Routledge Handbook of Japanese Media

Edited by Fabienne Darling-Wolf

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The *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Media* is a comprehensive study of the key contemporary issues and scholarly discussions around Japanese media. Covering a wide variety of forms and types from newspapers, television and film, to music, manga and social media, this book examines the role of the media in shaping Japanese society from the Meiji era's intense engagement with Western culture to our current period of rapid digital innovation.

Featuring the work of an international team of scholars, the handbook is divided into five thematic sections:

- The historical background of the Japanese media from the Meiji Restoration to the immediate postwar era.
- Japan's national and political identity imagined and negotiated through different aspects of the media, including Japan's 'lost decade' of the 1990s and today's 'post-Fukushima' society.
- The representation of Japanese identities, including race, gender and sexuality, in contemporary media.
- The role of Japanese media in everyday life.
- The Japanese media in a broader global context.

Taking an interdisciplinary approach, this book will be of use to students and scholars of Japanese culture and society, Asian media and Japanese popular culture.

Fabienne Darling-Wolf is Professor of Journalism and Director of the Media and Communication Doctoral Program in the Klein College of Media and Communication at Temple University, USA. Her recent publications include *Imagining the global: Transnational media and popular culture beyond East and West* (2015).

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Contributors

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Introduction
Why the Japanese media?

Fabienne Darling-Wolf

Up until relatively recently, individuals growing up in the United States found themselves somewhat insulated from the global influence of Japanese popular culture. If the mounting transnational reach of Japan's 1980s bubble economy was difficult to ignore, the (omni)presence of Walkmans and Toyotas on American streets was typically interpreted in purely economic terms. Japan was deemed the 'great imitator' (Tatsuno 1990) whose 'culturally odorless' products, while cleverly engineered, had little impact on consumers' sense of self or global consciousness (Iwabuchi 2002). After all, did it really matter that the Walkman was a Sony product if young people around the globe used it to listen to *American* music?

It was not until the late 1990s that scholars in the United States started to point to the emergence of a new kind of Japanese superpower. As Japanese video games and animation gained in popularity – in 1999, CNN reported on the 'Pokemon mania' sweeping the United States ('Pokemon mania' 1999) – discussions shifted from Japan's gross national product to considerations of the country's 'Gross National Cool' (McGray 2002). In what would ironically come to be characterized as 'the lost decade' in Japan, Pikachu and Sailor Moon came to symbolize a new order in millennial capitalism marked by an alleged decline in the global impact of US culture and by the rise of Japanese cultural products as a possible antidote to the perceived negative effects of Hollywood-style Americanization (Allison 2006).

As the first 'non-Western' cultural center to enter the sphere of geopolitical influence typically reserved – at least in recent history – to the United States and Europe, Japan certainly deserves this growing attention. However, the Japan vs. US dichotomy present in much work emanating from both sides of the Pacific, if understandable considering the historically tortured relationship between these two nations, does not fully do justice to the historical realities of Japan's global cultural power.

The fact is that Japan had been globally culturally influential long before talk of 'Japan cool' started to seep into US academic and popular discourse. Some of the most recent evidence, on which I will further elaborate in Chapter 1, includes the works of Kitagawa Utamaro and Katsushika Hokusai whose woodcut prints – published, incidentally, in volumes called *manga* – provided inspiration to many of Europe's most celebrated artists in the second half of the nineteenth century and, more generally, the *Japonism(e)* movement that followed. Even the

contemporary version of manga, along with the related genre of animation, started to spread globally much earlier and on a much wider scale than most US scholars realize.

Indeed, the cultural significance of such popular texts as *Candy* or *Captain Tsubasa* throughout Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America starting in the second half of the 1970s cannot easily be overstated. In early January 1979, *UFO Robot Grendizer* (renamed *Goldorak* for the French market) appeared on the cover of *Paris Match* under the heading *The Goldorak Madness* (Paris Match 1979). By that time *Heidi, Girl of the Alps*, one of Studio Ghibli partners Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata's earliest collaborations, had already started to spread to some 35 countries around the globe. These texts remain highly celebrated today. Heidi (the anime character) was given her own postal stamp by the Japanese postal service in 2013, along with other characters from Nippon Animation's illustrious World Masterpiece Theater series. In the early summer of the same year, the digitally remastered version of the first 12 episodes of *Goldorak* quickly became the number one best-selling DVD in France, despite its pretty hefty price – the entire series was released as a box set for Christmas (Darling-Wolf 2015). In other words, the Japanese media are clearly a force to reckon with in global media studies even if, in many ways, they have long remained in US scholars' blind spot.

This book proposes to broaden the scope of inquiry into Japanese popular culture on two interrelated levels. From a global perspective, it explores the role played by the Japanese media in processes of transnational cultural influence – both historically and in our contemporary era – and the power dynamics inherent in such processes. It also considers how the media intersect with the multiple factors that constitute individuals' sociocultural identities to create 'local' definitions of the nation, culture and of what it means to be 'Japanese'. As will quickly become evident, in Japan as elsewhere, these two levels are deeply interconnected and often mutually constitutive.

Combining the works of scholars working in different cultural contexts – Australia, Europe, Canada, Japan, Mexico, Singapore, Taiwan, the United States – and hailing from different academic disciplines, this book aims at providing a more multifaceted picture of the nature of Japanese media and of their contribution to global cultural flows than it typically found in broad surveys of Japanese texts. The academic affiliations of the different scholars represented here only tell part of the story of the book's global reach, as many of its contributing authors live highly transnational lives. The collection's main objective is not to introduce readers to Japanese popular culture, even though this will be a likely side effect for readers unfamiliar with Japan, but to give them a sense of the kinds of issues currently at the center of scholarly discussions *about* the Japanese media. Many of the contributors to this volume have long been key figures in these discussions. Others are newer arrivals on the scene.

A number of important running themes quickly emerge here. As in other cultural contexts, the media in Japan play (and have historically played) an integral role in the creation of the imagined communities that, as Benedict Anderson (1983) argues, form the basis of national identity. Hence the running concern throughout the book with (re)definitions of the nation, the politics of national/cultural identity and the politics of nostalgia. In Japan, these (re)definitions have historically intersected – perhaps particularly powerfully so even if the Japanese case is certainly not unique – with definitions of gender and race. The connection of the ideal of 'good wife, wise mother' to nationalism and militaristic state policies from the 1868 Meiji Restoration to the end of World War II (Fujimura-Fanselow 1991), for instance, or the link between nationalism and racial purity (Roebuck 2016) are well established. Thus, discussions of gender and race also run through the book. Finally, the fact that 'no discursively unified notion of the "Japanese"' (Ivy 1995, p. 8) existed before Japan's eighteenth century forced engagement with the West reminds us that the imagination of the nation, or even the 'local', is significantly shaped by global forces.

These global dynamics are the specific focus of the collection's Part V, but are relevant to some extent to all of its chapters.

The book's organization

The complexity of the dynamics outlined above make the organization of a volume on Japanese media quite challenging. The diversity and reach of Japan's involvement in popular cultural production also means that boundaries had to be set and some things were necessarily left out. Most conspicuous in this volume is the absence of works on Japan's long-standing influence on gaming and its global industries. Far from suggesting that gaming is not important, the decision not to include a chapter on the subject came from the fact that gaming studies has developed into its own separate full-fledged field within media studies. Including an essay or two here could not possibly have done justice to the multifarious nature of this fast-evolving area of inquiry. In other words, gaming in Japan deserves its own separate volume – and, as noted, limits had to be set.

To readers in the United States unfamiliar with the Japanese context, the collection may also appear to overly favor the role of 'mass' media – television, film, magazines, newspapers – rendered quasi-obsolete by the digital revolution. Thus, it is important to note that despite the widespread availability of digital technology and satellite communication, the Japanese media audience is far less fragmented than that of the United States. For example, it is not unusual for a TV drama starring a popular idol (e.g. Kimura Takuya[1]) to reach a 'live' audience – individuals watching the show as it is first aired, as opposed to using a DVR or digital service provider such as Amazon or Netflix – of 15 to 20 percent throughout its run (Tokyo Hive 2017), while its final episode might reach 40 percent or more (A Koala's Playground 2013). In comparison, the rating for the highest-ranking show in 2016 in the US (*The Walking Dead*) was 8.8 percent, and this statistic included seven days of DVR and on-demand play back in addition to live viewing. The next highest-ranking show was *Big Bang Theory* with a rating of 5.5 percent (Porter 2016). As several of the contributors to this volume point out, print newspapers and magazines in Japan enjoy a much higher circulation than their North American counterparts. In fact, the two largest circulated newspapers in the world, *Yomiuri* and *Asahi*, are Japanese. Online news, manga, and J-pop also reach a particularly broad audience. In highly media-saturated Japan, the mass audience has not yet disappeared.

The highly intertextual nature of Japanese popular culture and the inherent intersectionality of dynamics of gender, race, sexuality, and national/cultural identity means that many of the chapters included here could have found a home in more than one part of the book. Because one must impose some order on this kind of project, however, the collection is divided in five parts, each organized around a broad theme.

Part I, *The rise of Japanese media*, explores some of the central historical dynamics that set the stage for the development of Japanese media as we know it today. In Chapter 1, I elaborate on the global spread of Japanese popular culture that accompanied Japan's opening to the West after the 1868 Meiji Restoration. While the Meiji era is typically characterized as a period of intense *importation* of Western ideas aimed at thwarting the Western colonial threat (which it certainly was), what is less frequently recognized is that the period was also marked by equally strategic efforts on the part of Japanese leaders to *export* Japanese culture abroad. The chapter examines the consequences of this strategy and some of the possible reasons behind the relative lack of recognition of Japan's early cultural influence on the West.

Chapters 2, 3 and 5 trace the role of the Japanese media in shaping gendered identities in Japan from the Meiji period to the 1960s. In Chapter 2, Sarah Frederick examines the early entry of girls' magazines on the Japanese publishing scene at the turn of the twentieth century. Exploring

the range of materials found in these publications, the chapter outlines how they simultaneously reflected a growing sense of Japanese girls as a distinct part of the modern nation of Japan *and* as part of a world culture of 'girlhood'. Acknowledging the staying power of the concept of *shōjo* (girl) media, Frederick also reflects on these texts' continuing legacy. In Chapter 3, Barbara Sato focuses on the role women's magazines played in thrusting average women into wider society in the interwar period. She argues that as young women not previously in the habit of reading became subscribers and were exposed to modern lifestyles unlike their own, the genre became a force in molding new gendered identities and new forms of capitalist consumption. Noting how the actions of women themselves helped shape these media formulations, she challenges their common characterization as mostly conservative and frivolous. Chapter 5 takes the exploration of *shōjo* identities to the postwar period through an examination of *mangakan* Mizuno Hideko's career and her celebrated manga *Fire!* (1969–1971). Noting that the series introduced readers to the 1960s countercultural ideals of personal liberation, Deborah Shamoon examines its role in allowing girls and young women to form communities and find means of self-expression. Taken together these chapters offer a powerful reflection on the intersection between gender, national identity and capitalism as Japan developed into a modern nation.

Just as World War II interrupted the course of the development of Japanese media, Chapter 4 comes to interrupt this book's narrative. In it, David Earhart shows how, starting in the late 1930s, the militarized government reconfigured the Japanese media landscape to create an environment favorable to its war goals. Through an examination of wartime print media, film and radio, the chapter explores how the media aggressively promoted a universal program of extreme self-sacrifice for the sake of national greatness and racial destiny that enshrined and inculcated euso-cial behavior. It demonstrates how the media ultimately spun this myth into an epic narrative of existential struggle – with dire consequences.

Chapter 6 closes Part I with an examination of a historical moment identified as a symbolic turning point in Japan's postwar rebirth: the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. Focusing on the Olympics as a media spectacle that provided opportunities to express pride in Japanese technology, Iwona Regina Merklejn demonstrates how this one sporting event became central to Japanese national identity to a degree hardly known in other advanced capitalist nations in the twentieth century.

Part II, *Media, nation, politics and nostalgia*, considers how Japan's national and political identity is imagined and (re)negotiated in different media both in recent history and in today's 'post-Fukushima' society. Building on Merklejn's examination of the triangle of sport, media and nationalism, Chapter 7 focuses on national and cultural identity formation in sumo wrestling. Taking the case of Mongolian sumo champion Hakuho as a starting point, Michael Plugh explores traditional markers of Japanese national identity in the sport, discourses of 'Japaneseness' in media narratives and the ways in which sports narratives reproduce these ideas for the Japanese public. In Chapter 8, Masaki Taniguchi outlines the unique role of Japanese newspapers and television in political communication. After describing the interrelated structure of the Japanese newspaper and television markets, the chapter examines Japanese politicians' media strategies and reflects on the growing role of the internet on political communication.

Chapters 9 and 10 both concentrate on the use of popular media idols in the definition and negotiation of national identity. Chapter 9 explores the politics and problematics of how idols come to represent 'Japan' through a case study of AKB48 – an idol group consisting of more than 100 women in their teens and twenties often described as 'national idols'. Noting the controversy surrounding producers' proposal to have an AKB48 spin-off perform at the Tokyo Olympics in 2020, Patrick Galbraith points to the contested nature of such narratives. In Chapter 10, Yunuen Ysela Mandujano-Salazar uses Foucault's notion of regime of truth to discuss domestic media discourses circulating in 'post-3.11' Japan. She argues that Japanese power

elites have been relying on popular media idols – and their non-political images – to disseminate and naturalize a discourse that emulates the outdated *nihonjinron* discourse (discourse on Japanese uniqueness) with the aim of nurturing patriotic sentiment and easing the social acceptance of otherwise controversial policies.

The chapters in Part III, *Japanese identities – plural: race, gender and sexuality in contemporary media*, explore the role of the Japanese media in shaping and representing different dimensions of individuals' identities. Chapters 11 through 13 center on the representation and negotiation of LGBTQ issues in Japan. Katsuhiko Suganuma starts the section with a critical examination of the performance of Matsuko Deluxe, one of the most popular male-to-female cross-dressing figures in Japan. He demonstrates how Deluxe provides a rare challenge to the mainstream media's handling of gender-queering individuals by exposing and making a mockery of the media's policing tactics. Chapter 12 focuses on the self-published lifestyle magazine *Laph*, produced by and for female-to-male (FTM) transpeople in Japan. Combining textual analysis and fieldwork, Shu Min Yuen examines the production and representation of FTM masculinity in the magazine to illustrate how its strategies can be read as an attempt by a group of individuals who have fallen outside the norm to access and place themselves in (rather than resist) the realm of the 'normal'. In Chapter 13, Claire Maree takes an innovative approach to examine how the term 'LGBT' is inscribed onto the television screen in mainstream news and current affairs programming in Japan. Through an analysis of captioning and flip-cards, Maree illustrates how the term is visualized to augment the hyper-visibility of 'sexual minorities'. She concludes, however, that mediatized hyper-visibility is produced alongside corporate expansion into lucrative 'rainbow markets', while the histories of representations and advocacy for LGBT issues and rights are simultaneously rendered invisible.

Chapters 14 and 15 focus on dynamics of gender construction. Michelle Ho considers the role of morning 'wide shows' (*waidō shō*) – a subgenre of *jōhō bangumi* (information programs) filled with stories of sexual assault, murder and violence and targeted at housewives – in shaping female viewers' sense of self. Employing both interviews with viewers and discourse analysis, she argues that representations of women as victims and perpetrators in these shows' crime narratives both transgress and reinforce the housewife's social role as 'good wife, wise mother'. Christie Barber turns to constructions of masculinity through an analysis of representations of parenting men in the Japanese films *Usagi doroppu* (*Bunny drop*, 2011), *Kiseki* (also known as *I wish*, 2011), and *Soshite chichi ni naru* (also known as *Like father, like son*, 2013). She demonstrates how each film employs the absence and presence of fathers as a thematic center in order to explore the complexity of relationships between men and their families and the challenges parenting men face in contemporary Japan.

Finally, Michael Thornton and Atsushi Tajima examine how representations of African Americans in Japan's leading English-language newspaper are employed to symbolically negotiate the country's handling of race relations. They illustrate how the newspaper, relying on a narrow range of racial stereotypes, manages to simultaneously position African Americans as marginalized within the US and Japan as hospitable and embracing of non-Japanese cultures – at the expense of a more honest discussion of Japan's troubled internal racial dynamics.

Part IV, *Japanese media in everyday life*, includes works that examine the intersection between everyday routine media use and the formation of cultural identities and civil society. In Chapter 17, Kaori Hayashi explores the economic, cultural and historical foundations upon which newspapers in Japan have flourished into one of the world's most robust print media industries. Noting a recent decline in print newspapers, the chapter also considers the consequences of rapid changes, spurred in part by the development of digital and mobile technologies, for Japanese newspapers and for contemporary Japanese society at large.

The impact of these relatively recent technological changes is further assessed and contextualized in Chapters 18 through 20. Paying attention to the distinctive nature of Japanese youth's social media 'tomodachi' (friends) relationships, Kiyoshi Abe opens with an interrogation of how social media generate new modes of sociality in Japan. He argues that while such modalities may, at first glance, seem to provide a liberating participatory alternative to highly vertically integrated traditional mass media, they also function as a tool for peer surveillance in the process of coordinating harmonious relationships between users. Amy Johnson follows, in Chapter 19, with an exploration of the characteristic traits and social expectations associated with (automated) bots that make the category appealing for human use. Drawing on examples of manual bots used for political critique and for carnivalesque play, she argues that the ambiguous accountability, predictability and non-humanness of the bot category help users navigate the challenges of being human in machine-shaped social spaces. Noting Japan's status as one of the earliest adopters of mobile media and wireless internet, Chapter 20 closes with a reflection on the future of mobile societies. Kyoung-hwa Yonnie Kim offers mobile media (keitai) communication in Japan as a key to understanding contemporary modes of daily practices. Focusing on Japanese youths as global cultural pathfinders for the adoption of mobile technology, she describes and discusses different cultural forms of mobile practices in Japan and investigates the relationship between mobile technology and its social manifestations.

In Chapter 21, Brian McVeigh explores the sociopolitical and economic projects behind the proliferation of cheerfulness, cute imagery and character goods in Japan. He demonstrates how products of late capitalist mass production, consumerist desires, technologies of simulation and physical and virtual spatialities interact to generate 'consumutopia' and 'simulacra-scapes' – alternatives to ordinary reality where our imaginary and fantasy worlds are enlarged. He also discusses how cheerfulness and cuteness, as everyday esthetics/ethics of 'resistance consumption', are appropriated by individuals for personal use.

Finally, in light of major environmental disruption from climate and pollution crises, Gabriele Hadl looks, in Chapter 22, for 'technologies of survival' in Japanese media culture. She ponders such questions as: How did TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi disaster change people's attitudes toward media sources? How could journalism better respond to, or even prevent, environmental disasters? Does anime culture, with its profusion of animal characters and inherent animism, offer positive alternatives to anthropocentrism? To what degree can environmentalist messages become widely popular without perversely fueling overconsumption? And, how can green media activism help to change course to a sustainable society?

The final part of the handbook, *Japanese media and the global*, explores the role of the Japanese media in a broader global context with a particular focus on Japan as a culturally influential nation. Koichi Iwabuchi starts the conversation with an examination of cultural diplomacy and nation branding. Noting the enhancement of soft power and 'pop culture diplomacy' under the influence of the 'Cool Japan' policy, he argues that the latter is principally a one-way projection of national images in line with the idea of nation branding and notes that its rapid development has come at the cost of promoting cross-border dialogue and fostering cultural diversity within national borders.

In Chapter 24, Sueen Noh Kelsey's ethnographic work considers how Korean women negotiate their continuing consumption of both Japanese and Western popular culture – whose introduction to the Korean cultural landscape was, for many years, mediated by Japan – in the post-colonial era. Kelsey demonstrates that while Korean women's childhood memories are illustrative of the three-way post-colonial relationships between these three contexts, female media consumers do not passively accept Japanese culture but actively transform it to make it their own.

Chapter 25 assesses the implications of Japanese individual and institutional authorship in recent inter-Asian adaptations and remakes. Eva Tsai examines two cases from the perspectives of intellectual property negotiations and local remediation – that of a small Japanese company struggling to see three Korean drama remakes come to fruition and that of the recent successful adaptation of a thrice remade Japanese idol drama into a Chinese film – to offer a comparative and complementary perspective on the relative power of independent players and media corporations in the transborder screen trade. The collection closes with Rayna Denison's analysis of the historical development of anime's distribution from its domestic market to a growing body of fans in the United States. This final chapter challenges conceptions of anime's worlds by investigating how shifting distribution technologies and logics have shaped the markets for anime at home and abroad. By arguing that anime's worlds shift and change as some texts travel and others are left behind, it contends that distribution has much to add to our understanding of anime's global significance.

Taken together, I believe these chapters make a powerful case for the continuing significance of the Japanese media to our understanding of both 'internal' dynamics of national, cultural, gender, sexual and racial identity construction, and 'global' dynamics of transnational influence – a subject to which I will briefly return in the conclusion of the book. They also point to the need to continue to interrogate these dynamics from multiple points of entry, including ones that do not necessarily go through the United States as the assumed main global cultural influencer in relationship to which everything else is considered. In sum, I hope that this collection will serve to broaden and further open a continuing discussion about the nature of the Japanese cultural context and its relationship to various parts of the world in an era in which globalization and the reassertion of national/local identity politics are increasingly simultaneously felt.

Note

1 References to Japanese names throughout this volume will follow either the traditional Japanese order (family name/given name) or the 'Western' order (given name/family name) depending on the context. The traditional Japanese order will be used for individuals most prominently known within Japan and/or other parts of Asia. The 'Western' order will be used for individuals who enjoy broad name recognition and/or work and live outside of Japan. Thus, I use the traditional Japanese order here to refer to actor and former SMAP member Kimura Takuya – aka Kimutaku – because that is the more common and 'natural' iteration of his name. In the closing chapter, however, I will use the 'Western' order to refer to globally celebrated animators Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata (given name/family name). The 'Western' order is also used here for the names of Japanese scholars who contributed to the volume (e.g. Masaki Taniguchi, Atsushi Tajima, Kaori Hayashi, Kiyoshi Abe, Koichi Iwabuchi). In a similar vein, Sarah Frederick notes in Chapter 2 that 'Japanese scholarship by Honda Masuko [Japanese order] has also been translated into English by Tomoko Aoyama ['Western' order] and Barbara Hartley'.

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Part I
The rise of Japanese media

Who's the 'great imitator'?

Critical reflections on Japan's historical transcultural influence

Fabienne Darling-Wolf

Is this Orientalism? Japan's early engagement with 'the West'

In 1867 – about 14 years after Commodore Perry's arrival on Japanese shores forced the country to open up – Japanese art hit the Paris exposition. By the time the Universal Exposition of 1878 (also held in Paris) closed its doors, enthusiasm for all things Japanese had, according to Ernest Chesneau's 1878 article *Le Japon à Paris*, 'swept through the studios [of Paris] like a flame on gunpowder' (cited in Napier 2007, p. 29). Speaking of the growth of all things Japanese in the 11 years between the two expositions Chesneau concludes that 'This is no longer a fashion, this is a passion, this is madness' (p. 34). Artists and intellectuals enthusiastically started to integrate elements of Japanese visual arts into their own work. They also became enamored with all sorts of Japanese cultural practices – they were, in a sense, the first generation of *otaku*. Famous Japonisants like the Goncourt brothers or writer Emile Zola and, of course, artists like Monet, Van Gogh or Rodin, not only collected Japanese woodcut prints, but they also drank Japanese sake, ate Japanese food with chopsticks and composed poems of haiku inspiration.

As art historian Siegfried Wichmann (1981) puts it, while '[i]t is impossible to establish a precise or approximate date when Europe and the Far East can be said to have first encountered one another … From the very beginning, all European references to the subject show an intense interest' (p. 11). The 'madness' would eventually reach far beyond the studios of French artists and intellectuals to permeate all aspects of society as 'Japonisme soon entered the public domain and was adopted as a favorite style, discernable in such realms as fashion, interior design, and gastronomy' (Genova 2009, p. 453). Even 'the way the fashionable Parisienne stood and moved between 1860 and 1900 was, so to speak, imported from Japan' (Wichmann 1981, p. 19).

The significance of Japanese influence on European arts at the time is well established (see for example, Hokenson 2004; Lambourne 2005; Wichmann 1981) and a detailed analysis of Japonisme's impact on European visual aesthetic is beyond the scope of this chapter. A few of the best-known examples include Vincent Van Gogh's numerous paintings ostensibly based on Japanese prints – which Wichmann characterizes as 'more Japanese than their Japanese models' (p. 42) – and Claude Monet's 1876 *La Japonaise* featuring his wife holding a fan and wearing a red kimono. As Van Gogh himself put it, 'We like Japanese painting, we have felt its influence, all the Impressionists have that in common' (cited in Wichmann 1981, p. 42). Later on, the Art

Nouveau prints of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Pierre Bonnard or Jacques Villon, and the works of the French cubists and surrealists would also be associated with the movement. Describing Japonisme as a 'force that stimulated the development of modern art' (p. 7) Wichmann notes that it 'gave rise to a whole new range of subject matter, new techniques and new artistic devices' (p. 10).

While most often associated with the European – particularly French – context, Japonisme nevertheless quickly spread beyond France's borders. Siegfried Bing's Paris-based Japonist review *Le Japon Artistique* [Artistic Japan] featured French, English and German editions and was read across Europe and the United States by groups of Japanese art aficionados united by 'shared practices of art appreciation and a desire for antique objects that had not been adapted for the Western export market' (Rodman 2013, p. 490). As early as 1876, the Japanese exhibit at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition set off a 'Japan craze' on the American continent and by the 1880s 'Japonisme had become a popular trend that shaped US decor, architecture, and popular culture as much as it did aesthetic debates and the development of fine arts' (Patterson 2015, p. 667). As Tara Rodman (2013) demonstrates in her analysis of the movement's influence on modernist theater, diversely localized strands of Japonisme developed from Boston to Seattle. Japanese influence would eventually permeate virtually all aspects of European and American culture – from fashion and advertising (Wickmann 1981) to literature (Patterson 2015), theater (Rodman 2013), music (Stankis 2015) and architecture (Nute 1993) – resulting in 'a shift of Copernican proportions, marking the end of Eurocentric illusionism and the beginnings of a new, modern way of seeing and recording the world' (Hokenson 2004, p. 17).

Because the practice and study of Japonisme involves the borrowing of Eastern cultural elements by representatives of the West, 'the provocative comparative model of Orientalism has become an obvious referent' (Genova 2009, p. 455) for its academic critique (see, for example, Evett 1982; MacKenzie 1995; Yoshihara 2004). Describing Said's 1978 publication of *Orientalism* as a 'bombshell that even several decades later continues to exert enormous influence on the study of … the interaction between Western and non-Western cultures', Susan Napier (2007, p. 7) discusses the difficulty of resisting this seductively simple 'theoretical straightjacket' (p. 10). Certainly, European and North American encounters with Japanese culture were, and often continue to be, imbued with 'teeth-grittingly offensive examples' (p. 9) of racism and misrepresentations, and elements of Orientalism can clearly be found in many European Japonist texts – Pierre Loti's *Madame Chrysanthemum*, which Jan Walsh Hokenson (2004, p. 23) rightly characterizes as illustrating 'some of the basest aspects of "orientalist" colonial paternalism, with a contemptuous feminization of the subject' comes to mind. However, the blanket application of Said's concept to *all aspects* of Euro-American engagement with Japanese culture is not particularly productive. A number of features specific to the nature of the movement and to Japan's historical relationship to 'the West'[1] significantly complicate the picture of this multidimensional phenomenon.

First of all, the specifics of Japanese history resulted in a different positioning in relationship to Europe and the United States than that of most of the other nations Said discusses. Unlike India and most of Asia, Japan was never formally colonized by Western powers. Because it was 'encountered so late in the long bloody history of colonialism, Japan did not fit into the established rubrics of the Orientalist enterprise' (Hokenson 2004, p. 25). While the leaders of the 1868 Meiji Restoration were clearly reacting to the menace of Western domination made obvious by the arrival of Perry's 'black ships' in Uraga Harbor, Japan's 'revolution from above' was a strategic effort to thwart the kind of military intervention suffered by other Asian nations (Duus 1998). Their decision to open Japan's borders and actively import Western technology, institutions and philosophies was often fueled by anti-foreign rhetoric – the original slogan of the restoration was 'Revere the Emperor and Expel the Barbarians' (Dower 1993, p. 3) – rather

than admiration. And if Westernization was recognized as a crucial step on the road to modernity, Western influence was merged with Japanese tradition to (re)define the country's modernization process as uniquely Japanese and ultimately justify its own imperialist aggression in other parts of Asia (Boyle 1993; Rado 2015).

Furthermore, Japan's opening to the West was a carefully orchestrated *two-way* process. As essentialized visions of 'the West' penetrated the Japanese cultural imaginary (Ivy 1995) Japan, in turn, entered the imagination of Parisian artists and intellectuals. Thus, as French cultural critic Denise Brahimi (1992) concludes, 'what [Western nations] were looking for, when going to Japan … was the example of a country capable in every way to resist occidental enterprises, without nevertheless giving up on the advantages that come with being a civilized nation' (p. 21). As a result, the intensity and depth of Europe's engagement with Japan at the time was qualitatively different from its relationship to other Asian nations. Wichmann (1981) notes, for instance, that 'Japonisme penetrated every area of the fine arts in Europe far more thoroughly than *chinoiserie* did in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' (pp. 18–19). Art critic Lionel Lambourne (2005) points to high levels of admiration and respect in 'The West's love affair with Japan' (p. 7). While some forms of engagement remained mired with stereotypes and misconceptions, 'more and more writers endeavored to understand the fundamentals of Japanese aesthetic theory', and by the end of the nineteenth century 'writers of a variety of styles were seeking to integrate essential principles of Japanese art into their work, as they aimed to analyze, modify, and personalize Eastern aesthetics, translating the ideas from painting to the new medium of creative language' (Genova 2009, p. 454).

In other words, Japonisme's multifarious nature and the scale of its influence suggest that it cannot be fully understood through a purely Orientalist lens. If, as 'a style emerging out of Western gestures of imitation' of Eastern cultural elements Japonisme is, as Pamela Genova (2009) reminds us, 'always already an art of the other', it is not 'a single entity or a consistent stance' (p. 455). Rather than a discursive practice, Japonisme represented a much broader aesthetic shift – conditioned, as noted above, by a two-way transcultural exchange – that would ripple through all dimensions of European and North American cultural production. Unfortunately, academic disciplinary boundaries often result in scholars focusing on individual texts when analyzing historical examples of the movement without questioning their alleged positioning within a broadly assumed Euro-American 'Orientalist discourse'.

For example, in her otherwise excellent discussion of the intersection between Japanese (trans)nationalism and gender dynamics, Mori Yoshihara (2004) begins with a description of *Madame Butterfly* as a 'quintessential Orientalist narrative' that 'echoed the numerous existing texts of European Orientalism' (p. 975). However, her own analysis of the opera's trajectory onto the US stage and, in particular, of the performance and reception of Japanese singer Tamaki Miura (1884–1946) challenges, or at least complicates, this characterization. While Yoshihara recognizes this fact, she nevertheless continues to uncritically position the text within a taken-for-granted Orientalist discursive tradition. Her conclusion that 'to see Madama Butterfly simply as a cultural product of racialized and sexualized Western fantasies misses the complex layers of its functions for the performers and audiences across the Pacific' (p. 996) and points to the need to at least question the validity of the Orientalist lens when engaging with Japonisme's snarled complexity. The trick, then, is to approach Japonisme as 'a creative endeavor, inflected differently by different writers' and artists 'without imposing "orientalist" standards of measure that the texts themselves may invert or repudiate' (Hokenson 2004, p. 27). As Pamela Genova (2009) concludes, '[T]he exploration of Japonisme finds its most fertile context in the post-Said framework of more recent trends in critical analysis and cultural theory' (p. 456) – a point to which I will shortly return.

Orientalism's problems

The orientalist lens frequently applied to the study of Japonisme has had a number of problematic consequences on scholars' interpretations of the movement and, more generally, on discussions of transcultural exchange between Japan and 'the West'. Perhaps most problematically, the suggestion that European artists' infatuation with Japanese style stemmed from a relatively superficial desire for an exoticized and eroticized 'Other' akin to their engagement with the populations of colonized Islamic and Hindu regions massively downplays the importance of the movement. As noted above, Japonisme revolutionized European art. Without it, impressionism might never have happened – as Van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo in 1886, 'In a way all my work is founded on Japanese art … Japanese art … takes root again among the French impressionist artists' (cited in Wichmann 1981, p. 52), or as Monet explained,

> We needed the arrival of the Japanese prints in our midst, before anyone dared to sit down on a river bank, and juxtapose on canvas a roof which was bright red, a wall which was white, a green poplar, a yellow road and blue water. Before the example given to us by the Japanese this was impossible.
>
> *(Quoted in Lambourne 2007, p. 48)*

In other words, as Jason Farago (2015) put it in a BBC story titled *Hokusai and the wave that swept the world*, without Japonisme 'the global art world we today take for granted might look very different indeed'.

Interest in Japanese aesthetics, however, did not stop with the impressionists. Japanese transcultural influence continued far beyond the 30 years or so (in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) most frequently associated with the Japonist movement. Hokenson (2004) traces its impact on French intellectual production from the early days of Japonisme to the dawn of the new millennium. Moving beyond the already clearly established link between Japanese art, impressionism and early modernism (Patterson 2015; Rodman 2013), he teases out the ongoing significance of Japanese thought and aesthetics in the works of such diverse figures as Marguerite Yourcenar, André Malraux, Jean-Paul Sartre, Roland Barthes, Jean-François Lyotard, Julia Kriteva and Hélène Cixous (to name only a few). The often canonic position of these individuals on the global intellectual scene suggests that Japan – even if in translation through the works of French intellectuals (a point I will also return to in a moment) – is still present in the 'mind of the West' (Napier 2007). To put it bluntly, Japanese influence is a pretty big deal. Dismissing European engagement with the Japanese aesthetic as mere Orientalism, however, effectively conceals Japan's crucial role in the development of European artistic and intellectual thought. Consequently, as cultural critic Armando Martins Janeira (1970) notes, 'When we read any book on general literature, or on the theory of literature, very seldom do we find a reference to the literature of Japan. Studies of a general nature about the modern novel or about poetry are written as if Japanese literature did not exist' (p. 14).

Subsuming Japonisme under the broad lens of Euro-American historical relationship to 'all things oriental' also fails to do justice to the specifics of both its contexts of origin and reception, and to the plurality of forms the movement eventually took – Shūji Takashina (1988) speaks of 'Japonismes' (plural). In France, for instance, the early spread of Japanese arts must be understood in relationship to a shift in governmental cultural policy toward greater cultural democratization that took place, not coincidentally, in the late nineteenth century and, more broadly, within '[t]he complex web of Franco-Japanese artistic relations' (Hokenson 2004, p. 27). As

Hokenson reminds us, French Japonisme is ultimately 'primarily about France, about problems in the French practice of occidental arts and letters' (p. 21).

Japonisme, however, is also very much about Japan. Positioning the latter as a passive victim of Euro-American Orientalist discourse only paints (at best) a partial picture. First of all, placing Japan in the same camp as other Asian nations colonized by European powers erases the country's own history of imperialist aggression throughout Asia. Noting that Said treats Japan 'predominantly as a non-Western, quasi-Third World nation which has been a victim of Western (American) cultural domination', Koichi Iwabuchi (2002) wonders about 'the total absence of a consideration of Japanese imperialism/colonialism in his analysis of imperialism and cultural heritage' (p. 3). In fact, Japan justified its colonial violence through the kind of East/West binaries frequently found in theories of Orientalism, resorting to 'an ideology of pan-Asianism to camouflage its imperial ambitions' (p. 8) to oppose itself to 'the West' and secure a dominant position in the region.

Furthermore, if Meiji-era leaders actively imported Western wares, technologies and ideas, they also assertively exported Japanese ones. The fact that Japanese art entered Europe and the United States through international expositions was no accident:

> On the international stage, Japan's national image was largely propagandized through its arts and crafts, especially in the universal expositions. Since the second half of the nineteenth century, world's fairs had provided a grand arena where nations showcased their industrial development, military prowess, and cultural achievements. *The Meiji government keenly explored these opportunities, heavily investing in Japanese exhibits as a means to elevate its international prestige.*
>
> (Rado 2015, pp. 604–5, emphasis mine)

In the process, 'various forms of Japanese "tradition" were reconstructed and reinforced both by the state and the intellectuals' for foreign consumption (Yoshihara 2004, p. 976).

As Japan turned capitalist, entrepreneurs quickly understood the potential of a global market. Japanese expatriate art dealers and merchants soon joined European intellectuals and artists in promoting Japonisme. Newly industrialized Japanese companies started to actively produce for the foreign market. Silk retailer Takashimaya – which would transform into one of Japan's first modern department stores in 1910 – sent its executives to Europe and the United States to 'investigate artistic, industrial, and commercial trends' and sold modified versions of kimonos to Western customers (Rado 2015, p. 586).

In a pattern still present in the more contemporary version of Japanese capitalism (Ivy 1995), these commercial endeavors were often bolstered by self-Orientalizing gestures. As art historian Mei Mei Rado (2015) explains in the case of Takashimaya: 'In Western eyes, the kimono represented the opposite of the changing fashion silhouettes and evoked an ancient civilization. This idealized view of an eternal Oriental style *would have been enthusiastically embraced and promoted* by Takashimaya in fashioning its products' (p. 588, emphasis mine). Japanese art dealers in the United States – such as Bunkio Matsuki (1867–1914) and Sadajiro Manayaka (1866–1936), who 'regularly updated Japanese factories on changing American tastes in order to develop new products' (Rodman 2013, p. 496) and sold 'a wide variety of items that included pots and lanterns' (Chen 2010, p. 29) – took advantage of their status as Japanese nationals to establish themselves as trustworthy sources of 'authentic' Japanese art. Capitalizing on their Western customers' anxiety about mass-marketed objects they 'fabricated and sold definitions of race and art to peddle Oriental goods' (p. 22). Through 'self-essentializing strategies' (p. 36) these

entrepreneurs strategically exploited Western desire for Asia, using 'their catalogues to construct idealized Japanese and Chinese pasts filled with brave warriors and beautiful maidens (p. 29).

In the performing arts, figures such as Tamaki Miura similarly drew on Western audiences' imagination of Japan to bolster their fame. Describing Miura as 'remarkably savvy about the creation and performance of her role on stage', Yoshihara (2004, p. 982) notes that she 'quite consciously and skillfully enacted the character of Cio-Cio-San to appeal to her Western audiences' in her performance of *Madame Butterfly*. She, Yoshihara concludes, 'voluntarily performed the role of the Japanese woman created by Western Orientalism' (p. 983). Japanese entrepreneurs, artists and government officials strategically tapped into an exoticized version of Japan formed in the Euro-American imagination.

Indeed, charges of Orientalism – particularly those found in the works of Anglo-American cultural critics – typically point to the mix of fantasy, paradox, desire and fear in 'the West's' engagement with the Asian 'Other' (see, for example, Goebel 1993; Gordon 1983). In turn, European and North American artists and writers are chided for failing in their efforts to truly understand Japanese culture. Setting aside for a moment the evidence suggesting otherwise (Brahimi 1992; Genova 2009; Lambourne 2005; MacKenzie 1995) – and the difficulty of fully understanding *any* culture – one wonders how this engagement is different from other forms of transcultural exchange. Because few individuals have opportunities for long-term physical entry into other cultures, global flows of culture, as cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (1996; 2013) reminds us, always necessarily operate through the work of the imagination. How, then, are the fantasies, paradoxes, desires and fears of French Japonisme different from visions of the United States as both a culturally imperialist invader and a place one dreams about – as illustrated respectively by the quotas limiting the entry of US texts into the French media market and by the French expression 'c'est l'Amérique' used to refer to something exceptionally good (Darling-Wolf 2015)? Why, in other words, is the history of Japanese cultural influence in Europe and the United States interpreted as an example of Orientalism rather than as an early instance of cultural globalization?

Japonisme, racism and amnesia

The most obvious answer to the question above is, of course, racism. One significant difference between Europe and the United States' engagement with each other and their relationship to Japan is that the former is conceptualized as an (albeit inaccurate) meeting of universalized White (male) Westerners as opposed to an encounter with racially (feminized) 'Others'. The lens of Orientalism – particularly the more nuanced and complex versions of the concept found in contemporary post-colonial theory (see, for example, Hedge 2011; Stam and Shohat 2012) – is certainly useful in assessing this specific dimension of the Japan/'West' relationship. Noting that Orientalism 'provided a call for self-awareness on the part of scholars and commentators on other cultures', Napier (2007, pp. 8–9) reminds us that 'racism, condescension, ignorance, and at a certain point, sheer, almost mindless, hatred have eddied among the flow of discourse' about Japan. Or, as Hokenson (2004) concludes, 'In japonisme … the typology of [Said's] Orientalism is useful, allowing for quick, clear distinctions between such writers as Loti and Claudel' (p. 23). Thus, cultural exchanges between Japan and 'the West' are always necessarily mired in the politics of race. The scale and depth of Japonisme's reach suggest, however, that we must remain carefully attuned to how these politics took shape in different contexts at different points in time. We must also 'entertain the possibility of identification with the Other' (Napier 2007, p. 8) – the possibility, in other words, that racism may occasionally be transcended, or at least put aside for a moment.

Furthermore, if Euro-American racism tinted artists and intellectuals' engagement with Japan throughout the Japonisme movement, it may also explain the later tendency to fail to acknowledge the full extent of the debt European and North American cultural productions owe to Japanese aesthetics – or, ironically, the tendency to interpret it solely through an Orientalist lens. Orientalism, as a theory developed in the wake of decolonization movements, was applied to Japonisme inductively and after the fact. In a more recent historical context, it may be easier to believe that nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European and North American artists and intellectuals were racist than to wrap our head around the fact that Japan was a hugely globally influential nation prior to its World War II defeat and its spectacular recovery. For instance, while the impact of Japonisme on such artists as Degas, Van Gogh, Monet or even Picasso is widely discussed in art history, this influence is rarely acknowledged in museum exhibits in the United States or Europe today.

The broader contemporary conceptualization of 'the West's' relationship to other parts of the world in studies of global cultural flows is indeed also at work here. As globalization theorist Jan Nederveen Pieterse (2009) reminds us, 'The West' is a notion conditioned by and emerging from two historical polarities, the North–South polarity of the colonizing and colonized world, and the East–West polarity of capitalism-communism and the Cold War' (p. 50). This polarity has a number of consequences for the study of Japonisme. First, because the most intense debates about the nature of transcultural influence arose post-World War II in the wake of the United States' growing hegemony, global cultural dynamics are 'predominantly studied in terms of how the Rest resists, imitates, or appropriates the West' (Iwabuchi 2002, p. 50). The concerns about Western cultural imperialism that dominated early discussions of globalization (see for example, Schiller 1976) have made it difficult to envision Europe and the United States as culturally influenced – at least by Japan[2] – rather than culturally influential. In the case of Japonisme, French and US cultural arrogance might also have something to do with the desire to downplay this influence.

Second, 'the West' came to be most closely associated with the United States at the expense of internal differences and tensions. Today, 'Westernization' and 'Americanization' are frequently treated as synonymous in both North American and Japanese scholarship and the forces of US global cultural hegemony receive most of the attention in discussion of cultural globalization (Darling-Wolf 2015). As a result, relationships outside a US–non-West dyad – where the 'non-West' is the presumed victim of 'the West' – fell to the wayside. Or, as Pieterse (2009) puts it, 'the differences between North American and Europe are papered over. In fact, historical revision may well show that there are much greater historical affinities … between Europe and Asia than between Europe and North America' (p. 50). Japonisme certainly comes to mind here as an obvious victim of this development.

Furthermore, as noted, Japan does not easily fit the North/West/colonizer–South/East/colonized dichotomy. Not only was Japan (unlike most of its neighbors) never formally colonized by 'the West', but it also engaged in its own *mission civilisatrice* in other parts of Asia. This status as 'non-colonized colonizer' places Japan in a rather unique position in its relationship to both 'Western' and Asian cultures. On the one hand, '[t]he advocacy of a cultural and racial commonality between Japan and other Asian nations naturally conferred upon Japan a mission to rid Asia of Western imperial domination and to itself civilize Asians instead' (Iwabuchi 2002, p. 9). In other words, emphasizing racial and cultural similarities between Japan and other parts of Asia allowed Japan to position itself 'in but above Asia' (p. 8) and justify its imperialist aggression. In order to do this, Japan also had to culturally distance itself from Europe and the United States. Thus, 'Japan is represented and presents itself as a culturally exclusive, homogeneous, and uniquely particularistic through the operation of a strategic binary opposition between two imagined cultural entities, "Japan" and "the West"' (p. 7).

This strategic opposition to 'the West' was further accentuated in the postwar era as Japan worked to erase the history of its colonial past, reinterpret itself as a war victim and renegotiate its national identity (Duus 1998; Gluck 1993). Japan's long history of transcultural exchange did not sit well with the move to construct Japanese culture as unique and impenetrable to outsiders – which takes its strongest contemporary form in the conservative *Nihonjinron* discourse on Japanese purity: 'To put it bluntly, the idea of a Japan lacking in external cultural power has been collusive with a postwar strategy of constructing an exclusive and unique Japanese national identity' (Iwabuchi 2002, p. 6). To put it differently, the love affair of Japonisme had to be carefully muffled in order to avoid a political scandal.

Interestingly, the story has not resurfaced yet. In the 1980s, Japan's spectacular rise to economic superpower was interpreted, both in Japan and in other parts of the world, as a case of economic strength devoid of cultural influence, based on the 'generalized assumption that Japanese culture would not be accepted or appealing outside the cultural context of Japan' (Iwabuchi 2002, p. 2). Recalling his surprise when first hearing about the Japanese media's popularity on Asian markets, Iwabuchi explains, 'As a Japanese, I had implicitly accepted the idea of Japan as a faceless economic superpower: Japan has money and technology but does not have a cultural influence on the world' (p. 2). Japonisme, in other words, is the victim of both 'Western' and Japanese amnesia.

Who's the great imitator?

The reasons behind the continuing influence of the Orientalist lens on scholars' understanding of Japanese transcultural power are multidimensional. They stem from both Euro-American and Japanese racism. They have much to do with identity politics and strategic positioning, with cultural arrogance and willful amnesia. While Orientalism helps us understand some dimensions of 'the West's' relationship to Japan – and while I agree with Napier (2007) that 'the dark elements that Said discerns in Orientalism must not be ignored' (p. 8) – it is overall a rather ill-fitted tool to tackle Japan's unique history. In the end, it hides more than it reveals.

One continuing side effect of the East/West divide implicit in Orientalism and, as we have seen, often embraced by both sides, is the downplaying of Japan's historical transcultural influence and the consequent concomitant positioning of 'the West' as the main generator of globalized popular cultural forms. The Japonisme movement is but one example of Japan's global cultural influence swept under the carpet of postwar politics. Indeed, one might argue that Japan never stopped being incredibly culturally influential.

Japonisme, for instance, set up the stage for Japanese animation and graphic novels' later global influence – Hokusai's woodcut prints were collected in books called 'manga'. As noted in the introduction to this volume, the second wave of 'cultural invasion' (Hermelin 2000, p. 133) from Japan came in the late 1970s when Japanese animation and manga first hit the global market (with the notable exception of the United States where en masse arrival of Japanese animation would happen some ten years later).

While individuals who grew up reading and watching these texts may recognize their significance in shaping their cultural identities (Darling-Wolf 2015), scholars' interpretations are still frequently haunted by the ghosts of Orientalism (MacWilliams 2008). Positioning anime consumption as a fan activity rather than a broader global phenomenon (Cooper-Chen 2010; Napier 2005, 2007), they often ascribe the genre's appeal to 'Western' audiences to its exotic value – as when Shinobu Price (2001) argues that anime 'creates a freshly intriguing aroma that lures foreigners into its mist' (p. 166) – or its quintessentially Japanese qualities (see, for example,

Levi 1998; Schodt 2008). Even when recognizing Japanese animation as both a culturally influenced and globally influential genre, they tend to locate its global spread within the familiar framework of Japan either appropriating or offering an antidote to US cultural influence (see for example, Allison 2006, p. 275; MacWilliams 2008, p. 13; Napier 2005, p. 5).

Again, such positioning does not do justice to the scale and nature of Japanese popular culture's transnational voyage. Most problematically, it fails to recognize the necessarily hybrid character of globalized cultural forms (Kraidy 2005). Indeed, ample evidence suggests that the lens of hybridity provides a much more useful instrument for understanding the history of Japanese transculture than that of Orientalism. Hybridity was a significant subtext of both Japan's early adoption of Western technologies and ideas in the Meiji era and European and North American early encounters with Japanese aesthetics. The woodcut prints that European artists admired were 'the direct result of a fundamental tension in Japan … due in no small way to the impact of Westernization in that country' (Genova 2009, p. 458). In turn, these artists, and the generations of intellectuals who would follow, integrated what they learned from Japanese aesthetics and literature into their own cultural frames – as when Van Gogh referred to the impressionists as 'the Japanese French' (cited in Butor 1995, p. 90). As Hokenson (2004) concludes, 'What "japonais" meant in France, and French "gaijin" in Japan, was and remains fluid, and always mutually revisive. To watch writers counterposing their motifs of Japan and France is to watch a dynamic process of intertextual creation, in one moment of transnational aesthetic reception' (p. 33).

Approaching Japonisme through a lens of hybridity attuned to power dynamics (Kraidy 2005) allows us to ask a different set of questions. It frees us from the need to establish the authenticity of individuals' engagement with the Other to focus on the work of the imagination. It pushes us to consider why some dimensions of transcultural influence are readily acknowledged while others are erased. It helps us understand how transcultural exchange can be strategically used in definitions of national identity – Iwabuchi (2002) speaks of Japan's 'strategic hybridism' (p. 53). It sheds light on the process through which 'Japan's political quest for national identity dovetailed with the Western cultural undercurrent searching for renewed exoticism', as '[t]he stories on both sides were crystalized on the same hybrid imagery of the Orient' (Genova 2009, p. 609). It helps us recognize that 'In literature, painting, or music, French japonisme is primarily about France, about problems in the French practice of occidental arts and letters, and only secondarily about Japan, imagined source of proposed solutions' (Hokenson 2004, p. 21). It helps us wrap our heads around the fact that Japanese influence can be felt through French texts just as Japanese texts can sell European culture to the French (Darling-Wolf, 2015, 2016). As Said himself recognized 'cultural forms are hybrid mixed, impure, and the time has come in cultural analysis to reconnect their analysis with their actuality' (1994, p. 14). It is time to think about Japonisme as an early example of cultural hybridization in all its complex messiness.

Notes

1 The use of quotation marks here points to the constructed nature of the concept of a unified 'West'. 'The West' will be used throughout the chapter to refer to the strategic positioning of the United States and Europe in opposition to 'the East', and sometimes 'the rest', in both theories of Orientalism and in the rhetoric of Japanese leaders.
2 There is actually quite a bit of concern in France about US cultural imperialism as illustrated, for instance, by France's protectionist cultural policies (McPhail 2010).

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2

Girls' magazines and the creation of *shōjo* identities

Sarah Frederick

[M]y older brothers had a subscription to a magazine called *Boys' World*, which I would read surreptitiously whenever they left it sitting on their desks. I remember being so happy when I could finally take the publisher's new magazine for girls and have it all to myself. Whenever *Girls' World* was delivered from the bookstore, I would spread it out in my hands and savor every corner. Taking great care not to dirty the pages, I would add each magazine to the neat pile on my desk and enjoy the stack growing higher and higher. The frontispieces were drawn by illustrators such as Ikeda Shōen, bearing charming titles like 'A Doll's Banquet' and graced with flower images appropriate for each month. I would gaze at them for hours. At that time, there were certainly no movies or revues for a young girl to go to in a rural town, and perhaps it was because I did not have the opportunity to seek such pleasures that one monthly issue of a cheap girls' magazine inspired the passion of this girl and gave her such immense pleasure. Now I publish many stories in girls' magazines … From my own girlhood memories, I see what an important role I can play.

(Yoshiya 1975, pp. 12: 408–9)

Near the start of the twentieth century, girls' magazines (*shōjo zasshi*) entered on the Japanese publishing scene. Titles such as *Shōjo sekai* (Girls' World, 1902), *Shōjo no tomo* (Girls' Friend, 1908), and *Shōjo gahō* (Girls' Pictorial, 1912) emerged and grew in concert with girls' education and magazine publication over the coming decades. These magazines reflected, in both their content and existence, a growing sense of Japanese girlhood as a distinct community, embedded in a range of intersecting identities. The *shōjo* as a category of gender and age was represented as a group holding places in multiple realms: as young citizens of the modern nation of Japan, of the Japanese empire, and of a perceived international community of young women. The magazines evoked a sense of Japanese girls as national figures and also part of a cosmopolitan world culture of 'girlhood'. The publications cultivated and reflected an increasing awareness of and sensitivity to a sense of place in the world partly defined by cultural capital, national origins, and class background, but expanded or complicated by shifting views of love and sexuality, and the sense of individual subjectivity encouraged by magazines that directly expressed that they were aimed at girls. Of course, such identities would not always be mutually compatible, and

this chapter also focuses on ways in which girls' magazine media negotiated and represented these interactions.

As we see from author Yoshiya Nobuko's childhood experience quoted above, the medium itself was highly important to the girls' magazine's aesthetic and social influence, from their visual and physical qualities to the very act of bringing to new spaces and audiences distant texts and images. From the perspective of media, these magazines provide material to think about the ways print culture was an early window on what has come to be called the 'media mix' of Japanese modernity.[1] While most scholarship has focused on gender identity, we also see in these magazines the interaction among capital, print culture, and the rise of the nationalized perspective articulated by Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities* (Anderson 1983). Astute scholars have noted the links between the sense of community among Japanese girl magazine readers and this concept of imagined communities, linking the importance of discourses on the status of women to the modern Japanese state and promotion of Japan as part of world civilization (e.g. Watanabe 2007). The illustrators and editors made use of relatively new technologies of photography and cheaper color printing to bring images of Japanese and world lifestyles to a readership of increasingly well-educated girls and also to disseminate many of the readers' own images and words back on the same pages. To explore how media interacted with girl identity in the early twentieth century, this chapter considers the reader communities and the place of girl communities in the world and empire, with attention to media of representation of these various communities. Through these texts we see how the identities of the *shōjo* were partially created by the magazines and their producers and contributors. It is useful to also remember that those contributors' careers were sometimes made by the magazines and that 'contributors' frequently includes the readers themselves.

The central issues in research on girls' magazines in both Japanese and English have mirrored those discussed above. As with much media material, a focus has been the issue of how enabling or how exploitative these materials and venues were for young women of the early twentieth century. To what extent did they support the rising Japanese empire and state institutions? To what extent did they permit different ways of imagining a life course or rethinking gender norms? To what extent were their messages different from those of the more conservative girls' schools of the era? In the Japanese scholarship, there has been interest in considering the different roles of social forces, education, and magazines themselves in creating and shaping the concept of the *shōjo* and her reading material, and some debate over cause and effect has ensued (for an excellent summary of these discussions and controversies, see Imada 2007, p. 9).

An important general statement from the 1980s on the neglect of girls' magazines and the history of girls' culture in Japanese scholarship by Honda Masuko has also been translated into English by Tomoko Aoyama and Barbara Hartley (Honda 1982; English translation, 2010). Citing the 'neglect or even contempt' regarding girls' fiction and manga, she observes, 'Scholars do not wish to be sullied by contact with these works' (Honda 2010, p. 25). Honda's approach is to embrace this outsider position of girls' culture, and to place both girls' culture and her own scholarship itself in a confrontational or critical position in relationship to the mainstream. In her account, the '*hirahira*', a word describing the fluttering of girlish items from ribbons to girlish language, stands against the staid scholarship that has ignored them, and in all their *hirahira*, 'outside the linear advance of time' subverting the mainstream even as it never performs a pointed critique (p. 36). While there has grown up a body of academic and popular scholarship on girl culture in the meantime, this issue of how to place the 'girl' and 'girls' magazines' in relation to politics or social criticism remains at the forefront. The same edited volume in which Honda's translation appears has been important in bringing the topic to light and in providing a range of approaches to the girl as reader, writer, and subject of representation (Aoyama

2010). Some important recent Japanese critics besides Honda who work directly on early *shōjo* magazine culture in Japanese have been Kan Satoko (2008), Kume Yoriko (2013), Imada Erika (2007), and Watanabe Shūko (2007), each providing especially close attention to the interaction between the construction of the category and *shōjo* labeling as a category of periodical publishing. Kan, Watanabe, and Kume have especially strong roots in literary studies but all take a holistic approach that considers materials in cultural history and visual studies as well. Imada takes a sociological and social history approach but deals extensively with literary materials in her book (2007), which provides an argument for the positive aspects of girls' magazines for young women in the 1910s and 1920s, well substantiated with valuable tabular data about the readership and content. In short, this has been an interdisciplinary field but one which generally returns to the richness of the creative work in these publications.

One of the most salient features of these magazines is the prevalence of romantic or erotic relationships among girls that they represent (e.g. Frederick 2016; Shamoon 2012; Kanno 2011). Reviewing materials from the late Meiji period on signs of these themes are present, if not always obvious, early on, and by the time one reaches the 1920s, same-sex relationships among girls are pervasive on their pages, whether among the girls represented in the artwork, the fiction, or among the readers themselves. So an important topic in the analysis of girls' magazines has been their role in creating a space for expression and realization of same-sex relations among young girls, and virtually every secondary source mentioned in this chapter refers to this trend.[2] In addition, scholars writing specifically about same-sex love among girls in the prewar era use girls' magazines extensively as primary materials (e.g. Suzuki 2006; Pflugfelder 2005; Akaeda 2011). Variation in how same-sex romance is treated by existing scholarship is often linked to what degree these relationships are viewed as utopian, fleeting, 'purely' emotional, or benign, whether in their threat to hetero-normativity or other ideologies of domestic life or femininity. As Kanno (2011, p. 18) rightly points out, the tendency in the scholarship on girls' media of prewar Japan to underplay the political significance and staying power of same-sex relationships among girls often seems surprisingly at odds with the visibility of such relationships in the texts themselves.

Theoretical approaches to *shōjo* magazines tend not to be explicitly displayed in the scholarship, but Michel Foucault and Judith Butler are the most common interlocutors. Behind the work on the origins of girls' culture in girls' magazines is often a sort of genealogical approach that refers to Michel Foucault's conception of 'genealogy', where the method looks at the history of concepts and systems of power to consider and critique where they have ended up. Generally speaking these works do not address the concerns of Foucault, where the imagined inevitability and totalizing discourses of the present would be opened up for question by the method of genealogy, but rather show where girl culture came from to present the *shōjo*'s origins. Among such works in English, Shamoon (2012) is particularly thorough in tracing these trends from Meiji to the present day. Some are less historical but pick up on transporting a conception of girlishness across time and gender as a mode of social critique (e.g. Takahara 2006).

Such genealogical approaches to the *shōjo* most closely draw on the political concerns of the Foucauldian methodology when they use the concept to reconsider universalized notions of sexuality, gender, and maturity, articulating the ways girls' culture called on the ambiguities of the concept of 'not-quite-female' (Robertson 1998, p. 65) to embrace more a status that allowed for a longer-term relationship with the eros and intimacy that had heretofore been associated with a 'phase' of adolescence that should be outgrown through a process of maturity toward heterosexuality. Writers including Yoshiya Nobuko (of the epigraph) and later Mori Mari employed 'girlhood' in order to maintain a form of queer sexuality beyond the age of adolescence. In this mode, *shōjo* genres became important to lesbian identities, while being called by

various historical names such as 'S' and '*dōseiai*' (same-sex love), and later as 'lesbian' when this term became more familiar (for history and of the loan words based on the English 'lesbian' see Welker 2010). More recently, fans of Japanese *shōjo* media culture internationally have found in *shōjo* culture material variously interesting for feminisms, lesbian identities, and queer identities. A reason for this abiding interest is the power of a representative practice that does not require 'growing out of' same-sex love. Nor are they even limited by the more radical, but still limited, conception of 'growing into' same-sex sexuality through a process of liberation. At its best, the purpose of girls' magazines in such narratives is not simply to show the existence of same-sex relationships at some particular historical moment, but to destabilize master narratives of liberation or oppression (discourses of power) that affect people's lives in the present.

Many works on the *shōjo* and their media influence suggest the ways that girls and cultural producers question dominant discourses on the nature of femininity and 'women' through their performance of girlhood. This is true also of the interest in girls' anime and manga, which often provide a space for queer sexuality and identity, and some scholars note this connection with Butler explicitly (for example, Welker 2012). Quite recently, Iida Yūko (2016) has explored in a sustained and powerful way the importance of a sort of performance, in Judith Butler's sense, of gender and sexuality categories in and around the writings of twentieth-century Japanese women, including the ways that *shōjo* and *jogakusei* (girl students) and their representation develop the contradictions and ambiguities already present in a concept like 'good wife' (*ryōsai*), part of the master narrative of women's education from the late nineteenth-century *ryōsai kenbo* (good wife, wise mother). She shows how the discontinuity and potentially self-contradictory aspects of this phrase are split open and revealed through the performances of reading and writing, including those for and by those with girl-related identities.

What is a '*shōjo*'?

Girls' magazine writer Yoshiya Nobuko's essay 'Loving one another' implies various distinctions among a girl child (*dōjo*), a maiden (*shojo*), and an adolescent girl (*shōjo*). For her, the last is the oldest of the three and develops strong friendships with other girls her age that are in a continuum with, but different from, the love of the youngest for her doll (Yoshiya 1921). She argues that this sort of sweet affection on the part of girls of various ages before marriage should not be feared as any type of untamed sexuality, but rather valued as an ethical core for behavior when she grows up. This bring us to the useful point made by Jennifer Robertson and repeated and developed by John Whittier Treat that there comes to be an implication in the word *shōjo* of 'heterosexual inexperience and homosexual experience' (Robertson 1998, p. 65; Treat 1996 p. 283). Same-sex relationships in the early 1920s were often seen as benign, even beneficial, for *shōjo* girls who were old enough to experience romantic and erotic inclinations, as an alternative to fraternization with men.

Rather than the common translation of 'girl' for *shōjo* it would be more accurate to use something more prosaic, such as 'adolescent young woman'. In her extensive book on *shōjo* discourses in the prewar, Watanabe Shūko writes that most who use the term are referring to the span of time between puberty and marriage (Watanabe 2007, p. 22). This is the basic concept of the *shōjo*, and is located in adolescence. But the English word 'girl' also has a range of colloquial meanings that is more evocative of the range with which '*shōjo*' has been used, including various qualities that are seen as in some way 'girlish' or playful that might extend into adulthood. Writings by Takahara Eiri and Takemoto Novala have been especially important for considering the possibility of a *shōjo*-inspired stance across gender, sex, and sexual orientation lines, perhaps

because gender and sexual ambiguity have always been a part of this concept (Bergstrom 2011; Takahara 2006; Takemoto 2009).

In addition to girls' magazines themselves, a main factor that lay the groundwork for the emergence of this category of *shōjo* were changes in the education system and the increase in girls' education, including the Upper School Act of 1899, which required high schools for girls all around Japan. In the Japanese scholarship on the early twentieth-century *shōjo* some especially emphasize this educational factor (e.g. Honda 1990) in her creation. Relatedly, what this emerging concept of *shōjo* also reflects is a lengthening of the time between when a young woman was monitored by her parents and when she married, particularly for those who moved from their homes to dormitories to be closer to a school. This extended period meant for some young women a greater mobility, choice, and free time embodied in the overdetermined figure of the *shōjo*. Because this concept's legacy extends to the present, these discussions apply to questions of women's place in society today and their potential to be politically mobile and mobilized. An important detailing in English of the Japanese-language 'girl critics', who take on the writing style of the *shōjo* while also doing academic work, can be found in Aoyama (2010); some of the scholars she covers are Honda Masuko, Kawasaki Kenko, and Saitō Minako.

Finally, an important area of analysis for contemporary *shōjo* studies has been the history of postmodernism and analysis of the ways consumption and commodity fetishism have intertwined with *shōjo* culture in Japan (Treat 1996). Thinking about girls' magazines of an earlier period is important in that they help to define the term *shōjo* in the very context of the capitalist press as a form of marketing, and in that the consumption of reproductions of girls' culture of the Meiji and Taisho eras remains an important aspect of contemporary girls' culture with new inflections particular to late capitalism.

Definitions of *shōjo* have a sense of urgency as they seem to apply to questions of women's place in society today and their potential to be politically mobile and mobilized. The current interest in the *shōjo* is clearly tied to the place of the term in the genres of *manga* and *anime*, and the prevalence of the term among cultural critics and scholars of popular culture. Saitō Tamaki's *Beautiful Fighting Girl* (2011), which focuses more on girls' anime and game characters' meaning for contemporary Japanese psychology and sexuality than on the gender of consumers, is also an important piece in this discussion. A full review of studies of contemporary *shōjo* is outside the scope of this chapter, but citations are found in the historical works mentioned above as well as the discussions found in works on *shōjo manga* (Prough 2011; Welker 2006; Aoyama et al. 2011; Shamoon 2008) and other media (Kotani 2008; McLelland 2010; Napier 2001; Lamarre 2009). *Shōjo* is a category that has remained important in contemporary Japanese publishing, and is now known beyond Japan via the world of *anime* and *manga*. There is a sense that *shōjo* has a conceptual contribution to make and is worth using in its Romanized form, and 'shojo' was entered in the Oxford English Dictionary in 2011. The rest of this chapter will explore the ways in which early *shōjo* magazine media formed and reflected the multiple layers of girlhood identity.

Shōjo magazine media and communities

The origins of *shōjo* magazines lie largely in the popularity of a 'girls' column' launched within the *Boys' World* (*Shōnen sekai*) magazine in 1895, and leading to a number of girls' magazine publications after the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5). Propped up by Japan's perceived success in that war, magazines addressed the young citizens of Japan as though speaking to an increasingly unified group. They were driven equally by the rise of consumer society and sense of the possibility of middle-class leisure. As Mark Jones has argued, treating childhood as a precious time for education and future social mobility was a hallmark of the Japanese rising bourgeois class

(Jones 2010). Meanwhile, girls' magazines were also moving away from the model of Women's education magazine *Jogaku zasshi* (founded in 1885) and such intellectual enlightenment magazines that were read as much by men as by women (see Brownstein 1980; Copeland 2000). Although editors still thought that providing moral guidance and information were central goals, and sometimes rejected items on the grounds of being age inappropriate, the clear break toward seeking popularity and high circulation as important qualities of these publications came with the *shōjo zasshi*, and the editors addressed what was clearly seen as a new market. It was in the context of the capitalist press in Japan that the 'shōjo' became a marketing category, and this remains a core aspect of its social meaning today. Meanwhile, this media culture created a range of communities for that girl, from her personal connection with the magazine to the larger reader and contributor community, to the Japanese nation, empire, and the world.

Early *shōjo* magazine materials are difficult enough to view in person that some detail of what they were like may be helpful. All of the magazines were in the size typical of magazines of the time, the dimensions of a standard contemporary academic book, and about a centimeter thick. They had color covers and insert pages with artwork, thick photopaper for some reproductions, and cheaper newsprint paper for the inner pages. For an example of one issue we might look at *Shōjo Gahō* (*Girls' pictorial)* from the early Taishō era (January 1913). It has a cover image reproducing a woodblock image by future manga artist Hosokibara Seiki (1885–1958) in colorful blues, greens, and reds, with a young woman wearing a large green ribbon, fashionable especially among schoolgirls at the time. She clutches a ball of string, a common item for posed photographs of girls for the New Year's holiday, and a pine tree is in the foreground. Hosokibara was one of the many commercial artists who were supported by the rising readership of women's magazines, with Takehisa Yumeji being one of the best known. Inside the cover, we see two additional color images, including one of girls playing a traditional card game (also by Hosokibara). There are 18 photographs, almost all featuring girls and young women, from quite young children in velvet lace-collared dresses to those in their late teens. Many are children of well-known figures or society elites, and the author Natsume Sōseki's daughters are posed at their home with large hair ribbons similar to those on the cover. Other photos seem to be chosen to serve as snapshots of daily life of the upper-middle class: girls with their grandmother, girls having their hair fixed, a girl holding a puppy, girls sitting by a fireplace. The photos often have dreamy captions: 'A White Shawl: While waiting for her mother to get ready to go out, she stands in the garden, her black hair like lacquer bound with a white ribbon, and waist tied with an obi – everything here is beautiful, but what stands out is her white shawl!' There are photographs of dogs in the snow, a baby elephant at the zoo, and four pages show formal poses of young women whose names are provided – a feature on society women. These images build a montage of daily life in early twentieth-century Japan and common aspirations held out for girls and women in the early Taishō period. Advertisements are for home remedies, the Mitsukoshi department store, an upper girls' school, and competing magazines and girls' novels. There are biographies and children's stories, and at least half of the hundred pages of text are reader submissions of poetry, personal experiences, and letters.[3] There are three pages from the editor, Takami Kyūtarō (Shisui) (1875–1945), an editor working with Kunikida Doppo, later known for his work with the magazine *Children's Land* (*Kodomo no kuni*). This one issue includes most important elements of the girls' magazines and what readers said appealed to them, information we have because of their participation in the publications.

As suggested by my description, one of the keys to the success of these girls' magazines as media was their visual lushness and variety. The early days of girls' magazines correspond with the influx of lithography as a choice for graphic designers, and the originals of the early illustrations for the girls' magazines are a mix of woodblock prints, lithography, painting, and

photography. Lithography was popular early in its introduction around 1890 largely due to its apparent realism, seeming to be 'just like the real thing' (*honomono sokkuri*). In some sense, this effect was overwritten by the availability of photography, but the introduction of color to lithography brought out its full potential, and it saw increased use by a group of commercial artists. One outlet was posters, but the primary one was the rising number of magazines (Utagawa 1997, p. 49). The printing of these periodicals was still not micro-specialized, so while mechanical reproduction remained very important, the compositional medium of the original artwork for the various frontispiece illustrations could be diverse, with photos, oil paintings, woodblock, and lithography all reproduced on the same paper. So while previously 'woodblock prints' (*hanga*) were slower to reproduce, one image could now be distributed through mass reproduction via photo technology. These trends also gave artists a wide range of venues so that someone like Takehisa Yumeji was able to illustrate periodicals, sheet music, and advertisements, while also producing bestselling books of his prints. Arguably, this added income from commercial art allowed for more complex and detailed original designs, and scholars write that it 'freed up creativity' (Utagawa 1997, p. 63). Artists for the magazines were often trained in multiple styles and places, lending to the variety and vibrancy of the period. For example, many *Shōjo no tomo* covers were by Kawabata Ryūshi of the Hakubakai School who trained extensively in Western painting. He was later inspired by the Japanese collection at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and from 1912 began to reinscribe Japanese art methods back into his work just as he began to work in mass-produced materials for girls' magazines. There were many such examples of artists with cosmopolitan training, and it made this moment a good one for creating the vibrant look of girls' magazines. In turn, the very success and large readership of these magazines meant that they could make a profession of illustration.

Just as many of the reporters and authors for girls' magazines were men, so too were most of the famous graphic artists we associate with the girls' magazine (Takehisa, as well as Fukiya Kōji, Takabatake Kashō, and Nakahara Jun'ichi, all of whom owed much of their success to their work for girls' fiction book design and girls' magazine illustrations). There were several women artists as well, however, and the epigraph by Yoshiya specifically mentions Ikeda Shōen (ne. Sakakibara Yuriko, 1886–1917), who was a modern-style ukiyo-e painter and woodblock artist, often choosing as subjects beautiful women in a mix of Western and Japanese dress. She and her students were featured in girls' magazines (e.g. *Shōjo gahō*, August 1914, unpaginated front matter). The opportunities for women artists extended also to the reader columns, with drawing contests. Early Taishō *Shōjo no tomo* editions generally included eight drawings across two pages drawn from reader submissions. The editors also provided themes for subjects and guidelines, such as 'not using color or pencil', because these would not be reproducible (e.g. *Shōjo no tomo*, October 1919, p. 97). Here the medium of the magazine brought the sense of a worldly aesthetic to the lives of younger girls and also suggested that they might have the opportunity to produce art of their own. The extensive backgrounds in Paris of painters like Fukiya and ties to world modernism brought these aesthetics to the lives of the girl and to their own creative repertoire, whether those made their way into their lives through art, fictional work, or household arts from interior to kimono design.

Also important in this medium was the use of print technologies to represent girls and to create extensive opportunities for self-expression. Writings by reader-contributors themselves often tie the visual appeal of the magazines with their own desire to contribute. In the epigraph to this chapter, Yoshiya Nobuko expresses the intense pleasure of her visual experience as a reader of girls' magazines to her later career as a writer for them. Similar sentiments are seen among less famous reader-contributors. For example, the *Special Spring Supplement*, 1917 issue of *Shōjo no tomo* included a column among the articles (rather than the contributor section) by various

women reflecting on their history of reader submissions. Each of them mentions as a starting point her sensory experiences of finding the colorful magazine covers and frontispieces, and then later contributing her own writing. This typical fan letter written by a Yanase Ayako (April 1917, p. 60) from Kobe links the visual experience of the magazines with the sense of personal connection that they brought after the loss of her parents:

> The days went by quickly and here it is nine years after my parents passed away leaving my sister and I in the care of my grandparents near Awaji. Their loving care has allowed us to live here by the sea happily enough, but what has always been lacking are friends to serve as our conversation partners. To soothe our loneliness both of us took to reading … My older brother from the capital sent something, saying 'Here's a new book for you'. The cover was like burning crimson, two girls encircled by a wreath and smiling. That was the first issue of *Shōjo no tomo*.

Another writes of similar images moving her to submit to the magazine and when successful she writes emotionally, 'Such happiness from being invited amongst all of you illustrious writers. It feels like a dream!' (Tanimoto Sonoko, *Shōjo no tomo*, April 1917, p. 62). That these writers link these visual parts of the magazines and their own desire to submit suggests they wanted to be a part of the aesthetic experience of the magazine and connect themselves to the *shōjo* identities that are represented in those images.

We see here also that an important aspect of this community building was the tie between city and country that these images provided. The magazine clearly brought aspiring girls living outside of the major cities a sense of being part of a larger community through the submissions, and the very content of the images solicited the interest of and interpellated adolescents from the periphery. One of the most popular subjects of covers and inserts was a girl by the seashore or river looking out longingly or a pair of girls doing the same. These called on the associations with melodramatic fiction of the era, such as Tokutomi Rōka's *Hototogisu* (The Cuckoo, 1899) of elite women by the shore, perhaps recovering from tuberculosis or fleeing a family problem. A pastoral scene by Sasaki Rinpū called 'A little break from tending to spring chickens' explicitly depicts a young woman reading a magazine while sitting against a pile of hay in a chicken coop. Meanwhile, such pastoral images come also to be tied with modern poetry and fiction early on, with works by groundbreaking poet Yosano Akiko, but also with translated modern and modernist poetry such as William Butler Yeats. Increasingly in the 1920s, the same artists who graced the covers and drew illustrations for girls' magazine fiction themselves combined lyric poetry with their drawings, and this became part of what came to be labeled as 'lyric pictures' (*jojōga*). Again, these provided the readers with aesthetic links between modernity and their own emotional lives, which might or might not align with the nature of their own life environment, and this seems another reason they are so often mentioned by the readers.

These visual styles arguably contributed to the imaginings and realities of girl–girl intimacy surrounding girls' magazines. As mentioned, these images from very early on tend to contain pairs of girls together and alone in a landscape or bourgeois household setting. While same-sex relationships start to appear in girls' magazines as early as 1910, particularly in the reader letters and indirectly in stories about school and dorm life, I would argue that such relationships reveal themselves first most clearly in the visual spaces of the magazine in such paintings, and readers' reactions to them. For example, in 1919, a reader of *Shōjo no tomo*, Nanri Fusako, writes, 'The girl on the cover: She was truly, truly cute and beautiful. Those eyes, those cheeks, the moon peeking out through the new leaves – unbearably wonderful!' (Nanri Fusako, *Shōjo no tomo*, October 1919, p. 98). In the same issue, an insert by graphic artist Harada Namiji shows two girls on a sofa