴ However this political activity was quickly marginalised by the far more pressing diet discussion about the state of Japanese contributions to the United Nations operations against Iraq in the gulf. At the core of the protracted PKO (Peace Keeping Operation) debate was the question of whether it was constitutional for Japan to send Japanese SDF (Self Defence Forces) troops to the Middle East and if not, whether it should amend 'Clause 9' of the post-war constitution in order to be able to do so. In this context the proposed bill for revising the local law frequently used against manga was seen as a challenge to the constitution. It is possible that this echoed unhelpfully the spectre of the PKO debate, which was the immense strategic difficulty of altering the post-war constitution in the early 1990s. For all these reasons the bill did not get off the ground and in 1992 the

³⁷³Interview with the chief editor of Tsukuru journal and publishing company and one of the founding members of the Society for the Protection of Freedom of Expression in Manga (Comic Hyôgen no Jiyû o Mamoru Kai), Shinoda Hironori. May 1994.

³⁷⁴Interview with Shinoda Hironori. May 1994.

Liberal Democratic Party lost its position as the party of government, taking the last of the anti-manga lobby supporting the revision bill, with it. Instead of culminating in a revision of existing local law, the activities of the anti-manga lobby were realised by stimulating a greatly increased level of activity in the already 'in place' but round-about system for regulating manga via local law and organisations linked to a centralised national system of listing 'harmful' manga.

6.4 The increase in manga regulation, 1990-1994

Each month the Youth Policy Unit (Seishōnen Taisaku Honbu) of the Ministry of General Affairs (Sōmuchō) draws up a new list of 'harmful' manga known as the 'Official Harmful Manga List' (Yūgai Shitei Zusho List), which is distributed amongst publishers in the three monthly report, 'Lists of material categorised as 'harmful' in each prefecture, according to local laws' (Todōfuken jōrei ni yoru yūgai shitei ranhyō). Within the manga publishing world, manga books which have appeared on one of these lists are identified as "yūgai sareta" (harmful-ized) manga. Figure 23 illustrates a rapid increase in the number of cases of manga magazines and books officially categorised as yūgai between November 1990 and February 1991.³⁷⁵

Until October 1990 the inquiry committee for the compilation of new lists of manga to be categorised as 'harmful' in the government report met once every two months. Since the beginning

³⁷⁵Tabular data printed in Reader's Civil War (Shigaisen), Tokyo: Tsukuru Shuppan. 1991. 159. In Reader's Civil War it is stated that the data was originally derived from statistics provided by the Youth Policy Unit (Seishōnen Taisaku Honbu) of the Ministry of General Affairs (Sōmuchō).

of the regulation movement in October 1990, however, this committee intensified its activities and met once each month instead. It is evident from this graph depicted in Figure 23 that the huge increase of manga arriving on the official blacklist took place two months after the inquiry committee increased the regularity of its meetings. This suggests that rather than responding to an already existing surge in the number of 'harmful' manga reported in each prefecture, the national inquiry committee helped to precipitate the increase in the number of cases of 'harmful' manga by increasing its capacity to categorise manga as 'harmful' in the first place. The graph in Figure 23 shows the number of cases of censored manga only from October 1990 because prior to this date manga were not blacklisted on a monthly basis and hence no previous monthly data exist. It is possible to estimate the general scale of the increase in manga blacklisting however, by consideration of the fact that in the year prior to the period shown on this graph, between October 1989 and October 1990, the total number of manga books blacklisted was only 554, or an average figure of approximately 46 books per month.³⁷⁶ These are clearly far lower figures than the figures for manga blacklisted in the year succeeding October 1990.

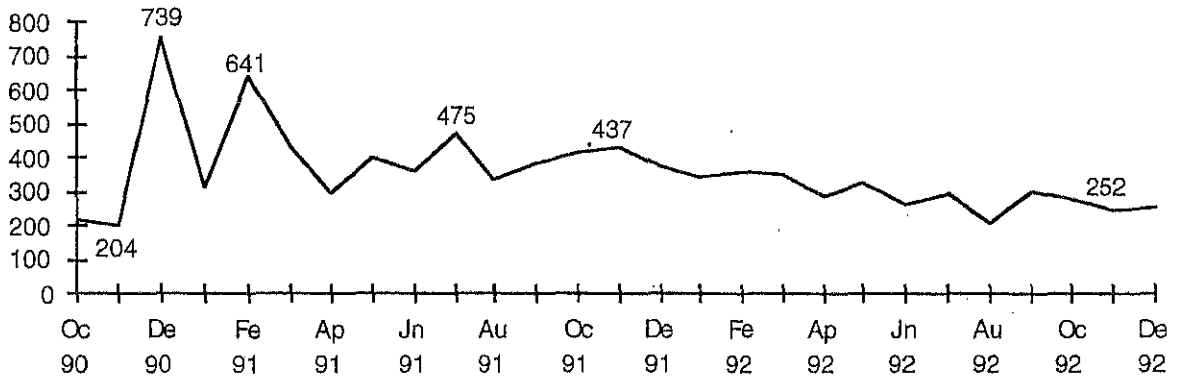
6.5 Self-regulation within the manga publishing industry

Despite the strength of the anti-manga lobby the Youth Policy Unit national government agency was most strongly assisted in its efforts to regulate manga by the publishing industry itself.

³⁷⁶As above.

Figure 23

The number of manga books categorised as 'harmful' between October 1990 and December 1992



Source: tabular data in Reader's Civil War (Shigaisen), Tokyo: Tsukuru Shuppan. 1991. 159. [Original data from the government Youth Policy Unit (Seishōnen Taisaku Honbu)].

Executive staff of larger publishing companies responded to the external "regulation movement" (*kisei undō*) with an industry level campaign to promote anticipatory "self-regulation" (*jikō kisei*). In fact the Japan Publishers' Association (Nihon Shuppan Kyōkai) established an industrial level watchdog, the Publishing Ethics Committee (Shuppan Rinri Kyōgikai), to monitor the contents of manga as early as 1963. Thus the industrial 'ethics' watchdog anticipated organised government regulation by 4 years, and it is probable that large publishing companies set up an industrial watchdog on manga at the behest of government officials. Moreover links between the government investigative committee on manga and the industrial Publishing Ethics Committee have remained close. In 1994 the Publishing Ethics Committee which met once each month to discuss the content of manga consisted of 15 members, including representatives of each of the major publishing companies and one government official from the Youth Policy Unit.³⁷⁷

Throughout 1990 the ethics watchdog became increasingly involved in urging its manga publishing members to exercise editorial discretion to reduce the amount of sex, violence, and violence against women, in the pages of their manga books and magazines. The ethics watchdog began to draw up its own list of 'bad manga' based on the government list. Manga books which had appeared in 4 or more of the official government lists of 'harmful' manga, appeared on the industrial watchdog's lists of bad manga. The ethics committee, ultimately responsive to the commercial interests of its members, suggested that manga books appearing

³⁷⁷Discussion with a member of staff of the Japan Publisher's Association (Nihon Shuppan Kyōkai). January 1994.

on their lists should be sold in plastic covers with special labels on the dust jackets indicating that they were *SEINEN COMIC* (ADULT MANGA BOOK). This was one way in which the industrial watchdog could appear to represent both the interests of the government, by forcing publishers to comply with the law against selling harmful materials to minors, and the interests of their members, who did not want to stop producing their manga books. In fact the effect of labelling manga as ADULT MANGA BOOK in this way greatly strengthened the influence of the government manga blacklists. The ADULT MANGA BOOK stickers made the whole issue of the legal status of 'harmful' manga far more explicit and active. Retail outlets were discouraged from stocking any listed or labelled manga at all. Some publishers sought to reassure book shop owners by also sealing manga designated for labelling in plastic covers to prevent casual browsing by minors. However, the majority of outlets preferred not to risk fine or arrest and refused to stock designated adult manga at all, while a minority of book shops instituted ADULT MANGA BOOK only shelves or '*corners*'.³⁷⁸

As the number of manga books which the ethics committee insisted must be labelled with ADULT MANGA BOOK stickers increased, then the number of manga books listed as 'harmful' in government lists each month decreased. In 1991 the ethics committee designated a total of 58 books for labelling, in 1992 this figure rose to 87, and in 1993, 322 manga books had been

³⁷⁸A telephone questionnaire survey of book shops about 'harmful' comics' (Yûgai Comic ni Kan suru Shoten e no Denwa Ankêto), in Thoughts on the Dangerous Manga Problem. Tokyo: Tsukuru Shuppan. 1991. 62-63.

labelled.³⁷⁹ Finally, in December 1992 the Publishing Ethics Committee stepped up its activities further and demanded that all manga books produced by its members which had appeared on government lists of 'harmful' manga must be recalled and removed from book shop shelves entirely.

This was a bold and highly repressive act which it is unlikely that a government agency could have pursued without causing a great deal of political agitation and public mistrust.

Regulation amounting to censorship, activated at an industrial level, was evidently a more practical and less apparently anti-constitutional and therefore problematic means of controlling manga than the arduous process of making local laws against specific manga books. Thus by the end of 1992 the political regulation movement had largely been internalised within the manga publishing industry, establishing a firm precedent for automatic self-regulation, or internal censorship by editors and artists at the point of production.

6.6 Which manga were affected?

Manga series which most frequently appeared to cause offence were *Lolicom* series in specialist magazines, love-comedy in boys' manga containing generally mild sex scenes, followed by raunchy adult manga series and ladies' manga - which generally contain the largest number of explicit sex scenes. In other cases, gag series, such as Magazine's *Violent Idiot* (*Gekiretsu*

³⁷⁹Data printed in the 1994.2.1 report of the Publishing Ethics Committee (Shuppan Rinri Kyôgikai), obtained from the Japan Publisher's Association (Nihon Shuppan Kyôkai).

no Baka), were added to the list of 'harmful' manga on the simple and arbitrary basis that they were in "poor taste".³⁸⁰ One of the first and most often cited cases of a manga series which was entirely dropped from production and removed from the book shelves is the series *Angel* by manga artist Yûjin (Playboy) serialised in Young Sunday adolescents' magazine until October 1990. *Angel*, also subtitled *High School Sexual Bad Boys and Girls Story*, was appropriately a series aimed at high-school children. It in fact contained little more 'harmful' than rather cute passive nude scenes in which innocence, discovery, young love, and sex education were the main themes. The incorporation of sex education themes in commercial publications, usually teenage magazines and to a lesser extent adolescent manga, is relatively common and serves as a compensation for inadequate formal sex education in schools.³⁸¹ Later in March 1992 the regulation of a broadly similar series, manga artist Yamamoto Naoki's *BLUE*, caused another outburst of indignation and anger amongst manga artists and young readers. Interestingly only a small proportion of manga made officially 'harmful' was either commercial adult manga targeted at male audiences which frequently feature belligerent sexism, or hard-core pornographic manga stories.

Examples of leading series which appeared on the government lists of 'harmful' manga in 1990 to 1992 and which were

³⁸⁰Discussion with the deputy chief editor of Magazine, Iishi Tohru, about the 'harmful' categorisation of *Violent Idiot (Gekiretsu no Baka)*. *Violent Bastard* was categorised as 'harmful' in Sendai city on the basis of the city mayor's observation that it was "in poor taste". April 1994.

³⁸¹See White, M. (1995) 'The marketing of adolescence in Japan', in Skov, L. & Moeran, B. (eds.) Women, Media and Consumption in Japan, London: Curzon Press. 268.

subsequently discontinued include volumes of the following: *Bad Invitation* (*Ikenai Invitation*), *108 Temptations* (*Hyakuhachi no Koi*), *Feel It BABY* (*Kanji Sasete BABY*), *Bad School Mistress Luna!* (*Ikenai Luna Sensei!*), and *1+2=Paradise* published by Kôdansha; *Feel Good Clinic* (*O Genki Clinic*), *Wife Lunch* (*Okusama Lunch*), *I wanna do it* (*Yaritai Hôdai*), *ANGEL*, *AMORE*, and *BROTHERS* by Akita Shoten; *Lemon Angel*, *Cinderella Express* and *Bad BOY* (*Ikenai BOY*) by Shûeisha; *Happy Gorakubu* (*Happy Club*), *Sotchi ga Ii No* (*That's Good*), *Junk Boy*, *SIGH*, and *100%* by Futabasha; plus *The Ultra Heaven of Love* (*Ai no Ultra Heaven*) by Kôbunsha.³⁸²

Interestingly Shôgakukan, one of the three largest publishers of manga was barely implicated in the regulation movement at all. Preceding the *Angel* incident only one manga book published by Shôgakukan, *Ecstasy at the Edge. Vol.1* (*Genkai ni Ecstasy Vol. 1*) was listed as 'harmful' and removed from book shelves. Possible explanations of this may lie in the early shock Shôgakukan executives and editors received when the series *Angel* was targeted by the anti-manga lobby as a 'harmful' story and subsequently forced out of production. Relative to Kôdansha and Shûeisha which have historically been associated with blue collar readerships, Shôgakukan manga has frequently been perceived by manga critics and readers to be more contemporary, white collar and liberal-minded in its general ideological orientation. Thus Shôgakukan executives were marginally more sensitive to the 'politically correct' element of the anti-manga

³⁸²Reader's Civil War. 1991. 14-15.

lobby's agenda and quickly responded by making their artists and editors produce even more 'gentle' manga.³⁸³

Manga which was labelled ADULT MANGA BOOK under the direction of the Publishing Ethics Committee and which had already appeared on government lists of 'harmful' manga included volumes of the following series: *Bad Invitation (Ikenai Invitation)* and *108 Temptations (Hyakuhachi no Koi)* by Kôdansha; *O Genki Clinic (Feel Good Clinic)* and *Okusama Lunch (Wife lunch)* by Akita Shôten; *Lets Go Funky (Funky De Ikô)* by Issui Sha; *Renai Express (Express Affair)*, *Just Like You (Kimi to Omoikiri)*, *Dangerous Woman (Abunai Onna)*, *Go Ahead Wife (Dôzo Okusama)* and *The Loving Time (Ai shite Doki)* by Matsubunkan; *BE MY SISTER* by Tokyo Sanyo Sha; *Like An Idol (Maru Maru Idol)*, *EVOCATION*, *Triangle* and *Sisters Panic* by Fujimi Shuppan.³⁸⁴

In terms of the effect of the regulation movement, manga series which were discontinued, removed from book shelves, placed in ADULT MANGA BOOK corners, or marked with ADULT MANGA BOOK labels, represented the tip of an iceberg. Hidden from public view within the manga industry the main effect of the regulation movement was an uncharted wave of anticipatory self-censorship exercised directly by manga editors and individual manga artists. The processes involved in self-regulation were extremely complex, involving both explicit and indirect pressure from manga editors, as well as measures - frequently unconscious - taken by artists to evade having their work perceived as

³⁸³Discussion with Comic Box editor, Kan Miyoshi, and with a senior staff writer of Weekly SPA!, Takada Isao. November 1993 and January 1994, respectively.

³⁸⁴Reader's Civil War. 1991. 58.

'harmful'. While the precise extent of the self-regulation trend cannot easily be quantified, it is clear from the accounts of artists and their response to the regulation movement that it was far reaching. Yamamoto Naoki, the manga artist of the series *BLUE* targeted for regulation in September 1992, discussed with reporters how he regulated his work himself:

Ever since regulations became stricter I've been shocked every time I notice that I am subconsciously controlling my expression.³⁸⁵

By 1994 elements of the anti-manga lobby were satisfied with what they perceived to be substantial improvements in manga.

Kamimura Bunzô opined that:

The companies promised not to publish bad manga again and I think that since then the content of manga has generally got a lot better than it was. Yes, it has changed quite a lot really.³⁸⁶

Publishing companies were motivated to apply self-censorship not merely because they were encouraged to do so by the Japan Publisher's Association, but through a combination of commercial concern about making losses on manga series that could not be distributed as books, and attracting negative publicity to their otherwise highly respectable organisations. Manga artists on the other hand had overwhelming reasons for accepting self-regulation. Even manga artists, such as Morizono Milk, Nagai Go, and Kobayashi Yoshinori, who took a militant line in opposing manga regulation and self-regulation were nevertheless strongly

³⁸⁵Asahi Evening News quoting manga artist Yamamoto Naoki in 'Cartoonists say Sex Restrictions Hinder Free Speech'. 16 September 1993.

³⁸⁶Interview with Kamimura Bunzô, executive director of NAYD. July 1994.

motivated to produce 'acceptable' work in order to survive in the competitive manga industry. Artists whose work was categorised as harmful faced severe setbacks in their careers and lost large parts of their incomes - the royalties on manga books which could not be sold.

The case of manga artist Morizono Milk provides a good example of the process by which the production of certain manga series was effectively quashed through the regulation movement. Morizono Milk is a media-friendly glamorous young artist. The key theme of Morizono's manga is wealthy, jet-set young women with luxury clothes and homes who have a wide variety of raunchy sexual encounters. Between 1991 and 1992 Morizono produced an erotic series entitled *Peacemaker (Ikôfuku wo Uru Otoko)* for Midori teenage girls' manga magazine published by Kôdansha. During 1990 Kôdansha public relations department began to receive letters complaining about Morizono's series from police departments, local PTA groups, housewives groups and local politicians. The management of Kôdansha began to place pressure on the chief editor of *Midori* magazine to stop certain manga series which had appeared on the list of 'harmful' manga, and on the top of this list was Morizono Milk's series. Kôdansha subsequently refused to publish books of Morizono Milk's series unless the entire series was revised. Morizono refused to revise her series in preparation for publication in book format with the result that neither she nor Kôdansha received any royalties from the series. At the end of 1991, the one year contract Morizono had signed with Midori for the production of the series was not renewed despite the popularity of the series. Morizono

took the series to a smaller company, Shôdensha, who agreed to publish a collected edition of the series in its original 'harmful' state. Small publishers such as Shodensha have far more limited channels of distribution, their books are sold in fewer outlets and generate far lower royalties for manga artists, than large publishers. Moving from a top publisher such as Kôdansha to a small publisher such as Shôdensha represented a severe regression in Morizono's career as an artist. However in 1994 Morizono had not only continued to produce manga predominantly for Shôdensha, but she had also found herself compelled to exercise self-censorship of her work in order to earn a living in the manga industry. Even working for Shôdensha however, Morizono found herself forced to give her stories a lighter and more innocent appeal:

I used to have to be very self-conscious at Feel Young because I do very 'dark' erotic pictures and their magazine keeps the pages 'light'. I kept having to lighten up my pages all the time.³⁸⁷

Significantly self-censorship which was frequently recommended to artists by their editors became fused with the more general process of creative editing in the manga production process. What was a commercially viable style of manga and what was a politically viable style of manga, in this case unlikely to arouse notice amongst manga regulation bodies, become fused in the styles of manga editors requested artists to produce. In Chapter Nine we shall examine the issue of editorial control more closely.

³⁸⁷Interview with manga artist, Morizono Milk, in a cafe in Shinjuku after observation of a work meeting between Morizono and the chief editor of Hime ladies magazine. April 1994.

As in the case of Morizono Milk cited above, 'harmful' manga dropped from production by large publishing companies was however often published at a later date by small publishing companies. Frequently the series itself was discontinued by the original magazine publisher but books of the series would be published by a small publisher either after they had been retracted from book shops by the original publisher or following their decision not to publish collected editions of the series at all. The 'harmful-ized' series *BLUE* discussed earlier was discontinued by the publisher Kôbunsha and volumes of previous collected volumes of *BLUE* were removed from the book shops by the publisher in March 1992. However by September 1992 volumes of *BLUE* published this time by a minor publisher, Hikiritsu Sha, reappeared on the shelves of specialist manga book shops.³⁸⁸ *ANGEL* dropped from Young Sunday magazine in Autumn 1990, was later published by Shûberu Shuppan company.³⁸⁹ As in the case of many series considered 'harmful' the re-edition of *BLUE* was given a new dust jacket with a softer more innocent image which could help deflect critical interest away from the contents.

Small publishers were able to avoid the regulation of 'harmful' manga on two accounts. Firstly, in order for re-editions of manga books by different publishers to be categorised as 'harmful' the arduous procedure of legally defining manga as 'harmful' had to be repeated. As these re-editions were often available only at larger specialist outlets they were less

³⁸⁸Reader's Civil War. 1991. 207.

³⁸⁹Reader's Civil War. 1991. 204.

likely to be widely viewed and cause equivalent offence amongst local government bodies. Secondly, few of the many small publishers in Tokyo were members of the Japan Publisher's Association, meaning that they were also outside of the internal jurisdiction of the industrial ethics watchdog. After 1990 in particular the regulation movement was indirectly responsible for the flourishing re-growth of smaller publishers, which had been declining in number since the late 1970s offensive against erotic manga and minor pornographic magazines. Small publishers were now able to benefit from publishing 'harmful' and potentially 'harmful' manga with greater impunity than large publishers.

Large publishing companies for whom keeping good relations with the political world was of significant strategic importance are more likely to join the publisher's association which acts as a cross-industrial negotiation body. As artist Morizono Milk suggested, large publishing companies were concerned about their general role as cultural organisations, and in the case of 'harmful' manga this was frequently more important than their directly commercial interests:

Big companies in the Publishers Association have a history and a reputation. They see themselves as respectable organisations so they won't publish things against public complaints.³⁹⁰

The case of artist Kobayashi Yoshinori's manga episode about the 1992 royal wedding illustrates the responsible political role large publishers generally pursue. Kobayashi Yoshinori, an

³⁹⁰Interview with Morizono Milk. April 1994.

extremely popular adult manga artist, was asked to produce a special episode of his weekly series *The Arrogance Manifesto* (*Gômanism Sengen*)³⁹¹ run in Weekly SPA! magazine to be used on the cover of the magazine during the week of the Crown Prince Naruhito's wedding to Owada Masako in June 1993. In the self-analytical and mildly iconoclastic style for which Kobayashi Yoshinori has become well-known he produced an episode entitled 'Front Cover Day' (*Cover Tsuki no Hi*). In this episode Kobayashi spun an absurd and indirectly critical story in which on the day of her wedding, Owada Masako, the incumbent bride of the future emperor jumps out of the royal carriage to join a demonstration for the abolition of the royal family, and in doing so reveals to the world that she is a member of Chukaku-ha (the Central Core Faction of the Revolutionary Communist League). Two days before this story was due to be published the management of the parent corporation of Fûsôsha publishers, the Fuji-Sankei Group, ordered the episode to be dropped from Weekly SPA!. The episode, 'Front Cover Day', was published in an act of defiance several months later in the October 1993 issue of the low-circulation avant garde magazine GARO.³⁹²

³⁹¹The Japanese term for arrogance in this case is *gôman*. Here the English word ending *-ism* has been added to this term to produce the term *gômanism*, which literally means *arrogantism* in English. *Gômanism*, sounds similar to *communism* in Japanese, and the title of the series *The Manifesto of Arrogance* contains an ironic reference to *The Communist Manifesto* and 'isms' generally.

³⁹²Information about this affair came from three sources. The first of these were informal discussions with a senior editor of Weekly SPA!, Takada Isao, in November 1993. The second source was an interview with the long-time chief editor of GARO, Nagai Katsuichi, in June 1994. The third source was an article: 'Fighting back against the curtailing of innocent anarchism' (*Innocent na anarchism de happô yabure no teikô*), in *Shôkun!*, July 1994. 272-273.

This example also illustrates that small publishers of 'harmful' - or in this case simply 'taboo' - manga were often in fact linked to larger publishers which had decided not to publish the same manga books. Small publishers such as Shôdensha, Sukora, Kôbunsha, Sakurambo Shoten, Issui Sha, Tatsumi Shuppan were the child-companies (*kogaisha*) of large respectable publishers. In fact a large number of smaller publishers were linked in hierarchical fashion to large publishers, either as immediate child-companies or as even more minor companies attached to these child-companies. In rarer cases successful commercial manga artists such as Ôzaki Jun and Sonoda Kenichi chose to print some of their own manga in amateur manga books and had them sold in amateur manga markets, in particular the bi-annual Comic Market.

As the manga regulation movement helped to push erotic and other 'harmful' styles of manga towards smaller publishers and to a lesser degree the amateur manga world, genres of manga associated with amateur manga books and contemporary erotic manga series became broadly associated with 'harmful' manga. During the 1990 to 1992 regulation movement, highly contemporary and popular genres of manga derived from the 'master-genre' of girls' manga (*shôjo manga*) first developed by women artists, were categorised as 'harmful' far more frequently than manga more stylistically related to *gekiga* which dominates new adult manga series and to a slightly lesser degree boys' manga. A high proportion of 'harmful' series were based on love-comedies, or *Lolicom* genres linked to girls' manga in general and contemporary 'otaku manga' in particular. Thus at a stylistic

level the regulation movement was aimed especially against the genres of girls' manga which had been developed within the amateur manga world and had begun to influence styles in smaller commercial published magazines. Correspondingly, several small publishers which became particularly infamous for running the gauntlet of the regulatory bodies to publish 'harmful' manga were already previously established as minor specialists in publishing amateur 'otaku manga' genres, and in this way acting as cultural ducts between the commercial and the amateur manga worlds. These publishers included Fujimi Shuppan and Matsubunkan whose manga books appeared on countless lists of harmful manga.

6.7 The institutionalisation of the anti-manga movement

Asked about the regulation movement, the great majority of artists and editors cited conservative housewives ("*osewazuki na obasan*") as the chief activists, followed by the PTA and local police authorities. Hara Takao an ex-assistant of Tezuka Osamu and founder of the manga artist's organisation, Manga Japan, represents the opinion of most manga artists in the following statement:

There is no complex thought behind censoring manga. Simply, nosey old ladies phone up the police or local diet members to complain about manga when they see it and then manga gets criticised. The Japanese government just censors manga when people complain about it; it is, like always, entirely passive in its actions.³⁹³

³⁹³Interview with the founder of Manga Japan, Hara Takao. July 1994.

In fact few artists or editors were able to specify the names or correspondence addresses of individual women or citizens organisations opposed to manga. The two most traceable anti-manga groups - the National Assembly for Youth Development (Seishônen Kenzen Ikisei Kenkyû Shûkai or NAYD) and the Tokyo Mothers' Society (Tôkyô Haha no Kai) - appeared on closer inspection not to be citizens' organisations, but, in fact, to be organisations virtually indistinguishable from local and national government agencies.

NAYD defines itself as a domestic non-governmental organisation (NGO), and was established by the Japanese government in 1964 to deal with the problem of juvenile delinquency.³⁹⁴ NAYD organises national and international youth training and exchange programmes and co-ordinates the activity of all other official youth organisations in Japan including voluntary organisations such as the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), Seinendan (National Youth Corps.), the Boy Scouts Association, and Youth Volunteers. NAYD receives most of its funding from the government and is linked at the executive level to the Youth Affairs Office (Seishônen Sômu Kyôiku), a department of the Ministry of General Affairs (Sômuchô).³⁹⁵ In addition to a large national centre comprising a building complex in the grounds of the National Youth Co-ordination Centre (Kokuritsu Seishônen Sôgô Centre) in Yoyogi, central Tokyo, local branches of NAYD also exist in every prefecture. Thus NAYD headquarters are

³⁹⁴NAYD, Japan, a public information pamphlet printed by NAYD.

³⁹⁵NAYD, Japan. Kamimura Bunzô, the executive director of NAYD also confirmed during an interview that NAYD was funded mostly by the government. July 1994.

located in an extraordinarily spacious area of ex-military park-land in central Tokyo, donated by the government to the National Youth Co-ordination Centre (Kokuritsu Seishōnen Sōgō Centre) in 1964.³⁹⁶

NAYD has been one of the most active if not often referred to organisations involved in the anti-manga movement of 1990 to 1992. Kamimura Bunzō, the executive director of NAYD, also Sociology lecturer at Ryūtsū Keizai University, has been a prominent figure in the anti-manga lobby. In 1991 Kamimura himself toured several prefectures in Japan to give a speech against manga at forums set up by local NAYD branches:

In 1991 we felt that manga full of sex was not good for children's development so we made an official pronouncement to work against manga. In 1991 we achieved the passing of a local law against 'harmful' manga in four cities simultaneously - Tokyo, Kyoto, Hiroshima and Osaka. At the same time NAYD gave speeches about the need to regulate manga in every prefecture.³⁹⁷

Since 1991 the process of channelling complaints about manga towards local government action to regulate manga has been organised by local NAYD branches. Detecting 'harmful' manga has become a job allotted to young members of the Youth Volunteers Association. Each week several young volunteers go to local book shops to look for potentially 'harmful' manga and then take what they think might be considered 'harmful' volumes to a local member of NAYD. Typically this individual is also a voluntary group leader or citizen active in the PTA. This local NAYD co-

³⁹⁶Interview with Kamimura Bunzō, executive director of NAYD. July 1994.

³⁹⁷Kamimura. July 1994.

ordinator appointed by local government is in direct contact with members of other local citizen's organisations, the PTA, and local youth organisations, which they are able to contact immediately to call together representatives to hold emergency meetings for the evaluation of manga. If this meeting decides that any manga book forwarded for review is 'harmful' they put forward the proposal to local government that a local law is passed immediately to stop the sale of that volume in book shops in the prefecture.³⁹⁸ What is quite clear from this outline of how precisely the manga regulation movement operates is that it is not in fact comprised of local movements of organised individuals or communities within society placing pressure on local government to remove manga, so much as one part of systematic local government activities. Rather than reaching the attention of local councils through forms of independent local protest, 'harmful' manga was systematically sought out by youth volunteers and judged by a team of individuals selected precisely on the basis of their hostile attitude towards manga. The implications of the routine manga examination system, are, of course, highly élitist. The implication was that good members of organisations such as the Youth Volunteers or the PTA were morally incorruptible, while the great majority of people were infinitely weak and under the influence of magazines.

Moreover a large number of the organisations campaigning against manga, such as the Parents' Society for Protection of Children (Kodomo wo Mamoru Oya no Kai); the Society for the Protection of Children from Pornographic Manga (Porn Comic kara Kodomo wo

³⁹⁸Kamimura. July 1994.

Mamoru Kai); or the Society for the Protection of Children from Manga (Comic Kara Kodomo wo Mamoru Kai), were in fact very small organisations launched by the same community, youth and voluntary leaders as were employed in the bureaucratic process of regulating manga. All the evidence suggests that the anti-manga movement was not a huge nation wide popular movement, as it was presented in the Japanese media, but an extension of government activities. Manga regulation was in fact local government policy which drew local citizens' organisations already close to local government activities into the formal process of regulation in order, perhaps, to provide legitimacy for what otherwise might be viewed as an anti-constitutional activity.

In 1994, the Tokyo-based citizen's organisation, Tokyo Mothers' Society (Tokyo Haha no Kai), was "organised from a room in a Tokyo police station". Members of this anti-manga organisation apparently visited the room on occasions but were otherwise not directly available. Inquiries to the Tokyo Mothers' Society had to be fielded through contacts in other organisations or through the police.³⁹⁹ On the occasion when I attempted to procure an interview with Tokyo Mothers' Society I wrote a letter to a private address for correspondence and received a written reply and later a phone call confirming that members would be happy to meet me and discuss their activities and views. On the day of the arranged interview I received a second phone call to the effect that the Tokyo Mothers' Society had once again discussed

³⁹⁹ Interview with the chief-editor of Tsukuru Shuppan, Shinoda Hironori, who later provided me with the address for correspondence with one member of the Tokyo Mothers' Society. May 1994.

the coming interview with me and decided that it was not in fact possible for them to discuss their Society business with me because it was "not public information" and apologised on behalf of the previous Society member who had apparently granted me an interview by mistake. Both members of the Tokyo Mothers' Society to whom the author spoke were highly professional and confident in their manner in a way which implied that if they were Tokyo mothers campaigning against manga these were not in fact their most distinguishing social credentials. In addition to using a room in a police station, the Tokyo Mothers' Society also attended regular meetings to determine the legal category of manga books, convened in exclusive office space of the new Tokyo Metropolitan Council building (Tochô) in Shinjuku, central Tokyo. Here Tokyo Metropolitan Government had also established a small library of all 'harmful' manga books in the Women, Boys' and Youth Section of the Tokyo City Culture Offices (Tôkyô-to Bunka Kyôiku Josei, Shônenu Seinenkan).⁴⁰⁰ The secrecy of the Tokyo Mothers' Society combined with the fact that their activities are balanced between a police station and Tokyo Metropolitan Government offices implied that they were not a local citizens' organisation eager to rally support for their views, but rather members of a Tokyo Metropolitan Government agency.

Kamimura Bunzô suggests that the anti-manga lobby was initiated by an organisation of housewives in Wakeyama prefecture who protested against manga in late 1990. However Kamimura, one of

⁴⁰⁰A visit to the Women, Boy's and Youth Section of the Tokyo City Culture Offices (Tôkyô-to Bunka Kyôiku Josei, Shônenu Seinenka) in the Tochô, Shinjuku.

the few experts on the history of the anti-manga lobby, was nevertheless unable to explain what actions the Wakeyama housewives had pursued to make their protest nor what the name of their organisation had been. No matter how modest, it would seem improbable that housewives could organise a public protest without organising themselves into a nameable organisation at the same time. The Wakeyama prefecture housewives' protests had apparently become a nation-wide movement in the space of a few months through the actions of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the Housewives' Suffragette League (Fujin Yûkensha Dômei) which were responsible for publicising the Wakeyama prefecture protest and turning it into a national movement against manga. The facts remain unclear. Clearly a section of Japanese society is opposed to the free distribution of manga, but it would seem that relatively small anti-manga protests have been spread and exacerbated by local and national government agencies extremely willing to tighten the regulation of manga.

The involvement of women in government agencies, local citizens' campaigns, and NGO's linked to government offices, has in fact an established history in Japanese local politics and social organisation. In late post-war Japan, women who have been barred from involvement in public life chiefly by discrimination in the labour market preventing them from getting anything other than low-status, part-time and casual employment have sought to be involved in other public spheres. Many women have attached great status and importance to the education of their children and attending PTA meetings, or elevating their private role as

housewives to a professional level by becoming accomplished in the bridal arts, such as flower arrangement, or contemporary home design, and cookery. Numerous magazines, 'culture' and 'women's' pages in newspapers and evening classes cater for Japanese women wishing to relate their home-making skills to public life.⁴⁰¹ Women who were students during the 1960s and who through student protests experienced an active involvement with society in their youths in particular have tended to complement their lives as housewives with educational activities and involvement in local citizens' campaigns. These women are sometimes referred to as 'full-time activist housewives' (*katsudô sengyô shufu*). In The Japanese Woman Iwao Sumiko estimates that approximately 10 percent of Japanese women, typically married and living in suburban housing areas, are actively involved in some form of citizens' organisation:

Leaders of all kinds of local campaigns tend to be drawn from this pool of activist housewives.⁴⁰²

The nature of the relationship between local branches of organisations such as NAYD or the YWCA, and the state, is one which closely approximates the style of citizens' organisations which Gregory Kasza describes as 'administered mass organisations' (AMO). Kasza, who has also published research on the state and the mass media in Japan, describes AMOs, which may originate as pressure groups or NGOs, as organisations which

⁴⁰¹See Creighton, M. (1995) 'Japanese Craft Tourism: Liberating the Crane Wife', in Annals of Tourism Research. 22:2. esp. 463-478; and Moeran, B. (1995) 'Reading Japanese in *Katei Gahô*: the art of being an upperclass woman', in Women, Media and Consumption in Japan, London: Curzon Press. 111-142.

⁴⁰²Iwao, S. (1993) The Japanese Woman, USA: The Free Press.

draw ordinary members of the public into an active involvement with domestic governmental policy making, often through mutual populist political campaigns. In Japan, Kasza categorises the pre-war Fujin Yûkensha Dômei and the National Youth Corps (Seinendan) as AMOs. Both of these modern organisations (Seinendan is now administered under the auspices of NAYD), and women's groups such as Tôkyô Haha no Kai, which have been involved in the anti-manga movement, appear to fall into some such similar concealed category of political campaigns which are membered by citizens but administered by the government.⁴⁰³

6.8 Manga regulation and the LDP

While none of the editors or manga artists whom I interviewed expressed the view that the manga regulation movement was anything other than an 'ordinary' citizens' movement, several individuals had nevertheless perceived broader relationships between the timing of the anti-manga movement and changes in the structure of Japanese politics. Deputy chief editor of Magazine, Ishii Tohru, discussed how in his opinion manga regulation had been a populist issue amongst Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) politicians since the late 1960s:

When I was a little boy and I used to go to the book shop my teacher used to wait and spy on children going to look at manga. He would hide and spy on us and then jump out and tell us off if we picked up a manga book. He would tell us that it was full of sex and political stories that were very bad for us. The PTA are largely composed of LDP members and they get financial support from the LDP. So when it comes to election time the LDP candidates become very vociferous complaining about manga. They know that it makes them look good

⁴⁰³Kasza, G. (1995) The Conscription Society, London: Yale University Press. See sections on Japan.

and attracts the votes of conservative housewives and local citizens.⁴⁰⁴

Kôyama Shikao the chief editor of Aoba Shoten company dated the cooling off of the manga regulation movement with the decline of the ruling LDP government in 1992:

The government is not as 'noisy' as it used to be about controlling manga. Since Hosokawa came into government they haven't bothered us so much at all; I think it is basically because it is no longer an LDP government.⁴⁰⁵

Following electoral losses sustained by the LDP in 1989, which were to become the forewarnings of the 1992 downfall, it is possible that LDP politicians felt greater cause for concern about their popularity than ever before. The strong association of LDP politicians and members with the manga regulation movement moreover substantiates yet again the thesis that the manga regulation movement was not so much a 'popular' citizens activity as 'populist' political activity.

⁴⁰⁴Interview with deputy chief editor of Magazine, Iishi Tôhru. April 1994.

⁴⁰⁵Interview with chief editor of Aoba Shoten, Kôyama Shikao. April 1994.

6.9 The campaign for the freedom of expression in manga

During the manga regulation movement of 1990 to 1992 Japanese state authorities gained more control over what manga people could produce and what manga people could read. The initial freedom of the publishing industry made manga more vulnerable to this specially devised and heavy handed bureaucratic treatment. However the move to restrict manga did not go uncontested. From 1990 publishing companies and the Publishers Trade Union (Shuppan Rôren) resisted early attempts to utilise local laws to effectively censor manga. Manga artists themselves were not involved in this low-key struggle until March 1992. Historically manga artists have been badly organised, and when they finally got their own voice in this dispute it was an organisation created for them, rather than by them. The Society to Protect the Freedom of Expression in Manga (Manga Hyôgen wo Jiyû ni Mamoru Kai) was founded by Shinoda Hironori, the publisher of, and chief contributor to, Tsukuru, a periodical about the media. Shinoda Hironori had been following the issue of manga regulation for several months in Tsukuru and just felt that manga artists ought to be more organised in order to defend their work.

By 1994 the Society for the Protection of Freedom of Expression in Manga had successfully recruited over 1000 members. Members were overwhelmingly composed of manga artists such as Satonaka Machiko, Saitô Takao, Chiba Tetsuya, Saimon Fumi whilst the president of the Society is Ishinomori Shôtarô - an artist who is involved in the management of several manga artist

organisations. In addition to manga artists, a few individual manga editors, company executives - such as Kôdansha's chief publisher, Mr. Yamano, the Publisher's Trade Union, and independent lawyers and manga fans - have also joined the Society. Each member pays a minimum fee of 1000 yen a month with which the Society supports its activities.

Between March and May 1992 the Society arranged for a special appeal to be placed inside the pages of all major manga magazines published by major publishers. This single page advertisement entitled the Appeal for the Protection of Freedom of Expression in Manga Books (Comic Hyôgen wo Jiyû ni Mamoru Appeal) aimed to inform manga readers about the problem facing artists and the manga industry. Readers were encouraged to send letters of support and membership fees to the society. The manga publishing industry was able to fight back against the accumulation of negative publicity it had received in the media in manga itself. The case made in the appeal was that the unfair and irrational censorship of harmless materials should be opposed.

Shinoda Hironori also produces the monthly bulletin of the Society distributed to all members entitled the Shigaisen Kaihô. 'Shigaisen' is a pun on the Japanese term for 'civil war' composed however from different Chinese characters: *shi* meaning 'read'; *gai* meaning 'outside of'; and *sen* meaning 'war'. Thus Shigaisen Kaihô means, approximately, 'Reader's Civil War Bulletin'. The bulletin contains up-to-date news clippings and letters of support from manga readers. Shinoda Hironori believes

that it is the strength of the publicity which the Society for the Protection of Freedom of Expression in Manga gathered and the gradual convincing of other sections of the media that manga should not be censored which caused a final decline in the figures of manga books regulated between 1992 and 1993. It is possible, however, that the regulation movement dwindled mostly because of both the change already wrought in the kind of stories serialised in manga magazines and because of political changes in Japan which stimulated a broad re-evaluation of manga.

6.10 Conclusion

The panic about *otaku* manga and amateur manga subculture was largely generated within the media and by individuals whose employment is to intellectualise, and ultimately define the terms of debate about social change. The issue of *otaku* and amateur manga was highly-publicised: debate raised throughout Japanese society during the early 1990s had a significant impact on the way in which amateur manga artists and *otaku* manga styles were viewed. The *otaku* panic was largely about the image of amateur manga subculture, and was orchestrated between the media and the Japanese public. The Japanese public was far less aware of the anti-manga movement than it was about the concept of *otaku*. The anti-manga movement was less focused on a debate about the image of manga, and more a political, or perhaps, cultural struggle between the range of social and commercial organisations over the right to produce and distribute manga.

While the *otaku* panic and the anti-manga movement were parallel activities existing at different levels of social interaction, they were linked. The underlying argument in both the *otaku* panic and the censorship movement was that manga have a negative influence on Japanese youth, and in particular, their sexuality. While the views of conservative citizens' organisations and government agencies were not interesting or acceptable to a wide section of contemporary Japanese youth, the entirely new and specific attack against amateur manga artists and *otaku* manga styles, was more novel, and amateur manga artists were widely accepted as a serious social problem. Both the *otaku* panic and the anti-manga movement were insecure reactions to growing social and political uncertainties in the early 1990s, but the *otaku* panic, to which leading cosmopolitan intellectuals contributed, superseded the out-dated goals of the less informed and more bureaucratic anti-movement. While the anti-manga movement represented the renewal of previous campaigns against broad swathes of commercial manga, in the fashionable debate about *otaku*, all criticism of manga was redirected onto the newly discovered amateur manga subculture. By this token amateur manga became a subtle scapegoat for commercial manga. Potential criticism of manga was unconsciously redirected towards amateur manga by liberal journalists and intellectuals, manga editors and especially manga artists, such as Morizono Milk, herself being closely pursued by citizens' organisations, who had grown to feel, or assume, that by the 1990s the production of commercial manga ought to be accepted as permanent and beyond question.

The genres of manga condemned in the *otaku* panic were the same as those targeted by the anti-manga censorship movement. Apparently arbitrary judgements by which manga series' had been singled out for blacklisting were overwhelmed by the tendency for categorising *otaku* manga style series as harmful. Thus most of the manga appearing on 'harmful' lists was published by small specialist publishers such as Fujimi and Tatsumi Shuppan, while a high proportion of the remainder, such as *ANGEL* and *BLUE*, were boys' or adult manga series produced in style derived from girls' manga. Despite the social confusion in which it was surrounded, the anti-manga movement eventually re-arranged the boundaries of what was to be considered acceptable and unacceptable manga. *Gekiga* and even adult manga which showed sexual scenes and parts, were re-considered and determined to be acceptable. Meanwhile, '*otaku*' manga genres, including fantasy and *Lolicom* - which is noted for its lack of depiction of sex scenes, pubic hair, and sexual parts - were defined as perverse and problematic. The re-defined expectations and values of the anti-manga movement had a deep influence on the sort of manga which was produced by publishers.

CHAPTER SEVEN: The Promotion of New Adult Manga

7.1 Information manga and new manga publishers

In Autumn 1986 the Japanese economic newspaper, Nihon Keizai Shinbun, published the first hard back manga book devoted to educational purposes.⁴⁰⁶ This was the Manga Nihon Keizai no Nyûmon (Japan. Inc. An Introduction to Japanese Economics) drawn by veteran manga artist Ishinomori Shôtarô. It was based on a series of Economics 'seminars' (Seminar Nihon Keizai Nyûmon) produced by Nihon Keizai Shinbun. In less than one year over 550 000 copies had been sold and in 1988 the manga book was translated into English, Japan Inc. An Introduction to Japanese Economics, and published by the University of California Press. (See a sample of Japan Inc. in Figure 24.) In 1989 the book was translated into French and published in Paris.⁴⁰⁷ The success of a manga book about economics was credited by the majority of critics to the rendering of a complicated and professedly boring subject into a more interesting and easily readable form. This was achieved by interweaving economics information with a human story of salary men and office ladies working for a large Japanese trading company.

The implicit political orientation of information manga has been a conservative affirmation of current and previous aspects of Japanese culture and institutions. Information manga frequently focuses in a positive way upon economic and political

⁴⁰⁶Personal correspondance with manga critic, Kure Tomofusa. January 1995.

⁴⁰⁷Ito, K. (1994) 'Images of Women in Weekly Male Comic Magazines in Japan', in Journal of Popular Culture. 27: 4. 82.

institutions such as the LDP, the Diet, the military, and large trading companies. The approach in information manga has been one characterised by a form of conservative revisionism in which readers are ultimately asked to suspend disbelief and their past experience in order to think about key political and economic institutions in a naive and positive light. In the introduction to the English language version of this manga book provided by Peter Duus of Stanford University, he indicates the essentially sympathetic bias of the story towards the Japanese business world:

In the final analysis, the message of the book is that the success of the Japanese economy will not depend on resource endowments or political management but on business practices that are ethical, socially responsible, and forward-looking.⁴⁰⁸

Following the successful publication of *Japan. Inc.* in 1986 a new category of high-quality 'information manga' which exerted a great internal influence on manga genres throughout the commercial medium, and a great external influence on the way in which manga was received in Japanese society, flourished.

'Information manga' (*jôhō manga*) is a loosely defined general term used to refer to a rapidly expanding and sub-dividing production category, which includes, introductory (*nyūmon*) manga, *business* manga, political (*seiji*) manga, educational (*kyōyō*) manga; literary (*bunkashi*) manga, and *documentary* manga. Information manga books and series have been described as 'cultured' (*bunkateki*) and 'high-quality' (*jōhin*). By 1993 the Asahi Shimbun newspaper debated as to whether or not the manga

⁴⁰⁸Duus, P. (1988) Introduction in Ishinomori, S. *Japan. Inc. An Introduction to Japanese Economics*. London: University of California Press.

Figure 24

English-language version of Japan, Inc. An
Introduction to Japanese Economics in Manga by
Ishinomori Shôtarô

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

medium might be about to transform itself entirely from mass culture to literature; "THE NEXT STEP FORWARD FOR MANGA IS LITERARY JOURNALS!"⁴⁰⁹ In 1994 *Chûô Kôron* a prominent periodical of culture and society carried a long article in which the "THE POTENTIAL OF MANGA AS A MEDIUM" was examined by high-brow cultural critics.⁴¹⁰ As the information manga trend has advanced, then so adult manga has assumed many of the characteristics of newspapers. Like newspapers, political, information, and business manga, have become more directly involved in the wider Japanese economy by providing factual market intelligence and political commentaries on international relations and domestic social issues.

The notion that information manga is high-quality culture is partly practical rather than just conceptual. Information manga books, unlike ordinary manga magazines and books, which are generally printed on low quality recycled paper, have been printed on expensive paper, sometimes with full-colour or part-colour printing, and bound in hard back covers with glossy dust-jackets. The front cover and dust jacket illustrations of high-quality manga frequently depict photographs or fine art illustrations rather than manga pictures. In 1994 a weekly adult magazine cost around ¥250 (£1.67), and a standard manga book cost around ¥500 (£3.33). Hard-back first editions of the Ishinomori Shôtarô's *Manga Nihon no Rekishi*, published by Chûô Kôronsha cost ¥1000 (£6.67) each. Glossy soft-back first editions of Chen Uen's *Tôshûeiyuden* published by Kôdansha cost

⁴⁰⁹*Asahi Shimbun* 'Manga, Aitsugi Bungeishi Ni'.18 March 1993.

⁴¹⁰*Chûô Kôron* 'Media to shite no manga no Kanôsei'.April 1994. 223-232.

¥1100 (£7.33) High quality soft-back re-editions of Shirato Sanpei's Kamuiden and Tsuge Yoshiharu's Nejiishiki published by Shôgakukan cost ¥1100. Hard-back first editions of Shirato Sanpei's Savannah published by Shôgakukan cost ¥5000 (£33.33).

As the first editions of information manga ushered in radical new perceptions of the medium, publishers of literature (*junbungaku*) and even academic journals, which had never previously allowed themselves any association with manga, began to jostle for the opportunity to produce new series of newly-respectable information manga books. The new category of high-quality manga was also retrospective; publishers began to rummage through post-war manga history to find early works by veteran manga artists which were appropriate for publication in new editions re-categorised as 'manga classics'. The complete works of Mizugi Shigeru and Tezuka Osamu for example, two artists commonly presented as the founding fathers of *gekiga* and manga, have been re-published in manga classics series by Chikuma Bunten and Kadokawa Bunten respectively. These new editions of works produced mainly in the 1950s have generally been packaged like *bunko* pocket-sized soft-back novels.

Mass media conglomerates such as NHK and Asahi Shinbun Sha have also attempted to branch into manga production. In 1994 NHK, the Japanese television broadcasting company, launched its first ever manga magazine, entitled *Mu*. This monthly magazine, with a format similar to the avant garde magazine *GARO*, was aimed at a broad but generally well-educated audience. NHK are interested in the potential for reproducing in manga, NHK television series

and programmes, not already derived from Manga series.⁴¹¹ In 1987 Asahi Shinbun Sha, broke into the information manga book market with the publication of a manga version of Morita Akiô, the owner of Sony company's autobiography, Made in Japan. (See a sample of Made in Japan in Figure 25.)

In 1989, Chûô Kôron Sha, a well known high-brow academic and literary publisher, began publication of a 48 volume work, The History of Japan in Manga (Manga Nihon No Rekishi), which told in full encyclopaedic detail the entire history of Japan. The series was produced and published at a rate of one book a month between 1989 and 1993. In order to carry out the work, manga artist, Ishinomori Shôtarô, was linked to a team of over 50 specialists of Japanese history and archaeology, including a large number of the academic staff of the highly prestigious Tokyo University. Ishinomori was provided with factual details about the costume, appearance, livelihoods and speech of the Japanese archipelago, in different periods.⁴¹² The Manga History of Japan has been recognised by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Monbushô) for its educational purposes in Japanese schools.⁴¹³

At the end of 1995 Sekai Bunkasha, a literary publishing house, launched a new series of foreign literary classics re-made in manga format, to celebrate 50 years of publishing. While

⁴¹¹Interview with Menjô Mitsuro, an associate editor of NHK's Mu magazine editorial. August 1994.

⁴¹²Japan Times 'New textbooks to present Japanese history in pictures'. 5 November 1989.

⁴¹³Interview with Ishinomori Shôtarô following a Manga Japan meeting. July 1994.

Japanese classic literature such as *The Tale of Genji*, had already been re-told in manga format this series was the first to transform foreign novels into Japanese manga. Thus artist Satonaka Machiko reproduced in manga Stendhal's *Scarlet and Black*; erotic manga artist Morizono Milk reproduced Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*; and artist Igarashi Yumiko reproduced Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Unlike the great majority of new forms of information and literary manga this series was produced entirely by female manga artists using girls' manga (*shōjo manga*) styles, which are quite distinct from *gekiga* - the master-genre most influential in new adult manga for men. By the application of girls' manga to literary manga this series of international literary classics in manga was doubly innovative.

7.2 Information manga and corporate communications

High-brow publishers keen to profit from publishing information manga books and literary manga were not the only companies to utilise its potential as a medium. Many companies quickly responded to the popularity of information manga books by using information manga as their medium of choice for communications and public relations exercises. Producing company communications in manga format enabled companies to get target audiences to read what might otherwise be unattractive or irrelevant information. Sony chairman, Morita Akio, claimed that he got the idea for having his autobiography, Made In Japan, drawn in manga after asking his young, female ski instructor if she had read his book. She replied that she had not, but she might consider

Figure 25

Japanese-language *gekiga* version of Made in Japan by
Morita Akio and manga artist Saitô Takao

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

reading it if it was a manga book.⁴¹⁴ Using manga in official communications also helped companies to project a positive, contemporary, and 'with-it' image of their business, something perhaps difficult to achieve after the late 1980s.

Sekai Bunkasha launched a manga book series of company profiles. Profiles produced so far include romanticised histories of Honda, Ajinomoto, and Nomura Securities.⁴¹⁵ Many large Japanese corporations are accustomed to handing bound volumes of the company history or rule book to new recruits and graduate job-seekers. Such companies have begun to make rule books and official company histories more palatable to young people by having them drawn in manga format. Ajinomoto, a Japanese household brand name akin to 'Crosse and Blackwell', is the world's largest producer of MSG. Since 1988, Ajinomoto has used a manga company history to tell the tale of how Ajinomoto company revolutionised processed food production. Honda's company manual tells new company recruits how Honda developed water-cooled engines in a struggle to produce the best cars in the world. Akio Morita's biography of his career as the boss of Sony company, Made In Japan, was reprinted in manga book format and published by Asahi Shinbunsha in English and Japanese language versions in 1987. Not only has this information manga been used inside the company, and sold in book shops across Japan, it has even found its way as far as the book shelves of Japanese studies libraries in the UK.

⁴¹⁴Duus, P. (1988).

⁴¹⁵See Fortune, 'Japanese Comics are all Business'. 9 October 1989.

In each of these accounts of company history, company operations are modestly presented as public services or practical projects for the betterment of humanity rather than profit making enterprises. In this regard corporate information manga books are similar to 'infomercial' music-videos increasingly distributed amongst the US public by American companies. Some companies have used information manga to combine advertising exercises with public information projects. Such combined exercises conferred upon the companies, a new form of moral legitimacy - as a public service. Otsuka Pharmaceutical Company, for example, used manga to produce medical advice books. In 1990 the company began producing a series of information manga books about various aspects of health and disease entitled the Ôtsuka Manga Healthy Kenkô Series. Drawn by veteran artists, Ishinomori Shôtarô, Akatsuka Fujio, and Nobaru Baba, over 200,000 copies of these books, which are not commercially available, have been distributed amongst elementary schools and libraries.

Interestingly, styles of adult manga which are now being most favoured as a serious medium able to convey company messages are the realistic, dramatic styles developed by the politically anti-establishment *gekiga* movement. The manga history of Sony company, Made in Japan for instance was been drawn by a leading artist of the *gekiga* movement, Saitô Takao. On its dust jacket it proudly bears the word *gekiga* in huge characters. The term '*gekiga*' which this group of artists invented to describe their movement has been resuscitated within the information manga genre to mean manga considered to be artistic, or high quality culture.

7.3 Manga and educational and cultural institutions

The only comprehensive library collection of post-war manga books and magazines in Japan is the Modern Manga Library situated at Waseda, Tokyo. In 1978 Uchiki Toshio turned his private manga collection into a tiny private library located above an old style manga book loan shop. By 1994 the library contained 120 000 volumes of manga which visitors can read and photocopy on the premises for a small fee. Uchiki Toshio, a life-long collector of manga, explained that he had wanted to save manga as a cultural heritage:

The library's function is to keep manga as objects of cultural research, not as consumer items.⁴¹⁶

However, Uchiki's opinion that manga was culture worth saving was unusual and no Japanese public institution considered the idea of saving manga books as cultural objects until 1988. Like television the majority of commercial manga was intended as instant entertainment to be read and disposed of immediately. Unlike television in the late post-war period, no archives or printed records have been kept of published manga. Kawasaki City Museum began to collect select volumes of manga books in 1988 and has a large hall, 100 metres in length, dedicated to displaying in 90 framed panels, the history of post-war manga. Kawasaki City Museum has also held special exhibits of cartoons and manga by Marumaru Chinbun, Tezuka Osamu and Fujio Fujiko.

⁴¹⁶Mainichi Daily News, 'A Place for Manga Lovers'. 17 November 1989.

The new treatment of manga as culture which should be kept in museums spread rapidly. Between July and September 1990 the Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art held a retrospective exhibition of the pioneering work of the late manga artist Tezuka Osamu. This became in fact the largest exhibition ever held in this prestigious institution. In 1993 Takarazuka municipal government in Hyôgo prefecture opened a sophisticated purpose-built museum based around the manga of Tezuka Osamu. The local council won the rights to establish a museum dedicated to Tezuka Osamu against strong competition, on the grounds that Tezuka had spent his first twenty years in the town and was inspired by Takarazuka to produce his later works.

Since his death in 1988 Tezuka Osamu has been increasingly frequently presented as the "god of manga", the main cause of the development of manga in post-war Japan, and a key representative of post-war Japanese culture and values. The laudatory and simplistic fashion in which Tezuka is now referred to as both a 'national treasure' and the father of contemporary manga has obscured the fact that it was not simply the prolific Tezuka Osamu but a whole generation of manga artists, and more significantly *gekiga* artists, who wrought the contemporary manga medium. The following statement taken from an article in an English-language magazine produced by NTT, introducing manga to foreign students of Japan, provides a typical example of the way in which Tezuka Osamu is now presented:

In the 1940s an extremely talented artist, Tezuka Osamu, pioneered a new style. He took playful and satirical genre and added a story-line, spinning out a "story manga" that could lead the reader through thousands of pages of fiction and fantasy. For almost

fifty years many comic-strip artists have followed Tezuka's lead.⁴¹⁷

The exaggerated cultural significance and honour awarded to Tezuka Osamu between 1988 and 1996 was symbolic of the broad tendency towards the institutional appropriation of the manga medium. The style of pomp and ceremony now surrounding Tezuka is also evidenced in the following statement by the director of the Tezuka Osamu museum:

We are quite honoured to establish a museum here to proudly introduce such a world-class Japanese cartoonist (as Tezuka) - or should I say, a philosopher who passed his ideas on to posterity through the medium of manga.⁴¹⁸

Immortalised in a museum, Tezuka is presented to Japanese school children as a kind of national hero to compete with Walt Disney and simultaneously presented to the world as a philosopher and individual who represents the cultural wealth of a specifically contemporary Japan.

Manga not only became the resident and guest of local and national museums but also entered the national curriculum at various levels. In 1984 questions about manga were incorporated into the exam paper of an entrance exam to a public university. A little later in 1985 works by Tezuka Osamu and Satô Sanpei were incorporated into sections of elementary school textbooks on Japanese culture approved by the Ministry of Education and

⁴¹⁷Japan Pictorial (1995) Tokyo: NTT Mediascope Inc. 18: 1. 19.

⁴¹⁸Yamashita Minoru, director of the Takarazuka municipal museum, quoted in the Mainichi Daily News 'Tezuka museum going ahead despite protest'. 9 August 1992.

Culture.⁴¹⁹ In 1987 several universities launched courses on manga criticism and students wishing to do their dissertations on manga instead of film or literature found an open door. Manga critic Kure Tomofusa also lectures in literature at Tokyo Rika University and supervises courses and dissertations on manga history and criticism. In 1988 Asahi Shinbun newspaper launched a new weekly review of manga geared towards the new genres of adult manga, entitled 'Manga Record: Heisei Manga World' (Mangakyô: Heisei Mangakai). In 1989, Bunkachô, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, declared that manga could, for the first time, be considered for educational awards.

Finally in an unprecedented step in 1994, manga was used directly by the government, in the form of an Environment White Paper in Manga, printed by the Ministry of Finance. The manga in question, Secrets of the Earth, was produced by a school girl, Tsubota Aika, who died in 1991. The white paper produced using this manga story was printed in Japanese, English and several other languages and later distributed to elementary schools in several foreign countries.⁴²⁰ This action by a government agency carried the message that in Japan writing official documents in manga form is normal and that manga can therefore be considered a special and official aspect of Japanese culture. Manga was elected as an appropriate cultural envoy capable of negotiating an improvement in Japan's image abroad. (See ministry officials discussing the manga White Paper in Plate 9.)

⁴¹⁹Ito, K. (1994) 'Images of Women in Weekly Male Comic Magazines in Japan', in Journal of Popular Culture. 27: 4. 81.

⁴²⁰Japan Pictorial (1995) Tokyo: NTT Mediascope Inc. 18: 1. 20-21.

7.4 Political and economic genres in adult manga magazines

Alongside the publishing boom of information manga books and the general promotion of manga classics, new themes coming under the general category of information manga flourished within new adult manga. Adult magazines such as *Morning*, *Spirits*, *Original* and *BJ* were aimed at predominantly male older audiences, typically salary men in their thirties and forties. As the publishing category of adult manga expanded rapidly from 1988 then distinctive adult manga genres emerged in these magazines over the next half decade, which reflected the enhanced cultural, political and educational role of manga in society. From within the genres of political and economic manga and *gekiga* for adults came some of the best-selling manga series of this period. In 1990 only two series published in any Kôdansha manga magazine sold more copies than the political adult manga series *Silent Service* (*Chinmoku no Kantai*) of which 1,050,000 books had been sold. During the same period only one series published in any Shôgakukan manga magazine was more popular than *Feast* (*Oishinbo*) which turned to political affairs after the 'Rice war' between Japanese and Californian farmers, and sold 100 0000 copies.⁴²¹ Three of the four most popular political and economic manga series between 1990 and 1991 - *Silent Service* (*Chinmoku no Kantai*) ; *Osaka Streets of Gold* (*Naniwa Kinyûdô*); and *Section Chief Shima Kôsaku* (*Kachô Shima Kôsaku*) - were developed in *Morning* adult manga magazine.

⁴²¹Data derived from Thoughts on the Dangerous Manga Problem (Yûgai Comic Mondai wo Kangaeru). 1991. 93.

Plate 9

Ministry officials plan an Environment White Paper in Manga



Source: Japan Pictorial (1995), 18:1. NTT Mediascope.

Morning slogans published on the front cover of the magazine in 1994 were either 'Read it and feel great' (*yomu to genki ni naru*) or 'Satisfy your intellectual curiosity' (*chiteki na kokushin o manzoku suru*). These slogans were intended to tentatively distinguish Morning as a more high-brow kind of manga magazine. Morning editors frequently described the kind of magazine they wanted to produce as a 'splendid' or 'respectable' (*rippa*), or 'high-quality' (*jôhin*) magazine. Other phrases used were, 'the kind of magazine that a salaryman can let his family read too' (*kazoku ni misete mo ii zasshi*); and 'a magazine for mature tastes' (*otona no aji mangashi*). Morning editors discussed creating characters for their series who were 'splendid people' (*rippa na hito*) and 'characters who could be respected' (*sonkei subeki shujinkô*).

The most successful story in Morning was *Section Chief Shima Kôzaku* (*Kachô Shima Kôzaku*) by Hirokane Kenshi, serialised principally between 1983 and 1992. By 1992 the series had sold a total of 1,300,000 copies of 17 collected volumes of the series, making it a huge hit and the beginning of a whole new genre of super-salary men stories. This story is based on the life of a salary man who works hard for a large electrical company, and struggles to reform company factionalism. Shima Kôzaku is the flamboyant, just and able section chief of the General Affairs department of a large electronics company, Matsushita Corporation, modelled on the real life electronics company, Matsushita. For Shima Kôzaku the company is the focus and is seen in an ultimately positive light. The editor of this story explained to me that:

The original idea was a story about an ordinary salary man, and the pathos, the hardness of their life, the ups and downs. But as the story was written Shima Kôzaku gradually began to become more and more popular and famous, and discreetly changed from being a mild anti-hero to a super-hero. It was not planned and it was not really due to the artist, it just started to go in that direction by mutual understanding. He started to get less realistic and more like a super-hero salary man.⁴²²

(See Shima Kôzaku on a business trip to Vietnam in Plate 10.)

Shima Kôzaku became such a popular salary man that he appeared in expensive advertisement campaigns for 'Do Co Mo' portable phones in 1994, in which he was portrayed either as a manga character in leaflets or as a real man played by an actor who resembled the manga character in television advertisements. In October 1992 Morning magazine attempted to launch an advertising campaign for Section Chief Shima Kôzaku around the highly innovative idea of a competition to find the real life ideal salary man. In a series of advertisements placed in commuter trains Morning offered a prize of ¥300 0000 (£2000) to the final winner of a competition for 'The Shima Kôzaku in your company!' (Anata no Kaisha no Shima Kôzaku!), run on the lines of a general election. Members of the public were invited to propose individuals in their company for the position of ideal salary man. From amongst proposed candidates 100 would be chosen to enter an 'election campaign' involving train advertisements designed as campaign posters for the 100 candidates. The ideal salary man would then be voted on by readers of Morning magazine who had seen the candidates posters on commuter trains. However

⁴²²Interview with Kihara Yasuo, senior editor of Morning magazine. February 1994.

the attempt to realise the idealism of *Section chief Shima Kôsaku* in this campaign failed: Morning editorial ultimately received only a few nominees for the post. Clearly few people felt there were many ideal salary men in existence whom they could nominate.⁴²³

Another less idealistic series which incorporated innovative and informed financial advice ran in Morning from late 1991 to 1996. Aoki Yûji's *Osaka Streets of Gold (Naniwa Kinyûdô)* is a humorous story about Osaka loan sharks (*machikin*) desperate attempts to dodge legalities and pull stunts for quick cash. While the semi-realistic, ugly illustrations and speech rendered in down-town Osaka dialect depicted an insecure and uncomfortable economic underworld after the burst of the economic bubble, it also incorporates contemporary survival tips for businessmen.⁴²⁴

Unlike *Osaka Streets of Gold*, the themes of many of Morning's stories have frequently been closely linked to traditional values and images of Japan. *Sai* (meaning Green, which is the name of the lead female character) by manga artist Watase Seizô, is an all-colour manga series launched in October 1992. *Sai* is an idealistic romance between Sai and her husband, Kôhei, who enjoy pursuing what is considered to be a traditional Japanese lifestyle, made comfortable with modern conveniences and a large house and garden. Sai wears a kimono instead of normal 'Western clothes' and enjoys being an old-fashioned housewife in their Japanese-style wooden house in Kamakura, which is a small

⁴²³Tokyo Post 'A fantasy section chief is popular, but in reality...' (Ninki no risô kachô, demo genjitsu wa-). 16 July 1992.

⁴²⁴Discussions with Morning editor, Doi Takashi. May-August 1994.

Plate 10

Business new adult manga showing Department Chief Shima Kôsaku on a business trip in Vietnam

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

Source: *Buchô Shima Kôsaku* by Hirokane Kenshi. Morning, 25 August 1995.

wealthy Japanese town near Tokyo, similar to Cambridge, perhaps, in its significance as a recognised centre of national culture. The series includes lots of illustrations of traditional seasonal foods, flowers, festivals, and traditional Japanese cultural items such as kimono and yukata, the tea ceremony, sake, and moon gazing. (See a sample of *Sai* in Plate 11.)

A different kind of exemplary Japanese woman is portrayed in *Depend on Her! (Kono Hito ni Kakeru!)* by manga artist Yumeno Kazuko and script writer Shû Ryôka, which began serialisation in September 1993. *Depend on Her!* is the story of how Hiromi, a tall female bank manager, gets on in her career by sticking to traditional values of perseverance and self-effacement. The theme of the series is that since the 1985 Equal Employment Opportunities Law Japanese women have had career opportunities equal to those of Japanese men, so they should be more willing to carry out extensive overtime work for employers on the same basis as male employees. This story was thought up as a rebuke to the widely-aired feminist opinion that the 1985 Law did not help women to pursue careers in companies at all, but simply forced them to choose between having a job which involved regular over-time work during the evenings, or a family.⁴²⁵ Many feminists had argued that the Law in fact strengthened the prejudice that women are both lazy and physically unable to pursue male careers, and some Morning readers perceived *Depend on Her!* as an anti-women drama which makes as an example, a woman who could barely exist in reality.

⁴²⁵Interview with a Morning editor supervising *Depend on Her!*, Fujisawa Manabu. April 1994.

Kaji Ryūsuke's Principles (Kaji Ryūsuke no Gi) by Hirokane Kenshi serialised not in Morning, but in Mr Magazine, from 1992 became another prototype of new political stories. Kinô Yutaka the editor of this story explained its political orientation:

The media tend to focus on the Liberal Democratic Party powerbroker Kanemaru Shin first, and then on money politics and then corruption. There must be honest people who are working enthusiastically and seriously in politics but we rarely hear about them. Kaji Ryūsuke, a conservative party member working to realise his ideals against all manner of temptation, looks fresh to our readers.⁴²⁶

Kaji Ryūsuke is a young LDP member fighting for political reform in a realistic drama set in the National Diet which portrays politicians, and in particular the LDP, in a romantic and even heroic light. *Kaji Ryūsuke's Principals* encourages a sense of trust and positive enthusiasm for an institution which has been viewed sceptically by the public throughout much of the late post-war period.

New political themes in new adult manga have also been linked to an awareness of Japan's changing position in the international community. Kariya Tetsu's *Feast (Oishinbo)* serialised in Spirits (Big Comic Spirits) was a series about gourmet food, until early 1994, when, at the time of the 'Rice war' between the United States and Japan, *Feast* took up a new political theme. As the story began to discuss international food regulations and the political agenda involved in the US-Japan rice war, the numbers of its readers increased rapidly. Issues surrounding the future

⁴²⁶Kino Yutaka quoted in The Nikkei Industrial Daily 'Comic books shed light on politics'. 1991. 13.

Plate 11

Sai by Watase Seizô

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

of the Japanese Self Defence Forces (SDF) and the Peace Keeping Organisation (PKO) were simultaneously debated in *New Friends Report* (*Shinyûron*) by Ishizaka Kei serialised in *Young Jump* magazine.

The most popular and influential politics and international relations story however was Kawaguchi Kaiji's *Silent Service* (*Chinmoku no Kantai*), serialised in *Morning* magazine between 1988 and 1996. *Silent Service* was about a Japanese-built UN nuclear submarine, staffed by an international crew, and lead by the heroic Japanese Captain, Kaieda. The submarine named Yamato - an ancient Japanese term for the Japanese landmass as well as the name of a famous battleship sunk during the Pacific War - mutinies from the UN and charges off on a vigilante mission to challenge the military actions and moral authority of the UN and the USA on behalf of the global population. (See Captain Kaieda in New York in Plate 12.) *Silent Service* looked at the future of the US-Japan Security Treaty, the meaning of Japan's post-war constitution, the status of the nation state, globalisation, and a whole range of other topical issues. During the Gulf War of 1990 to 1992, *Silent Service* became so topical and popular that in 1991 it was debated in the Diet, and subsequently made into a 3 hour radio play aired by NHK to 11 percent of the population on 25 October 1991.⁴²⁷ The series was strongly criticised by the leftist magazine, *Comic Box*, who claimed with some credibility that it was the new bible of both young right-wing extremists and the Self Defence Forces.

⁴²⁷Discussion with *Morning* editor, Shin Kasayuki, who has supervised the series *Silent Service*. June 1994.

Kaji Ryūsuke's Principals, Section Chief Shima Kōsaku and *Silent Service* all exhibit a characteristic trait of new adult manga. In these dramas the focus of interest was on the economic and political concerns of Japanese social élites. A pervasive quality of previous genres of commercial manga and especially realistic *gekiga* stories had been their focus on the preoccupation, hopes and problems of ordinary Japanese people. The chief editor of Morning emphasised that the new wave of graphically realistic dramas about political and economic élites was the way forward for adult manga:

We want to do the top of society - always the most exciting part. The reason why *Ryūsuke's Principals* was boring was because it was not about a top member of the LDP, it was about a minor member. We should do manga about Hata [a conservative faction leader] and Hosokawa [the then Prime Minister]. That would be exciting! Or what about doing something about Zhirinovskiy in Russia, that would be interesting. The only problem of course is that only Kawaguchi Kaiji could draw any of those stories.⁴²⁸

The growing readerships of political and economic adult manga stories with contemporary themes was noted by manga editors and newspaper journalists alike. The license to be unrealistically bold and imaginative in considering the different aspects of current affairs in manga appeared to be stealing attention away from high-brow current affairs magazines, where similar issues were being debated with possibly rather less innovatory zeal. In 1992 a headline in the Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper made the sarcastic observation that:

⁴²⁸Kurihara Yoshiyuki speaking in a Morning editorial meeting on 1 December 1993.

plate 12

Military new adult manga series, *Silent Service*: Captain
Kaieda cuddles an American black kid in New York

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

Source: Morning (front cover), 15 June 1995.

AS POLITICS BECOMES MORE LIKE A MANGA SCENARIO, MANGA STORIES ARE BECOMING MORE POLITICAL⁴²⁹

In 1992 the *Shûkan Shinchô* weekly current affairs magazine, published a special report on the wealth of new ideas flowing from political and economic manga:

After observing the dark side [the Kanemaru incident] of the political world without the help even of clean investigative tools, the nation is suffering from indigestion. There is a special remedy for this indigestion however. I am talking about the current boom in popularity of *gekiga* stories about the political and financial worlds. Realistic struggles between benefactors and heirs; or how to gather capital for political campaigns; or accounts of terrorist organisations, are being drawn as I speak. The power of the new political manga series' is so strong that everyone from diet members to secretaries are reading it.⁴³⁰

Large publishers of new adult manga magazines sought to attract this kind of serious consideration of their new style adult political manga which they suggested was a decisive catalyst in contemporary political debate. On the 26 October 1990, Kôdansha placed large adverts in two leading broad sheet newspapers, *Asahi Shimbun* and *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, daring that:

HEISEI JAPAN IS FINALLY AWAKENED FROM ITS SLUMBER BY MANGA⁴³¹

⁴²⁹*Yomiuri Shimbun*, 'Manga Geppyô: Seiji ga mangateki da to manga ga seijiteki ni naru!?', 10 November 1992.

⁴³⁰*Shûkan Shinchô* 'The Power of political economic *gekiga*' (*Seizaiteki na gekiga no hakuryoku*) 15 October 1992. 139.

⁴³¹Interview with Tsuchiya Seiji, vice chief of Kôdansha General Affairs Department 2 (*Dainibu Henshû Sômû*). March 1994. In the alternative Japanese calendar, *heisei* is the name given to the current period which began in 1989 with the crowning of the new emperor, Akihito.

7.5 Adult manga and new Japanese identity in a changing international order

Editors and leading artists of adult manga displayed an acute awareness of the potential new role for adult manga not only as an arena for domestic political debate but also as an official representation of Japanese culture abroad. Anticipating the scale of the discursive and diplomatic potential in adult manga, the chief editor of Morning began to prepare his own critique of international relations in the mid 1980s:

I changed the content of Morning from 1987 to 1988. I wanted to express more consciously new Japanese thinking in manga. In order to do that I went abroad and travelled around Europe, Asia, and the United States. I wanted to think again about Japanese culture. The biggest change which resulted from this exploration was the story *Silent Service* which we launched in 1988. In this story Japan and foreign countries are re-evaluated.⁴³²

Kobayashi Yoshinori is the artist of *Gômanism Sengen* (*A Manifesto of Arrogance*) serialised in the current affairs (non-manga) magazine *Weekly SPA!* since 1992. In key episodes of *A Manifesto of Arrogance*, Kobayashi Yoshinori pursued subjects such as the *burakumin* caste system; the emperor; AIDS; and nudity and censorship, which had been subject to a specific form of media taboo throughout the post-war period. In this extremely popular adult manga series previous and still existing structures within Japanese society were lambasted in favour of innovative if not particularly progressive new ways of looking at things:

⁴³²Interview with Kurihara Yoshiyuki, chief editor of Morning magazine. April 1994.

The entire framework of the leftist-rightist conflict has collapsed and we are searching for new values. I want to portray these changing circumstances.⁴³³

The Manga History of Japan by Ishinomori Shôtarô provided ample scope for the expression of revised views of Japanese history. Especially since 1989 the question of Japan's role in the Pacific war has become a central point of debate between Japan and other nations. Politicians in the United States and the United Kingdom have expressed their hostility towards new Japanese economic and political ambitions through repeated criticism that Japanese politicians are not recognising enough their war time 'guilt'. Ishinomori Shôtarô explains below how the portrayal of twentieth century Japanese history in the Manga History of Japan has responded to these international criticisms in an attempt to forge new kinds of international relationships:

My aim is to make people born before world war two change their views and enable young people to grasp correct information. Looking back connects us to the future. If the past is recorded inaccurately, how can we look the world in the face?⁴³⁴

The picture of contemporary Japan drawn in information manga by well established manga artists like Ishinomori Shôtarô attracted dissent from many manga editors and artists either because they felt that information manga was just illustrated factual information and not real story manga, or because they disagreed with the naive description of Japan born in these information

⁴³³Kobayashi Yoshinori quoted in 'The Conversation', in Tokyo Journal. June 1994. 20.

⁴³⁴Angela Jeffs, 'New textbooks to present Japanese history in pictures', Japan Times, 5 November 1989.

manga books. Manga critic Kure Tomofusa had sharp comments to make about the aesthetic potential of new adult manga:

Inevitably a vulgar distinction has been drawn between information manga which are 'good' and all other manga which are 'bad'. In fact the reality is the precise opposite of this. There is no potential in the information manga genre to develop new manga techniques because the essence of information manga is simply the application of drawing skills to a subject.⁴³⁵

In response to Ishinomori Shôtarô's Japan Inc. one less famous manga artist, Arimura Sen, produced a series of adult manga books entitled The Art of Laughing at Japan Inc. The Art of Laughing at Japan Inc. was about the life of impoverished day labourers in Osaka's Kamagasaki day-labourer district. In order to aim the book at an international readership living in Japan, Arimura Sen took the unusual but entirely logical step of writing the speech parts in Japanese, Korean, and English simultaneously. Arimura's works competed with Ishinomori's more official ones, to present an anti-thetical image of the social and economic failures of contemporary Japan. In Arimura's words:

There is a lot of imbalance in Japanese society and imbalance is funny. Death through overwork (*karôshi*) is a tragedy for the individual. But looked at objectively it is funny - we work to live, but then work ourselves to death.⁴³⁶

Beside Arimura Sen's alternative information manga, the images of Japan presented in information manga books have been overwhelmingly positive. Domestic political debate about Japan's

⁴³⁵Kure, T. (1990). 210.

⁴³⁶Arimura Sen quoted in Cameron Hoy, 'Day labourer 'manga' a laugh at society', The Japan Times. 9 November 1993.

international relations in information manga was in fact inseparable from the promotion and re-definition of Japan's national image to foreign audiences. Information manga books were translated into English, French and other languages to ensure their messages were internationally received. Moreover while foreign cultural institutions refreshed their artistic repertoires and indexes of Japanese art with manga, foreign journalists and even government agencies took the time to analyse the content of key adult manga series as an alternative source of information about contemporary Japanese thought. Frederick Schodt, for example, a prominent foreign expert on manga history, was contracted by the US Pentagon to keep tabs on military manga series and translate the politically provocative series *Silent Service* into English, during the early 1990s.⁴³⁷

The promotion of manga as an official form of Japanese culture abroad was apparently inseparable from the domestic patronage of information manga. One senior adult manga editor in Shûeisha company made clear the way in which the relationship between 'culture' and the international community was perceived:

When people start saying that manga is 'culture' (*bunka*) they also have to think about the impression manga gives to foreigners. At present, we just make it and don't care about what it is like or what anyone thinks of it. But from now on I think that we should take responsibility (*sekinin*) for manga and start recognising it as our culture.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁷Discussion with Frederick Schodt in the Sendagi Club Cafe, Tokyo. 9 May 1994.

⁴³⁸Interview with Tachikawa Yoshitake, a senior editor in Young Sunday editorial. August 1994.

Iwasaki Yoshikazu, curator of the Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, suggested bitterly that in fact the appraisal of manga as a great culture was one which had to be made outside Japan before it could be received within Japan itself:

The Japanese have a tendency to praise anything blindly once it is acknowledged abroad. The same could apply for cartoons (sic). In any case, Japan should make an effort to introduce a unique part of its culture to the world.⁴³⁹

One of the most comprehensive exhibitions of manga was held not in Japan but in San Francisco, Cartoon Art Museum. The exhibition contained 120 single framed sheets taken from manga drafts and was funded by the two most PR-conscious large manga publishers in Japan, Kôdansha and Shôgakukan, in collaboration with the Japan Foundation, and the US Consulate General of Japan.⁴⁴⁰ Entitled Visions of the Floating World: The Cartoon Art of Japan, the exhibition which ran through Summer 1992 made the explicit arrogation that contemporary manga is an official element of Japanese national culture on a direct par with cultural objects, such as nineteenth and twentieth century *ukiyo-e* prints. *Ukiyo-e* prints have served as cultural icons of Japan throughout the twentieth century. As the curator of the exhibition, Mark Van Cotta made explicit, in San Fransisco manga were viewed not as entertainment but as 'fine art':

⁴³⁹Iwasaki Yoshikazu, curator of the museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, quoted in Yvonne Chang, 'Museum memorialises man of manga', The Japan Times. 11 July 1990.

⁴⁴⁰Fred Schodt, 'Manga Visions of the Floating World', Mainichi Daily News. 15 August 1992.

Given their influences, I think Japanese comics can be considered fine art in the making, just the way woodcut prints were and are.⁴⁴¹

This status was easier to confer if the origins of manga were determined to be *ukiyo-e* prints, which are now considered to be fine art. Interestingly, it was the rapt discovery of Japanese *ukiyo-e* prints by French impressionist artists, such as Dégas, Pissarro and Gauguin, in the late nineteenth century,⁴⁴² which persuaded the Japanese authorities of the time to begin to think of *ukiyo-e* not as vulgar entertainment for towns people, but as the main current of Japanese art.⁴⁴³

In the 1990s adult manga seemed to present itself, through the efforts of manga artists and publishing companies, as the perfect modern representation of Japanese culture abroad. A more vital and contemporary culture than the exhausted virtues of wood block prints and yet different enough to be distinguished from any other national culture. Manga critic, Kure Tomofusa, discussing manga on the pages of the prestigious glossy art magazine, *Geijitsu Shinchô*, made quite clear his belief that as an aesthetic item manga was better able to represent Japan than all previous classic tokens of the Japanese culture:

If we were to discuss the aspects of Japanese culture we should be proud to show off to the world I would

⁴⁴¹Quoted in the above.

⁴⁴²See Ives, C. F. (1974) The Great Wave: The Influence of Japanese Woodcuts on French Prints, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

⁴⁴³In an introduction to an unusual book collection of *ukiyo-e* prints written by a Japanese author for an English-speaking audience, Noguchi Yone states that: "The present book is, therefore, testimony that we have something still to show, and an explanation or self-defence that we are not, at least today, behind the Westerners in our estimation of our own prints." Noguchi, Y. (1933) The Ukiyoe Primitives, London Agents: Kegan Paul Trench Trubner and Co. Ltd.

pick two things, firstly, manga, and secondly, the mixed script of Chinese characters and Japanese syllabary. There are other examples - such as the emperor system, Noh [theatre], bonsai, netsuke [carved toggles], and *kamon* [family crests] - of what is called 'Japanese civilisation'. Some of these I also like. But I do not think they emphasise the characteristics of Japan so supremely as manga and our mixed script.⁴⁴⁴

Information manga books and series also gave manga artists, especially ageing veterans who despite their fame were no longer capable of producing popular series for commercial magazines, a new social position and a new income. The previously quoted statement by Ishinomori Shôtarô not only illustrates the international aspects of information manga but just as clearly demonstrates Ishinomori's assumption of authority as a spokesperson of Japanese politics and mediator connecting younger and older generations of Japanese with contemporary national political objectives. Whilst previously, when Kobayashi Yoshinori had attempted to incorporate a discussion of the *buraku* caste system into his manga, his editors prevented his work from being published, between 1992 and 1994 Kobayashi Yoshinori found himself encouraged to play the role of political devil's advocate. In 1994 Kobayashi Yoshinori discovered that he had attained such an enhanced social status through his political manga series that he was able to secure interviews with key politicians such as Ishihara Shintarô of the LDP and Suzuki Kunio, the independent nationalist intellectual. Kobayashi recalled how in 1994 opinion was split over the concept of manga artists wielding such social power:

⁴⁴⁴Kure, T. (1991) 'The smart Japanese that managed to link Chinese characters with a syllabary' (Kanji kana majiri bun ni yoku taeta kimben naru nihonjin), in Geijitsu Shinchô. August 1991. 86.

We aren't supposed to have any powers of persuasion. Yet here I was suddenly reproaching scholars and cultural figures. I received a lot of criticism from people asking me who I thought I was to be saying such things.⁴⁴⁵

This improvement in the social status of many leading adult manga artists in Japan was also connected to the willingness of foreign agencies to see manga artists as serious individuals. Hirokane Kenshi, artist of the series' *Section Chief Shima Kôzaku* and *Kaji Ryûsuke's Principles*, demonstrated this point clearly when he insisted to foreign reporters that the correct translation for the Japanese term 'manga' when discussing his series in English, was not 'comic':

I kind of cringe when I hear people call my work "comic books". That is not what I do. I think the best translation for mahnga (sic) in my case is graphic novel. I'm writing novels in a serial form. I write with words as well as pictures.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁵Kobayashi Yoshinori quoted in Tokyo Journal 'The Conversation'. June 1994. 18.

⁴⁴⁶Manga artist, Hirokane Kenshi, quoted in an interview with T.R.Reid - a well-known US journalist specialising in Japan reportage, in The Washington Post 'Japan's serial addiction'. 22 April 1992. B-1.

7.6 Manga artists' struggle for full artistic status

The highly respectable style of the manga artists' campaign to oppose the regulation movement, which involved close cooperation with the media and manga publishing companies, signified the existence of another more general objective latent in their anti-censorship agenda. Manga artists were concerned not only to oppose government censorship of their books, but many of them were also concerned to take the opportunity to challenge the general public image of manga as a low or crude form of culture. Many manga artists wanted to be seen as 'artists' in the full modernist sense of the word and they felt that gaining respect as such artists was inseparable from being allowed to control and determine for themselves the content of their own manga books. The most organisationally active older 'veteran' artists such as Ishinomori Shôtarô, Satonaka Machiko and Go Nagai, who acted, increasingly, as public figure heads for manga artists generally, were concerned with changing the public understanding of manga and manga artists. Thus female artist, Satonaka Machiko argued:

It is possible to view the control of manga as a way of concretely enforcing the idea that manga is a low form of culture. But, just as literary figures do not expect to be challenged over their responsibility towards their work, individual manga artists can assume responsibility for judging the value of their own work - work that might later be made into films or television dramas.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁷Veteran manga artist, Satonaka Machiko, writing in the Asahi Shimbun. 9 October 1993.

Publishing companies also wished to challenge prejudice against manga because this was central to their ability to recruit yet larger readerships composed of broad sections of the adult population. Uchida Masaru, the ex-chief editor of Magazine suggested that in order for the medium to develop it must be perceived as positively as other cultural media:

There is still a strong prejudice against manga in society, and so long as this continues to exist manga won't develop any further. If adults don't read manga then there won't be an audience worth writing for and manga will not develop any further artistically.⁴⁴⁸

Through the counter campaign against manga regulation, manga artists fought for a new privilege; to be seen as a reliable and respectable group in society with the right to pursue their interests beyond the arbitrary control of the government. The strength of this arrogation and degree to which it was entertained within the media suggests that manga artists had already become sensitive to signs that there was a real potential for them to move beyond the previously limited role and status they generally worked within. The majority of members of the Society for the Protection of Freedom of Expression in Manga opposed government censorship of their work at the same time as claiming that artists could censor their own work. By arguing for self-censorship manga artists emphasised that aspect of their demands which involved being perceived as serious and respectable individuals. Only two famous artists, Morizono Milk and Kobayashi Yoshinori, were vocal in opposing both government and company regulation, and self-censorship, though in practice

⁴⁴⁸Interview with Uchida Masaru, ex-chief editor of Magazine. August 1994.

both artists found that they did have to censor their own work in order to get it published. Thus the struggle against manga censorship was not only a progressive activity which attempted to block off new areas of government control, but also a self-interested and ultimately commercial activity. Several manga artists and manga editors did perceive that gaining cultural status might in fact bring more restrictions of a different nature with it:

Manga is not culture (*bunka*), it is entertainment (*goraku*). Who wants more culture and *ideology*? I like the perverse and crude manga where everything happens.⁴⁴⁹

In 1993 another organisation, this one for the exclusive membership of manga artists and explicit exclusion of manga editors and company representatives, was launched. Manga Japan, was launched by an ex-assistant of Tezuka Osamu and multi media entrepreneur, Hara Takao. Manga Japan entertained a loose alliance with the Society for the Protection of the Freedom of Expression in Manga, and supported artists of erotic manga such as Nagai Go and Morizono Milk against company imposed self-censorship. On the other hand, Manga Japan was also explicitly concerned with raising the cultural status of manga and manga artists. As Hara Takao outlines below, for Manga Japan the order of concern was firstly promoting high-quality respectable manga, and secondly opposing censorship:

We want to prevent the government from censoring manga. Artists give up trying to draw because the environment is so restrictive but Manga Japan feels that artists can be responsible for themselves and

⁴⁴⁹Interview with Morning editor, Ishizaka Hideyuki. March 1994.

decide themselves what they should draw. Basically we want to heighten the awareness of artists in relation to these problems and make them take more responsibility for their own work. So, Manga Japan is a group designed specifically to help story manga artists produce good work and at the same time maintain the quality of their work.⁴⁵⁰

The policy of Manga Japan was that in order for manga artists to produce higher quality work a space for artistic integrity and personal responsibility had to be cleared. The management of Manga Japan claimed to be opposed to government regulation and company imposed censorship because it represented an external interference which undermined the special and total artistic process of creating good manga. Manga Japan represented manga artists who actively anticipated, even before publishing companies, the potential new cultural status of manga, and of an enhanced social role for themselves in Japanese society. In fact, the majority of Manga Japan's core membership were also involved in the Society for the Protection of the Freedom of Expression in Manga, highlighting again the keen awareness of many artists of a desire to change the restrictions of their current circumstances.

As the title, Manga Japan, suggests, its concern with the status of manga artists was also bound-up with promoting manga and manga artists abroad. On a general level Manga Japan appeared to seek verification of the status of manga as an important constituent of Japanese culture, by implicitly appealing to the judgement of an imaginary international audience. On a more practical level many manga artists wanted to fight to defend

⁴⁵⁰Interview with Hara Takao. July 1994.

their copyrights abroad which they felt would be increasingly infringed in the future. Previously, many artists had found that their copyrights were not actively defended by the large publishing companies they were contracted to produce work for, in cases where their series had been illegally reproduced by foreign companies.⁴⁵¹

Manga Japan might be viewed by contemporary social geographers and social scientists as a novel post-modern collective, claiming to support both individual members rights and their work performance. At the same time it was neither a group pursuing a narrow political issue like the Society for the Protection of Freedom of Expression in Manga, nor an artists' trade union. If Manga Japan is an example of an entirely contemporary collective organisation with mixed aims then it also illustrates the potential for hidden business or political interests behind new forms of collective organisation.

Although Manga Japan made no reference to any sponsorship or business interests in its literature, it was in fact funded by Dentsu, a large Japanese multi media and advertising corporation - in fact the largest advertising company in the world.

Executive meetings of Manga Japan were held in spacious and

⁴⁵¹Between the late 1980s and around 1993 many Japanese manga series were pirated illegally by small publishers in other Asian countries. Whilst the readership of these pirated series increased abroad, Japanese publishers did not attempt to press legal charges against the foreign publishers but allowed the illegal pirating to continue. This policy paid off in 1993 to 1994 when many pirated Japanese manga series had become so popular and lucrative that their Asian publishers sought to legalise their business arrangements and willingly entered into copyright agreements with Japanese publishers. Japanese publishing companies had accrued large new readerships abroad, had their manga series regularly translated and re-set and evaded a costly and potentially touchy legal battle at no cost to themselves at all. Several top manga artists paid for this period of indulgence however through large losses on their royalties.

technologically lavish conference rooms inside the new Dentsu Corporation buildings, overlooking the Sumida river.⁴⁵² While Manga Japan presented itself as nothing more than an independent manga artists organisation to the Japanese media and to the majority of its passive members, its leading members were aware that it was linked to Dentsu's long-term business plans. Dentsu aimed to buy the copyrights to the new CD ROM versions of the most popular manga artists' work, and go public about extending its enterprise to the international marketing of CD ROM manga, at a later date, presumably after copyright contracts had been sealed.⁴⁵³ Dentsu was taking advantage of the incipient expansion of CD ROM, and possibly even internet technologies, to attempt to wrest a share of the manga producing business from manga publishers. It is probable that Dentsu wanted to align themselves with manga artists, struggling against the control of publishing companies, simply in order that in the future they might be in the sort of independent position where they would choose to work for Dentsu instead. Unsurprisingly Manga Japan was extremely unpopular with manga publishing companies. Hara Takao reported to me that between 1992 and 1993 he had received death threats on the telephone and a knife in the post.⁴⁵⁴ In 1994, however, Dentsu's plans were no more than a minor catalyst amongst the total influences upon the manga medium, and neither were Dentsu's long-term plans guaranteed to develop as they imagined.

⁴⁵²I attended an executive meeting of Manga Japan in Dentsu Inc. buildings on 22 July 1994. Dentsu Inc. employees did not participate but several Dentsu Inc. executives observed the meeting from chairs set back from the conference table.

⁴⁵³Interview with Yokoyama Yoshihiro. July 1994. Yokoyama was an employee of Dentsu Inc., based in its Development Department (Kaihatsubu), and currently acting as the partner and advisor of Hara Takao, in Manga Japan.

⁴⁵⁴Interview with Hara Takao. July 1994.

7.7 Conclusion: The promotion of manga to the rank of national culture

The ambitions of the group of manga artists active in The Society for the Protection of the Freedom of Expression in Manga, and Manga Japan, converged. The orientation of individual manga artists whom had joined organisations to defend the freedom and reputation of manga were closely, though not explicitly, aligned to the trend towards the promotion of new adult manga to the status of a serious culture by cultural institutions and manga publishing companies. The majority of well-established manga artists have been keen to receive their new status and produce a more respectable manga which focuses on national political and economic goals. In many cases, artists most active in Manga Japan and The Society for the Protection of the Freedom of Expression in Manga, were the self same individuals as those featured in flattering reports about the manga medium or who had been commissioned to produce information manga books. The most obvious example of this convergence of activities is the ubiquitous Ishinomori Shôtarô, titular president of Manga Japan and The Society for the Freedom of Expression in Manga, and the artist of Japan Inc. and A Manga History of Japan. Ironically, artists such as Ishinomori Shôtarô and Satonaka Machiko, were too "old fashioned" to be popular with the readers of manga magazines, and they were unable to get new contracts for weekly series with manga magazines.⁴⁵⁵ Hence the emergence of information manga books became an important new source of employment for some veteran artists.

⁴⁵⁵Interview with senior editor of Magazine, Iishi Tôhru. April 1994.

At the same time, accepting manga as a part of Japanese culture appeared to become important to key Japanese government agencies and cultural and educational institutions as well. Individuals and institutions concerned with modernising domestic Japanese culture, and others concerned with modernising the image of Japan abroad, appeared gradually to perceive in manga a suitable symbol of change. Internally the promotion of manga to high-quality culture appeared to portend a more liberal and inclusive social environment. For companies too, using manga helped to overcome social barriers and counteract passive but deep employee and consumer cynicism about their corporate 'missions'. Towards Europe and the USA, manga came to hand as a cultural threat through which Japan could assert its continued vitality, strength and difference, in an indirect and politically acceptable manner. As we shall see in Section Three which looks at changes in the production of adult manga magazines in this period, between 1986 and 1994 the push to produce what was considered high-quality manga was not a straightforward trend for commercial manga publishers to work with.

Section Two Conclusion: The formation of 'good' and 'bad' manga

Between 1986 and 1994 Japanese public institutions and well-established companies operating in close cooperation with government policy objectives reached out towards the manga medium and attempted to draw it closer to the state. This happened through two superficially antithetical trends - a censorship movement and an active process of cultural assimilation. The general process of promoting and using adult manga by educational and cultural institutions was aptly described by manga critic Kure Tomofusa as the granting to manga of "cultural citizenship", after a long period of "outsider" or "immigrant" status.⁴⁵⁶ Tezuka Osamu's child-oriented manga stories and genres of *gekiga*-based realist, political, and information manga were central to this official promotion. The selective assimilation of specific genres of manga continued alongside a powerful trend towards closer government regulation of the contents of all categories of manga between 1990 and 1992. Fortified regulation removed certain manga series and strongly discouraged the production of designated manga, in particular sexually explicit and highly contemporary girls' and *otaku* genres, which did not conform to the newly re-defined values of what was 'good' manga. Morizono Milk, an artist particularly affected by the regulation movement felt that there had been a basic shift in the issues which provoked concern or praise in manga:

⁴⁵⁶Kure, T. (1990) Contemporary Manga: The Complete Picture (Gendai Manga no Zentai Zô), Tokyo: Shiki Shuppan. 208-217.

Before 1990 none of the companies censored sexual imagery - it all started then. Previously there was just a big taboo against things [manga] about politics and gossip about the emperor.⁴⁵⁷

The movement for the regulation of manga was run largely through local government and local organisations but the promotion of manga was orchestrated largely through national government agencies and public institutions. To some extent the regulation movement was propagated by older political interests based on local organisation which had been quite central to the 'grass roots' structure of LDP rule in the post-war period, while the promotion movement was fostered by national organisations attempting to strengthen and re-forge a new, independent and possibly more centralised Japan. Thus Ozawa Ichirô, current president of the New Frontier Party (Shin Shintô) and a political character strongly associated with national political renovation, identified the political adult manga series, *Kaji Ryûsuke's Principles (Kaji Ryûsuke no Gi)* as his favourite bedtime reading. While the movement for stricter censorship and the movement for greater cultural status did, in the case of many individuals, represent a clash of interests, at the level of society the two trends dovetailed into a general process of increasing interference in the manga medium and the imposition of new agendas and values on manga by generally non-commercial institutions.

Interestingly the positive reception given to political, economic and information manga represents the return of

⁴⁵⁷Interview with manga artist, Morizono Milk. April 1994.

explicitly political themes - accompanied by previously associated realistic graphic styles of *gekiga* - to commercial manga magazines for the first time since their partial demise in the 1970s. The rebirth of political realism in adult manga paralleled the boom in growth of new adult manga publishing at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s. In its second life, political adult manga had changed in disposition from being broadly anti-establishment to broadly pro-establishment. For some individuals who were active in the first explosion of adult manga at the beginnings of the commercial manga medium, and who have been willing to produce essentially conservative and uncritical political or corporate manga in the *gekiga* style in the recent period, the reversal of political ideas in adult manga has represented a final *tenkô*, or abandonment of reformist or left wing objectives.⁴⁵⁸ On the other hand, the stronger regulation of fantastical girls' manga genres, influential in contemporary 'otaku manga' and amateur manga subculture makes clear that fantasy, which in the early 1970s was perceived as a reactionary retreat from politics to petty and passive personal concerns, is now being perceived as problematically decadent and anti-social.

The opposition to girls' manga and *otaku* manga genres, which are derived from girls' manga, also indicates a deep prejudice in the publishing industry and cultural and educational institutions towards contemporary culture produced by women.

⁴⁵⁸The chief editor of the magazine *Comic Box*, Ryôtani Sai and leftist veteran manga artist, Nagashima Shinji, both used the term *tenkô* to describe the political changes in adult manga magazines. Discussions with Ryôtani Sai and Nagashima Shinji at Fusion Productions in Asagaya, Tokyo. January 1994.

Though girls' manga genres represent the a dynamic section of the manga medium in the recent period, they have been severely marginalised by the activities of the anti-manga censorship movement and humiliated by the otaku panic. Girls' manga has, moreover, been all but ignored by scholars and manga critics, whose work is focused almost exclusively on boys' and adults' manga.⁴⁵⁹ Critic Kure Tomofusa made the following insightful parallel in an attempt to explain the discomfort with which girls' manga is viewed:

When academics looked at girls' manga they were amazed. They felt like English missionaries discovering that there were different societies in Africa.⁴⁶⁰

The snobbery displayed towards girls' manga genres is reminiscent of a broader distaste in polite Japanese society for commercial culture produced by women. Lisa Skov and Brian Moeran have pointed up this trend:

Hence we find an almost apocalyptic anxiety that the supposed 'pure' and 'masculine' culture of Japan has been vulgarised, feminized, and infanticized to the point where it has become 'baby talk' beyond the comprehension of well-educated critics.⁴⁶¹

The cross-over of young men into girls' manga provoked particularly fierce opposition, The universalisation of manga genres pioneered by women implied that rather than being a discreet feminine section of manga culture, girls' manga is in

⁴⁵⁹The lack of documentation and discussion about girls' manga in Japan is part of the reason for the focus of this thesis on *gekiga* genres in boys' and adult manga, which is a far more accessible subject.

⁴⁶⁰Interview with manga critic, Kure Tomofusa, in his home. June, 1994.

⁴⁶¹Skov, L. & Moeran, B. (eds.) Women, Media and Consumption in Japan, London: Curzon Press. 70.

fact central to the contemporary medium, and that the individualistic themes of girls' manga are themes of universal value. Although the majority of amateur manga artists and fans are young women, the media panic about amateur manga subculture and *otaku* was focused almost entirely on young men who have adopted young womens' culture as their own. Thus the dominant stereotyped of an anti-social *otaku* is a male involved with female culture rather than young woman.⁴⁶² In the *otaku* panic and the anti-manga censorship movement the major producers of amateur manga, young women, have not been named.

At the same time, however, the awarding of 'cultural citizenship' to a broad section of boys' and adult manga, suggests that official educational and cultural institutions have become more willing to tolerate and recognise the previously dissident manga medium, and by implication, to cooperate in a new way with the previously problematic social groups and movements to which adult manga, derived from *gekiga*, is historically linked. The emergence of information and new adult manga suggests a realignment in the structure of Japanese society involving the assimilation of previously marginal social groups and political and cultural currents of the late post-war period into the new-fashioned intellectual and social mainstream of Japan. In the process adult manga itself has changed class. From being a distinctively lower-class medium, adult manga has become the novel new medium of national institutions and business. This realignment portends what may in one respect be a

⁴⁶²The horror which was reserved for young men involved in girls' manga is reminiscent, perhaps, of the outrage reserved for white American youth who got involved with contemporary black music and culture ('wiggers').

more integrated, populist and inclusive society and culture. At the same time, adult manga's role in internationalisation illustrates a distinctive immediacy in the inter-relationship of internal and international relations of contemporary Japan.

SECTION THREE: THE PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL CHANGE AND
TRANSFORMATION OF MANGA EDITING METHODS, 1986-1994

Introduction

In this section we will return to our micro-analysis of the commercial manga editorial office. In Section One the general industrial organisation and ethnography of manga production was outlined. Important recent developments in the relationship between the manga medium and society were examined in Section Two. We shall now examine how relations between manga artists and manga editors involved in commercial adult manga production have changed in the context of the social discourses about youth and manga which accompanied shifts in the status of manga in Japanese society in the period between 1986 and 1994. This final section, which leads towards the conclusion of the thesis, is based almost entirely on detailed ethnographic, and some sociological, research carried out during 1994, in and around the offices of a leading adult manga magazine, entitled Morning, and its monthly side-publication, Afternoon.

During this period, which starts in the mid-1980s and spans a decade, Morning editorial staff struggled to deal with what they ultimately perceived to be a solid barrier facing the manga industry which they hoped to surmount. In order that Morning magazine might be able, bit by bit, to transform itself and so ride with and overcome the problems it seemed to face, Morning editorial had set out to transform the standardized methods of production of adult manga.

Within the Tokyo-based adult and boys' manga publishing industry, Morning editorial office had become renowned and often admired for its pioneering production methods. Editors of Young Sunday magazine published by Shôgakukan, in particular, displayed the frankest interest in learning about and emulating the new methods of production apparently being tested in Morning editorial office. Morning's production methods also provoked occasional ridicule from some of its own editors, intense hatred from some manga artists, and distaste from many amateur manga fans and critics.

The special editorial processes observable in Morning editorial office, were manifested on two levels: ideas about problems and how to resolve them, and experiments. Chapter Eight and Chapter Nine focus separately on these respective manifestations. Chapter Eight looks at various ideas about problems facing the adult manga industry and their influence on editorial policy (*henshû hôshin*) in Morning. This first chapter in the section is therefore concerned solely with the limited realm of editors' ideas and aspirations which informed editorial policy, and even, what a few editors called, editorial *ideology*. The next chapter, Chapter Nine, progresses from this analysis of editorial ideas to examine actual experiments and adjustments which were made in the production of Morning and other magazines, to a lesser extent. Production experiments in Morning editorial represented the practical expression of their ideas about the sort of problems facing the adult manga industry. In some cases, production experiments which did not appear to have worked

highlighted the limitations of editors' original ideas, and the presence of more intractable problems facing adult manga publishers.

The research on which this section is based is composed mainly of interviews with manga editors, and both famous and unknown manga artists; observation of weekly editorial and other meetings over a period of 10 months; observations of meetings between various artists and editors of Morning, Afternoon, Magazine, and Young Sunday magazines; observation of everyday workplace events and conversations in Morning editorial office; and correspondence with individual editors and artists between 1994 and 1996, after returning to the United Kingdom.

CHAPTER EIGHT: Problems in the Adult Manga Industry and Ideas About How to Resolve Them

8.1 Introduction

In 1994 I found that a large number of editors and even artists involved in the adult manga industry shared a strong but diffuse sense that adult manga production was facing problems. Editors and artists complained of boring manga series, dull magazines, lack of direction, a lack of heroes, the narrowing of story manga themes, the lack of originality in artists' work, the over-saturation of the market, the lack of interest in manga on the part of readers, and many other problems beside. The wisdom that adult manga was in some form of a decline was shared by virtually all editors in Morning editorial and several of the editors of other adult manga magazines, with the exception of a few individuals who stoically insisted that nothing had changed at all since the early 1970s.⁴⁶³ The belief that adult manga was having problems was confirmed on a most immediate level by editors' experience of the increasing difficulties involved with trying to make 'good' manga series. Moreover, by 1994 the gradual decline in the circulation figures of Morning since 1992 had heightened the feeling amongst most editors that something was wrong.⁴⁶⁴ Beyond the general perception that there were

⁴⁶³One senior editor who would not acknowledge any truth in Morning editorial's concerns was Yuri Kôichi, deputy chief editor of Afternoon, and previously the editor of Otomo Katsuhiro's series, Akira. Yuri dismissed other editors' concerns about new problems facing manga as silly and groundless. Discussions with Yuri Kôichi, whilst on drinking sessions with artists in Tokyo. April-July 1995.

⁴⁶⁴For a reminder of the overall shape of the decline in Morning sales figures see Figure 15. No exact circulation figures are available - even to editors - but Morning editors generally estimated that in 1992 circulation

problems, however, adult manga editors and artists did not share coherent ideas about what kinds of problems they were experiencing.

Explanations of the origins of the decline did however fall loosely into three categories: explanations which saw artists as the problem, explanations which saw editors as the problem, and explanations which saw readers or society in general as the problem. In voicing their opinion on this, individual editors revealed their largely unconscious assumptions about how manga should be constituted. Editors and artists who felt that it was the fault of artists that manga was in decline implied that artists were or should be the strongest subjective influence shaping the commercial adult manga medium. Those who felt it was the fault of editors implied that editors had or ought to have the greatest subjective influence in producing adult manga. Editors and artists who saw the problem as a general one of the whole period, sometimes defined in terms of 'youth', the 'readers' or 'society', tended to present both editors and artists as the passive vessels of 'historical' trends over which they had no control.

In Morning editorial the view that decline was caused by the failures of manga editors was promoted by senior editors, in an attempt to counter the more prevalent editorial opinion that the problems lay with manga artists. Only this view, that the decline of the adult manga medium was the fault of editors,

had peaked at around 1 200 000, after which circulation had declined rapidly, reaching around 800 000 in 1994.

enabled them also to believe that through changing editorial methods alone the manga medium could be rejuvenated.

8.2 The dearth of genius manga artists

Amongst the great majority of adult manga editors was held the belief that manga artists were simply not as good as they used to be. The greatly increased number of youth accomplished in drawing manga as compared with previous generations of the 1960s and 1970s, who had been less exposed to manga during their childhoods, was widely acknowledged. However, fewer newcomer artists were felt to achieve the status of what are termed within the manga industry, 'geniuses' (*tensai*). Geniuses are artists who create hugely successful hit manga series which have the potential to generate large profits over a number of years for publishing companies and become significant parts of national culture too. The formal goal of manga editors, like music producers, is to produce big 'hits' which will generate maximum profits from minimum initial investment and production expenditure. From another perspective geniuses are also defined as artists who can produce a manga series without much editorial guidance. They were also described as artists who were in some way ahead of their period, or who could create whole new genres or styles. Thus geniuses are considered to be artists who by some complex and inexplicable means express in their work a new sentiment or interest in society that was previously unexpressed in culture, which makes their series extremely interesting and popular. Big commercial hits are generally inseparable from manga geniuses.

In 1994, editors perceived that there had been a reduction in the number of big 'natural' hits or series which had become unexpectedly popular without a large amount of preparation and marketing on their part. Rather than large nation-wide manga hits, editors reported that there were increasing numbers of small hits, many of which had been planned meticulously by editors. Editors perceived, secondly, that the lack of big hits was attributable to a decline in the number of genius manga artists. These ideas are well represented by the words of a senior editor of Young Sunday magazine:

There have been no natural hits since 1985 when *Dr. Slump* became a huge hit all over Japan. *Dr. Slump* was a real hit - it was not arranged by editors. When someone makes a huge hit without editorial know-how, we think of them as geniuses. Often editors oppose geniuses at first because what they are doing is too new.⁴⁶⁵

The last big hits in boys' and girls' manga were *Dragon Ball* in 1981, *Dr. Slump* in 1985, and *Chibi Maruko Chan* in 1989. The last big hits in Morning magazine were *Silent Service (Chinmoku no Kantai)* by Kawaguchi Kaiji, between 1990 and 1992, and *Section Chief Shima Kôzaku (Kachô Shima Kôzaku)* by Hirokane Kenshi, which was terminated at the height of its popularity in 1992.⁴⁶⁶ As we saw earlier in Chapter Two, adult manga magazines are generally sold on the basis of a few leading series - big hits. The recent absence of big hits in Morning magazine was a cause

⁴⁶⁵The term *know-how* in this quotation is a contemporary Japanese term. Interview with senior editor of Young Sunday, Tachikawa Yoshitake, in a restaurant near the Shôgakukan building. August, 1994.

⁴⁶⁶The artist, Hirokane Kenshi, decided to stop producing weekly episodes in 1992, though he continued to produce occasional episodes of the series, re-titled *Department Chief Shima Kôzaku (Buchô Shima Kôzaku)* - on account of the lead character's career promotion - until 1996.

of immediate anxiety amongst Morning editors. Some editors suggested that there were no longer enough genius manga artists to share amongst the increasing number of adult manga magazines. The apparent loss of manga geniuses was at least partially related to a wider historical problem in which the manga medium and industry was perceived as outmoded...

The number of geniuses has become very few compared to before because the manga world has lost its charm and interest. The geniuses have all gone somewhere else, like computer-game software designing etc.⁴⁶⁷

...or saturated:

There are so many magazines out now that geniuses are thinly spread between them and hard to come by. In 1970 at the time of the manga boom there were only three big magazines - Magazine, Sunday, and Jump - so all of the geniuses would come their way.⁴⁶⁸

The view that manga was in decline because of the dearth of genius manga artists strongly implied that the best possible and most commercially viable manga was manga made almost entirely by artists without the interference of their editors. Editors implied that there was such a thing as 'natural' or 'genuine' manga which was created by the artist alone and which was naturally superior in key aspects of its quality, to manga made by the more regular method of industrial production in which editors play a large part in developing the theme of each manga series:

⁴⁶⁷Interview with a senior editor of Morning magazine, Kihara Yasuo, in a restaurant near the editorial offices. January, 1994.

⁴⁶⁸Interview with deputy chief editor of Magazine, Iishi Tohru, in magazine editorial office. April, 1994.

A genius is an artist who can think up a theme and tell a story as well as draw. We are very happy if a genius comes along because their stories are usually big hits. The problem of not having enough geniuses is also a historical problem related to the period we are living in.⁴⁶⁹

The above statement made by the deputy chief editor of Magazine emphasises that the lack of manga artist geniuses was part of the same problem as newcomer artists being unable to think of subjects for manga series.

Though Morning editorial aspired to publish both the drafts of prize winners and other amateur drafts they felt unable in practice to publish even the best amateur work because of what they felt to be its low quality. In 1994 the top prize of the Morning manga competition was awarded to Takahashi Shinji, for his work *Kamikaze Japonaise*. Fewer than half of the pages of the original draft of this story, edited and revised, were later published in Morning.⁴⁷⁰ The editor in charge of this newcomer artist warned the chief editor of Morning magazine that if Takahashi's winning draft could not be published in its original state it might suggest to readers and other newcomer artists that Morning did not genuinely believe in the talent of artists.⁴⁷¹ It might imply rather that newcomer artists work

⁴⁶⁹Iishi. April, 1994.

⁴⁷⁰In the case of prize winner Takahashi Shinji, his winning draft could not be published because of poor colouring, inappropriately long speech parts, misplaced speech bubbles, and the large number of pages based on blatant plagiarism of a series of copyrighted photographs of the Tour de France bicycle race. Observation of the first meeting between this artist, Takahashi Shinji and his supervising editor, Doi Takashi, plus continued discussions about the progress of this artist with editor, Doi Takashi, in Morning editorial offices. April-May, 1994.

⁴⁷¹On realising that the editorial collectively intended to go ahead with plans to award Takahashi Shinji the top prize winner of the competition, the editor supervising the artist in question suggested to his chief editor, "Well, you can't really do that because I have already asked him to

was, in the opinion of Morning editorial, unworthy of artistic status and in need of severe editing before it could be released.⁴⁷²

8.3 Over-particularity amongst artists

Editors complained frequently about the inability displayed by newcomer artists to actually fulfil the role of professional manga artist. Complaints tended to focus around newcomer artists' inability to think of themes, stories or subjects around which to create manga series. The graphic style of newcomer artists was rarely mentioned as a problem except in cases where artists had used too many photographs to create their illustrations and in this way were posing a potential copyright problem for the editorial. Whilst artists' drawing styles were acceptable on a technical level, editors complained that artists were nevertheless unable to draw anything because they lacked imagination. As they had no particular thing in mind they wanted to draw, the repertoire of newcomer artists' work was frequently limited to imitations of better known artists' work and single illustrations. Newcomer artists' drafts were frequently criticised for being excessively introverted (*naimenteki*), particularistic (*jiheiteki*), and limited to petty personal themes (*kudaranai, jibun no shumi*). One senior editor described how in his experience newcomer artists were increasingly incapable of producing anything more than pictures

change his script completely for publication and it will look bad if we elect him to be the top winner after asking him to change his script so much." Observation of discussion between Morning editors Doi Takashi and Kurihara Akira, at artist Chiba Tetsuya's home. 9 April, 1994.

⁴⁷²Observation of discussion between Morning editors Doi Takashi and Kurihara Akira, at artist Chiba Tetsuya's home. 9 April, 1994.

of cute girls which he characterised derisively as "masturbation-manga". The same editor went on to describe the scale of the problem:

It's not Romeo and Juliet you know. We have been reduced to making stories which hinge on whether the lead character does or does not wear glasses. There is a big problem in manga. Nothing seems to have any energy or a powerful impact anymore. We do not make big hits, just lots of little ones. Manga has become so individualistic and inward-looking that it just cannot go any further. Even the artists talk about it. A lot of artists are tired these days; they can't write any more. They ask me over and over again, 'What is interesting?' 473

Some editors related the increasingly limited repertoire of manga artists to the breaking up of popular culture into smaller interest groups, a cultural process referred to as *saibunka* (subdivision), which can be loosely equated with the English postmodernist term, 'fragmentation', - and the associated rise of niche marketing. In 1994 manga drafts submitted to Morning editorial by newcomer artists which lacked a theme, story, or traditional plot, were not infrequently described by manga editors as *otakuppoi*, meaning 'nerdish' or in more analytically sophisticated language, particularistic. Many of these artists were influenced by the distinctive genres and graphic styles of the amateur manga medium or were even previously engaged in this manga subculture, described in Chapter Five. Amateur or *otaku* manga was considered to represent the furthest extreme of over-particularism and individualism amongst all the manga genres. Whilst adult manga editors noted with pleasure the energy and typically uncritical 'nerdish' enthusiasm for hard work

⁴⁷³Interview with senior editor of Young Sunday, Tachikawa Yoshitake, in a restaurant near the Shôgakukan building. August, 1994.

displayed by newcomer manga artists whom they felt exhibited *otaku* tendencies, they were on the other hand extremely unimpressed by what they perceived as *otaku* manga artists' inability to think up subjects for manga series.

The inability of newcomer artists to produce viable themes and plots for manga stories meant that many editors doubted if the majority of young manga artists were really artists at all. They felt that being an artist should involve having a relatively sophisticated understanding of society based on accumulated social experience. Rather than being representatives of the 'younger generation', 'in touch' with society, newcomer artists appeared to be entirely 'out of touch' and this severely limited their ability to bring new cultural material to the editorial. One deputy chief editor explained over-particularism and the inability to develop stories as a result of many artists' limited social experience:

Lots of young artists only read manga and do not know about anything else so we editors have to feed them information and ideas about what readers are like and what they are interested in. In that respect manga artists are not really Artists. They do not understand anything about society at all, let alone have something to say about it. They just draw. We only use a tiny fraction of even the very best artists themes that they chose themselves.⁴⁷⁴

The accounts of young manga artists tended to confirm the opinion of editors. None of the newcomer artists working for *Morning* and other magazines whom I met claimed to harbour personal interests which they wanted to deal with in manga.

⁴⁷⁴Interview with deputy chief editor of Magazine, Iishi Tohru, in Magazine editorial offices. April, 1994.

Artists said they had developed stories and themes for manga series out of commercial necessity rather than personal interest. Sugimura Shinichi, artist of the story *California Hotel* (actual spelling) serialised in *Young Magazine*, provided a particularly sorry account of his own lack of ideas:

I don't believe in anything so I am faceless. I do not have a clear idea about what I want to write so it just develops as it goes along. I have no plan and no message so I am very dependent on my editor for ideas.⁴⁷⁵

The exhaustion of ideas amongst manga artists meant they were reliant upon editors to help them to create manga stories and less likely to conflict with editors over the content of their series. Editors supervising artists whom they felt lacked ideas were forced to carry out more of the intellectual work involved in making manga series in order to continue to produce manga of interest to readers and which was, by this criterion, commercially viable.

8.4 The commercial consciousness of artists

The belief that there was a shortage of geniuses and that the consciousness of young artists was too limited came together as explanations of a broader assertion that the artistic talent of contemporary manga artists was low. A high proportion of editors and artists suggest alternatively that manga artists have become too motivated by financial gain to produce good artistically-motivated manga. It was not simply the case that artists were

⁴⁷⁵Interview with artist Sugimura Shinichi in the presence of his editor, in a bar in Shinjuku. July, 1994.

not felt to be as good as they were previously, but also the feeling that commercial manga, as it had become well-established and a known source of income, had begun to attract many more young people to enter the manga industry who might not previously have possessed any particular artistic drive or outstanding talent compelling them to draw. This explanation of the falling standards of manga is one more frequently held by manga artists themselves. Leading adult manga artist, Kawaguchi Kaiji, summarises this simple theory:

People who draw manga are now very close to a big source of money; so the incentive to draw manga has become much higher and attracted people with far less talent; so the general level of manga is going down.⁴⁷⁶

Artists who had made themselves into private businesses such as Watase Seizô, currently producing the colour series *Sai* in *Morning*, were unpopular amongst editors. Business oriented artists who explicitly struggled to control their production and income were often artists who had found, developed, and defended narrow cultural forms or clichés which they were able to reduce virtually to a technical formula and reproduce many times to maintain a steady income over a long period of time. In fact this form of commercially motivated manga production was more prevalent amongst female artists of ladies' and girls' manga, such as Morizono Milk and Ide Chikae, than male artists working for adult manga magazines who appeared to conform more closely to the idea of the manga artist genius who prepares all his own drafts. Kôyama Shikao, the chief editor of *Aoba* manga production

⁴⁷⁶Interview with artist, Kawaguchi Kaiji, in his studio/home. March, 1994.

company which produces Hime and Sakura ladies' manga magazines confirmed that:

The manga artists I prefer are the less business-like ones who do not photocopy the features of their characters. The business-like artists are second rate and never go any higher. All their work is done by assistants using photocopies and screentone. The style of business-like artists is repetitive and rigid... but that sometimes becomes their trademark. ⁴⁷⁷

Discussion with artists seemed to suggest that it was in fact true that most young artists had a solely commercial interest in drawing manga. Artist Okada Yûkyô, producing the series *Rentaro no Ai* for Morning Open in 1995, was one example of this trend. Okada claimed that he had never produced even a single drawing, illustration, or manga strip, during his adult lifetime, for his own pleasure.⁴⁷⁸ Another newcomer artist working for Young Sunday magazine under the pen-name Rodriguez explained to me that he did not like manga and became a manga artist simply to fund himself through the final year of his university architecture course:

I never read manga much before. I entered a competition because I was so poor. I earned ¥50 000 (£334) in a Shôgakukan manga competition and the draft that won became the basis of the series I am doing now for Young Sunday. But, I still do not like manga much now - I just write it.⁴⁷⁹

While on the one hand the financial incentive to become a manga artist created by the manga industry, manga competitions and the

⁴⁷⁷Interview with the chief editor of Aoba company, Kôyama Shikao, May 1994.

⁴⁷⁸Discussion with artist, Okada Yûkyô, in the back of a taxi. April, 1994.

⁴⁷⁹Private interview with artist, Rodriguez, in a café near the Shôgakukan building. June, 1994.

royalties system had apparently attracted inferior manga artists to the profession and in this way contributed to a lowering of artistic standards, several editors also held the more specific opinion that being a good artist and earning a living were in any case entirely incompatible. It is quite striking that company editors employed to produce manga magazines precisely for profit motives should hold the view that making good, high quality manga was in fact impossible within social relations motivated by profit. Uchida Masaru, a highly experienced previous chief editor of Magazine, strongly believed that manga artists who worked for money ceased to be artists:

Today manga artists are just bread-earners, I really think they should be artists or it just isn't any good. Bread-earners do not have any freedom, they just follow their editors' orders. If they lose their freedom then artists become bread-earners.⁴⁸⁰

Uchida refers to freedom in the sense of freedom from profit-incentives rather than any more substantial structural freedom. It is clear that the element of manga artists' work which manga editors sought to exploit for commercial purposes was precisely that part of the artist's work which was concerned with expressing and communicating ideas and feelings to other people for their own sake. Without a genuine desire on the part of the manga artist to produce manga to put across his or her ideas the manga artist's work became purely commercial. The implication of manga editors' opinions was that the manga industry's commercial success relied ultimately on their exploitation of works primarily human or spiritual in motivation and content. This

⁴⁸⁰Interview with the ex-chief editor of Magazine, Uchida Masaru, in a restaraunt close to his new editorial offices in Shinbashi. August, 1994.

perceived contradiction in the methods of commercial manga production is informed by, and supports, the classic modernist understanding of art and culture as a sphere of social life which is fundamentally incompatible with capitalist production. On a more general level the case of adult manga seems to suggest that contemporary culture industries are able to produce commercial culture only as long as the goods produced are genuinely cultural and embody a specifically social utility or value.

Individual manga artists who do have ideas to express, and also wish to make a living doing this, resolve this contradiction for the manga editorial. Several leading adult manga artists favoured by Morning editors, including Kawaguchi Kaiji, and Hirokane Kenshi, fall into this category. It is precisely these artists who had found a stable balance between social and economic motivation who were the most reliable and useful artists for the manga editorial. Keeping a consistent balance between social or artistic motivation and economic motivation was evidently a difficult position to maintain.

The contradictory nature of commercial manga production implied in editors' views of artists was simply not encountered as an abstract logical or moral barrier to activity but as an actual practical barrier to production. The problem presented by artists who appeared to be motivated to produce manga only by profit was one of the arbitrariness of their work. Artists who have their own ideas that they wish to put into manga come to the manga editorial not just with their drawing skills, nor

merely with a good imagination, but with a package of vital information expressing their subjective response to their social experiences. This information about the artist expressed in his work is a central source of interest for manga readers. Within the artists' ideas is expressed a range of feelings and ideas entirely specific to aspects of contemporary society and in which readers are likely to take an interest because it relates to some of their recent experiences. It is this subjective response which is able to transform an abstract aesthetic object into culture: a mode of communication. Editors found that artists who did not appear to have ideas to express were difficult to exploit because the themes eventually incorporated in their manga series were arbitrary and unspecified; they were not dictated by their specific youthful experiences. Their work did not communicate ideas which had a drive, immediacy and urgency, that could attract, inspire and compel readers. Moreover, it seemed that artists who arrived in the manga editorial without ideas of their own, obliged manga editors to undertake the time-consuming and expensive work of developing themes for new manga series themselves. Manga artists without ideas were in this sense, less exploitable. For both of these practical reasons the perceived lack of social motivation to produce manga on the part of newcomer artists was a direct commercial problem for manga editors.

8.5 Bad editing and salary men

In Morning editorial the concern with falling artistic standards amongst newcomer artists coexisted with the view that company editors themselves were suffering from a decline in their editorial ability. The phrase "the standard of editing is too low" (*henshū level ga hikui*) was frequently reiterated by senior editors in editorial meetings and conversations in the editorial office. Manga editors were perceived to be no longer sufficiently proficient at spotting and recruiting talented artists and developing themes for manga stories when artists were unable to do this. In Morning the editorial function of story-building was loosely divided into two parts referred to by the English terms 'create' and 'keep'. 'Create' was the function of thinking-up suitable subjects and stories for manga series, and 'keep' was the function of maintaining a story for months or years after it had been launched and feeding it with new components and interesting directions. Whilst it was hoped that all editors would carry out both functions, in reality different editors tended to either 'create' or 'keep' manga series according to their personal abilities. In the opinion of Ogawa Haruo and Kurihara Yoshiyuki, the chief editors of Afternoon and Morning magazines respectively, company editors were failing to carry out either create or keep properly:

Editors are not thinking-up new ideas anymore. There is no way to deal with the problem of editors' lack of imagination but it is the biggest problem we face. An editor should be able to carry out all stages of producing a story but, even though this is their primary function and this is what makes the money, in reality most editors cannot keep a story going. The editors who can think up new stories are the most respected people in the office, they often think up

new stories and then pass them on to other less able editors to keep going. Now, only about 1 or 2 editors out of every 10 can produce anything at all.⁴⁸¹

The principal reason put forward by editors to explain their lack of editorial ability was that, like many newcomer manga artists, they were too uncommitted and commercial in their attitude to their work. Many manga artists also complained that their editors were incapable of producing manga:

Now editors have few skills related to manga at all, they are just salary men.⁴⁸²

In Morning editorial company editors were repeatedly encouraged not to be 'salary men' but to think of themselves as individuals and cultural leaders. A major source of the low level of creative direction amongst editors was thought to stem from their stable employment position in a large publishing company from which they would be extremely unlikely ever to be made redundant even if they carried out no work at all. Large publishing companies producing the leading adult manga magazines, including Kôdansha and Shôgakukan, are staffed by the graduates of élite universities which continued, even during the recession of the 1990s, to provide all employees with life-time employment. Morning editors tended to follow the view that a secure income had drained them of all interest and enthusiasm to create manga series and that what was really needed to correct low editorial ability was an element of "competition" or a touch

⁴⁸¹Interview with chief editor of Morning, Kurihara Yoshiyuki, in Morning editorial offices. July, 1994.

⁴⁸²Interview with artist, Kobayashi Yoshinori, in his studio in Ogikubo. August. 1994.

of "capitalism", the two concepts frequently being used loosely and interchangeably in contemporary Japan. The chief editor of Morning magazine exhorted his less productive junior editors in the following fashion:

The editors here have got a salary-man mentality, like civil servants on life-time employment! You have got to be editors not salary men! You have got to have enthusiasm, energy and curiosity. You have got to sense what is great and coax the richest talent and power out of each artist. Right now we are just not realising the potential of artists at all. This is a lifeless editorial. It is getting more and more conservative and boring!⁴⁸³

To a degree the concept of 'company employee complacency' was influenced by the powerful moral held across contemporary Japanese society that wealth is bad because it breeds passivity and complacency, while lack of material wealth is good because it engenders hard work, ingenuity and moral strength. One editor, displaying at the same time, several banal historical prejudices, linked the apparently falling editorial standards in Morning editorial with a bad attitude to work:

The 'workers-rights', 'lazy blacks' style of editorial production has got to stop.⁴⁸⁴

Ironically, the view that permanent financial security disinclined editors to bother trying to create good manga eventually contradicted the simultaneously held view that the falling artistic standards of manga were caused by the competitive pursuit of financial rewards by artists. Whilst the

⁴⁸³Observation of the chief editor of Morning magazine, Kurihara Yoshiyuki, talking during a Morning editorial meeting. March, 1994.

⁴⁸⁴The Japanese wording of this statement was: "Kore kara rōdōsha kenriteki na, bara bara kokujin no henshū tsukurikata wa dame." A senior Morning editor in Morning editorial meeting.

lack of a variable financial incentive to create manga is cited as the cause of low editorial ability, the presence of a variable financial incentive is cited as the cause of low artistic ability. These views are not precisely contradictory however, but imply rather that editors sensed that neither of the two extreme situations possible with regard to the relationship between financial income and the creation of manga afforded the most favourable possible circumstances for stimulating artistic creativity.

8.6 Bringing the Artist out of artists and editors

To renew the artistic qualities of the adult manga medium, Morning editors felt that they must relinquish their possible cynicism about commercial manga. They were encouraged to think of manga as real 'Culture' rather than just a commodity, and to think of manga artists as proper 'Artists' worthy of respect. In 1994 the chief editor of Morning was clear about his basic public view that:

Manga artists are *artists*. People who think new human expression is *art* think manga is *art*.⁴⁸⁵

Manga artists working for Morning were, where possible, promoted as artistic geniuses to their readers and the general public. The promotion of individual manga writers as 'manga stars', although far less defined than the so called 'star-system' first operated from Hollywood and later in the British pop-music

⁴⁸⁵Art and *artists* were the terms used in the original Japanese statement. Interview with the chief editor of Morning, Kurihara Yoshiyuki, in Morning editorial offices. June, 1994.

industry, had been normal in adult manga magazines since the late 1960s.⁴⁸⁶ However, in Morning in 1994 manga artists were promoted not just as famous people and stars but also as serious Artists, complete with idiosyncratic artistic characters. The 1950s *gekiga* movement attempted to re-define manga artists as serious individuals rather than mere entertainers, but within commercial manga this was the first occasion on which editorials also attempted to promote the notion of manga artists being serious artists with intellectual dimensions. Aoki Yûji, a genuinely wilful older male artist producing the series *Naniwa Kinyûdô* in Morning, for example, was the subject of newspaper and radio interviews in which he was portrayed by Morning editorial as an eccentric individual with unique artistic genius, a close reader of Dostoyevsky concerned with the moral quality of contemporary Japanese life.

At the same time as promoting the artistic qualities of current manga artists, Morning editors also attempted to locate raw (*namappoi*) artists and raw script writers whom they felt were more in touch with real society and were the bearers of 'genuine' experiences. Individuals not yet inured to the commercial manga industry, but with experiences from elsewhere in society, were associated with fresh artistic talent. Novelists who had recently become well known or who had won prizes in Kôdansha literary competitions used by other manga magazines, for example, were no longer suitable as script writers for Morning:

⁴⁸⁶See Robert. C. Toll (1982) The Entertainment Machine: American Showbusiness in the Twentieth Century, Oxford University Press.

What we need to find are script writers who are already living out there in the world. We all need to keep our eyes open and read and watch the media to spot characters who look as if they might be good manga script writers. We need raw people. 487

As the image of manga artists was being upgraded, the image of manga editors as the directors and producers of manga series was undergoing a simultaneous transformation. Editors were encouraged to be more genuinely interested in the artistic value of manga and to be more sensitive to the artistic genius of their artists. The reformation of manga editors' behaviour in Morning complemented the revival of genuine manga artists. During an editorial meeting Morning's chief editor suggested that it was editors' disenchanted perceptions of manga artists as, amongst other things, under-talented youths chasing financial incentives, which was one source of their inability to supervise good manga series. In order to realise each artist's full potential editors were told they had to think of themselves as private art-lovers:

People are too mean-spirited and that is why they think the standard of manga artists' work is low. Editors have to love their artists. Editors have bad personalities; if you are honest and faithful with your artist then they will like you and might produce really good work for you.⁴⁸⁸

In particular, the arrogant but possibly accurate assumption that editors practice *sodari* or 'raise' manga artists and were therefore the original if secret progenitors of even famous

⁴⁸⁷ Observation of deputy chief editor of Morning, Fukumoto Hiroyuki, speaking during an editorial meeting. July, 1996.

⁴⁸⁸ Interview with the chief editor of Morning, Kurihara Yoshiyuki, in Morning editorial offices. June, 1994.

artists' work, was quashed by a severe new code of editorial political correctness:

About 5 or 6 years ago many of the editors here were going around saying they "raised such and such manga artist". But I do not want them to speak in that way. It is embarrassing to hear editors saying they raised an artist when it is really the artists who raise the editors. You see editors can edit manga but they cannot make the original product. It is the older editors who supervised artists who became famous who got into the habit of saying they had raised them as a way of claiming their dues.⁴⁸⁹

Again, becoming a 'new editor' who did not attempt to forcefully educate artists under his supervision, or claim to have done so, was concomitant with becoming an art-lover, popular-culture fan, or something in-between. Editors were asked to appreciate manga in a personal rather than a professional way:

The difference between editors who say that they raise artists and editors who don't, is that the former dislike manga and the latter like manga and feel that they themselves were raised by it. As for manga artists, there is a saying that a child will raise himself in spite of his parents.⁴⁹⁰

The idea that editors should love their manga artists with a passion rather than see them as tools, or ordinary contract employees, is reflected in a manga story serialised in *Big Comic Spirits*. In *Editor!: Tomorrow's Joe (Henshûô: Ashita no Joe)*⁴⁹¹,

⁴⁸⁹Interview with the chief editor of *Morning*, Kurihara Yoshiyuki, in *Morning* editorial offices. August, 1994.

⁴⁹⁰Interview with deputy chief editor of *Afternoon*, Yuri Kôichi, in *Morning* editorial offices. June, 1994.

⁴⁹¹The transliteral meaning of *Henshûô* is actually 'Edit-King!'. It is a hybrid word which appears to be a playful parody of the style of manga story titles which - like popular film titles (*Alien*, *The Fly*, *Terminator*, *Robocop*, *Rain Man*) - are often based on made-up, conjoined, or specially emphasised words, which describe horrible monsters or human transformations. This title suggests playfully that editors are tyrants bearing down on artists, like the horrible monsters in manga stories.

a story by Tsuchida Seiki which began serialisation in Big Comic Spirits adult manga magazine in 1994, a romantic view of both the manga editor and manga artist was developed into a feature length story. The lead character of *Henshûô*, Momoi Kanpachi, was influenced by his childhood reading of the late-1960s manga classic *Tomorrow's Joe (Ashita no Jô)* to follow in the footsteps of his manga idol and become a champion boxer: a man who fights back to the end. When Momoi's boxing career is abruptly curtailed by eye injuries, he is forced to take a different path in life and becomes a manga editor in the editorial of a large publishing company, not unlike Shôgakukan or Kôdansha. Momoi is an energetic, charismatic manga editor who does not fit into the office environment but is nevertheless committed to the manga artists he supervises. The series *Editor!* is based on adult manga editors' perceptions of the ideal editor and ideal artist in 1994. Momoi is concerned, raw, and personal and works with an old eccentric manga artist who sweats blood and tears to produce his manga. (See Momoi as the *Editor!* in Figure 26.)

One individual firmly rooted in the adult manga industry, Okamoto Makoto, attempted to locate the recent encouragement of manga artists to be more artistic within a historical perspective:

The level of energy manga artists invest in manga goes up and down according to the period and according to the degree of dissatisfaction manga artists feel with the current state of innovation and expression in manga culture. During the 1960s, the time of student unrest, the level of activity on the part of manga artists was very high and then it began to drop off. Recently artists have been more active in creating

Figure 26

Editor! Tomorrow's Joe: An ideal artist and editor
working together

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

Source: Henshû! Ashita no Joe Vol.1. (1992) by Tsuchida
Seiki, Tokyo: Shôgakukan. 145--147

manga and they are being asked to do more of the things that they really want to do.⁴⁹²

Like many manga editors, Okamoto referred to the 1960s and 1970s as a period when manga artists were at the peak of their artistic powers, and to 1994 as a period when things had 'come full circle' and it was manga artists' turn to flex their artistic muscles. This view of adult manga, while struggling to be historical, failed. Okamoto implicitly assumes, like Morning editors, that any artistic revival of the adult manga medium would take a similar form to the *gekiga* and manga movements generated by independent manga artists in the 1960s and 1970s. Okamoto's assertion that manga artists would become, of their own accord, more artistic because of their accumulating dissatisfaction with the manga medium was also undermined by his later observation that in fact manga artists had not attempted to express new artistic interests in manga. Rather, the idea, or wishful prophesy, that manga artists were becoming more artistic was one generated from within adult manga editorial offices and which individual manga artists were being invited to fulfil. The possibility that manga artists might not in fact actually be any more 'artistic', simply because they were being promoted in a certain way by editors, was pointed out by Kobayashi Yoshinori, one of the premier adult manga artists in 1994, producing the series *The Manifesto of Arrogance (Gômanism Sengen)*, in the following ironic comment:

Actually manga has changed recently. Previously editors encouraged whatever was a big hit according to

⁴⁹² Interview with Okamoto Makoto, brother of the *gekiga* artist Shiratô Sanpei and founding owner of contract manga editing company, Ginnansha. July 1994.

the circulation figures of their magazines, regardless of anything else. Now manga is so homogenised that they have started trying to ignore their circulation figures and let artists be more experimental. My series in Weekly SPA! magazine is a bit like that. However, the thing is I don't actually think there are many artists who want to 'express' themselves!⁴⁹³

8.7 Problems with society

Both editors and artists were perceived to be suffering from a broadly similar contraction of their respective spheres of social engagement and an over-developed interest in immediate personal issues, which was causing a decline in their motivation and ability to create manga. In other words, manga was in a period of decline because in 1994 neither artists nor editors wished to express ideas for social or cultural reasons. Artists appeared to be motivated to make manga for little more than financial reasons and editors were barely motivated to make manga at all. The complexity and pervasiveness of this problem, which resulted in difficulties determining interesting subjects, on which to base new manga series was expressed by one Morning editor in the following way:

Why is Morning declining? Because there are no hit stories in it. If the magazine was more interesting then more people would buy it. The problem is that no one knows how to make anything interesting anymore. I don't know why people cannot work out how to write anything interesting anymore.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹³ Interview with adult manga artist, Kobayashi Yoshinori, in his studio in Ogikubo. August, 1994.

⁴⁹⁴ Interview with senior Morning editor, Doi Takashi, in the editorial offices. May, 1994.

Thus whilst editors and artists were each singled out for specific criticism, editors who attempted to apply greater social perspective often discussed the problems of production in terms of a historical problem (*jidai mondai*). The 1990s were described as a "weak period" (*usui jidai*)⁴⁹⁵ in which it was difficult to make strong manga with powerful heroes who could attract large readerships. One manga editor I interviewed perceptively reversed the received belief that the 1990s were a weak period, by suggesting instead that the problems encountered by editors were grounded in their own subjective inability to understand and relate to the new period, both as editors and artists:

Manga have lost their heat and I don't know if that is a good thing or a bad thing, but as a magazine producer it seems like a bad thing. In the 1960s success-story manga about struggling and winning were very popular. Then sadness, love and nostalgia took over in music and manga. Now I cannot see what period this is, nor what kind of new manga there could be either.⁴⁹⁶

Linked to the sense of loss of direction which permeated the adult manga industry in 1994, was a nostalgia for the 1960s and 1970s, which were universally alluded to as the heyday of manga production. This nostalgia, for a period when the manga industry was expanding rapidly into a mass culture and manga artists were inspired individuals in the midst of mass social movements, is evident in editors' speech and even in the themes of some recent adult manga series. In 1994 a series entitled *Pendako Paradise* by Yamamoto Osamu was serialised in *Weekly Manga Action* adult

⁴⁹⁵The first meaning of *usui* is 'thin' in the sense of 'weak' or 'watery' food. Used more broadly it carries the connotations of 'unremarkable', 'bland' or 'wet'.

⁴⁹⁶Interview with a senior editor of *Young Magazine*, Tachikawa Yoshitake, in a café near the Shōgakukan building. July, 1994.

manga magazine published by Futabasha. *Pendako Paradise* told the story of how a young boy was inspired to write manga in 1970 after seeing on television political demonstrations at Sasebo, a US naval port in Japan, and witnessing clashes between students and police at anti-AMPO treaty demonstrations. (See Figure 27.)

The pervading view of the 1960s and early 1970s was that youth were materially impoverished, and that this poverty had encouraged them to aspire and struggle, and inspired manga artists to illustrate these aspirations and dreams in manga. The first post-war baby-boom generation (*dan kai no sedai*), and the 1960s in general, are often described as the 'hungry generation' (*hungry sedai*) and the 'hungry years' (*hungry jidai*), and these historical concepts are popular with manga editors too. The specifically contemporary Japanese usage of the English term 'hungry' refers at the same time to physical poverty epitomised by a shortage of food, and a fighting spirit 'hungry' for more from life. A previous chief editor of Magazine for example felt quite certain that rising living standards caused artists to produce dull, unimaginative work and that "poverty is good because it stimulates energy and creativity."⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁷Interview with the ex-chief editor of Magazine, Uchida Masaru. August 1994.

Figure 27

Pendako Paradise by Yamanaka Osamu
serialised in Action from 1993

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

Source: Weekly Manga Action published by Futabasha.

8.8 The future of adult manga in Japanese and international Society

Other more loosely defined ideals about the overall direction in which adult manga might attempt to progress were generated within Morning editorial. The principle underlying these broad ideas was the expansion of the scale of production, so that adult manga might expand further and become an international medium, produced by teams of people, rather than individual manga artists.

The simultaneous encouragement of both manga editors and manga artists to consider their manga series as serious artistic projects implied that they should have friendlier relationships, based on their mutual personal enthusiasm for manga. There was a subsequent blurring of the editorial and artistic functions at the level of ideas, which was ultimately expressed in Morning editorial by the concept of 'group art', variably referred to as *shūdan geijitsu*, (*group art*), *line*, and *team produced manga*.⁴⁹⁸ The idea of group art was manga made not by single manga artists but by teams or lines incorporating the artist, specialists, editors, and possibly other individuals such as researchers and informants and script writers or 'manga colourists'. The chief editor of Morning magazine aspired eventually to turn the process of making adult manga into one based less on the individual manga artist, into one based on the type of production teams which make television and film. Editors

⁴⁹⁸While the term *shūdan geijitsu* was occasionally used during interviews with myself, group art was more frequently referred to as the *team* or *line* method of production in discussion between editors. *Shūdan geijitsu* sounds more Japanese, formal and important, than either of the English loan words.

sometimes encouraged each other to imagine that they were film directors (*eiga kantoku*), and to think of the series they edited as if they were massive, dramatic projects on the scale of Hollywood films. Howard Becker has pointed out how the complex division of labour in film making exemplifies the collective nature of artistic production.⁴⁹⁹ Discussion of films, in particular high budget films made in Hollywood and distributed around the globe, regularly took place within editorial meetings. Morning editors discussed classic films of the 1980s such as Brazil, Bladerunner, Robocop and Terminator, as well as recent 1990s releases such as The Piano, Beauty and the Beast, Silence of the Lambs, and Goodfellas. The chief editor of Morning often used the examples of Hollywood films to inspire editors to try to create "big" manga series with equivalent "power", "energy". Although the idea of group art was vaguer and less practical than ideas about how editors and artists ought to behave and was not discussed often, editors of other adult manga magazines nevertheless observed the concept emerge from Morning editorial with interest.

More pragmatically, group art was a concept which offered an alternative means of overcoming the apparently declining standards of manga artists and editors. By working more closely together and pooling their weakening resources it was hoped that editors and artists might be able to create series they had been no longer able to create as individuals. Thus the chief editor of Morning entreated editors to overcome their editing problems by developing new series together with artists:

⁴⁹⁹Becker, H. (1982) Art Worlds, University of California Press. 7-9.

You don't need plans! you don't need to be editors, you need to have personal relationships with artists! You should each go off and develop story plans with artists and then report back on what you have got together when you have 10 or 20 plans.⁵⁰⁰

Ideas about team produced manga went hand-in-hand with Morning magazine's other aspiration to develop a new form of 'universal' or 'international' manga out of the adult manga medium. The potential for developing manga with universal themes which could transcend its currently-limited domestic appeal was considered to be partly dependent on moving towards production based on teams, like those of the film and music and American comic industries:

Pop-music is international. Films are international. We want to mix comic and manga production to produce a universal manga.⁵⁰¹

Both group art and universal manga were future goals which Morning editors hoped to achieve by reorganising the production of manga in the manga editorial. These ideas precluded the possibility that it could be manga artists who would play a central role in affecting a transformation of the adult manga medium - through, for example, influences received at the level of style by artists drawing manga - and strengthened instead the ideal role of manga editors. In fact, manga was already 'group art' in as much as that the basic division of labour between artists and editors had already occurred with the

⁵⁰⁰The chief editor of Morning, Kurihara Yoshiyuki, speaking during an editorial meeting in Morning editorial offices. June, 1994.

⁵⁰¹Interview with senior Morning editor, Tsutsumi Yasumitsu, in Morning editorial offices. March, 1995.

commercialisation of the medium. What Morning meant by 'group art' clearly had more to do with obfuscating the role of the artist and emphasising the role of the editors as the 'directors' of manga teams. In this way, conflict between manga artists and editors over these new techniques might be smothered under the concept of the team - de-emphasising the particular function of the artist, and emphasising the particular function of the editor, who would, it was presumed, be the director of the new team manga.

8.9 Conclusion

Experienced editors of Morning editorial believed that the adult manga industry, of which Morning and Afternoon magazine constituted a large segment, was faced with serious difficulties. These editors displayed a vivid awareness of the need for Morning to deal with its problems in a thorough manner, by instigating production experiments which might transform the social relations of artists, editors and readers. The seriousness of thought most experienced editors gave to the current problems in the manga industry, and the enthusiasm of Morning, and other editorials, for new projects, gave the strong impression that editors considered the situation to be one of 'sink or swim', in which adult manga would die out if it did not make rapid changes. The sense that the adult manga industry was moribund was not consistent, however, with the dramatic ambitions and forward-planning of Morning editorial. The vision of decline which pervaded the perspectives of manga editors was influenced by pessimistic social discourses about contemporary

social problems, and in particular the apathetic and individualistic behaviour of Japanese youth.

One of the central issues which editors had isolated as a current problem was the relationship between culture and commerce in contemporary mass culture. Many editors felt that the reason why manga artists and manga editors were no longer creating brilliant manga was because they had become corrupted by financial interests. In different ways, artists and editors were diagnosed as having too much money. Thus the sense that there were specific problems in 1994 had lead Morning editors to reassess deeper fundamental relationships of commercial manga production and to consider ways of resolving them. However, an editorial policy which encouraged editors and artists to apply more personal and artistic criteria, respectively, to their series was clearly not going to affect the fundamental contradictions of commercial manga production, and was, for this reason, quietly disregarded by several more experienced and cynical manga editors. Moreover, pointing to the difficult relationship between culture and commerce as the probable source of recent production problems was misguided, given the fact that this relationship had been accommodated within the manga industry since its foundation. At the same time, the sudden interest in the dynamics of the relationship between culture and commerce was relevant. While the relationship between a cultural medium and contemporary commerce may work fruitfully in one period, it may reach a point of incompatibility in another. So, while the emergent manga medium and the commercial interests of publishing companies grew together in the 1960s and 1970s,

giving rise to the massive expansion of manga, in 1994 this original relationship did not appear to be working at all well.

By encouraging artists and editors to be more artistic and personally involved in their work, Morning editorial hoped in some way to re-kindle the great enthusiasm for manga and social expression of the 1960s and 1970s, which had been tapped by publishing companies. Editorial nostalgia for the manga heydays of the 1960s and 1970s was also generated by this desire.

Neither social and political movements generating new ideas about society, nor a manga movement in which such forms of social awareness might be channelled, existed in the 1990s. The fact that many manga editors perceived new manga artists to be 'useless' (*tsukaenai*), was merely their response to the fact that new manga artists were not like the typical young manga artists who had worked for manga editorials in the 1960s and 1970s. The broad political awareness and social idealism of those artists had been well-suited to the production of a mass commercial medium. If new artists were 'no good', they were simply no good for the manga publishing industry.

The focus on editorial style and the international programme in Morning, implied that it had already lost confidence in newcomer manga artists and Japanese society generally. By expanding into international production Morning attempted to leapfrog over the immediate barriers it perceived to adult manga production in Japan. Morning hoped and presumed that adult manga could eventually be produced or sold overseas, like film. The inclination to overcome domestic production problems by

expanding production and sales abroad appears to conform to a Leninist understanding of the impulse towards imperialism amongst ordinary national industries dealing with what are eventually experienced as falling profits.⁵⁰² The focus on editors, as individuals, and within the 'group art' idea, was in fact far more clearly expressed at the level of practical experiments than in editorial policy. In 1994, Morning was in the process of attempting to implement production changes which focused on manga editors, which we shall examine fully in the next chapter.

⁵⁰²See Lenin, V. (1982) Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism, Moscow: Progress Publishers.

CHAPTER NINE: Production Experiments in Adult Manga

9.1 Introduction

By 1994 Morning editorial was in the throes of struggling to reorganise the means by which commercial adult manga was produced. In Morning editors attempted to alter the division of labour between artists and editors and the systematised production of adult manga which had been a part of its transformation into a culture industry. These changes amounted to the implementation of long-term large-scale capital investment.

In order to invigorate manga production, different types of manga artists and editors were invited to work in the editorial office. Morning editorial concentrated its efforts searching for new manga artists who had not yet succumbed to the corruption of commercial production and who were dedicated to manga for cultural rather than financial reasons. Morning looked for these new artists in Japan, and abroad in foreign countries' comic movements. New types of adult manga editors were recruited from contract manga editing companies within Japan. Morning experimented with artist/editor relationships by incorporating foreign comic editors into the editorial office and de-systematising editorial production methods, by, for example, rejecting market research and long-term series planning. Editors hoped this project would eventually yield less 'commercialised' and therefore paradoxically more commercially viable adult manga, a category of higher quality manga which could be

marketed to an extended adult readership. Increasing the creative role of editors in making adult manga was implicit throughout all of Morning's production experiments.

9.2 Rejecting market research

In order to encourage editors to behave more spontaneously and creatively in their approach to their work and less like well-paid secure salary men, editorial production in Morning had been de-systematised. The deliberate rendering of unplanned production amounted in some senses to an attempt to regress to a more 'amateurish' style of production. Two important techniques of commercial production generally relied upon throughout the manga industry, and especially in magazines attempting to change their form or readership, were officially banished from use in Morning editorial offices. These were the use of readers' surveys (*dokusha ankêto*) to carry out market research, and the use of long-term production schedules by which manga is produced months or years in advance of the date of publication.

In 1994, episodes of regular Morning series were produced 3 weeks in advance of the publication date. Editors and artists of manga series frequently did not know how their stories would develop more than one episode in advance. The details of most story plans were worked out by discussion between artists and editors approximately one month before the actual publication date. By keeping the details of plots unplanned, Morning editorial tried to channel individual editors' own life experiences more directly into the themes of manga series. Thus

it was hoped that determining manga themes on a week to week basis would encourage a more thoughtful and engaged mode of production, which would be influenced by editors' immediate social experiences.

Morning editors also avoided relying on market research information to guide the themes of their stories. Careful consideration of data about readers and their lives and what they thought of the different manga series, gleaned from surveys inserted in each copy of the majority of weekly adult manga magazines, has become a standard part of commercial manga production. Morning editorial policy rejected using market research data in this way because of a belief that reliance on readers' interests and tastes could only downgrade the artistic quality of manga and the freedom of manga artists and editors to create new manga styles and themes. The chief editor of Morning felt that the extensive use of market research would cause Morning magazine to lose its distinctiveness and become a homogenous product created by using the same data as all other adult manga magazines. Whenever possible the chief editor of Morning also avoided attending Kôdansha executive-level market research meetings, which caused friction between the different manga departments of the publishing company.⁵⁰³

Accordingly, the readers' survey used in Morning was rather different to those used in most other boys' and adult magazines. Big Comic Spirits, the direct rival of Morning magazine published by Shôgakukan, for example, asked readers in its 1994

⁵⁰³Discussion with Morning contract editor, Pierre-Alain Szigeti, in morning editorial offices. June, 1994.

readers' survey a series of standard questions on subjects such as their socio-economic circumstances, favourite series, where they saw the current issue advertised, and what they thought of the cover. These details helped the editorial to adjust its current marketing strategy. Readers' surveys in Morning were based on different sets of questions each week, on themes not directly connected with manga or its readership. Themes included anything from what readers thought of hospitals; how they analysed their dreams; to what they thought about fashion and style. Morning's readers' surveys were based less on collecting information which would help the editorial to adjust its immediate marketing techniques, and more on assessing the type of interest readers had in themes which editors were going to use as the basis of new series.

Morning editors aspired to lead rather than to follow readers. One editor proudly remarked he felt that, "Morning readers have a high-tolerance level for new things."⁵⁰⁴ This opinion was based on the fact that Morning was a top manga magazine, with circulation figures of around one million, and yet was also publishing more varied and unusual manga than any other commercial adult magazine. While the relative popularity of different series amongst readers was monitored, this data was not officially allowed to be used to determine how to develop story-lines or to decide which series should be continued and which series should be axed. By limiting the use of sophisticated market research, the space for experimentation, accident, and creative editing was increased.

⁵⁰⁴Discussion with senior morning editor, Tanaka Hideyuki, in the editorial offices. April, 1994.

However within Morning, editors often disagreed about the actual nature of their methods with regard to market research. The rejection of market research was an editorial policy implemented from above by senior editors, but some editors found they could not resist using readers' surveys and sometimes contravened this policy:

You have to care about the readers' surveys a bit. If the readers like an episode then I am happy, if they did not like it then I wonder why they did not *understand* it. Some manga series follow readers' responses entirely but it is better to be one step ahead of the readers and to give them something new. The problem with a readers' survey is that they always tell you about the past and not about the future.⁵⁰⁵

The example of market research illustrates the tension which existed within Morning editorial between production ideals disseminated in editorial policy and what editors felt they could actually implement. The eradication of systematic production techniques in morning editorial was a difficult project which was implemented in fits and starts.

9.3 Editorial creation

In Morning and Afternoon a great emphasis was placed on promoting editors' ability to think of interesting ideas for new manga series. This emphasis was quite different to the idea that manga editors should be manga-lovers. It insisted that the

⁵⁰⁵Discussion with Morning editor, Tanaka Hideyuki. April, 1994. Tanaka Hideyuki made the above comment to me during a discussion in Morning editorial office. The chief editor of Morning overheard his comment and interrupted us, saying that Tanaka was wrong to believe that readers' surveys would ever help him make a popular manga series.

editor himself, and not just the artist, should be more creative. Editors were encouraged to compensate themselves for the lack of creative, story-building ability diagnosed amongst current generations of manga artists. The chief editor and publisher of Morning and Afternoon magazines explained to me the centrality of editorial creativity to Morning:

The editorial process has four main steps, those are: one, think of a plan for a new story; two, get the plan Okayed by the chief editor; three, find a manga artist suitable to write the story and start it; four, control the story well and keep feeding it with new components. The speciality of Morning is that we have a stage one - thinking of a good new idea for a story. Other manga magazines don't have that stage. If we did not have stage one then we would just wind up mimicking other magazines and disappear.⁵⁰⁶

Strong competition existed between manga editors over how well they were able to create successful new manga series. Those most experienced in the creative task were the most highly respected individuals in the editorial who became informally exempt from attending editorial meetings where the main purpose was often to inspire, monitor and lecture unproductive editors. The most important element of each manga series is the idea on which it is based, on which the claim to authorship and originality is centred. The removal of conceptual functions by editors from artists in Morning editorial created an additional friction in their already complicated relationship.

Morning editors developed ideas for new manga series themselves, often quite separately from manga artists. These ideas were

⁵⁰⁶ Interview with the chief editor of Morning and Afternoon magazines, Kurihara Yoshiyuki, in Morning editorial offices. June, 1994.

raised and discussed within weekly editorial meetings (*henshū chair*). In one such editorial meeting the following ideas, some already partly researched, were put forward by editors as themes for potential new manga stories. One editor suggested a story about people and 'iron' set in a period of industrial revolution. This editor had read an article about making iron in a business magazine and thought it would provide a good setting for a strong 'industrial age male hero.' Another editor wanted to do a story about the Mafia money-lender world and its links to Tokyo stock market dealing. The series would be designed to take up the issue of 'grey areas' which exist at the interstices of legal and criminal business activity, a topic visible in both the Japanese and international media in 1994. This editor had already asked Dynasearch, a small American research company in the USA to research the details for such a story if it were set in the USA. Another editor explained his plans for a story based around an extremely strong woman who gets married many times. The editor had found a female artist to draft this story but was having difficulties because he felt that the female lead character portrayed in the artist's drafts was consistently too meek and gentle in appearance. Another editor proposed a series about what ex-members of The Red Army - active in urban guerrilla warfare during the late 1960s and early 1970s - were now doing with their lives. The documentary style series would be based on real life interviews with previous Red Army members. Other editors pointed out that it was unlikely that the editorial would be able to locate or buy interviews with these people who are still on wanted lists across the country. Another editor suggested a series about a secret rocket industry. Other

editors said they felt that it would be hard to make the story really 'plausible' to readers. Another editor was interested in making a series about a gay ballet troupe in which all the dancers were transvestites and had an artist and a script writer lined up for this project. Another editor explained that he wanted to do a series about the history of colonialism. Another editor was engaged in research to produce a series based on the theme of smell.⁵⁰⁷

What is apparent about the majority of these typical ideas for new stories thought up by Morning editors is that their interest value was based on the presentation of specialist information. Stories put forward by Morning editors are invariably about historical events, dramas based in professional worlds, or scandalous subjects similar to those focused on in many Japanese news magazines. Editors proposing scandals and popular subjects as ideas on which to base new stories tended to cull their subject matter from themes topical in the rest of the Japanese media at that time. In this respect, editors' ideas were often second-hand and only original in the sense that they had not previously been dealt with in manga. Of the ideas for new series raised in one weekly editorial meeting, listed above, approximately half were based on popular themes already circulating in the Japanese media. The idea for a story about a secret rocket building industry was based on an NHK television programme about secret rocket making societies in Scotland.⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁷Morning editorial meeting. May, 1994.

⁵⁰⁸A documentary programme about secret rocket making societies in Scotland was aired on NHK television in Winter 1993-1994. Discussion with free-lance researcher for NHK television employed to carry out research into Scottish rocket makers. Tom Feiling, UK. September, 1995.

The idea for a series about a gay ballet troupe was probably stimulated by Trocadera, a European queer ballet troupe, which toured Japan in 1994. The editor who wanted to make a manga series about the sense of smell admitted to me that she got the idea after reading the Japanese translation of the international best-seller, *Perfume*, written by Peter Süskind, which received a high-profile in the Japanese media in 1994.⁵⁰⁹

The conception of new ideas to turn into manga stories by editors did not take place in isolation but by reference to subjects editors had learned about during their education, from their private interests, as well as editors' on-going research into topical themes in the rest of the Japanese media. Company editor of the successful Morning series *Naniwa Kinyūdō* (Osaka Streets of Gold), which includes detailed business information, applied to the series his own personal fascination with money and experience dealing in the Tokyo stock market.⁵¹⁰ During Morning editorial meetings, free discussions about current events and news items were occasionally engaged in, in an attempt to discover interesting new subjects for manga stories. These discussions covered everything from evil women who deliberately spread AIDS, to the sad position of bachelor Japanese farmers who travel to poorer Asian countries to find brides prepared to stay in rural regions with them. The nature of these discussions in Morning meetings was strongly amateurish. Highly-educated editors generally discussed subjects

⁵⁰⁹Discussion with female contract Morning editor, Iishi Hanako, in Morning editorial offices after this editorial meeting. May, 1994.

⁵¹⁰Discussion with Morning editors, Ogawa Haruo and Doi Takashi, in Morning editorial offices. May, 1994.

in a prejudiced, uninformed and impressionistic manner.⁵¹¹ The undisciplined nature of editorial discussion illustrates that the principal goal of such discussions was not to apply a critical approach, which is that presumed of intellectuals, but to locate subjects which were already, in their current form, "very interesting" to the average reader.

9.4 Editors as social researchers

The development of educational manga since 1986 had a great influence on the themes of new adult manga magazines. A significant new aspect of the functions carried out by editors in Morning was research that had become necessary to produce well informed, specialist, educational or 'issue' based manga stories. Editors carried out detailed research into subjects they felt might make interesting new themes for mature audiences. In Morning editorial a wide range of research techniques was used, often at considerable expense.

Initially all editors were encouraged to keep abreast of subjects topical in the multi media and to be aware of new books, magazines, the news, television, film, theatre, dance, and foreign culture. A large variety of magazines were made available to read in the editorial office. In order to research specific subjects, editors carried out research into literary

⁵¹¹The social status of women in Japanese society became an increasingly divisive domestic issue during the 1980s and 1990s. Many ideas for stories raised during editorial discussion related in some way to the subject of 'women'. Some members of the small minority of 6 female editors present at editorial meetings, felt uncomfortable with the extent of misogyny freely expressed by other editors while discussing ideas for new manga stories targeted at a largely male adult audience.

and secondary sources and made direct contact with individual informants. The editor of the Morning story, *Naniwa Kinyûdô*, featuring specialist financial and business information, spent a large part of his time reading specialist business magazines and books in order to incorporate up-to-date business advice into the plot of the series.⁵¹² In the case of other series based in professional-worlds such as the police, the navy, doctors, diet, or monasteries, specialists and individuals professionally engaged in the area of interest are employed to advise editors and act as informers. Advisors inform editors about visual details, personal anecdotes, social relations, key issues, and may also be employed to provide photographs.⁵¹³ Extensive editorial research was carried out in the preparation of the Morning series *Silent Service*, about a Japanese built nuclear submarine which mutinies and then wages a war against the United Nations. This included discussions with military specialists and academics, and the purchase of expensive original aerial photographs of naval boats and submarines from military photographers.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹²Interview with Morning editor, Doi Takashi, in Morning editorial offices. June, 1994.

⁵¹³The development of educational manga is also linked to the rise of photographic realism in the drawing style of adult manga artists. In order to achieve realistic styles manga artists have begun to rely on the close examination of photographs. In many cases manga artists' drawings are so similar to original photographs that a new copyright problem has emerged in which photographers have begun to sue manga publishing companies for copying their photographs without permission. In order to get around this problem, editors in Morning try to take their own photographs of the real life locations manga series are set in, or to pay photographers for original prints, as well as encouraging artists to try to disguise their sources and methods after copying photographs. Interview with Morning editor Doi Takashi, in Morning editorial offices. June, 1994.

⁵¹⁴Discussion with senior Morning editor, Shin Kasuyuki, whilst travelling to artist Kawaguchi Kaiji's studio-home. March, 1994.

Whilst girls' and ladies' manga has been unaffected by the education and information manga trends, some leading boys' manga magazines have also begun to serialise 'issue'-based stories. These new series are set within the key genres of boys' manga; *konjô* manga ('valour' or 'feeling' manga), *sports konjô* ('sports feeling') manga, or *love-comedies*, all of which focus in some way or other on human relationships and aspirations. *Super D K* serialised in *Magazine*, is a story about the life of a surgeon which includes detailed information about medicine and human biology. The editor in charge of this series regularly reads specialist surgeons' textbooks and medical journals, had interviewed surgeons and gone into the operating theatres with them.⁵¹⁵ The previous example of an editor who attended actual hospital operations raises the subject of participant observation techniques used by editors. Gathering personal experience, feelings, anecdotes and ideas is the most intensive and expensive form of editorial research. Morning editorial was unusual in the extent to which editors were encouraged to conduct experience-gathering forays into all corners of Japanese and foreign societies.

In some cases editors received funding from the editorial to take their artists on expensive trips. Yamanaka Yûsuke a successful younger editor in *Morning* took a two-week trip to Tibet with a manga artist in 1994 in order to gain experiences to produce a new story on Tibetan Buddhism and religious beliefs in an afterlife in Japan. In Tibet Yamanaka Yûsuke and the artist stayed in the Lhasa Holiday Inn, and together interviewed

⁵¹⁵Interview with deputy chief editor of *Magazine* in *Magazine* editorial offices, Ishii Tôhru. April, 1994.

several monks and local experts on Tibetan religion, and took a large number of photographs for use by the manga artist in drawing the costumes and scenery for manga later.⁵¹⁶ Artist Arai Hideki was taken to a remote fishing village in Japan by his editor in *Morning*. Over three days they explored the village, talked with fishermen and took photographs in order to gather experience to produce a series based in a fishing village - which Arai subsequently did not produce.⁵¹⁷ The editor of the series *Silent Service* travelled to New York with the artist Kawaguchi Kaiji, several of his assistants and his family, in order to gather ideas and experience, and take photographs, before shifting the location of events in this important series to the UN headquarters in New York.⁵¹⁸ The editor of *Morning's* colour series, *Sai*, about a couple who love Japanese nature and traditions, took artist Watase Seizô for an extremely exclusive weekend, experience gathering in Kyoto. Watase Seizô and the editor of the series stayed in historical inns, visited rare tea houses run by matrilineal hereditary geisha, and took lots of photographs.⁵¹⁹

Research carried out by editors in *Morning* is a qualitatively new development in editorial production. Editorial research forms the basis of the education and information manga genres and also has encouraged the development of a complementary realist drawing style prominent in new adult manga. There are

⁵¹⁶Interview with *Morning* editor, Yamanaka Yûsuke, in *Morning* editorial offices. February, 1994.

⁵¹⁷Interview with *Morning* editor, Ichihara Shinji, in *Morning* editorial offices. March, 1994.

⁵¹⁸Discussion with senior *Morning* editor, Shin Kasuyuki, in *Morning* editorial offices. February, 1994.

⁵¹⁹Interview with senior *Morning* editor, Tanaka Hideyuki, in *Morning* editorial offices. March, 1994.

two principal effects of editorial research. The first of these is an educational approach which bases the main content of manga series on factual specialisation rather than on subjective opinions and feelings. Well-researched 'issue' or 'location'-based manga series tend to embody an objectifying approach to the world which has precedence over subjective experiences and feelings. The second result of editorial research is the increasingly dominant intellectual role of editors in planning manga series. In series researched by Morning not only did editors play a role in manga production by providing artists with information but also provided artists with editors' subjective experiences accumulated during experience-gathering trips. Editorial research in Morning has contributed to the substitution of the social experiences and feelings of freelance artists for those of company editors.

9.5 "GAROtique" and the investment in unpopular manga

In 1986 Morning launched a monthly sister manga magazine, Afternoon, which was still being produced in an area of Morning editorial offices in 1994. Afternoon, appropriately subtitled MANGA FRONTIER, was used as an experimental zone, in which the most unusual new artists would be encouraged to develop their graphic styles. While in Afternoon emphasis was placed on the visual aspect of manga and giving a relatively free reign to artists' drawing styles, Morning was considered to be a complementary magazine in which emphasis was placed on developing the greater creative role of editors in developing story lines. Afternoon was over 1000 pages in length, and

contained enough pages to publish a large variety of new artists' work. Though some 'unpopular' series such as *Pierre et Ses Amis*,⁵²⁰ *Gamurakan*, and *Golden Lucky* were published in Morning, there was a general division of series allocated to Afternoon and Morning, and profits and losses in Morning editorial were partly divided between the two magazines.⁵²¹ Afternoon had low circulation figures of around 20 000 copies per issue and had been operating at a loss since its launch in 1986.

At the time of the launch of Afternoon magazine in 1986, and continuing until 1989, Morning editorial also published a series of special edition magazines (*zôkanshi*) entitled The OPEN. (See a cover of The OPEN in Plate 13.) The goal of The OPEN magazine series was to publish the works of a wide variety of unknown manga artists, several of whom had recently been working for the non-commercial avant garde magazine GARO, and many of whom had unusual and "arty" drawing styles not usually published in commercial adult manga. One senior editor of Morning, with a personal fondness for subculture, explained the following:

In 1986 and 1987 we published lots of manga such as the work of Taishô Yarô, which won the Morning Comic Open competition top prize in 1987. When you look at it from a distance it is stuff that would not be out of place in GARO. We found lots of talented fresh artists at that time.⁵²²

⁵²⁰This series will be discussed in the next section 9.6.

⁵²¹The deputy chief editor of Morning, Fukumoto Hiroyuki, explained that: "Afternoon has been running at a loss for 9 years now. That has only been possible because Morning makes a profit." Discussion with Fukumoto Hiroyuki in Morning editorial offices. January, 1994.

⁵²²Interview with senior Morning editor, Tsutsumi Yasumitsu, in Morning editorial offices. March, 1995.

Plate 13

Morning Special Issue: The OPEN

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

Source: Front cover of The OPEN, published by Morning, 25 October 1988.

GARO is the title of a famous subculture *gekiga* magazine. Of the artists producing subculture-linked styles of manga recruited in this period, several, including Iwaaki Hiroshi, Takamochi Gen, Tsuchida Seiki and Tanaka Masashi, have now become leading artists working for Morning and other commercial adult manga magazines. (See a sample of Iwaaki Hitoshi's *Parasite!* in Figure 28.) Manga critic Kure Tomofusa cleverly described the result of Morning editorials inclusion of 'raw' artists, normally banished to minor publications, into Morning, as "GAROtique" style manga - commercial adult manga with some of the flavour of a non-commercial magazine.⁵²³ Though editors perpetually searched for fresh, genuine talent amongst newcomer manga artists and artists working for more minor publications, in 1994 this search appeared to be frustrated by a lack of results.

Supporting the production of what was considered to be artistically superior manga was not an immediately profitable venture. In order to cultivate adult manga culture Morning management sometimes ignored their most basic commercial function - to please their readers. Kuroda Iô was a newcomer artist in his early twenties who began to produce the primitive-art and folk-tale inspired series *Words and Pictures of the Great Japanese Troll* (*Dai Nippon Tengû To E Kotoba*) for Afternoon while still a university student in 1994. (See a sample of Kuroda's work in Figure 29.) Kuroda's manga is said to be influenced by new-wave *gekiga* artists such as Yoshiharu Tsuge, and is produced using a technique which gives the

⁵²³Interview with manga critic, Kure Tomofusa, at his home. March, 1994.

Figure 28

Parasite! by Iwaaki Hitoshi

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Figure 29

Pictures and words of the Great Japanese Troll (Dai Nihon Tengu no E to Kotoba) by Kuroda Iô

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

appearance of a traditional art drawn by brush (*fude*) strokes. Kuroda's work, though distinctive and detailed, contained few of the most popular elements of adult manga. The chief editor of Afternoon magazine explained about this artist:

He will not sell very well. Not many readers will like him. People who like him will really like him and people who do not, will not like him at all. He is the type of artist only a narrow range of people can relate to. But the fact that such a talented artist exists at all is very important so I want to publish him anyhow. Someone with skill like he has can have a good influence on the state of the manga industry generally.⁵²⁴

Fukumoto Yôji is an older artist producing the unusual surreal series *Gamurakan* for Morning magazine. (See a sample of Fukumoto's work in Figure 30.) Though Fukumoto's story was not popular with Morning readers in 1994, editors allowed Fukumoto a great deal of freedom to continue producing it. Employing artists' assistants to speed up production to commercially-viable rates carried the simultaneous potential to reduce the artistic cohesion and quality of adult manga. Fukumoto was one of a minority of professional adult manga artists who preferred to produce their manga entirely by their own hand in order to maintain the strength of their artistic vision and the cohesion of its execution. Fukumoto's slow techniques were indulged by Morning editorial:

We have no problem with his strange pictures. In no sense would Morning attempt to restrain his imagination. The only barrier Fukumoto faces is time. Fukumoto rarely uses assistants and works very slowly. Morning has allowed him to take a three month break in the middle of his series *Gamurakan* in order to let him

⁵²⁴Interview with chief editor of Morning, Ogawa Haruo, in Morning editorial offices. June, 1994.

Figure 30

Gamurakan by Fukumoto Yôji

The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

Source: Morning, 25 August 1995.

continue to work slowly and maintain the high artistic quality of his drafts.⁵²⁵

Commenting on Fukumoto, another senior editor suggested that Morning editorial did not in fact consider itself primarily a business:

If it was a perfect business we were running here then this work, which is the kind of thing that only real manga connoisseurs like, would not get published. This writer does not write about everyday events and his powers of imagination are so strong that he is unpopular with most readers. But if we editors like a work then we want to show it to the readers regardless.⁵²⁶

Overall Morning had been a successful enterprise since its launch in 1982 and had sold enough copies of books of more popular series such as *Silent Service* and *Section Chief Shima Kôzaku* to cover the losses incurred by publishing unpopular manga series. The high level of experimentation in Morning editorial was also made possible by the size and renowned wealth of the publishing company Kôdansha. Editors of Magazine, produced in a different department of Kôdansha, expressed annoyance with Morning editorial for its expensive production experiments which they felt were eating into company profits which their magazines, produced by more cost-effective methods, had played a large part in raising.⁵²⁷ Editors of Young Sunday published by Shôgakukan on the other hand wished to follow Morning's example and place more unusual manga in their magazine

⁵²⁵Interview with Morning contract editor, Hayashi Tarô, in Morning editorial offices. July, 1994.

⁵²⁶Interview with senior editor of Morning, Shin Kasayuki, in Morning editorial offices. June, 1994.

⁵²⁷Discussion with Deputy chief editor of Magazine, Iishi Tohru, Magazine editorial offices. May, 1994.

but lamented that they could never afford to carry out such an expensive project.

The focus on the artistic integrity of Morning artists was heightened through the publication of prize winning newcomers' drafts in a special section in both Morning and Afternoon magazines. The work of the top three finalists of Morning manga competitions appeared in a section towards the back of the magazine entitled 'Comic Open', whilst the winning drafts of Afternoon competitions of over 100 pages long were printed in a section of Afternoon entitled 'The Hundred Club'. Informal policy in Morning editorial was that the top ten finalists work, and at the very least, the top three prize winning drafts, should be published in the magazine without any editing. Publication of the work of amateur artists also enhanced the impression given by manga competitions generally, that manga was generated by talented freelance artists.

9.6 Introducing foreign artists into adult manga

In addition to changing the conditions within which manga artists worked in Japan, Morning imported artists from different social and commercial environments. In 1989 Morning launched an international project through which they were able, amongst other things, to locate and employ foreign comic artists in other countries around the globe to produce manga for adult Japanese audiences. It was reasoned that foreign artists from countries in which there is only a small comic industry might use original adult comic drawing styles which when edited by

Japanese editors could have a positive influence on the adult manga medium. By 1994 Morning had in stock over 1500 pages of original manga produced by foreign artists and available to Morning for whatever usage they determined over the following years.⁵²⁸ The international project involved employing 10 foreign and Japanese editors resident in foreign countries to search, translate, and edit suitable comic artists.⁵²⁹ The international project involved sending unspecialised Morning editors to search for potential new artists at foreign comic festivals in Europe and USA. Each January editors attended the Angoulême comic festival in Central France, and in August editors attended the International Comic Festival in San Francisco. This was an immensely expensive operation which Morning hoped would eventually yield interesting and profitable results:

We are thinking along two lines now, either to sell adult manga abroad like a Japanese equivalent to Hollywood movies, or to absorb foreign artists into Japan. We are not sure which idea is best yet. This is why we are inviting so many foreign comic artists and critics to come to Tokyo, even though it is costing us an awful lot of money. We think we will get the money back eventually because the manga they write will help us find a new route in adult manga.⁵³⁰

⁵²⁸Interview with the senior editor in charge of the Morning International project, Tsutsumi Yasumitsu, in the foyer bar of the Tokyo Imperial Hotel where editors were gathered in groups after attending the annual Kôdansha Manga Awards (Kôdansha Mangashô). August, 1994.

⁵²⁹In Spain Morning employed a Japanese couple, Suzuki Keiko and Shigeru, as overseas editors; in France, a resident Japanese, Hasegawa Takako; in Germany, a Japanese-German couple Junko and Jurgen Seebeck; in USA Morning contracted overseas editorial work to a small research company called Dynasearch, which it virtually owned; in Taiwan Morning employed a Japanese, Mr. Tokuda; in South Korea Morning employed a Korean, Mr. Son; and finally, in Italy Morning employed a Japanese, Mr Yamane, as overseas editors. Discussion with the senior Morning editor in charge of organising the international project, Tsutsumi Yasumitsu, in Morning editorial offices. June 1994.

⁵³⁰Interview with a junior Morning editor with some responsibility for the international project, Ichihara Shinji, in Morning editorial offices. January, 1994.

In 1994 Morning was in regular contact with a stable of over 50 foreign artists, including many already major figures such as Herve Balu, Jacques de Loustal and Joly Guth from France, Chen Uen from Taiwan and Hwang Mina from South Korea. Chen Uen, one of the most popular manga artists in South East Asia (also a famous interior designer) was commissioned to produce the extremely popular series *Heroic Stories of the Eastern Chou Dynasty* (*Tôshûei-yûden*) about a fantastical pan-Asian empire for Morning, whilst Hwang Mina produced another popular series *Uni* about the contemporary legacies of Korean history. (See a sample of Chen Uen's work *Heroic Stories of the Eastern Chou Dynasty* in Figure 31.) The first full length 400 page story by a European artist, Herve Balu, entitled *Highway to the Sun* (*Taiyô Kôsoku*) was serialised in Morning in the summer and autumn of 1994. A series of short photo-montage episodes entitled *Dominator* by British artist Tony Luke has been published in Afternoon magazine since 1993. The majority of European artists begun working for Morning by submitting short 8 page stories to be published in a series of foreign manga called *Pierre et Ses Amis*. This series ran between October 1992 and April 1994, and was composed of different short stories by artists from Italy, Germany, USA, Belgium, France, Britain, Yugoslavia, and Spain. *Pierre et Ses Amis* was organised by Morning editorial's resident Japanese-speaking French editor, Pierre-Alan Szigeti.⁵³¹

⁵³¹Before being employed in this special assignment with Morning editorial, Pierre-Alan Szigeti worked for five years in the comics' division of the French publishing company, Albin Michel, in Paris.

Figure 31

Heroic Stories of the Eastern Chou Dynasty by Chen Uen
The image cannot be displayed in ORA due to copyright reasons

Source: Tôshûei-yûden Vol. 3.(1993), Tokyo: Kôdansha

The use of foreign artists attracted a great deal of scepticism from Morning readers who did not generally like the foreign manga stories by European artists. During 1994, both series and short stories by European artists came close to bottom in the weekly popularity ratings of Morning series calculated from readers' surveys. Manga drawn by foreign Asian artists, especially series by Chen Uen, fared far better on the popularity ratings. Many manga editors, including those in Morning editorial, were similarly unconvinced of the relevance of European or American comic artists and production techniques to Japanese adult manga. Morning editors had an additional reason to be privately unimpressed: the cost of the international programme was a heavy financial burden on Morning, made worse by the unpopularity of European manga with Morning's readers. In 1995 two manga books produced by French comic artists were published by Morning for the domestic Japanese readership; these were Edmond Baudoin's *Tabi (Voyage)*, and Herve Balu's *Taiyô Kôsoke (Autoroute du Soleil)*. In 1996 Morning also published Luis Maldonado's *Rosario*. This trial publication of foreign manga was an expensive failure: each manga book sold less than 5 thousand copies.⁵³² However, the international programme run by Morning magazine, which was the first of its kind in the contemporary manga industry, was admired by editors of other magazines, including Young Sunday.

⁵³²Morning's French contract editor Pierre-Alan Szigeti explained that while the precise circulation figures were undisclosed, it was common knowledge within Morning editorial that these three books had made substantial losses, and almost certainly sold less than 5000 copies each. Correspondence with Pierre-Alan Szigeti by Email. 21 May 1996.

In Spring 1994 Young Sunday followed Morning's lead and introduced an Asian Manga Festival (*Asia Manga Matsuri*) starting with a series of four short stories by manga artists from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Korea. A senior editor of Young Sunday explained that the main attraction of artists from other Asian countries for Young Sunday was that, unlike Japanese newcomer artists, they had not yet become accustomed to a large commercial manga industry:

Manga has lost its artistic elements because of the activities of companies. We have to think about the situation again. That is why I have been to Hong Kong to find artists who will still write like artists and not just as if they were making a commodity. We have got three Asian artists working for Young Sunday now, from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Korea. They all write manga about the young people in their own countries. To an extent we do ask them to write along certain themes, for instance, our artist in Hong Kong is producing a series about violent youth brought up in slums who join the local Mafia. However we also want them to contribute their own style and interests as much as possible.⁵³³

By using foreign artists, Morning and Young Sunday hoped to capture in comics and manga produced by young artists living in other societies, a dynamism and orientation towards social themes which they felt was now lacking amongst young Japanese artists.

⁵³³Discussion with Young Sunday editor, Musha Masaaki, in a restaurant near Shôgakukan Building.

9.7 Internationalising manga

Morning carried out ongoing inquiries into the possibilities for developing editorial techniques. One perspective held by editors of Morning's expensive international project was that it was a project designed to revitalise the Japanese adult manga medium by the introduction of more artistic foreign comic artists into Japanese manga. A rather different and interesting perspective held by the chief editor of Morning and Tsutsumi Yasumitsu, a senior editor in charge of the international project, was that creating new forms of adult manga by introducing foreign manga into Japan was an experiment which hinged on editors rather than artists. Tsutsumi explained this view in the following way:

To make new manga we do not mix the themes of the manga; we mix the different methods of manga and comic production. Morning manga is made by a single editor and a single artist working together, American comics are made by a large team of people and European comics are made just by individual artists. What we want to do with the international project is to try to edit foreign artists. We want to create a new method of production.⁵³⁴

Since 1989 Morning had funded an International Manga Fellowship programme (*Morning Kokusai Manga Tsûshin*). Through the Manga Fellowship programme funds were provided for foreign artists, editors and comic critics to travel to Japan for variable lengths of time up to 6 months, to learn about manga under the supervision of Morning editors in return for contributing their editorial or artistic experiences to the editorial. Although not a critic or editor of manga I too was awarded a 6 month Morning

⁵³⁴Interview with senior editor of Morning, Tsutsumi Yasumitsu, in Morning editorial office. July, 1994.

Manga Fellowship, between March and September 1994, starting from a point 2 months into my fieldwork.⁵³⁵

By 1994 a handful of well-established foreign comic artists had produced manga series for Morning under the supervision of Japanese editors. Sera (Ing Phousera) a French-Cambodian comic artist who visited Morning editorial office for 3 months during the summer of 1994 produced a manga series entitled *Retour de Soleil* in the editorial offices under the direction of a senior Morning editor. French artist, Balu (Herve Balu) produced a 400 page series *Autoroute du Soleil (Taiyô Kôsoke)* partly under Morning editorial supervision. Famous Spanish artist, Luis Alberto Maldonado decided in 1995 to cooperate with Morning's programme of production experimentation by accepting a full time job as an artist's assistant with the leading adult manga artist currently working for Morning and Big Comic Spirits, Kawaguchi Kaiji. Maldonado wanted to study the techniques of manga composition in order to expand his skills and develop his work. Although his official status dropped from that of a famous comic artist to manga artist's assistant, working with one of the leading adult manga artists in Japan was in fact a highly coveted position amongst many Japanese and a good place to learn new drawing techniques. The idea for Maldonado to work as

⁵³⁵Before starting research in Morning editorial office in December 1993, I was asked to complete a formal application for the Morning International Fellowship. Senior editors who had agreed to allow me to use Morning editorial office as a base for my research felt that I should adopt the formal status of International Manga Fellow in order not to confuse other editors or Kôdansha employees about the exact purposes of my presence in the editorial office. After 2 months of fieldwork Morning decided to award me a bursary too, provided in the form of a wage-packet distributed at the same time as company editors received their monthly salaries. Though individual generosity certainly came to bear, the full reasons Morning had for deciding to award me a bursary remained uncertain.

Kawaguchi Kaiji's assistant came from Morning editorial office and Maldonado was not paid in the normal fashion by Kawaguchi, but by Morning under the auspices of the Manga Fellowship.⁵³⁶

Working in the opposite direction to that of involving foreign comic artists in producing manga in Japan, Morning had made some tentative bids at publishing manga for non-domestic audiences. A variety of Japanese boys' and girls' manga series were translated into English and sold in the United States during the 1980s.⁵³⁷ Two companies, Viz Communications, a branch of Shôgakukan and First Comics, a branch of a US comic publisher, successfully published translations of popular, classic manga series including *The Legend of Kamui (Kamui Gaiden)* and *Lone Wolf and Cub*. In France and Italy manga series such as a Fujishima Kôsukey's *Aah My Goddess! (Aa Megami Sama!)* published in *Afternoon* magazine have been translated and published with some success in *Kappa* magazine owned by Edizione Star Comics.⁵³⁸ *Kappa* magazine, containing selected series from Kôdansha manga magazines, was launched in Italy in 1992, where manga has found its most consistent European audience. While *Kappa*'s initial circulation figures reached 50 000, these figures fell quickly and settled at 20 000, representing a small regular readership. All of these manga series achieved, what, calculated from the perspective of their Japanese publishers, are extremely modest sales figures of between 10 and 40 000 copies per book. All of

⁵³⁶Discussion with Morning contract editor, Pierre Alan-Szigeti. Email. May 1996.

⁵³⁷As throughout this thesis, I am discussing manga books and not animation.

⁵³⁸Details of these are available in Toren Smith, (1993) The Japan Foundation - Japanese Book News. 2: 2.

these publishing ventures were originally undertaken for a Japanese audience, and, in the case of *The Legend of Kamui* and *Lone Wolf and Cub*, produced over a quarter of a decade ago too. Occasional manga series which have become popular in the United States and Europe have tended to be either well-known cultural classics like *Kamui*, or contemporary Lolita complex manga, such as *Aah My Goddess!*, which are currently popular amongst amateur manga or *otaku* readerships in Japan. The popularity of these manga series abroad has therefore been accidental and incidental to their original production.

One of the less clearly circumscribed aspirations of Morning editorial was to develop a new form of 'international' or 'universal' manga. This would be adult manga conceived and produced for an international readership at the outset. Morning worked in two directions to test the potential for international manga. On the one hand, Morning considered whether adult manga series such as *Silent Service* (*Chinmoku no Kantai*), which were presented as substantive, realistic and serious manga series, could be promoted as respectable forms of culture both in Japan and abroad simultaneously. The success of foreign editions of adult manga books such as *Made in Japan* and *A Manga Introduction to the Japanese Economy* (discussed in Chapter Seven) suggested that adult manga could be targeted at a Japanese and international readership at the same time. *Silent Service* was translated and published in Taiwan, where it met with moderate success, and also in South Korea, where it was unpopular. Though *Silent Service* is strongly rumoured to have been translated entirely into English by Frederik Schodt as part of the US

pentagon's information gathering activities, it has not been officially translated and published in English by Morning despite being widely reviewed. The probable reason for not translating *Silent Service* into English is the unwelcome reaction which might greet its political stance against the US.⁵³⁹ (See Chapter 7.4) This case shows that the themes of many respectable adult manga series have turned out to be more tied to particular aspects of contemporary Japanese culture and politics, in this case a theme of complex yet implicit nationalism, than editors might have initially envisaged.

Another approach adopted by Morning was the development of more absolutely universal manga - without speech bubbles. Morning editorial contracted Tanaka Masashi, one of the more avant garde style artists recruited by Morning in 1987, to produce a 'no-speech bubble' series for Morning magazine about the adventures and guile of a charming dinosaur-like creature. GON was serialised in Morning and became popular with its Japanese readers before being published and sold abroad in 1994. The series, or at least the book cover, was translated into over 9 languages and distributed in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Thailand, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Taiwan, and Korea. In each country, sales of this book were estimated at around 20 000 copies. GON became immensely popular with foreign comic and manga lovers and became a good advertisement for Morning and Afternoon magazines in comic fan and comic artist circles abroad.

⁵³⁹The editor of *Silent Service* was clearly sensitive to criticisms of the series from left-wingers and foreigners, and stated only that the series would not be translated and was not at all related to real political events. Discussion with Morning editor, Shin Kasayuki. February, 1994.

GON was considered successful as an experiment in producing international manga despite the fact that it made losses rather than profits on its foreign sales. GON indicated to Morning the difficulties of marketing manga outside Japan where audiences and distribution systems for manga are very limited and even a book series which is popular cannot generate a profit. Morning editors estimated that even if they could publish manga successfully in Europe or the United States, sales figures of 50 000, which would challenge the sales figures of the most popular local comics, would still be too low to cover their production costs in Japan.⁵⁴⁰

9.8 Contract editors

During the late 1980s adult manga offices began to introduce new sorts of editors into their editorials who were sub-contracted from specialist manga editing companies.⁵⁴¹ By introducing contract editors into the editorial Morning could both realise a more pro-active style of editing, which required more editorial time, and also draw both the enthusiasm for manga, and the varied social experiences of contract editors, into the production process. The number of contract manga editors working in adult manga editorials and in Morning in particular increased quickly during the 1990s. In 1995, 18 of the total combined staff of 52 editors in Morning and Afternoon editorials were contract editors and Morning employed more contract manga

⁵⁴⁰Discussion with senior Morning editor in charge of the international program, Tsutsumi Yasumitsu. June, 1994.

⁵⁴¹Only the adult manga editorials of Shôgakukan and Kôdansha had employed contract manga editors to work inside the company with other manga editors.

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editors than any other manga editorial. Contract editors were hired by Morning editorial from a variety of specialist contract-editing companies including Gauche, Comic House and Ginnansha.

The oldest and largest of the contract manga editing companies is Ginnansha which was founded in 1973 and which had 70 employees by 1994. As the son of an artistic, socialist family, and elder brother of Shirato Sanpei, one of the most important artists in Japanese *gekiga* history, Okamoto Makoto was in an ideal position to establish a contract editing company which could link individuals with manga editing potential to large manga publishing companies. Until the mid-1980s Ginnansha carried out minor editorial work such as introductory guides (*nyûmon*); practical advice pages (*how-to* articles); a few pages of work from television programme guide magazines, on its own premises, while attempting to pursue its main objective which was to sell ideas for new manga stories to manga editorials.⁵⁴² From the mid-1980s Ginnansha began to develop a reputation for the high quality of its ideas, which it had sold in the form of brief reports to manga editorials, and it was able to begin to contract individual editors to work inside the manga editorial offices of publishing companies.

In addition to liking manga, contract manga editors are frequently individuals who could have gone to top universities and even entered large publishing companies directly, but who chose instead to pursue their personal interests at an early

⁵⁴²Interview with the boss of Ginnansha, Okamoto Makoto, in a restaurant near the Shôgakukan building. July, 1994.

stage in their lives. The job of manga editing is popular amongst graduates who want to work with manga, and individuals who have dropped out of conventional career routes. Each vacancies' advertisement posted by Ginnansha in 1992 attracted between 700 and 1000 applicants, from amongst whom only 2 or 3 were employed. Okamoto Makoto, described the kind of people he wanted to hire as contract manga editors as those who were both creative and 'in touch':

We do not want childish people who can only imagine the issues of their own generation. All the editors at Ginnansha are outstanding individuals who really understand society in one way or another. More and more of them have language skills too, as this becomes more in demand in publishing companies.⁵⁴³

Torigae Takushi was recruited to Ginnansha in April 1994 to work in the editorial office of Young Sunday magazine. A young man in his mid twenties with unusual socialist ideals, Torigae represented well the exceptional social and cultural experiences expected of contract editors. Torigae speaks Chinese, Korean, Spanish and English as well as Japanese and has lived in Costa Rica for three years, in China for four years and in Korea for one year. As a child Torigae had been encouraged to read manga by his expatriate father who felt that manga was a progressive part of Japanese culture. Both Torigae's father and his brother had attempted and failed to debut as manga artists. Torigae attended Waseda, a top ranking university where he specialised in Asian culture and proceeded to do research for a Master's thesis on Chinese nationalism. When he was unable to secure

⁵⁴³Okamoto Makoto. July, 1994.

funding to continue his research and pursue a career in academia, Torigae decided to become a manga editor instead.

Hayashi Tarô was employed by Comic House contract editing company in April 1994 and immediately sent to work in Morning editorial office. Hayashi had studied Biology in university for four years before dropping out and forming a rock band. Hayashi's rock band did not succeed in breaking into the music industry and prior to starting his placement in Morning editorial, Hayashi had alternated between selling jewellery on the streets, and doing part-time shifts as a telephone salesman. Although he had read manga since his teenage years and become something of a connoisseur with a taste for new wave *gekiga*, Hayashi had never been a strong fan of manga or attempted to become a manga artist himself. Both Torigae Takushi and Hayashi Tarô were extremely pleased to have been hired as manga editors and considered themselves to be in fortunate positions.

Contract manga editors were paid by contract editing companies at a rate far lower than that of the salaries of publishing company employees. The majority were prepared to work harder than company editors for lower wages because they wanted to work with manga. Moreover, many contract editors were also individuals who had missed the opportunity to enter a *nenko seido* system of life-time graduate employment, by dropping out of university courses or the graduate recruitment process operated by universities. Okamoto Makoto suggested that one of the initial reasons for establishing contract manga editing companies was actually a relative one - economics. Contract

editors' wages are low and they could be hired by publishers at a rate which undercut the wage of a company employee:

Our best selling point is that there are no otaku and no lazybones in Ginnansha. There is no competition or incentive to work hard in big companies and keeping lazy workers has become expensive. They need cheap 'hungry' hard workers from small companies like mine who do the job because we want to do it.⁵⁴⁴

As the role of editors became more important in the industrial production of manga, the number of editors allocated to manga editorials by parent publishing companies became increasingly insufficient for the amount of work that editorials had to perform. Hiring contract editors has become a means by which manga editorials can attempt to cope with the increasing work loads placed upon them:

The reason why we manga editors work so hard is that we are chronically understaffed for the work we do. Publishing companies like Shôgakukan and Kôdansha still do not regard manga as an important division in the company and it is the general policy of management not to send many new employees to the manga departments. Publishing companies exploit manga editors more than other editors and they value them less. However, things are changing now Morning has hired a lot of contract editors to boost the size of their editorial and Young Sunday, too, is hiring 2 more contract editors in 1995.⁵⁴⁵

In addition to the straightforward economic advantages of hiring contract editors who carry out more work for lower wages, contract editors have become increasingly important to Morning editorial for cultural reasons. Contract editors with their diverse and sometimes unusual social backgrounds carry a range

⁵⁴⁴Okamoto Makoto. July, 1994.

⁵⁴⁵Interview with a senior editor of Young Sunday, Tachikawa Yoshitake, in a restaurant near the Shôgakukan building. July, 1994.

of personal experiences which can greatly increase the combined social experience of the editorial. The majority of Kôdansha company employees share a distinctive personal history, involving graduating through a series of good schools, attending cram school, attending an high-ranking university - likely to be Waseda or Keiô - and then entering the company around the age of twenty two. Contract editors are in many senses far more experienced individuals, able to apply different social experiences and attitudes to making manga. Torigae Takushi described contract editors as 'unusual people' (*kawatta hito*) with more 'individualistic' (*kojinteki*) attitudes. Okamoto felt that the position of contract editors outside the homogenised experience of publishing companies meant that they were more creative than company editors, though he was clearly careful not to reveal this point of view, which might be construed as slanderous by the company employees he did business with:

If just the same old companies continue to make manga then it will just cycle round and round and get boring. We are a different sort of people with new ideas... Oh, damn! I should not have said that...⁵⁴⁶

The 'individualism' of the contract editors was displayed at a superficial level in the clothes they chose to wear in the office. The majority of company editors in Morning and other manga offices wore light, casual clothes, typically T-shirts or Hawaiian shirts with jackets, jeans or slacks, and sandals or trainers. Casual attire had become acceptable amongst manga editors because they did not normally have to meet anyone during

⁵⁴⁶Okamoto Makoto. July, 1994.

the course of their work apart from manga artists,⁵⁴⁷ who themselves tended to wear either casual or trendy clothes.⁵⁴⁸ The majority of contract manga editors in Morning editorial dressed in far more distinctive styles than company employees. Hayashi Tarô, a new contract editor, was the most modishly dressed contract editor working in Morning editorial in 1994. He sported a long pony tail tied with a leather thong, leather T-shirts, coloured head kerchiefs and Dr.Marten boots.

The majority of contract editors had a personal interest in manga or popular culture generally which enabled them to relate to manga artists in a manner which was more familiar and enthusiastic than that of company editors:

Very few employees in big publishing companies want to make manga but in Ginnansha everyone wants to edit manga. In addition to which contract editors are much better at human relations than company employees and this is central to editorial skill.⁵⁴⁹

Contract editors helped Morning to overcome the problem of the 'salary man mentality' of company editors who were perceived to be apathetic and uninterested in manga. The increased usage of contract editors in Morning editorial verifies a general observation made during the 1980s by social anthropologist, Miyanaga Kuniko:

⁵⁴⁷Discussion with Morning editor, Ishizaka Hideyuki. March, 1994.

⁵⁴⁸The type of 'punk' attire popular amongst amateur manga artists and a large number of young professional artists was gothic and rocker inspired, involved black clothes, DM boots, sections of bleached and dyed hair, long hair in pony tails, and headkerchiefs for men; and SF animation, gothic, and pop-idol-inspired styles for women.

⁵⁴⁹Interview with contract editor in Young Sunday editorial, Torigae Takushi, in a restaurant nearby to the Shôgakukan building.

On the periphery, owners of creative firms, in contrast to main-stream élites, are under pressure. They could be swept out in an economic crisis, and consequently must be sharply business-minded as well as creative... What is significant now is that creative interaction is developing between the periphery and the mainstream.⁵⁵⁰

That large manga publishers have directly contracted manga artists to carry out the majority of their creative labour since the 1960s suggests that in fact the arrangement of large companies contracting creative individuals from the 'peripheries'⁵⁵¹ of Japanese society is not precisely a new trend, not at least in the publishing industry. In the case of contract editors brought into Morning editorial, however, they helped to compensate for the perceived decline in creative talent amongst both manga artists and company editors. Contract editors were ideally suited to the broader project of intensifying the editorial manga production, better equipped both to bring out the best in manga artists and to think up new ideas for new manga series.

9.9 Conclusion

In the 1990s Morning magazine was in the process of instigating a transformation of manga publishing techniques. Production experiments, designed to open up adult manga to new social and cultural influences through which it might be progressively transformed into a more viable medium, were essentially based on

⁵⁵⁰Miyanaga, K. (1994) The Creative Edge: Emerging Individualism in Japan, London: Transaction Publishers. 68.

⁵⁵¹In this case the term 'periphery' is used in the same sense as it is used by Miyanaga, to mean, essentially, professional or self-employed individuals who are not employed by companies in blue or white collar jobs.

the re-arrangement of the relationships between editors, manga artists and the readers. Manga editors, artists and readers each represent bodies of social experience and cultural tastes which are held in different sections of society. As we have seen, in 1994, the precise identity of Morning editors, manga artists, and Morning's readership, was uncertain - even to company editors. In general Morning pursued a policy of strengthening the creative role of editors and dismissing the tastes and interests of the readership. By these re-arrangements, Morning aspired to improve the quality and artistic content of its manga. Morning strongly aspired towards any form of upward cultural mobility.

Morning supported artists and editors who produced manga series which were unpopular with readers. Rather than matching the tastes of their current readership with the styles of available manga artists, Morning allowed a mismatch between manga producers and manga consumers to open up, in order to give priority to new graphic styles developed by manga artists and the tastes and interests of Morning editors. This policy, which was implemented as a long-term marketing strategy, embodied a cavalier attitude towards Morning readers and their cultural tastes. One Morning editor, supervising a series launched in 1994 entitled *Superlover (Chôai no Hito)*, drew attention to the fact that editors in Morning had learnt that they must be careful about how explicit they made the political and moral messages of their manga series. The theme of *Superlover*, thought up within Morning editorial, was 'safe sex'. The editor confided that if he made this selected theme too explicit within the

series, then the readers would react badly and feel that Morning magazine was displaying a 'patronising' or 'superior' (*erasô*) attitude towards them. Thus the 'safe sex' theme of *Superlover* had to be presented subtly through images in which lovers never actually touched each others' bodies, rather than presented explicitly in the dialogue.⁵⁵²

Morning's artists were strongly encouraged to produce what editors considered to be higher-quality, more artistic manga, and this encouragement was targeted principally at the graphic styles of their drawing. At the same time, editors were encouraged to raise the quality of manga scripts, to create a more realistic style of adult manga story. Thus promoting the creative power of artists and editors in Morning was a two-pronged project in which the process of making manga was increasingly split between the visual and the written elements. These two halves of production were welded together in published series, in a manner that sometimes left traces of tangible discordance in the final cultural form.

In order to carry out the role of thinking up new themes and plots for manga series, editors gathered social experience themselves and transmitted their social experience to manga artists. Morning editors created the plots of new manga series by carrying out systematic research projects which involved travel, interviews, participant observation, and literary research. Rather than the social experiences of artists being transmitted to editors through their medium of manga, it was

⁵⁵²Discussion with Morning editor, Kaneda Akitoshi, and manga artist, Narita Akira, in the artist's studio. March, 1994.

largely editors' social experiences which were conveyed to artists before their series began production. The social experiences of manga artists on the other hand were not rejected entirely. The individual expression of artists was not generally included in the plot, theme or speech parts of the series, but was instead channelled into the graphics, or drawings, of manga series. The social experiences of manga artists were referred to through discussion of the styles and visual techniques they employed. In the case of the Morning series *Osaka Streets of Gold (Naniwa Kinyûdô)* by manga artist Aoki Yûji, the editor of this series wrote the speech parts, whilst the artist's role was to rewrite these speech parts in an amusing downtown Osaka argot, popular with his readers. The editor of this series believed that if a percentage could be made, he contributed 80 percent of the plot of the story, and the artist merely embellished his plot with humorous characterisations of Osaka wide-boys and their colloquial speech.⁵⁵³

Although editors who produced their own ideas and plots for manga stories impinged on the creative role of manga artists, they did not simply reproduce them. Manga which had been substantially produced by editors in Morning editorial was qualitatively different to manga series, particularly those published in Afternoon, in which editors had played a more limited editorial role relative to that of artists or that of readers - whose tastes and interests are gathered through market research. Manga which had been produced by editors in Morning tended to have distinct themes and preoccupations. Editorially-

⁵⁵³Interview with Morning editor, Doi Takashi, in a restaurant nearby to Kôdansha buildings. June, 1994.

inspired manga tended to be particularly conservative and pro-establishment. On the whole Morning magazine inevitably reflected the tastes and preoccupation of the editors, who, in the broader context of Japanese society were one part of a social and educational élite.

The project of attempting to transform the adult manga medium was problematic in the extreme. It remained unclear where the new generation of manga artists who could develop a new form of adult manga, or *gekiga*, for the new millennium, would come from. Manga produced by foreign comic artists and unusual 'artistic' manga artists was unpopular with Morning readers, suggesting, perhaps, that this form of high-quality 'artistic' manga was not particularly commercially viable. In attempting to create a new form of respectable, political manga, Morning editorial had cut itself off from the cutting edge of the manga medium in amateur manga, and, by association, with the real experiences of a large section of society. Editorially-produced stories in Morning were sometimes described as stuffy, polite and boring. Thus in one editorial meeting a Morning editor asked:

What direction is this office going in? - because otaku manga is more interesting than what this office is making! 554

Another senior editor in Morning editorial described the chief editor of Morning as "Don Quixote without Sancho Panza".⁵⁵⁵ The implication of this drunken but dry comment was that Morning had

⁵⁵⁴A comment made by a junior editor during a Morning editorial meeting. 1 December, 1993.

⁵⁵⁵ Discussion with senior Afternoon editor, Yuri Kôichi, during a drinking session with artists. April, 1994.

lost touch with reality, and in particular it had lost contact with its regular readers, epitomised by Don Quixote's sensible companion, Sancho Panza.

CHAPTER TEN: Conclusion

10.1 Adult manga and Japanese society, 1986-1995

The dominant style of commercial adult manga, which is realistic drawing accompanied by a strong narrative, is quintessentially social. Boys' and adult manga developed through the incorporation of the *gekiga* genre into commercial magazines in the 1960s, and became a medium which could express and communicate opinions about society. The contemporary adult manga medium was literally formed in a period of great social, cultural and political activity in which broad sections of Japanese society, in particular youth, were contributing to social discourses and cultural production affecting the structure of society.

In the 1990s manga editors believed that they faced a severe problem re-producing a medium created in a period of mass movements and social expression, and in a society in which apathy, individual atomisation and social fragmentation had reached a point of apotheosis. The new social perception of manga in Japanese society, which was linked to broader debates about social fragmentation and the decline of a sense of social awareness amongst youth, influenced Morning editors in their own criticisms of the manga medium and how to produce commercial manga. Publishers noted the absence of large nation-wide manga hits and the increasing frequency of minor, and less profitable hits, amongst small, fragmented readerships. Many editors felt that this problem had its roots in the particularism of youth

engaged with consumer culture and amateur manga subculture. At the end of the post-war period, editorial confidence about what high-circulation manga magazines should look like, and who their readership was, had clearly broken down.

Manga magazine publishers also felt challenged by the forms generated within contemporary amateur manga subculture which they felt were socially unacceptable and commercially unviable. In 1994 young artists at the stylistic cutting-edge of the manga medium appeared to be too individualistic and self-absorbed. They were judged to be incapable of producing stories with universal or social themes, which had mass appeal and could be published. Moreover, the majority of amateur manga was in fact *parody* based on series which had already been run in commercial magazines. The amateur manga medium, which had released cohorts of leading manga artists in the 1970s, was no longer thought of as a rich source of exploitable ideas and artists for manga magazine publishers. Changes in the intellectual fields within society directly affected the potential for manga publishing. The disappearance of even the memory of mass social movements and accompanying forms of social consciousness was a problem for adult manga publishers.

At the same time as adult and boys' manga magazine editors perceived difficulties producing commercial magazines in a period characterised by social fragmentation, other quite different institutions and large corporations also perceived what was eventually the same problem, in different ways. Following the publication of Nihon Keizai Nyūmon (Japan. Inc) in

1986, educational and cultural institutions and large companies began to adopt and promote manga. Manga became a medium with which they felt they could more successfully communicate their ideas to employees, youth, or society generally. Manga was promoted as a valuable part of national culture. It began to appear in museums and special exhibitions, and in new forms of *information manga* books, produced by large corporations for educational and public relations purposes.

At the same time, amateur manga genres and young artists were strongly denounced and depreciated by a negative media campaign and quasi-governmental censorship movement. Between the two informal campaigns of depreciation and promotion a new 'official' and social perception of manga was defined and an institutionalised system for evaluating 'good' and 'bad' manga, introduced. Manga which did not fit the requirements of national culture - which was too individualistic, sexually deviant, or feminine in origin - was criticised and rejected. In the public perception, and increasingly in reality, the manga medium was bifurcated into two entirely separate currents.

From the middle of the 1980s, there appeared to be a desire amongst governing corporations and institutions to formulate new social and cultural values which might help to cohere Japanese society. Through the promotion of manga to the status of national culture, Japanese government agencies and institutions demonstrated, and perhaps tested, the potential for a more inclusive, modern and flexible style of government social policy, which might have the effect of encouraging broad

sections of 'pathologically passive' Japanese youth - or indeed all Japanese who grew up in the post-war period - to reconsider their commitment to Japanese society.

For adult manga magazine producers such as *Morning*, the new social perception of manga in Japanese society, and of *gekiga*-based boys' manga genres in particular, presented a novel commercial potential. The enhanced status of manga increased the possibilities of producing manga magazines for more distant, older and culturally-conservative readerships - in fact precisely the type of people which would not previously have read manga magazines. The first promotion of manga coincided, however, with a period in which adult manga magazines generally were actually experiencing their first commercial problems, in the shape of shrinking readerships and reduced manga book sales. *Morning* editorial responded to this commercial and political juncture by an attempt to transform itself entirely into a cultural medium which could thrive in the new social and political circumstances. This transformation was one in which commitment to shrinking traditional readerships and popular manga themes was gradually supplanted by conservative, political and social themes, which might appeal to an older and more political, new manga readership.

In 1994 *Morning* interrupted the systematic office-based system of commercial manga production. *Morning* experimented with the industrial mode of production in a bid to generate a new form of manga. Production experimentation hinged on contracting different types of manga artists and manga editors, and altering

the relationship between artists and editors. The type of new adult manga which Morning aimed to create was influenced by the style of *information manga* books, and high-quality artistic (*bunkateki*) manga, published by corporations, and publishers such as Asahi Shinbun and Chûô Kôron working in liaison with government agencies.

From 1986 Morning made a new space for innovative manga artists to explore their own graphic styles in The OPEN special series and Afternoon magazine. Rather than being involved in the large contemporary amateur manga movement, many of these artists used *gekiga*-inspired drawing styles drawn particularly from the avant garde magazine GARO, and *new wave gekiga*. Ironically these manga genres, which were not directly incorporated into *first rate* weekly magazines in the 1970s, appeared, by the mid-1980s, to be less commercial and therefore more artistic and high-quality. In envisaging a new form of manga, editors were inspired by the ground-breaking and profitable social and political manga dramas of the 1960s. Morning and other adult manga editorials also attempted to incorporate the work of foreign comic artists, which was also relatively uncommercialised and appeared to be more artistic. While contracting foreign comic artists at great expense, Morning excluded the graphic innovation of the depreciated amateur manga medium from the pages of Morning magazine.

The role of editors in manga production was simultaneously reinvented. In order to overcome the problem of manga artists who appeared to be unable to produce manga stories about issues

in society, and to develop new forms of political and social realist manga, editors took over the role of thinking up and researching new manga series. To increase editorial creativity, social experience, and productive power, Morning introduced large numbers of contract editors with diverse social backgrounds and often heightened awareness of social issues into the editorial office. Creating a more respectable and cultured form of adult manga involved the concentration of expansive new intellectual functions in manga editors. The manga critic, Kure Tomofusa, humorously characterised the chief editor of Morning magazine, as a "cultural dictator" for his attempt to create what might properly be described as editorial manga.⁵⁵⁶

Between the mid-1960s and the mid-1990s the direction of flow of ideas in adult manga reversed. From originating amongst (extraordinary) ordinary individuals in society and moving upwards during the 1960s - a flow which faltered in the 1970s - ideas in adult manga started to originate with editors at the top of society during the 1980s, and filter downwards into amateur manga, where they were turned into *parody*. The relocation of the social origins of intellectual expression, traceable in one of Japan's largest and most intellectually creative contemporary cultural formations, probably reflects a broader process of intellectual re-alignment taking place across Japanese society.

⁵⁵⁶Interview with Kure Tomofusa at his home. June 1994.

10.2 Ideas about popular culture theory

Adult manga seems to have been extremely open to a wide variety of political and individual expression during the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1990s adult manga magazines had become the intellectual products of manga editors and distinctly manipulative in their intellectual and political content. This change shows that the nature of popular culture produced by culture industries is variable. There is no set formula which can describe the nature of commercial popular culture. The potential for ideological manipulation perceived in centralised popular culture by Adorno and Horkheimer, and the potential for democratic politicisation perceived in mass-reproduced popular culture by Walter Benjamin, are both simply latent potentials which may become more or less relevant in different spatial and historical circumstances. Social and political circumstances dominate the actual nature of the culture industries.

In different media, in different or even the same cultural products, in different or simultaneous periods, the interplay between democratic expression and domination by the social discourses of intellectual élites, varies greatly. Aspects of expression in commercial popular culture may be controlled by social élites, while other elements may be open to the ideas, even radical ideas, of different sections of society. In the 1990s adult manga has become on the whole more concerned with the social discourses and political beliefs of social élites. At the same time, however, it has also become extremely receptive

to a certain category of purely visual graphic innovations and exciting artistic expression.

In fact, balancing intellectual representation and domination is a key concern for the adult manga industry, and this is possibly true for all culture industries. However, the main incentive to control the intellectual content of adult manga has not been commercial - the need to down-grade and simplify cultural material in order to target large audiences - but political. Simultaneously, the main reason to represent democratically the social tastes and ideological persuasions of the public have been commercial incentives. In the circumstances of the 1960s the commercial viability of popular culture was a barrier to the direct control of culture and intellectual discourse by the government, through cultural and educational institutions. Later in the 1990s government agencies and cultural institutions limited and channelled the activities of manga publishers, which were forced to shape their cultural products to suit national political objectives. The case of Morning also illustrates the fact that political influences and commercial incentives may also merge, rather than conflict, where culture industries are able to profit from the government cultural policy. Culture industries constantly re-assess to what degree they can or should be representative of their audience, and to what degree they can or should conform to government policy, and alter the contents of their cultural products accordingly.

Not only is there no meaningful single theory of popular culture, but there are no guarantees that popular culture itself

is anything more than a very particular cultural phenomenon which emerged at the brief and intense conjunction of post-war economic growth and the post-war democratic mass societies. It is possible that we have all become too used to popular culture and have grown accustomed to assume that it will always be there. The difficulties which manga publishers faced re-creating what is, in a sense, an archetypal popular culture, in the 1990s, seems to suggest that the concept of popular culture itself is largely out of date. The focus on consumerism and kitsch in Culture Studies has already implied that this is the case. Popular culture has been superseded by consumer culture. Rather than having a *social* influence on the political bias and intellectual contents of popular culture, audiences have been left to merely subvert the meanings of finished cultural products, at the point of *individual* consumption - or else buy kitsch goods.

The influence of political and cultural institutions on the transformation of adult manga serves as a good advertisement for more sociological theories of culture. The Japanese concept of 'culture' (*bunka*) most closely approximates the English concept of 'art'. The promotion and redefinition of strains of manga as 'culture', in particular 'national culture', had an impact on the form and contents of commercial adult manga, and a powerful general influence on the structure of the entire manga medium. The rise in social status of some manga artists was also directly linked to the promotion of manga to the status of 'culture'. The case of adult manga illustrates the value of the following proposition put forward by Raymond Williams:

Indeed the first deep form of the social organisation of art is, in this sense, the social perception of art itself.⁵⁵⁷

The transformation of Morning magazine shows that the external "social perception" of art or culture, influences its internal mode of production. As manga was promoted within Japanese society, then manga editors responded by attempting to produce respectable and 'cultured' manga. The appropriation of manga by cultural and educational institutions and powerful corporations was directly linked to the appropriation of key intellectual functions of manga production by company editors. The social perception of culture, the social relations of cultural production, and the intellectual contents of culture, are entwined aspects of the same cultural process. In the case of manga, this took place across society and connected individual artists, companies, institutions and the public. Research which focuses specifically on the social relations of cultural production may be the key to the development of more integrated social theories of contemporary culture.

⁵⁵⁷Williams, R. (1981) Culture, London, Fontana. 130.

METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

Research Activities:

1

Ten months' observation in a Morning editorial office. Between December 1993 and September 1994 I was allocated a desk in the office and allowed access to phones, fax machines, and manga magazines - of which the office contained a comprehensive and constantly updated selection. I spent several hours each day at my desk, where I was able to talk with editors sitting on my row, observe visitors to the office and meetings between manga artists and editors, arrange interviews with editors and visits to manga artists' studios, and read amateur unpublished manga sent into the office. Discussions with my neighbouring editors varied from semi-structured interviews initiated by myself, to general conversation about office rumours and company politics, new manga series, the latest films, politics, and so on, initiated by editors themselves.

2

During the evenings I often went to restaurants or bars with editors. These periods of general socialising frequently turned out to be the most exhausting and unpleasant part of my research. Drinking sessions usually extended until the early hours of the morning. As some editors became drunk they often encumbered me with their misogynist beliefs and hatred of white people. Sometimes I was forced to play a role similar to that of a paid hostess, while listening to their criticisms of, amongst other things, other editors, manga artists, companies and departments. In general, however, Morning editors had highly sophisticated and individualistic characters, and it was on account of this that I was able to socialise with them so frequently.

3

On other occasions, usually at my own request, editors allowed me to accompany them when they travelled to manga artists' homes or studios to carry out work-meetings. This usually involved a long commute by train, which was also useful for getting to know

editors, and hearing what they had to say about artists immediately after meeting them.

4

With a few exceptions I was allowed to attend and take notes in all editorial, *world*, and 'creation' (*zôkan*) meetings, which were held most weeks. Editorial meetings were held for *Afternoon* and *Morning* magazine, *world* meetings were related to *Morning*'s international project, and 'creation' meetings concerned the preparations for launching a new magazine. In fact, editorial meetings in general did not become as useful a source of information as I had expected. These meetings were for thinking about overall themes and strategies rather than making or announcing concrete decisions and policies. Conversation was dominated by the chief editor, and took the form of monologues in which editors were encouraged to work harder. Other editors' contributions tended to be light-hearted and rather inane. In editorial meetings I was struck by the apparent lack of discipline and professionalism amongst editors, who often displayed bored and amateurish attitudes to their work. Editors joked that I was the only person who was actually interested in what anyone said in meetings.

5

I participated in two commercial manga competitions, for *Afternoon* and *Morning* respectively. This involved reading around 50 drafts of amateur manga entered into each competition, filling out assessment forms, voting during election meetings, and attending prize-giving ceremonies held in hotel banquet halls.

6

I also attended the annual manga award ceremonies of Kôdansha and the Japan Cartoonists' Association (*Nihon Mangaka Kyôkai*), held in Summer 1994.

7

Whilst based at *Morning*, I was introduced to Magazine editorial office in another part of Kôdansha buildings, and was able to spend one week in a similar position, with a desk, in Magazine

editorial. I was also able to attend a Magazine editorial meeting and work-meetings with artists, all of which were organised quite differently to those in Morning editorial. Within Kôdansha, Magazine editorial had a competitive relationship with Morning editorial, and Magazine editors were keen to give me the impression that their editorial was more open and friendly than Morning's. This benefited my fieldwork, as Magazine editors allowed me to attend all of their work-meetings with artists, and generally gave more direct and revealing answers during interviews.

8

I also met a number of manga artists independently. I visited artists in their studios or homes to carry out interviews, which tended to last several hours. I was able to meet famous artists including Nôjô Junichi, Maruô Suehiro, Morizono Milk, Hatanaka Jun, Ishikawa Jun, and Kobayashi Yoshinori, in this way. These were often the most interesting interviews as it was possible to see artists in their own rooms and to allow the conversation to wander. Although artists were not hampered by the presence of manga editors in these interviews, an awareness that I was linked to Morning editorial made some of these artists cautious about answering questions concerning their relationships with editors and experiences with publishing companies.

9

I attended an all-day garden party held by the elderly artist, Yokoyama Ryûichi, in his house in Zushi. This was attended by a large number of veteran manga artists and cartoonists, and a few other types of artists and manga critics. I distributed a self-completion questionnaire survey, which asked artists about their socio-economic background, political beliefs, and feelings about manga and publishing companies. (Yokoyama Ryûichi unfortunately mistook me for a pop-star and insisted that I leave my signature on the wall of his summerhouse next to other embarrassingly famous signatures). Older manga artists tended to be individualistic and highly opinionated; when I attempted to talk to manga critic, Ono Kôsei, I was dragged away and told in no uncertain terms not to talk to that "pathetic person". This party led to invitations to

several other equally interesting parties held in the homes of older manga artists in the outer suburbs of Tokyo.

10

In addition to Morning and Magazine I made regular visits to three other manga editorials to talk to editors: GARO low-circulation avant garde magazine published by Seirindô, Hime ladies manga magazine produced by Aoba, and Young Sunday published by Shôgakukan.

11

I also made regular visits to Fusion Productions, the publishers of amateur manga anthologies and Comic Box, a manga fan's magazine. I became acquainted with a circle of people connected to Comic Box and sometimes went out on drinking sessions with them. On one occasion I attended Comic Box's costume-play cherry blossom viewing picnic party, attended by manga fanatics and specialists, veteran artists, and even influential intellectuals, such as Suzuki Kunio. Most Comic Box editors epitomised what are categorised as *otaku* (nerds) in contemporary Japan; they were sometimes dirty, unkempt, and socially inept. My relations with Comic Box were unfortunately limited by the fact that I was connected to Morning magazine, which they perceived as something akin to fascist propaganda, and an élite university (Oxford), which they perceived in a similarly suspicious light.

12

I attended Comic Market amateur manga conventions held at Tsukishima, on one day in December 1993 and one day in August 1994. On both occasions Comic Market was attended by approximately one quarter of a million amateur artists and fans. While visiting Comic Market in August 1994 I chatted to (generally hostile) amateur manga artists attending their stalls, and distributed a self-completion questionnaire survey with attached SAE's.

13

I was introduced to Meiji University manga circle by an editor who was an alumni member. I was later able to interview student manga

club members in their manga circle club room and attend one of their meetings.

14

I was able to make the acquaintance of, and interview, the organisers of Manga Japan and the Society for the Protection of Freedom of Expression in Manga. I also attended the first executive meeting of Manga Japan, and a party for business representatives of large companies interested in investing in manga, which was held afterwards.

Interviews:

Listed below are 63 editors, artists and other individuals with whom I carried out one or more formal interviews. Most interviews lasted for several hours and in a number of cases I interviewed the same individual two or three times and established a personal rapport with them. Not included in the list below are general contacts and editors and artists with whom I did not have full interviews or useful discussions.

Manga Editors in Morning editorial

1 Doi Takashi

This successful editor in his mid-thirties was an Engineering graduate from Tokyo University. Doi had launched several successful series, including *Osaka Streets of Gold* (*Naniwa Kinyūdô*), but was widely disliked in Morning and Kôdansha on account of his arrogant personality and anti-corporate individualism.

2 Fukumoto Hiroyuki

This quiet vice-chief editor in his early forties thought manga was "rubbish".

3 Ichihara Shinji

This 26 year old editor, with a background as a dancer, was a new company employee and my original contact in Morning editorial. Ichihara worked closely with the chief editor and was being primed to organise Morning's international program. Ichihara was friendly but keen to ingratiate himself well in his new job, and therefore unwilling to talk in depth.

4 Ishizaka Hideyuki

Ishizaka was in his mid-forties and had recently been moved to Morning from the literary periodical, Gunzô. Although he was very unproductive in the office, Ishizaka was popular, and clearly valued for his 'cool' manner, cheeky comments, and tendency to play the devil's advocate in editorial discussions.

5 Kaneda Akitoshi

Kaneda, an editor in his early-thirties, was also considered to be one of the 'cool' members of Morning editorial. Kaneda was willing to be interviewed and to introduce me to his artists and contacts, but was not generally a source of useful insights.

6 Kihara Yasuo

Kihara was an older vice-chief editor in his late forties, who though generally taciturn about the office, was an honest and self-mocking character. As a more senior editor, Kihara was not so concerned to disguise a certain level of cynicism in his attitude towards Morning editorial's plans.

7 Kurihara Yoshiyuki.

This was the chief editor of Morning and Afternoon who agreed to let me carry out fieldwork in his editorial for 10 months, and

who gave me a desk in the office. Kurihara was a charismatic but authoritarian chief editor, well-known throughout Kôdansha and the manga industry generally. Kurihara began his career working in Magazine editorial, under chief editor Uchida Masaru, editing an extremely famous series, *Tomorrow's Joe*, in the early 1970s. Kurihara launched Morning and Afternoon magazines and continues to be the source of the projects and editorial policy in Morning editorial office. Although I was able to interview Kurihara on three occasions, he was unwilling to give anything other than abstract, philosophical answers to my questions.

8 Ogawa Haruki

Ogawa was a successful editor in his forties and the chief editor of Afternoon, also produced in the Morning editorial. Ogawa was one of the most laid back and friendly individuals in the office, who greatly assisted my research by introducing me to many people. I interviewed Ogawa several times, and often socialised with Ogawa and other Afternoon editors.

9 Shin Kasayuki

This editor in his early thirties supervised the important Morning series, *Silent Service*. Shin was quiet, focused and intelligent, and was considered one of the best editors in the office. As the editor of a top manga artist and a series which was attracting a great deal of political controversy between 1990 and 1994, Shin was discreet and professional, and avoided talking concretely about any aspect of manga production or the series *Silent Service*. However, I was able to discuss things with Shin and accompany him on long visits to manga artist, Kawaguchi Kaiji's house/studio.

10 Tanaka Hideyuki

A smart, friendly senior editor in his mid-thirties, who supervised the series *Sai*. Tanaka was seen as too business-like because of his use of readers' surveys.

11 Tsutsumi Yasumitsu

This senior editor in his forties was alleged to have a background as a leader of the student movements, and had a considerable interest in society and culture. Tsutsumi was in charge of Morning's international project.

12 Watanabe Kyô

This editor in his late thirties was specifically recruited to Kôdansha because of his unusual personal expertise in manga, and was called a 'nerd' by other editors because of his enthusiasm for animation, foreign comics and girls' manga. Watanabe knew the amateur manga world quite intimately and had interesting opinions about manga, though little to say about Morning in particular.

13 Yamanaka Yusuke

A young successful editor in his early thirties responsible for the most popular story in Morning in 1994, *Iron Man*. Yamanaka was looked to as a model editor, but was unfriendly towards me, explaining that "the editors job cannot be described in words".

14 Yoshida Shôhei

A young, friendly editor responsible for supervising Afternoon's most popular series, *Aah! My Goddess*.

15 Yuri Kôichi

Yuri is a senior editor in his late forties who is famous for being the editor of the original manga series, AKIRA, which later became an internationally successful animated film. Yuri was placed in Afternoon editorial in April 1994, but made his allegiances to Magazine editorial and critical attitude towards Morning clear, which must have been quite de-stabilising for Kurihara Yoshiyuki, the chief editor of Morning and Afternoon.

Manga Editors in Magazine editorial

16 Igarashi Takao

Chief Editor of Magazine editorial, which launched the first boy's manga magazine. Igarashi described himself as a more traditional type of department chief, who left a great deal of practical decision-making to ordinary editors, and who worked in teams. Igarashi claimed to use many theories about Japanese culture in his work, for example: "Japanese are not individualists like Europeans and Chinese, we can only work in groups. So my department is split into groups, this is the most democratic way of working." This is quite unusual in the mass-media which tends more to emphasise some form of 'individualism'. I 'interviewed' Igarashi once, during which he lectured me on his view of manga production, for about five hours.

17 Ishii Tohru

This vice-chief editor in his late thirties was so active, comic and opinionated, that it was not a surprise to find out that he sometimes appeared on television as an occasional celebrity. Ishii was infamous in Kôdansha for his conceited personality, and peculiar personal plan to marry Miss Noma, the middle-aged owner of the company. Though his personality was highly unorthodox, and his comments politically insightful, Ishii was profoundly loyal to Kôdansha.

18 Tokumaru Yoshimasa

I interviewed this quiet, older vice-chief editor briefly, several times.

Manga Editors in companies other than Kôdansha

19 Konagai Nobumasa

This elderly chief editor began his career as an editor in Shûeisha, but was commissioned to create a new girl's manga company in 1975, whereupon he became the president of Hakusensha, which publishes 'Yume to Hana' girls' manga magazine. Konagai asked if I would write a column about him in Hakusensha's free readers' magazine. Konagai also showed me a large exhibition of landscape art, executed by himself.

20 Koyama Shikaô

This editor in his thirties was the boss and chief editor of Aoba, a small production company which makes Hime, Sakura and Sakura Special ladies' comics. Koyama was enthusiastic about manga.

21 Tachikawa Yoshitake

This editor in his mid-thirties was the chief editor of Young Sunday magazine for teenage boys, published by Shôgakukan. Tachikawa was married to a famous female manga artist, and claimed that he had wanted to be one, but having failed in this, became a manga editor instead. I met Tachikawa towards the end of my research but interviewed him at length on three occasions. He was the best interview subject I met - extremely thoughtful about his role as an editor, and apparently unconcerned about discussing the role of publishing companies.

22 Uchida Masaru

Uchida Masaru is an ex-Kôdansha employee and ex-chief editor of Magazine, famous in the manga world for introducing *gekiga* into commercial childrens' magazines in the 1960s. Uchida had founded a company on retiring from Kôdansha, and launched a new boys' manga magazine, Manga BOYS, in 1994. Uchida, whom I interviewed twice, was an unusual character. Uchida had a highly respectable status in society and gave occasional university lectures on sociology and the mass media, and high-brow newspaper interviews. At the same time, Uchida was rather mischievous and 'plebeian' in his humour and references, and on one occasion

showed me around his favourite back streets in Shinbashi (Tokyo's East End), where he displayed a strikingly independent aesthetic curiosity and judgement. Although I was introduced to Uchida by the chief editor of Morning, it was rumoured that they were in fact enemies.

Contract Editors

23 Fujisawa Manabu

Fujisawa, a contract editor of Ginnansha in his mid-thirties, was the successful editor of several series including *Depend on her!* (*Kono Hito ni Makeru*). Fujisawa was intelligent, self-consciously conservative, and loyal to Kôdansha rather than Ginnansha.

24 Hayashi Tarô

Hayashi was a young new editor from Comic House, who was quickly allotted the demanding job of supervising the unusual series *Gamurakan*. Hayashi was self-contained and confident, and within months of his arrival in April 1994 appeared in many ways to fit into the editorial better than most company employees.

25 Nishimura Hiromi

Nishimura was a female contract editor in her early forties from Gauche company. Nishimura was a graduate of Meiji University where she was active in the student manga circle and became a manga artist with a poor career. Later, Nishimura gave up drawing manga and became an editor of small, specialist mah-jong manga magazines, where she edited artists such as Kawaguchi Kaiji, who later became very famous. Nishimura was invited to join Morning editorial by the unusual route of entering her work into a Morning manga competition and meeting editors who told her that her drafts were not good enough, but that they were impressed by her editorial skills. Nishimura had a strong and outspoken character, and cynical conservative attitudes.

26 Nonoguchi Takeshi

This young Ginnansha editor working in Afternoon editorial had been a manga fan since early childhood. Prior to joining Afternoon, where he was a fairly anonymous character, Nonoguchi had worked for two years as an editor of Puff, a specialist manga fans information magazine. Nonoguchi claimed to be no longer interested in amateur manga since it had become his livelihood in Afternoon, but I spotted him at a Comic Market convention selling his own manga books.

27 Ojima Yûko

Ojima was a female manga translator, in her early thirties, working in both the Foreign Rights Division of Shôgakukan and in Viz Communications Japan. Ojima, who had begun her career as a clothes designer, was gentle, sophisticated, and a Europhile, but appeared to have little to say about her work.

28 Sziegeti, Pierre Alan

Pierre was an experienced editor of avant garde comics in Paris, recruited to Morning in 1992, primarily in order to act as a social intermediary who could introduce foreign artists to Morning. Sziegeti's role in the office was fairly unique and he did not seem to be aware of many of the issues which Japanese editors were aware of.

29 Sugano Yûko

This young female Ginnansha editor worked in Ginannsha offices doing contract work for other manga editorials. She was a personal fan of manga, strong-willed and critical of Japanese society. In 1995 she planned to start working for a new Japanese overseas NGO.

30 Torigae Takushi

This male *Ginnansha* editor, in his late twenties, worked in Young Sunday editorial and was an ex-graduate student, whose speciality had been Asian language and comparative cultures. I became good friends with Torigae.

Manga Artists

31 Hatanaka Jun

This famous middle-aged manga writer lived in Chôfu amongst an enclave of famous artists, including Tsuge Yoshiharu. Hatanaka came from the same mining village in Shikoku as the chief editor of Morning, and was solidly working class in background.

32 Ishikawa Jun

Ishikawa, in his mid forties, had become a well-known media personality and writer as well as a manga artist. Ishikawa was an independent artist who was not popular with editors because of his apparently arrogant public persona.

33 Ishinomori Shotarô

In his early sixties, Ishinomori Shôtarô is probably the most famous living manga artist, responsible for *Cyborg 009*, in the 1960s. Ishinomori is the titular president of most organisations related to manga.

34 Kawaguchi Kaiji

This adult manga artist in his forties, producing leading political series for both Big Comic Spirits and Morning, was highly valued in Morning as the best adult manga artist in the industry.

35 Kobayashi Yoshinori

Kobayashi is an unusual artist, whose satire series *The Manifesto of Arrogance (Gômanism Sengen)* is the most popular

article in Weekly SPA! general affairs magazine. Kobayashi has become extremely famous as a social critic and the agent provocateur of manga. I expected Kobayashi to be very opinionated when I interviewed him in his studio, with his also famous No. 1. and No. 2. secretaries, but in fact I found him to be rather quiet and unfocused.

36 Morizono Milk

Morizono was a militant female manga artist and television talent, who had a history of arguing with editors and refusing to self-censor her erotic ladies' manga. Morizono was beautiful and charismatic too, and her assistants complained that she spent all her time socialising instead of doing her work in the studio. I became fairly friendly with Morizono.

37 Morizono Milk's two assistant artists

I visited Morizono's studio, Milky World, and interviewed two of her assistants in her absence.

38 Nagashima Shinji

Nagashima is a famous veteran artist who was originally an assistant of Tezuka Osamu and who worked for COM and GARO underground magazines. Nagashima is left-wing and anti-war, and also unusual in that his social circles included both manga and *gekiga* artists. Nagashima claimed that in the 1960s, he and Tsuge Yoshiharu, who was also his childhood friend, were amongst the few leading artists of the period who refused to work for the new commercial magazines. Nagashima's opus is a manga autobiography of his childhood marred by the pacific war, entitled The Cruel Tale of Manga Artist (Mangaka no Zankoku Monogatari).

39 Narita Akira

Narita is a manga artist in his late thirties who specialises in realistic documentary-style manga about the sexual encounters of

men and women who meet through telephone introductory services. In Narita's studio life-size photographs of his wife, in the nude, were hung on the walls. Narita presented himself (professionally) as a sex specialist and connoisseur, and I went to an 'orgy' in a hotel suite to observe a meeting with his editor.

40 Nôjô Junichi

I interviewed Nôjô once in his studio, but found myself battling for time, because Nôjô was intent on using me as a source of ideas to form material for his next love story. Famous professional manga artists tend to be very isolated through the nature of their job and their editor's efforts to prevent them meeting other artists and editors. Just a single social encounter can be so rare for them that they tend to prey on conversation as potential reference material for their manga.

41 Otomo Katsuhiko

This artist in his late-thirties is the only internationally famous manga artist, on account of his animation film AKIRA. I met Otomo amongst a group of foreign comic artists. Otomo has established himself as a private company and produces his own films, but displays a puzzling posture of subservience towards Kôdansha, which raised interesting questions about the subtle role of the editor in befriending the artist on an intimate level.

42 Okada Yûkyô

I went out on a long drinking session with this manga artist in his early thirties, and his editor.

43 Rodriguez

I observed a work-meeting between this young, newcomer manga artist and an editor at Young Sunday editorial in Shôgakukan, and afterwards interviewed him alone. Rodriguez was an

architecture student from a respectable family who did not like manga and had never really read them.

44 Sera Ing

Sera was a French-Cambodian artist in his mid-thirties who was invited to Japan for two months by Morning editorial, where he produced a series under the supervision of Japanese editors. Sera was interesting to talk with because of his assessments of Morning series' and impressions of Morning's production methods, which were very different to those in Europe. The majority of comic artists which I met, who had become associated with Morning magazine, found the demands of Morning editors contradictory and technically difficult to fulfil. Sera perceived himself as an artist and was not pleased to be seen as a potential contract employee.

45 Suehiro Maruo

Suehiro strongly identifies himself with 'underground' (*uragawa*) culture and has worked for GARO and low-circulation erotic magazines for most of his career. While Taniguchi Jirô, Nôjô Junichi and Otomo Katsuhiro have risen from similar magazines to the top of the commercial industry, Suehiro's style is grotesque, and his main themes are incest, torture, rape, physical decay, and satire of the military. Though he is considered to be an outstanding artist, he has not been recruited by the editors of major magazines, which saddened him.

46 Yahagi Takako

Yahagi is a successful female manga artist in her forties who is a fine arts graduate of the prestigious Tokyo Art University. Yahagi began her career as an amateur manga artist, producing homoerotica, and has become known as an *otaku* or comic 'nerd'. I found Yahagi to be friendly and professional.

Others

47 Berenguer, Josep

Berenguer was the new owner and chief editor of El Vibora, an avant garde Spanish comic magazine, who had been linked to Morning for several years. Berenguer, who also helped to integrate Morning editors in Spain at the time of Barcelona Comic Festivals, visited Morning for three months during 1994 to discuss editorial methods.

48 Chiaki Sumi

Chiaki was an ex-manga artist now working as a teacher on the Professional Comic Artist Preparatory Course at Yoyogi Animation School of Further Education.

49 Hara Takao

Hara was an ex-assistant of Tezuka Osamu who had used his inside knowledge of the manga world to run a media consultancy business. Hara had founded Manga Japan in 1992 and was essentially a business-man.

50 Hiruma Takuma

I interviewed this accomplished young chief editor of Takarajima 30, an intellectual culture magazine, about Japanese youth culture over the past 15 years. Takarajima 30 is a successful new periodical targeted at the generation of Japanese now in their thirties who were involved in alternative youth culture of the 1980s and were the approximate readership of the well-known subculture magazine, Takarajima, before it itself became a glossy porn magazine in the 1990s.

51 Isogai Yasuhiro

I interviewed this senior official of Kôdansha about manga circulation statistics.

52 Kamimura Bunzo

Kamimura is the Executive Director of the National Assembly for Youth Development, a part-time sociology lecturer and one of the leaders of the anti-manga movement. Kamimura was friendly and unexpectedly open about his views and activities during my interviews, in his office in the National Youth Coordination Centre (*Kokuritsu Seishōnen Sōgō Centre*).

53 Menjō Mitsuro

Menjō had been Tezuka Osamu's editor in COM magazine throughout its duration from 1968 to 1972. Menjō at first sight appeared to be a fumbling old man, but revealed himself to be a clever, politically-conscious and slightly sarcastic individual. Recently Menjō had started a new consultancy job as an advisor to NHK's 'Comic Project'. I interviewed Menjō twice, at his chosen location, a café next to a race course.

54 Nagai Katsuichi

Between 1964 and 1992 Nagai had been the founder and chief editor of GARO magazine. I interviewed Nagai and his wife, who are now quite elderly, at their home, and found them to be a gentle and progressive-minded couple with an ordinary social background, as a soldier and a bar-maid, respectively.

55 Nishimura Shigeo

Nishimura, in his fifties, is a well-known character in the manga industry, who had been the editor of Jump magazine for most of his career in Shūeisha. Nishimura was a powerful character who had a range of insights into the political controversy that commercial manga production has sometimes attracted.

56 Okamoto Makoto

Okamoto was the boss and founder of Ginnansha, the largest contract comic editor company with 60 employees working in

Kôdansha and Shôgakukan. Okamoto, in his early fifties, was the son of "proletarian oil painters" and the younger brother of one of the most famous of all Japanese manga artists, Shirato Sanpei. Okamoto seemed to be influenced by Marxist ideas, and had developed a complex understanding of the interrelationship between artistic creativity and history, which he elaborated to me at length. On a practical level Okamoto was essentially a shrewd business-man with a predilection for golf.

57 Saitani Ryô

Saitani was the boss and chief editor of Fusion Press, which publishes Comic Box and collections of amateur manga artists and fans' work. Saitani was a serious manga fan, who was especially fond of children's animation, and believed that child's play was a progressive activity which he linked to other left-wing and anti-nuclear view points. I went out on several drinking sessions with Saitani, to the Golden Gei area of old-style bars in Shinjuku, which are sometimes frequented by manga artists.

58 Shinoda Hironori

Shinoda is the boss and chief editor of Tsukuru periodical and founder the Society for the Protection of Freedom of Expression in Manga (Manga Hyôgen no Jiyû wo Mamoru Kai). Shinoda was difficult to interview seriously.

59 Kure Tomofusa

Tomofusa is a media-friendly intellectual, a manga critic, and lecturer in Japanese literature, at Rikkyo University.

60 Takada Isao

I regularly met this investigative journalist at Weekly SPA! magazine during the first months of my research, to talk about the Japanese mass-media and manga generally.

61 Tsuchiya Seiji

I interviewed Tsuchiya, who was in the Kôdansha Department of General Affairs, to find out about complaints made by the public concerning the content of the Kôdansha manga.

62 Yatabe Shuji

This young editor of GARO magazine, whom I talked to when I visited GARO offices, hoped that Japanese manga culture would return to a state similar to that of the 1970s.

63 Yonezawa Yoshihiro

Yonezawa is the president and one of founders of Comic Market, a manga critic, and a part time university lecturer on the media. Yonezawa had never written manga or even joined a manga circle at college, and was more of an organiser of cultural trends than a participator.

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