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MEDIATISED IMAGES OF JAPAN IN EUROPE:
THROUGH THE MEDIA KALEIDOSCOPE

MUTUAL IMAGES

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MEDIATISED IMAGES OF JAPAN IN EUROPE:
THROUGH THE MEDIA KALEIDOSCOPE

EDITED BY

MARCO PELLITTERI & CHRISTOPHER J. HAYES



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A TRANSCULTURAL RESEARCH JOURNAL

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CONTACT: mutualimages@gmail.com

MUTUAL IMAGES RESEARCH ASSOCIATION – Headquarters
3 allée de l'avenir, Les chênes entrée 3
64600 Anglet – France

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Editorial

Marco PELLITTERI & Christopher J. HAYES | Shanghai International Studies University, China; Cardiff University, UK

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Dear readers, students, fellow scholars,
welcome to this sixth instalment of *Mutual Images*.

This Editorial is co-signed by the journal's director, Marco Pellitteri, and by one of the main members and collaborators of Mira, Christopher J. Hayes: Chris, in fact, is responsible for the second section of this issue and has contributed in many ways to make this issue possible.

The present issue is, overall, divided into three sections: the first two sections are devoted to research articles, and the third section is devoted to book reviews and exhibition reviews (more on the contents we offer in this issue later on). In this sense, we are happy to notice that *Mutual Images*, as a journal, is steadily growing and putting up some muscles, thanks to the continuous enthusiasm that young and senior researchers from many countries accord to our association and its initiatives. As an open-journal and open-access publication, *Mutual Images* journal is still young, but it is getting good results in two senses: among scholars, it is increasingly seen as a place in which interdisciplinary research papers can be submitted, seriously assessed and improved under the standards of a strict double blind peer review process; and formally, thanks to the progressive inclusion in academic indexes and cataloguing systems, which are a primary resource and parameter of recognition for academic journals. The road is still long, though, if anything, because many such indexes include new publications mainly on the basis of steady and long-term productivity in terms of issues published (and other criteria on which we will not bore readers further).

Let us talk about this issue of *Mutual Images*.

This particular edition of the journal stems from two of our recently held events and is, partly, a continuation of the fifth issue, namely as far as the first section of this instalment is concerned. In fact, in the first section we propose, as a follow-up to the previous issue,

two more and last articles drawn from papers presented at the symposium that Mira co-organised at Aoyama Gakuin University in November 2017, *Japan Pop Goes Global: Japanese Pop Culture on Aesthetics and Creativity*. As explained in the Editorial of *Mutual Images*, no. 5, we divided the presentation of the Aoyama symposium in two issues of the journal, and the papers presented here close the circle. Moreover, still in the first section, to the two papers from the Aoyama Gakuin symposium we have added a third article that matches the areas of interest of the other two essays (more on this later). A short note about the Aoyama Gakuin event: its aim was to reflect on Japanese pop culture's growing influence on contemporary visual arts, charting its progress as it makes its way across geopolitical barriers and arrives at the crossroads of culture, memory, and technology of the present day. The event was divided into three themes/sections: 'Adapting and Transforming Folktales in the Contemporary Period', 'Cultural Industries Across Borders', and 'Creating and Re-Creating Meaning'. For further information on the original deployment of the symposium *Japan Pop Goes Global*, please refer to Mutualimages.org.

The first article, titled 'Layers of the Traditional in Popular Performing Arts: Object and Voice as Character: *Vocaloid Opera AOI*', is authored by Krisztina Rosner. The piece delves into the relatively new area of research on how human and nonhuman subjects interact in the performing arts. In particular, the article uses as case study a new and intriguing form of spectacle and contemporary popular art, the 'Vocaloid', that is, the computerised simulation of a singer (or, more specifically, a new form of musical instrument/software that creates humanlike voices) able to interact with human artists, or that can be 'played' by human performers. The musical work analysed, *Vocaloid Opera AOI*, is at the threshold between past and future in its getting deep inspiration from Japanese classic literature (*Genji monogatari*) and other forms of folkloric art, such as the *bunraku* (puppet theatre). As Rosner writes: 'The representations of the Aoi character as object, body, body-object [...] and the changes in the dramaturgical-performative role of object and voice modulates the Cartesian division of body and mind and the human vs. nonhuman hierarchy in theatre'. If this new form of techno-artistic *pastiche* is to be assessed as postmodernism or post-humanism, or as a little of both, or something even different and more advanced and complex, is the theoretical duty of the readers after absorption of this compelling essay.

The second article is signed by Nargiz Balginbayeva and is titled 'The Re-creation of *Yōkai* Character Images in the Context of Contemporary Japanese Culture: An Example of the *Yōkai Watch* Anime Series'. It is a rich discussion on the ways 'monsters' have been visually

represented in Japanese folk and then popular culture. In part drawn from a wider research by the author, this paper is informative and insightful because, besides unravelling several important themes of the key *tòpos* of supernatural and monstrous creatures in Japan's folklore as later adapted into contemporary pop/ular culture, it potentially lends itself to a network of connections with related topics. One of which is, for instance, the process of 'monstering' and 'self-Orientalisation' constantly ongoing in Japanese contemporary culture facing the gaze of the Other (mainly, Euro-American observers); and another one, on an opposite side, is the trend of what we could here call 'de-monstering' of monsters, the tendency in Japanese popular culture to re-represent as pretty and cute legendary creatures which were before drawn, painted, and told as scary and menacing, thus following the trends of so-called *kawaiisation* of reality and visual symbols in part of Japanese pop culture (for further reference on these two complementary themes, besides Balginbayeva's article, see for instance Miyake, 2014 and Pellitteri, 2018).

The third article of the first part of this issue, as we anticipated above, is not specifically based on a paper given at the 2017 Aoyama Gakuin University symposium: it was selected from the submissions we received after putting out a public Call for Papers for this issue, but nonetheless it was chosen because it complements the other pieces and is on topic with respect to the themes and prerogatives of that initiative. Titled 'From *kawaii* to sophisticated beauty ideals: A case study of Shiseidō beauty print advertisements in Europe' and authored by Oana Birlea, the article delves into the longitudinal strategies of visual communication by a leading cosmetics company from Japan. Connecting the dots between policies of woman's representations, ideas of nation and of the (forced) ideals of womanhood, 'whiteness' and 'Asianness' in Japanese official and non-official cultures, the essay raises a quantity of critical issues related to the constraints and cultural cages in which the notions of femininity—and of a 'Japanese femininity'—have been struggling for decades, and still do, in the Japanese as well as in the European media. The article is particularly interesting, among other features, in that it extends the field of research on Japanese culture from the anthropological and literary perspectives (the most frequently explored and used in recent articles published on *Mutual Images*) to an analysis of fashion media and advertising, which are all but secondary lenses through which to observe the features and changes of contemporary Japan (or any given country). More cogently in relation to the previous article by Balginbayeva, which also deals with the notion of *kawaii*, Birlea uses as one of her analytical categories the concept of *kawaii* as suggested or

promoted in the visual strategies of the cosmetics advertising campaigns discussed, presenting to the reader the factual reality that the *kawaii* styles and aesthetics are not at all (only) part of a manga/anime subculture but, rather, an integrated sector of Japan's mainstream culture that long predates the 1970s or 1980s, as some past anthropological research suggested or implied. This article presents interesting facts and a general historical parable of Shiseidō's campaigns in Europe, and can become a good starting point for deeper and more articulated and comparative analyses on the theme of representations of Japan in advertisements addressed to foreign markets.

The second part of this issue stems from the sixth *Mutual Images* international workshop, which was co-organised by Mira with Christopher J. Hayes, and was held at Cardiff University (UK) on 1st and 2 May 2018. Held also through the support that Hōsō Bunka Foundation granted to Marco Pellitteri for his research activities in the fiscal year 2017-18, the workshop saw speakers from many countries participate in two days of academic exchange and discussion. The articles contained within the journal's second section represent the culmination of this workshop, but also the broader salience of the issues of representation. The title of the workshop and, subsequently, of the whole issue you are about to read, is 'Mediatized Images of Japan in Europe: Through the Media Kaleidoscope'. In past issues of *Mutual Images*, the journal has been concerned with images of Japan in Europe and vice-versa. Building upon this, this instalment focusses on the mediatization of these images, that is the ways in which the media (however defined) shape discourse, interpretations and understandings about images.

It is therefore worth considering the title of this issue for a brief moment. What are 'mediatized images'? And what do we mean by the 'media kaleidoscope'?

First of all, as you are most likely aware, kaleidoscope most commonly refers to a children's toy, one that works by positioning two reflective surfaces titled at each other at an angle within a tube, at one end of which is coloured glass and various colourful materials. By turning the tube, the image changes, creating symmetrical patterns as the objects shift, multiplied by the mirrors. The image changes whenever the tube is rotated and it is never the same. The observer only ever sees the objects in the tube through these reflections and abstractions. They are given a sense of the shapes and the colours of the objects within, but never see the objects as they actually are. A similar toy, the prismscope, allows the view to see the image directly in front of them broken up and rearranged, refracted through a prism.

The media are a lot like a kaleidoscope or a prismscope: as observers, we are shown an object, an event, or some other matter of enquiry, but the image that is received is not complete. Depictions in the media are affected by the kind of media through which they are transmitted, be it a static image, a sound or a video; a short news report will offer 500 words on a subject, whereas a television documentary may dedicate an hour or longer to exploring it. Motivation is also important. One has to consider where depictions come from, who created them, and why. The depiction of Japan in the U.S. media in 1943 will be very different to the depiction of Japan in the Italian media of 2019.

Lastly, as a closing musing for this Editorial, it is important not to forget the title of this journal, 'Mutual Images'. As much as Japan is fragmented in European depictions, be they historical accounts or contemporary media depictions, Europe is also filtered through the Japanese lens. In previous issues of *Mutual Images*, Maxime Danesin (2016, 2017) has examined the use of medieval Europe and Norse mythology as settings in manga, whilst Hernández-Pérez (2017) has looked at how Spain's cultural heritage has been represented and *mis*represented in anime. The kaleidoscope and fragmentary effect of the media lens is a universal phenomenon, and one that, as this issue shows, is not limited to recent representation. As stated earlier, it is our job as academics to continue to challenge and interrogate misrepresentation when we see it and to promote mutual understanding between Japan and Europe, and, as we will be starting to explore in the next issues, between Asia more in general and Europe. Indeed, among the further steps of this journal, there is the gradual extension of our investigation field to the wider Asian region: China, Hong Kong, Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam, India, and other countries. As written just above, we do like challenges, and we know that the notion of mutual images can and should be applied to a variety of combinations, settings, and scenarios—as it will.

But for now, please enjoy this sixth issue of *Mutual Images*.

Marco PELLITTERI, *Main Editor*

Christopher J. HAYES, *Member of the Editorial Board*

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Layers of the Traditional in popular performing arts: Object and voice as character - *Vocaloid Opera Aoi*

Krisztina ROSNER | Meiji University, Japan

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ABSTRACT

The paper analyzes how the concept of presence is put into play in connection to disappearance, contemporary popular media technology and objects in the 2014 production of Vocaloid Opera Aoi, composed by Hiroshi Tamawari. In the traditional noh theatre version of the famous story, the character Aoi does not appear "in person," she is represented by a kimono. In the 2014 production the modified story is performed with bunraku puppets and sung by a Vocaloid singer, a software. By analyzing this, I elaborate on the connection between the recent studies on object dramaturgy and the questions of nonhuman (Bennett, Eckersall), and the nonreflective position rooted in animism from the fan base of pop culture that attributes personality and emotions to their respective robot/android/software idol. I examine the latest performative events in contemporary Japanese theatre that involve both human and non-human actors/agents (animals, objects, androids, vocaloids): the corporeality of the organic and inorganic Other, focusing on how the presence of the organic and non-organic nonhuman appears within the interplays of representation, how it relates to the layers of empathy, responsibility and consent, in the frame of contemporary Japanese popular culture.

KEYWORDS

Contemporary Japanese Performing Arts; Transmedia; Vocaloid; Miku Hatsune;
Theatre; Aoi; Object Dramaturgy; Presence.

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In this paper I take a close look at *Vocaloid Opera Aoi*, directed by Hiroshi Tamawari in 2014, a performance that blends one of the most well-known plays of traditional Japanese theatre with bunraku puppets, projection and Vocaloid. The Vocaloid is a constructed entity, a sound/voice product, which is generated by synthesizer software that uses human voice as a database library, and which is made visible by a projected image. It is my hypothesis that the *Vocaloid Opera Aoi* can be positioned on an axis of two major approaches of dealing with the nonhuman. The first approach is new materialism, especially the distinction between objects and things as a way of intensified ecological awareness (Bennett, 2015: 234), and the second is neo-animism, which term, with its background in cultural anthropology, offers a complex perspective on the performative qualities of nonhuman otherness (Jensen-Blok, 2013). The performing arts context include

the latest theatrical experiments with animals, objects, or robots on stage - as seen for example in the performances directed by Oriza Hirata.¹ These approaches allow us to reflect both on the ways of corporeality and its substitutes, and also on the image of the (female) body staged through object/absence in the case of the Vocaloid. The performative aspects of Vocaloid are a particularly interesting field, and I interpret the theatrical application of the Vocaloid as a method that challenges the concept - and the illusion - of performative presence defined by the live human body and voice.²

This theoretical question can be positioned in the context of some inherent linguistic and cultural aspects of Japan, with its traditionally intricate ways of “othering”: based on the dualistic image of “in” (*uchi*) and “out” (*soto*) there is a multi-layered sense and dynamic differentiation of inside(-r) and outside(-r), not only regarding the things a person shares with the public sphere (*tatema*) or keeps only for him- or herself and the closest circle (“*hon’ne*”), but also in the concept of hospitality, which *per definitionem* requires an act of exclusion, and designates the guest, the outsider, the other, in order for hospitality to be exercised. Reflecting on the diverse concepts of “otherness” and “othering” from a Japanese perspective offers an opportunity to extend the radius of the main Eurocentric references focusing on de Beauvoir, Lacan amongst others. In doing so, I follow Eiichiro Hirata’s (2014) thoughts on othering in relation to the experimental Japanese theatre dramaturgy, especially his suggestion on differentiating between assimilation, separation and “in-between” dramaturgy, and Ko’s (2010) analysis of otherness representations in Japanese films in relation to power, majority and the problematic idea of “Japaneseness”.

What follows is a survey of the representations of the title character in the adaptations of the play *Lady Aoi*. These representations are diverse in their materiality, and will be discussed in the context of the recent studies between things, objects, and other forms involving the nonhuman (Bennett, 2015; Eckersall, 2015). These theatrical representations appear for the spectator as an oscillation between withdrawn and manifest, which are,

¹ More on Oriza Hirata’s robot theatre, please see Rosner (2016).

² The research was funded by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Postdoctoral Fellowship (“Reconsidering the Performer’s Presence: Non-Human and Neo-Human Aspects of Contemporary Japanese Theatre”, Waseda University, Tokyo, 2015-2017). Shorter versions of this paper were presented at the Performance Studies International conference “Performing Climates” (University of Melbourne, 2016), and the Mutual Images “Japan Pop Goes Global” conference (Aoyama Gakuin University, Tokyo, 2017), and I am extremely grateful for the reviewer for the valuable comments on the version published in this issue.

according to Bennett, the characteristics of the object (Bennett, 2015: 226). I agree with the assumption that “it is the very potential of theatre to put presence *into play* that enables us to consider the importance of theatre as an art form that can allow us to reflect upon and question the construction of “reality” in the contemporary world” (Power, 2008: 9, original italics), and that “presence should not be seen as something fixed which theatre has or doesn’t have, but as the subject of a constantly shifting interplay between theatrical signification and the context in which a performance takes place” (Power, 2008: 14). I suggest that in the theatrical representations of the Aoi character, the dynamic position of things, objects, bodies, voices, ghosts and spirits can be described with Latour’s term of “vacillating presence” (Latour, 2013: 244). My wider research examines how the recent theoretical interest in the performative role of objects and nonhuman agents connects to artistic practices involving different forms of “things”: puppets, objects and Vocaloids, accepting that “this is not just a matter of anthropomorphism or projecting human emotional responses onto objects; it is the beginning of an understanding of new modes of subjectivity” (Eckersall, 2015: 124). By positioning *Vocaloid Opera Aoi* in the contexts of tradition and technology, I intend to point out the performative moments where the dualistic approach, in which the human is identified as “us” and the nonhuman is identified as the “other”, is questioned. I will also analyse the possibilities for creating a character beyond / besides embodiment.

The Other, represented by an object – Lady Aoi and the noh theatre tradition

The story of *Vocaloid Opera Aoi* originates from the Tales of Genji, written by Murasaki Shikibu in the 11th century, and was adapted to the noh stage by an anonymous writer, whose play Zeami Motokiyo rewrote at the end of the 14th century. According to the story, Aoi, the young wife of the handsome and powerful prince, Hikaru Genji, falls ill unexpectedly: she gets possessed by a spirit. The family invites the priestess Teruhi, who finds out that it is the spirit of Lady Rokujo that is torturing Aoi. Lady Rokujo is one of Genji’s former lovers, a longtime mistress of the attractive prince. The spirit of the noble lady tells that she still loves Genji so deeply that she uncontrollably suffers from jealousy and humiliation: she wants to hurt Aoi to take away her soul. The family, scared, invites a Buddhist priest and, during the service, Rokujo’s jealousy embodies itself as an ogre that attacks Aoi and the priest. At the end of the fight, the vengeful spirit calms down and Aoi is cleansed.

One of the most important characteristics of the noh play *Lady Aoi* is that Aoi, the title role, does not appear on the stage as a character played by an actor. Instead a short-sleeved kimono (*kosode*) is placed on the stage at the beginning of the performance, representing³ the ill and defenceless Aoi, who is possessed by a spirit, and therefore considered as not herself, already someone else, already an other (an-other). The focus of the play is the “possessing”, Rokujo’s great love and jealousy, and the very moment when Rokujo’s spirit beats the unconscious Aoi. This moment is enacted in the performative event by the leading actor, or *shite*, who suddenly thrusts his fan in the direction of the *kosode*. These instructions/actions are interpreted within the noh theatre context, with its strong tradition of the theatrical representations of (often iteratively possessing and possessed) spirits, ghosts, and the dead. Another example for context is the appearance of the stage assistants (*kōken*), who are perceived as outsiders to the layer of the fiction, but have a major role in the performative event. In this sense, the noh theatre context offers a constant interplay between visible and invisible. Also, in the strict visual codes of noh theatre, the metonymic or symbolic assembled props (*tsukurimono*) often have central importance. Therefore, in the realm of evocative objects, Aoi’s non-corporeal presence is not equal to the missing body: I suggest the term *withdrawn presence*.

This *withdrawn presence* of the Aoi character is closely linked to the noh theatre representations of ghosts and spirits, and it was fundamentally changed when the story of Aoi was adapted to modern drama and stage by Yukio Mishima in 1955. As Mishima notes, “[s]ince these are tales told by ghosts, their plots do not, as in most dramas, form a present progressive but depend on the evocation of the past, so that by the time a noh play begins, the drama is already over” (Mishima, 1971: 55). The retrospective quality of the noh plays even if the basic topics (evoking the past, and the jealousy as being possessed) remain the same as in Zeami’s play, Mishima’s adaptation, published as a modern noh play, and addressed by the author as “opera”, has two important differences. Firstly, in this version Aoi is portrayed by an actress on stage, rather than through the symbolic representation of a kimono in Zeami’s version. Secondly, the setting is a psychiatric ward, where the past events unfold at the unconscious Aoi’s, through the dialogue between the husband and

³ The most commonly used bilingual online edition of the play (The Noh.com, 2016) translates the verb 表す, *arawasu* as “to embody” – which, especially considered from the point of view of presence studies, is slightly misleading. As I suggest in this paper, the object (the kimono) doesn’t embody the character Aoi. Instead, I suggest to use the term “represent”, “express” in the context of noh theatre play.

Rokujo. Through these two major changes, the traditional noh form is blended with the imported system of psychoanalysis and stage realism. The “embodiment” of the Aoi character by a female human body is a major shift from the noh version. I suggest that it is a bigger change than just replacing an object with a performer: this shift represents an important difference between noh and the theatre of the modernity, namely *staging the female body*. While the stories told in noh often centre around female characters (usually in extreme emotional conditions such as mourning, possessed, jealous), on the stage of the noh theatre performance these characters are represented by *anything else but* a female body: male actors, or objects, or narration. The Aoi embodied by the female body of an actress in Mishima’s version therefore also represents the of the modern theatre. As she is lying conscious and motionless in a sickbed throughout the play, Aoi’s female body in Mishima’s play is also “feminized” in the sense Haraway uses the term: “to be feminized means to be made extremely vulnerable” (Haraway, 1991:166). In much the same way as the noh play, however, Mishima’s Aoi is a silent role, thus maintaining a certain level of secrecy. “[I]n Mishima’s play, Aoi is still a cipher, more of a representation of a character than the true incarnation of a role. She shares no analogue with any pre-existing Nō role type; yet, through her corporeal presence, rather than that of a folded piece of costume, Mishima inspires an immediate, visceral sense of compassion for her fate at the deadly hands of his *shite*” (Neble, 2011: 127). Defining Aoi as a cipher is an important point. However, it is questionable that embodying Aoi (“filling” the character with the human flesh of a female performer) in itself triggers such an extra impact on the spectator. Instead, it can be seen as a mere (re-) enforcement of the major Western theatrical concept of modernity, which celebrates the corporeal presence of the actor and psychoanalysis-based plots.⁴ In this regard, I suggest that Mishima’s version is the act of replacing Aoi’s “withdrawn presence” with character embodiment.

The Other as Artificial Voice – the case of *Vocaloid Opera Aoi*

This sequence of Aoi representation is once again modified by the *Vocaloid Opera Aoi*. Composed and directed by Hiroshi Tamawari in 2014, it is a 30 minutes long movie, set in a theatre stage setting without an audience. The story is performed by the bunraku

⁴ Mishima’s version is probably the most widely known adaptation of Aoi, in which the living female body is Aoi’s most important difference from the noh version. The question of embodiment and object-body got another turn, when the Youkiza puppet theatre performed Mishima’s play in 2013 - with marionettes. In this case, Mishima’s Aoi character becomes (again) a body-object.

puppets, and all characters are sung by Vocaloids. As a representative of Japanese contemporary technoculture, the Vocaloid is a commodity that reinforces the stereotype of anime “Japaneseness” on the global market. It is a series of multi-platform software launched in 2004 by the Yamaha Corporation, with a sound synthesizer-editor at its core that allows the user to create songs without a live singer. The slogan “it sings instead/for you” (Tamawari, 2014b) caters to the wish for withdrawn/hiding identity for an apparently wide social layer, and I see it as a performative antithesis of the other popular entertainment form karaoke (the “empty orchestra”). In the process of creating the database library necessary for the editor, the developers use human voices, from which the user can choose the “singer” character based on certain qualities (pitch, gender, language, etc.). This artificial singer is an instrument capable of uttering words, one layer in the other instruments. In the case of the visual associated with the vocal and for the anthropomorphic character of the Vocaloid, it is often the stereotypical and simplified visual codes of anime characters that provide the main motif for the body: big eyes, colourful hair, sharp body contours.⁵ These virtual characters are stars “who” attract a global fan base (Crypton, 2019), and give full-house “live” concerts. Moreover, the development and operation of these characters are social products, as the songs written “for” and “with” the Vocaloids by the users are almost instantly made public online as shared content. These characters can therefore be interpreted not only as user-generated content (UGC), but also as spatially-temporally open, multi-authored creatures. The most famous one is Miku Hatsune, the turquoise haired singer-sprite, “who” regularly tours in Japan and in North America, in front of fans, who dress in Miku costumes. The character and the voice bank was developed and released by Crypton Future Media in 2007. Her name means “the first sound from the future”, and just as it is the case with other Vocaloids, her age, corporeal qualities are quantified: the fans have the information that she is 16 years old, 158 centimetres, 42 kilograms (Crypton, 2019). The Hatsune Miku phenomenon in relation to performing arts has been discussed in detail by Sone (2017). In the following I focus on cases when Vocaloids appear in theatrical and classical music productions, with or without human performers.

⁵ “Since the 1960s, in fact, fierce but beautiful female warriors (females who are fighters, leaders, heroes, or pilots, and also sexy, cute, attractive, and leggy) have proliferated across *manga*, *anime*, and television shows. [...] [These bodies] are overtly feminized in ways that could (and are) also read as sexual: skimpy costumes (short skirts, tight bodices, boots or heels) that show off flesh (standardly shaped as long legs, thin waist, rounded breasts).[...] girl heroes tend to strip down in the course of empowerment, becoming more, rather than less, identified by their flesh” (Allison 2006: 129).

The *Vocaloid Opera Aoi* is not the first attempt to combine classical music and the Vocaloid. The first such project, *Symphony Ihatov* by composer Isao Tomita premiered in 2012 after being inspired by writer Kenji Miyazawa's novels. This first Vocaloid symphony featured the Vocaloid Miku Hatsune singing along with the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra. The concert report emphasises how well the sound of the Vocaloid complements the human voice (Columbia, 2019). This might be true in the case of sound, but in the visual setting, the stage design of *Ihatov* contradicts this impression. In the concert, the traditional setting of the symphony (orchestra, chorus and conductor) is rendered in a pyramid shape hierarchy here, with the projected image of the Vocaloid at the top. The main impact of the stage design comes from the striking difference between the image of the dancing Vocaloid and the static chorus. This setting might remind us of Haraway's thoughts: "our machines are disturbingly lively, and we ourselves frighteningly inert" (Haraway, 1991: 152).

Shortly after appearing in *Ihatov*, Miku Hatsune had her own "solo debut" in the first Vocaloid opera *The End* composed by Keiichiro Shibuya in 2012/13. The libretto was written by one of the most prominent playwright-directors in contemporary Japanese theatre, Toshiki Okada. Miku Hatsune has become the representative icon for the Vocaloid phenomenon. In this paper, however, I focus on a Vocaloid opera that does not feature the idol Miku, as I intend to emphasise the diversity and the playful multiplicity of recent theatrical experiments involving Vocaloids.

Vocaloid Opera Aoi was originally intended as a radio play. By classifying it as "opera," the composer Tamawari emphasises the link to the western tradition of orchestra music, which separates it from the musicality of noh tradition (Tamawari, 2015). As Tamawari has worked as a composer for popular computer and video games since the 1990s, *Vocaloid Opera Aoi* is influenced by the electronic music common in video games.

Jealousy, duplicity, and revenge are some of the central topics of the original noh play. In his adaptation, Tamawari blends these themes with the topic of the problematic relationship between a human and nonhuman artist, and the emotional relationship between the artist and his creation (Tamawari, 2014a). Tamawari's version tells the story of Aoi, a famous singer who is in a close relationship with the popular composer Hikaru. One day Aoi's manager gets a phone call that Aoi was involved in an accident and she is now in hospital. The hospital psychiatrist tells him that Aoi has been possessed by the jealous spirit, called Midori. Named after the colour of jealousy (緑, green), Midori is a

Vocaloid character, who used to be world famous for singing Hikaru's songs, becoming "Digital Diva", but her fame and popularity have faded, partly due to Aoi's growing popularity. The opening scene of the plot depicts the composer, who previously wrote songs for the Digital Diva, but recently fell in love with Aoi, the (human) woman who sings his songs so beautifully. In terms of psychological dramaturgy, this can be defined as a re-humanised Pygmalion syndrome. At the end of the story Aoi wakes up cleansed and the spirit of Midori disappears (Tamawari, 2014c).

Partly as a result of the opera positioning the Vocaloid character as a member of a high-tension triangle of jealousy, certain points in the plot can be interpreted as a *mise-en-abyme* of animism, in terms of attributing feelings, emotions to the Vocaloid, and treating her as an equal member of the love triangle between the characters. For example, the character Psychiatrist (in the traditional *noh* role of "*tsure*", the performer who accompanies the leading actor, the "*shite*") says that "Hikaru may have seen Midori as nothing more than an instrument that played his songs, but to Aoi, Midori had a heart. She devoted her body and offered her songs. She aspired to become her" (Tamawari, 2014a: 9). Animism, as a concept, is often and easily applied to the relation of the human and Vocaloid (non-human and anime), and even in this case, by the creative team of this opera. In the interview I conducted with the creators in 2015 (Rosner 2015), the producer tells how the young audience wants to "identify" with the Vocaloids in general, because they are cute. On the other hand, in the very same interview, the producer herself often reflects on the "spirit of the Vocaloid" as something effortlessly accessible. However, I suggest that even though the notion of animism offers a tempting link for humans to explain the emotional attachment to nonhuman, it must be handled with special care and caution. In doing this, I find it very important to consider both the current critical analysis of contemporary animism (Harvey, 2014) and Jensen's recent observations (Jensen-Blok, 2013). Jensen and Blok reintroduce Allison's term *techno-animism* ("reconfiguring intimate attachments" with cultural and technological commodities, Allison, 2005: 13). I find that that this term quite accurately describes the relation of the human and the other in contemporary Japanese techno-presence, because it "allows us to identify different modes of human-nonhuman cohabitation, thus infusing new energy into the analysis of non-modernities outside the Euro-American orbit" (Jensen-Blok, 2013: 92). However, I find that the Vocaloid seems to have a special position amongst the other hybrids (robots, androids) that appear in a theatrical event, for example the Vocaloid body is a projected

image without the materiality of the object (as it is the case with the robots and androids). What role does the materiality, the body-thing of a robot and the lack of it play in the performative application of techno-animism?

The stage design concept of the *Vocaloid Opera Aoi* considers the layers of the Aoi tradition, and focuses on the bunraku puppets, animated by the five puppeteers with Kosuke Yoshida as head animator. These big anthropomorphic objects dressed in lush fabrics – the characters Aoi, Aoi’s manager, and the psychiatrist – are moving in front of a projector screen with images referencing both to mandalas and video games, and the props used by the puppets (objects/things used by used objects) are the daily tools for our senses and communication processes, such as smartphones and laptops. This performance is different from the previous Vocaloid operas, where the Vocaloid had a projected body. In *Vocaloid Opera Aoi*, it is not only the voice of the Digital Diva character Midori that is created by the Vocaloid software by the composer Tamawari, but of *all* the other characters as well, including the “human” characters (Manager, Psychiatrist), too. Therefore, the *Vocaloid Opera Aoi* is an opera in which the main theme, the conflict between the human and nonhuman voice, is performed solely through the artificial sound software.

Just as the other “human” roles in the play, such as Aoi’s manager and the Psychiatrists, Aoi is represented by bunraku puppets. Aoi’s character is a body-object, she is positioned in the centre of the space; for the most part, the puppet is laid face down on the stage. This position of the body-object character can be seen as a very close reminder of the noh theatre version, in which Aoi is presented as a kimono on the stage.

In the *Vocaloid Opera Aoi* this body-object character Aoi does not have a text of her own, but at the peak of the story the jealous spirit of the Vocaloid Midori speaks/sings through her. On the other hand, Midori, the Digital Diva, doesn't have corporeal qualities, instead, she is presented through abstract, green laser projections. The character of the unconscious woman possessed by a spirit is constructed through the voice of the Vocaloid that doesn't have a body and a body-object that doesn't have a voice. The voice, the question of who “owns”, who “possesses” the voice seems to be a central conflict in the opera, for example in the duel between the human and Vocaloid singer, and in the case when the possessing spirit sings through Aoi. These questions are very clear in the fictional layer of the opera, within the plot itself, but this very clear set of questions gets confusing due to the fact that all characters are sung by Vocaloid sound.

In addition, this very tension between the fictional and performative is even more intensified by the bunraku theatre tradition. In bunraku, the human voice is already divided from both the puppet and puppeteer, as the voice of the object-character comes from a separate source. While the puppeteer provides the movement of the puppet, the voice of the characters and the occasionally occurring narrative elements are uttered by the chanter, seated at the side of the stage. The vocal skills of the chanter (*gidayū* / *tayū*) are traditionally renowned and respected. As a result of the composer Tamawari's decision that the whole opera be written and performed by Vocaloid software, in the case of the *Vocaloid Opera Lady Aoi*, it is not the corporeal presence of character or actor-puppeteer but the chanter that the Vocaloid replaces. Tamawari's gesture of excluding the live voice of the chanter by replacing it with the artificial sound, yet maintaining the body of the puppeteer and the object-body of the character, is the main difference from both the previous versions of Aoi's story, and the other Vocaloid operas. Consequently, it positions the artificial sound in the omnipresent role of the narrator, and yet it does direct our focus to the absent role of the chanter, rendering it present through its very absence, thus creating the withdrawn presence of the chanter.

One of the most significant common denominators between the Vocaloid shows mentioned above (*Ihatov* by Tomita, *The End* by Shibuya/Okada and *Aoi* by Tamawari) is the fact that the Vocaloid characters are highly self-reflective in their utterances. The lyrics sung by the Vocaloids emphasise their otherness, difference, uniqueness and aloofness – but in this self-explanatory expression of their existence there is an imminent human standpoint that is quite educative and even didactic. By these pseudo-self-definitions, the spectator gets to learn about not only the illusory way a Vocaloid is different, but also how a human being is described as opposed to the Vocaloid. This process shows similarities with Hiroshi Ishiguro's experiment of androids and his pursuit to know more about the human existence. The Osaka-based professor-celebrity Ishiguro has collaborated with the director Oriza Hirata's to create robot-theatre performances. Ishiguro's primary research is to develop humanoid robots from a profoundly anthropocentric standpoint: 'If you are able to give me a definition of human, I will happily design a robot matching that definition' (Ishiguro, 2014). Through creating performances featuring robots, Hirata and Ishiguro don't attempt to define what a robot is, but what human is: whether a 'core', an essential quality, exists by which it is possible to define 'human'. In this concept, the shape of the humanoid robot is considered as a shell (Ishiguro, 2011). Ishiguro's idea on robots is

controversial, as it still maintains the higher position of the anthropocentric order, in which the “role” and ultimate purpose of nonhuman is to get us closer to the definition of human. This reflective attitude is somewhat similar in the recent Vocaloid operas as well. In these operas the Vocaloids’ main mark is “Vocaloidness”, defined as being *different* from the human, being *the* other. This suggests that there still seems to be a need for an introduction to, and reflection on, the Vocaloid existence “as something else”. In Miku Hatsune’s projected appearances, “she plays herself”, she/it represents her own persona (as a special guest), and in her songs she clearly names and identifies herself. Tamawari’s Vocaloid opera, however, is a more complex issue, as the Vocaloid “plays” other characters as well, so this self-reflective position is combined with the Vocaloid character uttering the sound of the other characters. While the composers of the Miku shows bring her own persona into play, Tamawari multiplies these layers of identification in his *Vocaloid Opera Aoi*. This process operates by constructing characters that are easy to recognise and identify (they have names and motivated actions), and the Vocaloid character Midori is just one amongst these fictional characters.

This self-reflective quality remains on the verbal and vocal level, and doesn’t go deeper in the visual intermediality. These Vocaloid operas and the symphony keep “the lanes” of human and nonhuman appearances parallel with no specific interaction. The *Vocaloid Opera Lady Aoi* is a theatre-movie form. While it is not unusual to make a theatre movie with no audience but multiple camera angles (e.g. *The Tragedy of Hamlet* by Peter Brook in 2002), but in most of these cases, performance precedes the movie. But with *Vocaloid Opera Lady Aoi*, the theatrical form (bunraku) is recorded as a movie first. Pretending to be a theatre is the very hope of the creators that one day it would be turned into a live event. As if the story told by *Vocaloid Opera Aoi* was mirrored in its medium, the ultimate wish of the “technological” is to become live.⁶ For the moment, therefore, one of the challenges of the relationship between human and Vocaloid seems to be an *institutional and contextual challenge*, as it raises the question of how perceptions change when the Vocaloids (existing mainly in the YouTube universe) make appearances in an institution that is designated primarily to theatre and classical music (on the stage of Bunkamura Theatre, Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall, or the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris).

⁶ The consequences of medium shift for the performative aspects of the human-nonhuman interaction are quite visible in the case of *Sayonara*: while in the theatre version of Oriza Hirata’s play the human-like android presence and the android-like human presence was a matter of acting, this difference is even more concealed, airbrushed in the film adaptation of the play, directed by Kōji Fukuda in 2015.

The representations of the Aoi character as object, body, body-object and synthesized voice and the changes in the dramaturgical-performative role of object and voice modulates the Cartesian division of body and mind and the human vs. nonhuman hierarchy in theatre. Somewhat surprisingly, the simple situation depicted in the *Vocaloid Opera Aoi* (the female character, who steals the song written by the man for a Vocaloid) reflects not only on the non-human condition, but also envisions a certain “post-Vocaloid” image, thus reversing the commonplace of the negative utopia, the basic human fear of being replaced. To paraphrase Allison’s and Haraway’s insight (Allison, 2006: 56 quoting Haraway, 1991), not only robots, but Vocaloids, too, might be seen as both tools and myths, and there seems to be a “spectre of the ghost in the machine” (Haraway, 1991: 152). This also shows that even when depicting a post-Vocaloid image of turning back into human, the very image of that human character in theatre is already an assemblage of things, projections and artificial voice.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Krisztina ROSNER wrote her PhD on the actor's presence and the performative aspects of silence (2011), and was an assistant, then associate professor of theatre studies at the University of Pecs, Hungary between 2005-2018. In her activity, theory and practice are intertwined: besides teaching, she is a theatre director and actor, and has given workshops in Japan, Austria, Malta, Hungary. As a recipient of UNESCO-Aschberg Bursary for Performing Artists, she worked with Robert Wilson at the Watermill Center (2006, 2007, 2008), participated in the SITI Company Suzuki/Viewpoints workshop (2008), and took part in the Lincoln Center Directors Lab (2010). In 2014, she was a Japan Foundation Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Hosei University (Tokyo). Between 2015 and 2017, she was a Visiting Scholar at Waseda University Graduate School of Letters, Arts and Sciences (Tokyo), as a Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Postdoctoral Fellow. Her JSPS research project focused on reconsidering the performer's presence, the non-human and neo-human aspects of contemporary Japanese theatre. Since 2017 she teaches comparative cultural studies and performing art studies at the Meiji University School of Global Japanese Studies. She is based in Tokyo. Website: www.tinarosner.com

The re-creation of yōkai character images in the context of contemporary Japanese popular culture: An example of *Yo-Kai Watch* anime series

Nargiz BALGIMBAYEVA | University of Tsukuba, Japan

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ABSTRACT

Supernatural creatures have always been an irreplaceable element of Japanese culture. Starting from the oldest collection of myths such as Kojiki to manga, anime and video games – they have always attracted the attention of people of all ages. However, modern yōkai have changed in terms of both visual representation and their role in the context of the work that contains these monsters. The images of yōkai used in popular culture are re-created in various ways in order to appeal to the taste of different kinds of audience. Undoubtedly, today's yōkai are not what they used to look like before: in anime targeting children, for instance, the element of fear may remain, but yōkai would most likely be referred to as kawaii ("cute") instead of kowai ("scary"). To explain these changes, I will present how yōkai images are re-created in Japanese animation on the example of the Yo-kai Watch anime TV series (the original Japanese TV series that ran from 2014 to 2018).

KEYWORDS

Yōkai; Supernatural; Japan; Anime; Monsters; Kawaii.

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Introduction to the phenomenon of yōkai

There is probably no culture in the world that would ignore the notion of the supernatural and unexplainable events or phenomena. Japanese culture is not an exception – the motifs of fear and reverence towards certain powers, which were a part of the universe together with human beings, have always been present in all forms of creation, be it oral traditions or written sources. Some of these powers were called deities: each of them had its specific role and meaning; people would worship them and connect essential events in their lives with a blessing or curse “from above”. Another category of supernatural phenomena was referred to as yōkai, which can vaguely be translated as a “monster”, “spirit”, “goblin”, “ghost”, “demon” (Foster, 2009: 2). It would be probably right to note that the modern understanding of the term “yōkai” has absorbed so many

categories that it instead serves as an umbrella term for a great number of supernatural events and phenomena.

Scholars such as Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962) and Inoue Enryō (1858-1919) – have proposed various ways of *yōkai* classification: Yanagita emphasized that *yōkai* must be differentiated from *yūrei* (ghosts of passed away people) – the first ones tend to attach to certain places (e.g., mountains, roads, ponds, etc.), whereas *yūrei* are attached to a concrete person (2016: 15); Inoue divided all *yōkai* into “false” (*kyokai*) – the phenomena misinterpreted as *yōkai* (*gokai*) as well as artificially created by people (*gikai*); and “true” (*jitsukai*) *yōkai* – the metaphysical phenomena and *yōkai* connected with natural phenomena which are to be examined with further scientific progress (2001: 101-104).

Another prominent scholar, who dedicated many of his works to the explanation of the *yōkai* phenomenon, is Komatsu Kazuhiko (born in 1947). He mainly defines *yōkai* as three ‘domains’: *yōkai* as ‘incidents or phenomena’, *yōkai* as ‘supernatural entities or presences’, and *yōkai* as ‘depictions’ (2017: 12).

When it comes to the meaning of “*yōkai*”, it would be a misconception to claim that supernatural creatures, demons, and other Japanese bestiary representatives are only united under this term: there are other concepts as *bakemono*, *mononoke*, and *ayakashi*. However, each of these words has its technicalities connected with a certain period of Japanese history, semantics, and the iconography of monsters. The word *bakemono*, for instance, is comprised of two Japanese words: *bakeru* (“to disguise, to take the shape of something”) and *mono* (“a thing”). As Komatsu stated, ‘in the past, *bakemono* referred only to living creatures with the mysterious ability to change their form, such as foxes that transformed into humans’ (2017: 66). The distinction between *bakemono* and animals was so vague, that such creatures as the *kappa* (a green creature dwelling in rivers), foxes and badgers were believed to belong to both animals and “monsters” (Hirota, 2014: 126).

The acceptance of *yōkai* existence by the Japanese people may derive from the animistic beliefs of Shintō (“way of the gods”), the Japanese indigenous religion based on the notion that ‘mountains, trees, even rocks are worshiped for their *kami*, or indwelling “spirit”, and samurai swords and carpenter’s tools have ‘souls’ (Schodt, 1990: 196). However, this seemingly perfect unity had two incarnations: as nature could provide people with food and shelter, at the same time, it could bring death. The legend of Yamata no Orochi, or a giant snake, represents fear and helplessness towards a destructive side of nature: floods and storms could cause loss of crops, and it meant that people’s lives would be in danger (Okuno, 1982: 6). In

this regard, it is crucial to point out that Shintō is not the only religious system existing in Japan and supporting the notion of various entities and spirits – Buddhism too admits the presence of such powers. That way, mysterious transformations and phenomena became a repeatable element of the *setsuwa* genre (narrations based on folktales, myths, and legends), and very often these stories were intertwined with the Buddhist ethics. As Foster also explained, ‘the concept of transmutation and transmigration lie at the core of Buddhist theology’ (2009: 6).

Moreover, both Buddhist and Shintō traditions include numerous rituals and ceremonies for spirits, because they could easily harm the living when someone treated them inadequately. Miyata gave some examples of such rituals as feasts and meals together with the representatives of “the other side” – usually with spirits of recently passed away relatives called *aramitama*, and also malicious spirits from hell, to whom people prepared special treats (this ritual is called *segaki*) (1996:123). As can be seen from the examples mentioned above, these elusive creatures could easily comply with the religious and philosophical beliefs or ideas widely spread in the society, which is one of the reasons why *yōkai* have become an irreplaceable part of Japanese folklore.

Contemporary *yōkai*-based content has become a successful commodity associated with fun and curiosity toward the world of the unexplainable. As a result, many characters of the Japanese bestiary can be found in manga, anime, and video games.

Nowadays the term “*yōkai*” is a category that has absorbed many meanings and ideas – *yōkai* are vivid and entertaining characters found in products of popular culture; they can also be spooky stories and local legends giving you goosebumps; and, of course, *yōkai* is a cultural phenomenon reflecting on people’s perception of the world. Similar to a fox taking up various forms, the notion of *yōkai* never stops changing and evolving into a new concept. For example, Toriyama Sekien (1712-1788), a famous Japanese scholar, poet and artist of the eighteenth century, liked to play with meanings, words, and images and was able to come up with new ideas for his famous *yōkai* characters (Foster, 2009: 62-63). Moreover, Foster represents Sekien’s creations as of a great importance when it comes to ‘how we envision and understand *yōkai* to this day’ (2015: 48) and that thanks to his works, ‘creatures from China became Japanese *yōkai*, and local *yōkai* from all over Japan were presented to a mass readership’ (2015:49). Taking these premises into consideration, I will constantly refer to his iconic *yōkai* depictions. I will also regularly mention other *yōkai* depictions of the Edo period (1603-1868) as they already exemplify Japanese monsters as a part of popular culture and entertainment for the first time in the history of *yōkai* (Foster, 2009: 48; Howard,

2011: 22). Some of these depictions imply portraying yōkai as encyclopedic units in attempts to understand and rationalize the very existence of yōkai – Foster calls this the ‘encyclopedic mode’ (2009: 31).

Yōkai awareness and anime: a case of the Yo-kai Watch TV series

The *yōkai* culture originated from tales of mysterious creatures and entities invading different parts of Japan. Gradually, stories transformed into visual art – this is the moment when *yōkai* become a source of inspiration for artists and painters, such as Sawaki Sūshi (1707-1772), Toriyama Sekien (1712-1788), and other masters of the Edo period. *Yōkai*-based scrolls and similar visual works are undoubtedly vital in terms of the *yōkai* phenomenon history and its research. However, static depictions of the creatures that were initially connected with certain movements and sounds could not grasp the whole spectrum of meanings the *yōkai* creatures represented. For example, some of the *yōkai* are associated with particular sounds: Azuki arai produces the sound of *azuki* beans being washed (Yanagita, 2016: 101); scary noises and voices that suddenly appear deep in the mountains are attributed to the mountain monster Yamahiko (Yamabiko) (Katsurai, 1942:23). Processes, such as shape-shifting that made the *kitsune* and *tanuki* famous, and other magical transformations of *yōkai* are similarly challenging to express when it comes to static visual depiction. Papp stated that ‘sequential art, animation and computer graphics are more suitable for this task (a visual representation of *yōkai* transformation), as these are the art forms which capture transformation’ and transfiguration (2010: 19). Anime is often believed to have absorbed specific trends and premises of classic Japanese visual arts (Murakami, 2000; Papp, 2010). So, it can be said that through the anime lens *yōkai* save their cultural livelihood, yet some of their characteristics are subject to change. The multi-faceted approach to graphics, music, and sound effects in anime allows re-creating *yōkai* as dynamic and aesthetically developed characters.

In Japan animated *yōkai* are often associated with the name of Mizuki Shigeru (1922-2015), a Japanese writer, manga author, historian, and specialist in *yōkai* studies. *Ge Ge Ge no Kitarō* is his legendary manga, later adapted into a TV series. According to Foster, the works of Mizuki have ‘shaped the meaning and function of *yōkai* within the popular imagination of late twentieth-century and early twenty-first-century Japan’ (2008: 8-9). Thanks to the extensive research initiated by Mizuki, *yōkai* have been scrupulously categorized to be rediscovered again by various audiences. Moreover, new creatures that

were invented by Mizuki later transformed into authentic members of the *yōkai* family. For many generations of Japanese children, it is the *Ge Ge Ge no Kitarō* series that triggered their interest to the mysterious world of *yōkai*.

Nowadays, the anime industry has produced numerous products targeting *yōkai* enthusiasts of all ages. *Yōkai* have invaded the world of anime: *Inuyasha*, *Kamisama Hajimemashita*, *Hōzuki no Reitetsu*, *Natsume Yūjinchō* *Naruto*, *Nurarihyon no Mago*, *Yōkai Apāto no Yūga na Nichijō*, to name only a few, refer to *yōkai*. This article, however, will mainly focus the anime called *Yo-kai Watch*.

The concept of *Yo-kai Watch* was originally presented in 2012 in the Comic magazine *CoroCoro* – it was a serialized manga targeting children and created by Konishi Noriyuki; “*Yo-kai Watch*” also refers to the name of anime and games based on the manga series (Tajiri, 2005: 97). The franchise is developed by the LEVEL-5 Inc., which is a Japanese company specializing in video games development and publishing (Hino, n.d.). In January 2014 the TV series started being broadcasting in Japan, and eventually in other countries such as USA, Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

Not only did this anime captivate my attention with its popularity, but also with combining ultimately cute characters (that were designed to be liked by children) with contemporary discourses the anime touches. I will try to cover these aspects in the following parts of the article.

The *yōkai* character image re-creation in anime

The practice of reusing already famous and well-known characters from popular culture in art, literature, and music is common. *Yōkai* too, being a motif repeatedly incorporated into the works of various generations of creators, have been re-created in a vast number of anime, manga, and games. However, just a few studies belonging to the Japanese popular culture studies field or the *yōkai* research field are primarily focused on the details of the *yōkai* re-creation. That being said, two of the studies I came across have become starting points inspiring me to pursue the research of *yōkai* re-creation. The first one covers the topic of the character re-creation in Japanese popular culture. It is a study by Uchida that demonstrated the following sequence of character development taking place in media: ‘multilayered character development within one media product’, a media mix or multi-use of characters in various elements of media, and secondary character re-creation happening as a result of active consumption of media products (2008: 85). The second work directly connected with

the yōkai phenomenon is a study by Ichikawa (2013) that is dedicated to the revitalization of *yōkai* culture by the residents of towns and villages. Although he differentiated folk culture and mass culture¹, Ichikawa still acknowledges the *yōkai* existing outside folk culture. These *yōkai* phenomena are later transformed into characters of the contemporary popular culture by ‘manga authors and others’ (2013: 187). In this regard, it would be critical to mention that some *yōkai*-based content is also initiated by independent creators such as fans creating art or small companies producing mobile games. In both studies, the act of re-creation is present but not explained to the full extent.

When it comes to the theories directly related to transtextual relationships and repeated motifs in texts, I had an opportunity to familiarize myself with a concept proposed by Gérard Genette (1930-2018), a French literary theorist. His notion of transtextuality is explained as ‘all that sets the text in relationship, whether obvious or concealed with other texts’ (Genette, 1979: 83-84). According to Genette, transtextuality can be divided into five different categories, one of which is intertextuality, or ‘a relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts: that is to say, eidetically and typically as the actual presence of one text within another’ (1979: 1-2). He then subdivides intertextuality practices into quoting (‘with quotation marks, with or without specific references’), plagiarism (‘undeclared but still literal borrowing’) and allusion (a reference to another text using ‘inflections that would otherwise remain unintelligible’) (Genette, 1979: 2). Other categories are paratextuality, metatextuality, architextuality, and hypertextuality.

In this article, I would like to exemplify the process of *yōkai* character re-creation in anime using the theoretical concept proposed by Genette.

The first way *yōkai* characters may be re-created relates to what is called a “remake” or “adaptation”. Eberwein describes a remake as ‘a kind of reading or rereading of the original’ (1998: 15). Loock and Verevis differentiate between the two, noting that adaptation is mainly ‘concerned with the movement between different semiotic registers, most often between literature and film’ (2012: 6). In other words, *yōkai* characters are revitalized in a newer text with some references to the previous work. One of the examples is already mentioned *Ge Ge Ge no Kitarō* anime series that launched in the 1960’s. The series tells a story of a *yōkai* boy named Kitarō, who was born in a graveyard; despite of

¹ For Ichikawa, modern *yōkai* culture cannot fully grasp the “creativity” created and nurtured by folk/local culture (2013: 187).

being a real *yōkai*, he also likes humans and continuously tries to protect them from the negative *yōkai* influence, and help others when they are in trouble.

Being a manga adaptation itself, the series has been remade a few times throughout its history, and the main differences in *yōkai* re-creation featured in a newer version are reflected in the visual stylistics of the characters. The original series in black and white is now transformed into a full-colour animated series, and the characters look “polished” compared to the originals – here I mainly refer to the *Ge Ge Ge no Kitarō* characters’ design, typical for contemporary anime projects. For instance, Neko-musume (one of the characters) is depicted in colours, and she looks quite different from the original character (See Figure 1). In the 2018 version, she is depicted as a mature version of herself. In general, the character is fully redesigned in such a manner that corresponds to a “generic” anime style. Anime fans tend to grasp these changes fast; some of them even address the changes in fan art (an “internet meme” from Figure 1).



Figure 1. Neko-musume in the 1968 series and her modern version.
The caption is entitled as “be careful who you call ugly”. Retrieved from
<https://knowyourmeme.com/photos/1358339-anime-manga>
© 水木プロ・フジテレビ・東映アニメーション

A case of the *Ge Ge Ge no Kitarō* series re-creation exemplifies one of the transtextuality aspects called hypertextuality, or ‘any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call hypertext) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the hypotext), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary’ (Genette, 1982: 5). According to Stam, the process of a hypotext transformation into a new form includes ‘selection, amplification, concretization, actualization, critique, extrapolation, analogization, popularization, and reculturalization’ (2000:68). In the case of *Ge Ge Ge no Kitarō*, we can see the impact of

these processes on the characters design in the first place: in order to create appealing to modern viewers characters, the creators have made Kitarō taller, and Neko-musume “prettier”, etc. – these are only a few examples of such changes. In general, it can be said that the practice of remaking provides a better understanding of old narratives through “adjusting” the characters into a certain mold or frame existing in the current period.



Figure 2. *Ge Ge Ge no Kitarō*: then and now.
© 水木プロ・フジテレビ・東映アニメーション

Another common way of *yōkai* re-creation in anime implies drastic changes on characters and their key features is through gender-swapping (reimagining male characters as female and vice versa), changing a time frame (introducing characters into a time frame unusual for them) or humanization of animal characters, among other strategies. A compelling case of such modifications is the *Rosario + Vampire* anime series, where a Japanese *yōkai* Yuki-onna (the “Snow Maiden”) (Figure 3) coexists with vampires, werewolves and other monsters raised and popularized in various cultures. These allusions to other texts dedicated to monsters exemplify transtextual relationships between the series and other discourses on monsters without explicitly citing them, but only referring to some monster names.

According to Eder, Jannidis and Schneider, the appearance of a character depends on the genre: ‘the occurrence of one typical element of a genre will then trigger a complex set of expectations concerning the kind of characters to appear, the situations they encounter, the themes they are likely to be confronted with, their conception as flat or round, or static or dynamic, and typical constellations with other characters’ (2010: 43).

This idea leads us to the assumption that a genre or any other characteristics existing to categorize anime will be reflected in the design and the conceptual parts of the product. It can be explained from the point of *architextuality*: we expect to see cute and simply drawn characters in anime for children (*kodomomuke*). On the other hand, we understand that

romanticized or highly sexualized characters will appear in anime targeting young females (*shōjo*), youth-oriented titles (*seishun*), or related to the romantic comedy genre (*rabukome*).



Figure 3. Mizore from *Rosario + Vampire* as a reimagined and sexualized version of Yuki-onna. ©池田 晃久／集英社・陽海学園新聞部

It is not rare when *yōkai* images are re-created with a humorous undertone. In this case, *yōkai* may only represent a quick reference to folklore and visual clichés of certain *yōkai* rather than a complete character. The example in Figure 4 is meant to imitate a kappa comically, in other words, its main function is to amuse the audience, and it does not imply any ‘aggressive or mocking intention’ (Genette, 1982: 27). The relation to a *hypotext* (former concepts of kappa) illustrated in Figure 4 is based on wordplay: “kappa” means both the green *yōkai* and the “raincoat” in the Japanese language.

To conclude, *yōkai* re-creation in anime varies from minor to drastic changes in the character design and *yōkai* conceptualization. Due to the word limit of the journal article, I am not able to elaborate furthermore on the re-creation patterns. However, it is necessary to point out that all these changes and modifications can be understood as the transtextuality mechanisms successfully explained and categorized by Gerard Genette. In the next part of the article, I would like to demonstrate concrete examples of *yōkai* re-creation in the *Yo-kai Watch* series.



Figure 4. A humorous representation of kappa in the *School Rumble* series, episode 4.

©小林尽/講談社・マーベラスエンターテイメント

The *yōkai* character image re-creation in the *Yo-kai Watch* series

The *Yo-kai Watch* franchise first started in Japan as a project targeting children. The cute appearance of *yōkai* characters and a simple structure of each episode of the anime series are to be well understood by young viewers. The series is comprised of 214 episodes divided into three seasons. It began airing in Japan in 2014 (January 8) and ended in 2018 (March 30). *Yo-kai Watch* has also been adapted into three full-length movies.

Keita, an 11 years old, is a cheerful junior schoolboy. One day he and his friends go to the woods to collect bugs, where Keita finds a mysterious capsule machine. When Keita opens a capsule, he enters a mystical world of *yōkai* – weird creatures which live next to humans, yet remain unseen. They like to cause mischief and usually tend to cause troubles to the human world. The journey of Keita is mainly about understanding the *yōkai* realm and its influence on the regular world. He is also granted a magic watch, which allows Keita to be able to see and communicate with *yōkai*.

As the franchise contains a large *yōkai* collection both based on familiar *yōkai* images and these created by the authors of the series, only a few of them will be analyzed. These *yōkai* are known as the *neko-mata* (his name is *Jibanyan* in the series), *kyūbi no kitsune* (*Kyūbi*), kappa (two characters called *Kappa* and *Nogappa*) and *Yuki-onna* (*Fubuki-hime*). I find these particular creatures one of the most common and well-recognized *yōkai* characters also featured in such anime series as *Nurarihyon no Mago*, *Naruto*, *Rosario + Vampire*, *Inuyasha*, *Inukami!*, etc.

It also must be pointed out that there is a clear *transtextual* connection between *Yo-kai Watch* and another popular franchise – *Pokémon*. Monsters in both universes are colourful characters, passionately collected by children; each of the creatures possesses a unique magical power, and in order to summon one, a special device is necessary – a watch in the

case of *Yo-kai Watch* and a poké ball in the case of *Pokémon*. In fact, funky monsters of the *Pokémon* franchise resemble *yōkai* in many ways. For example, the double tail of Espeon and his cute ears are typical features of the nekomata, whereas a monster called Drowzee is a visual and conceptual reference to the baku, a *yōkai* that eats dreams and nightmares. On the one hand, *Pokémon* creatures are only distant, well-concealed allusions to the *yōkai* realm. *Yo-kai Watch*, however, explicitly uses the *yōkai* term to shape its discourse.

The next part of the article will explain how Japanese monsters *yōkai* were reimagined in the *Yo-kai Watch* series.

Nekomata / Jibanyan

In Japanese folklore, there is a notion of cats as dangerous animals, which can change their appearance and transform into humans. Especially careful one must be with the nekomata *yōkai* – a cat with a double tail. As Casal pointed out, ‘people are firmly convinced that no cat can be trusted, especially if it is born with a long tail, which must immediately be clipped so that the beast does not develop into a nekomata, which actually refers to a cat with a forked tail’ (1959:59-60). In the series Jibanyan does not represent a terrifying monster – he is rather a hyperactive cat-*yōkai* occasionally causing much trouble to people. Similar to the nekomata image created by Toriyama Sekien in *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* (1776) (Figure 5), Jibanyan also represents a cat with a typical forked-tale who uses back paws for walking.

On the other hand, the nekomata of Toriyama Sekien does not wear any clothes, whereas Jibanyan has a *haramaki* (a band of fabric covering the stomach area) and a blue pet collar reminding him of a previous owner. As Episode 1 shows, before becoming a *yōkai*, Jibanyan was a regular pet belonging to a schoolgirl. After he had been hit by a truck while crossing the street, Jibanyan later transformed into a *yōkai*. The clothes and accessories serve to remind viewers of a tight connection between the *yōkai* and human worlds. These two worlds are also intertwined in the work by Sawaki Sūshi (1737) (Figure 5): here we can see a nekomata as an anthropomorphic female cat wearing a kimono and playing a *shamisen* (a Japanese music instrument).



Figure 5. Nekomata and Jibanyan. From left to right: A work by Toriyama Sekien from “Gazu Hyakki Yakō” (1776) (Kawasaki Shi Shimin Myūjiamu); a work by Sawaki Sūshi from “Hyakkai Zukan” (1737) (Fukuoka Shi Hakubutsukan); Jibanyan from *Yo-kai Watch* ©L5/YWP-TX

When it comes to the body proportions of Jibanyan, there is a clear disproportion between the head and the body ratio. The head takes up more space than the body; moreover, big round eyes and a tiny nose looking like a dot construct additional imbalance as well. Here it is necessary to point out that anime for children would usually incorporate similar features into their character design. For instance, famous series such as *Chibi Maruko-chan* and *Hello Kitty* follow the “big head-small body” rule for their characters design. One of the explanations for choosing this particular character look is hidden within the notion of “cuteness” or “*kawaisa*”. An interesting study on this topic was conducted by Lorenz (1943), who proposed an idea of the “baby-schema” or juvenile features that make people want to protect and take care of the creatures with big heads and eyes, but small noses and mouths. Other contemporary authors, such as Allison, connected cute characters with ‘big head, small body, huge eyes, tiny nose’ (2004: 43); similarly, Avella acknowledged ‘the visual language of cute’ and pointed out that the heads of cute characters ‘will be huge and their eyes simple dots or slits to make them look either shocked or peaceful, sleeping, sleepy, or blind’ (2004: 217). Although cuteness of characters chiefly depends on physical features, as the previous examples show, some studies suggest that typically a cute character is a combination of many factors (Oosawa and Yamada, 2017).

As opposed to Jibanyan, the earlier nekomata depictions on Figure 5 do not state any disproportion as such: the stylistics of these paintings follows a more naturalistic approach. This fact highlights huge differences in *yōkai* portraying of various periods: for instance, Papp described post-war *yōkai* as ‘harmless’, ‘childlike’ and elaborately explains these changes, including political reasons (2010: 129).

Another element of the Jibanyan design is the usage of *onibi* (“demon fires”). These elements have been a long-established motif of the supernatural and ghostly: ‘On dark nights, thousands of ghostly fires hover about the beach, or flit above the waves – pale lights which the fisherman call Oni-bi, or demon-fires...’ (Hearn, 2004: 4).

Onibi are often associated with various *yōkai*: for instance, one of the types is related to foxes and called *kitsunebi* (“fox fires”) (Opler and Hashima, 1946:47). Cats, however, are similarly believed to be in charge of creating *onibi* due to their supernatural powers. *Yamato Kaiiki*, an eighteenth-century collection of *kaidan* (tales of weird and mysterious), contains a story of *nekomatabi* (“*nekomata* fires”), approximately the size of a *temari* (a Japanese toy ball); they were floating in the air, causing panic in the house of a samurai (Kanda, 1992: 2). In the case of the Jibanyan character image, two *nekomatabi* of blue colour are used to signalize that the character belongs to the world of *yōkai*. Similar blue lights can be seen in many anime about the supernatural. This effect emphasizes ghost / *yōkai* presence: in *Naruto*, a character called Matatabi (who is inspired by the *nekomata*) is rendered in blue flames.

Undoubtedly, such aspects as the character voice and speech play a vital role in the formation of *yōkai* characters in anime. A study by Teshigawara (2003) is focused on voice characteristics of heroes and villains of anime. Studies by Kinsui (2000 and 2003) discuss the phenomenon of *yakuwarigo* (a role language) – a specific speech peculiarities existing in anime (and other genres) which can construct a specific character. The works of Toriyama Sekien and Sawaki Sūshi mentioned earlier have formed a perfect example of how visual art of the eighteenth century perceived *yōkai*, yet still, these images lacked additional details which would elaborate more on these characters. Modern technologies have granted the possibility to incorporate sound effects into a visual content, which is one of the distinct qualities anime industry possesses. It follows that modern *yōkai* re-creations, such as Jibanyan, are a complex set of characteristics, including visual, audio, behavioural, and psychological features. The voice of Jibanyan is performed by a Japanese seiyū Kozakura Etsuko, who also took part in voice acting for famous anime series such as *Pokémon* and *Crayon Shin-chan*. Her approach to Jibanyan was based on childish and emotional acting, which could help to build an image of a cute and active *yōkai*. The characters voiced by Kozakura, however, seem to have a lot of common qualities – therefore, one may start recognizing some parallels between Jibanyan and Piplup, for instance. This aspect

emphasizes the existence of *paratextual* (relating to footnotes, subtitles, and everything outside the text) relationships between *Yo-Kai Watch* and *Pokémon*.

The speech of Jibanyan can be characterized as the *nekogo* (cat language) – that is an imaginary language expressing how cats would talk if they could. The *nekogo* is not a rare phenomenon in anime, manga, and games; it implies occasional usage of the word “*nyan*” or “*nya*” (a word similar to “meow” in Japanese) so that viewers would perceive Jibanyan as an ordinary house cat rather than a monster. The name of Jibanyan itself contains the “*nyan*” part, which instantly allows identifying him with cats, and allows viewers to feel closeness between him and themselves. Some Japanese studies specifically focus on the animal character language specificities in anime and manga. One of them is a research project by Akizuki (2012) that elaborates on the *nekogo* phenomenon and demonstrates various mechanisms of creating a specific language for animal characters.

A substantial study of cats in the Japanese history by Marinus Willem De Visser (1876-1930) contains the information revealing that as soon as a cat possesses a supernatural power, they start speaking and behaving like human beings (Opler, 1945: 269). The Jibanyan case approves this notion: he is addicted to chocolate sticks, and he is also a big fan of the group called “NyaKB”, which is a parody of AKB48 – an idol group incredibly popular in Japan. Figure 6 portrays Jibanyan as a typical *otaku* (usually, a hardcore fan of popular culture and products referring to it). He is looking at the posters and merchandise depicting the NyaKB members – these are cute girls wearing cat costumes. The images of highly sexualized female idols are popular commodities on the Japanese market: there are special shops in the Akihabara area (Tokyo) specializing in this kind of items. Not only does the scene on Figure 6 illustrate and emphasize typical elements of an “*otaku house*”, but it also creates a surrealistic dimension, where a cat dreams about humans cosplaying cats. This scene is not only a fascinating example of *transtextual* relationships in anime; it also expresses the situations where *yōkai* are adjusted into the contemporary time frame, and the authors try to predict their behaviour and reactions in this case. By doing this they push *yōkai* beyond the borders of “otherworldliness” reinventing the world as the place where *yōkai* and people coexist and share similar experiences.



Figure 6. Jibanyan as a devoted fan of an idol group ©L5/YWP-TX

When it comes to other elements pointing to *transtextual* relations between *Yo-kai Watch* and the “iconic” *yōkai* of Sekien, for instance, I would like to emphasize the way each *yōkai* of the series is presented. In the case of Jibanyan, the screen is divided into a visual image and text in order to get acquainted with this *yōkai* better (Figure 7). The name of the *yōkai* appears on a stylized piece of paper reminding viewers of an *ofuda* – a type of talismans commonly used by the Shinto followers for protection purposes; it is usually hung in houses to prevent evil spirits from coming inside. Sekien used a similar way of *yōkai* presentation in his early works (Foster, 2009: 62).



Figure 7. Similar ways of *yōkai* representation in traditional art and anime. On the left: a piece of art by Toriyama Sekien from “Gazu Hyakki Yagyō” (1776) (Kawasaki Shi Shimin Myūjiamu). On the right: a picture presenting Jibanyan to viewers from *Yo-kai Watch* ©L5/YWP-TX

Kyūbi



Figure 8. Kyūbi. From left to right: A work by Utagawa Kuniyoshi “Hanzoku Taishi to Kyūbi no Kitsune” (1855) (Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan); Kyūbi from *Yo-kai Watch* ©L5/YWP-TX; a work by Katsushika Hokusai “Sengoku Yōkoden” (1807) (Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan)

Kyūbi is a Nine-Tailed Demon Fox – in folklore, it is a powerful demonic fox. In the *Yo-kai Watch* series, Kyūbi is portrayed as a mysterious creature, who regularly visits the human world in order to achieve a certain goal. He wants to conquer the hearts of females by making them fall in love with him. In other words, Kyūbi is a typical “heartbreaker” whose actions would lead him to a higher rank in the *yōkai* world he originates from. The visual design of the character consists of vibrant colours mixed with a warm colour scheme used for “classical” kitsune depictions. The main feature of Kyūbi is, of course, the presence of the nine tails of golden and violet undertones; a fur “hood” around the neck, long sharp claws and a white head are also his most outstanding features. The body is significantly bigger compared to that of Jibanyan, for instance. Overall, the body parts are well-balanced and create an image of a gracious grown-up fox. The face of the character may well be inspired by masks used for the Nō theatre performances or Shinto religious ceremonies (such as the *kagura* dance): a white face with a long, strict jawline, and narrow eyes. It is known that Nō massively engaged folklore motives for its plays, and plays based on supernatural motives implied the appearance of such characters as ghosts, demons and other creatures (Matsuo, 2014: 38). Popular plays such as *Sesshōseki* (*The Killing Stone*) and *Kokaji* (*The Swordsmith*) feature the characters connected with foxes. This fact can stand for the importance of the *kitsune* in Japanese culture. The images of foxes in anime have absorbed both old and new elements of culture, which means that at times foxes are given new meaning and roles.

Initially, foxes were an essential element of Chinese folklore, where they were believed to be animals of a magical power (Huntington, 2003: 10). Japan, on the other hand, had been following animistic beliefs from ancient times, and could easily fit the Chinese outlook on foxes into its indigenous culture (Casal, 1959: 1). Later, the fox becomes the symbol attributed to the goddess Inari. In fact, her image and functions are identical to a Buddhist deity called Dakini – she is portrayed riding a white fox (Heine, 1999: 27). White foxes are also said to possess ultimate wisdom and become extremely powerful when they turn a hundred years old (Opler and Hashima 1946: 45). Kyūbi, however, is a superior type among all; they have nine tails, and regarded as “celestial” creatures, whose fur is of a golden colour (Kang, 2006: 23); this fact explains why Kyūbi from *Yo-kai Watch* has fur of golden colours. The works by Sawaki Sūshi and Katsushika Hokusai on Figure 8 follow the same pattern: their depictions of foxes are based on this “classic” colour of fur.

When it comes to supernatural powers, foxes were among the most powerful animals of Japanese folklore. In folktales, they were portrayed as creatures that ‘can travel through different spaces and realms’ (Dupuy, 2012: 138). Nine-tail foxes, in particular, were believed to possess a great power; they were believed to ‘serve in the halls of Sun and Moon’, and to be ‘versed in all the secrets of Nature’ (Casal, 1959: 8). An old legend incorporating a nine-tailed fox tells a story of Tamamo no Mae², a beautiful court lady serving at the court of the emperor Toba; this lady later turns out to be a demonic fox. Because of her immaculate beauty, wisdom and impressive knowledge, no woman of the court could transcend her supremacy. After the mysterious events of one night that had proved Tamamo no Mae to be of a supernatural pedigree, Abe no Yasunari (an exorcist), decided to catch a sly fox and punish her. Although she was able to escape from the emperor guardians after transforming into a fox of nine tails, the warriors of the emperor were fast enough to catch and kill the runaway. At the end of the story, Tamamo no Mae turned into a rock also known as Sesshōseki, which is believed to be a cursed object and bring death to anyone who passes by. The legend of Tamamo no Mae reveals a shadow aspect of foxes mainly associated with female energies detrimental for human males (Bathgate, 2004: 40). In the *Yo-kai Watch* series, Kyūbi represents a gender-swapped version of the nine-tailed demon fox portrayed in the Tamamo no Mae legend.

² Here I am quickly referring to Bathgate’s retelling of the legend (2004: 2-3).

Similarly to this character, he tries to hide his true shape by disguising himself as a good-looking boy, when he first meets Fumi-chan, a close friend of Keita. Kyūbi plans to make Fumi-chan fall in love with him and steal her heart as the last element needed for his ambitious goal. Just like Tamamo-no-mae revealed her true form when she got caught, Kyūbi in the series faces problems while trying to attract Fumi-chan: he becomes nervous and has to get away. Some details of his human shape might be especially engaging. For example, Kyūbi wears elegant clothes – possibly a uniform of an elite private school. The hair colour is light brown, and his eyes are green. Other funny details are connected with “fox” elements even when he is disguised as a boy: his hair combed up in the shape of fox ears; curly lashes and eyebrows also give a small hint of his true form. Kyūbi imitates an image of a foreign *ōjisama* (prince) to make Fumi-chan get interested. To me, this seems like a funny interpretation of the opinion that foreigners are very popular among Japanese people, which is not always true. The specific shape Kyūbi decided to take may reveal a new context of *yōkai* re-creation in the series. In *Yo-kai Watch*, *yōkai* do not necessarily represent Japanese elements alone – they can be mixed with foreign elements of design in order to create a new, fresh dimension of the *yōkai* culture, which could easily comply with a modern world agenda when cultures converge but remain well-recognized.

The last thing to point out is that this type of appearance vaguely manifests both feminine and masculine aspects of Kyūbi; the character voice also justifies this idea because it sounds more feminine compared to that of Keita, for example. Together with other *yōkai* who are often portrayed as antagonists, Kyūbi later becomes one of the friends of Keita.

A magical aspect of foxes is present in the series. Kyūbi can control fire and calls rain whenever he wants. The lore tells stories about foxes and their power over rain – people say strange or irregular rains are a sign of a fox wedding (Nakajima, 1960: 101). Apart from natural phenomena, foxes are connected with love magic (seduction) (Piven, 2003: 61), which also exists in the *Yo-kai Watch* series. To conclude, it can be said the authors were able to both construct an image of a fox-trickster typical for Japanese folklore and to modify it in order to add a new dimension to this character. Although Kyūbi may be cruel and selfish at times, he is adorably cute at his desperate attempts to make Fumi-chan like him.

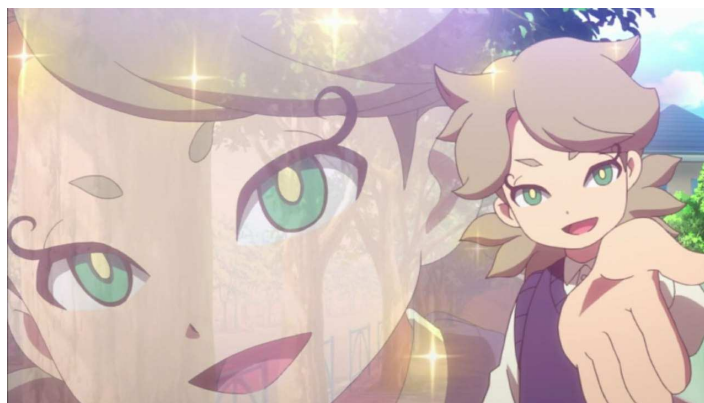


Figure 9. Kyūbi in his human form ©L5/YWP-TX

Kappa and Nogappa

The kappa is undoubtedly one of the most well recognizable *yōkai* in the Japanese bestiary. This representative of the *yōkai* world regularly shows up in Japanese folklore, especially in *mukashibanashi* (folktales); it is also a popular mascot for places³ and brands. In the series, the kappa is presented to viewers as a “celebrity” of the *yōkai* world. He lives in the city river and silently watches the human world while Keita is trying to solve the mystery of strange events happening next to the river.

A typical kappa is often described as a short (approximately the size of a three or four-year-old child, at times slightly taller) creature with skin covered with scales, a beak-mouth, and a carapace on the back (Foster, 1998: 4). The plate-like spot on the top of the head is filled with water, and this liquid makes the creature practically invulnerable. The word “kappa” has similar variants in the Japanese language: *mizuchi*, *kawaranbe*, *kawauso*, etc. Each of them is different depending on the region: the “standard” name, for instance, belongs to the Kanto and Tohoku regions and can be translated as “a child of the river” (Komatsu, 2017: 78-79). In the *Yo-kai Watch* series, the character is called Nogappa, which is a combination of two words: “wild duck” (*nogamo*) and “kappa”. It must be pointed out, however, that there is a second kappa character in the series called Kappa. I will intentionally elaborate on the two kappa images of the series in order to show how transtextuality creates new dimensions and understandings of the *yōkai* culture.

The two versions of the kappa may be an attempt of authors to provide their outlook on the water monster in a “traditional” and “modern” way. Compared to the seventeenth-century depiction portraying the kappa (Figure 10) it is clear that Nogappa is a result of major transformations of this *yōkai*: the general impression is that Nogappa represents

³ For example, Ushiku city (Ibaraki prefecture), Sumida city (Tokyo), Shiki city (Saitama prefecture).

something new and drastically different from the “original” kappa. His name is written in *katakana* (whereas *kappa* is usually written in *kanji*), as well as the proportions of his body (as in the case of Jibanyan) are hyperbolized and uneven. Nogappa has blue skin, whereas the kappa is typically depicted as a creature of emerald green undertones. Apart from the visual features, the behaviour of Nogappa is different from his predecessors. Although the kappa is not the most dangerous and bloodthirsty monster of all the *yōkai*, there are rumours and local legends blaming it of dragging people and livestock underwater or trying to steal the so-called *shirikodama* (a mysterious object situated in the human fundament) from a human’s body. Nogappa, on the contrary, is not aggressive at all: he is rather as curious as a child silently observing the world around him. A distinct feature not emblematic of the kappa is to leave its natural habitat for too long: the liquid inside the dish on the head may accidentally evaporate or spill out, which could make the kappa lose its power and become vulnerable. Nogappa seems like an exception among the other relatives: the red bottle hanging from his neck illustrates that he is a traveller exploring the world outside of his dwelling, but he still can be safe thanks to the water bottle.

On the other hand, the second kappa character is represented as a rival to Nogappa: especially from the viewpoint of his appearance that possibly was inspired by the classical iconography of the kappa. A small detail standing out from the typical kappa image is a skirt made of straws, as well as a big bottle made of gourd – in contrast to the features and design of Nogappa. As Figure 10 shows, the name of Kappa is spelled in kanji – this spelling is identic to the *yōkai* name depicted on two Edo period scrolls – *Gazu Hyakki Yakou* (1776) and *Bakemono Tsukushi Emaki* (exact date unknown). Although in this case a more thorough semantic analysis of the word “kappa” may be needed, I would suggest that the usage of *katakana* in the case of Nogappa’s name stands for the changes in the contemporary Japanese language: slang words, as well as other neologisms, are usually written in *katakana*. Moreover, *katakana* is an easy system for children’s perception – thus, Nogappa can be associated with the new generation. The spelling of Kappa’s name, on the other hand, is more impacted by history and traditions, yet more complicated; this is what kanji represent. The rivalry between the two kappa characters is emphasized even more with the help of different spelling of their names.

Both kappas meet each other in the series and start competing in sports such as swimming and sumo (kappa are skillful sumo-wrestlers according to *mukashibanashi* and other folklore texts) in order to decide who is “the real kappa”. The voice of the

“classic” kappa (as he is addressed in the series) sounds sophisticated and mature; in general, he looks and behaves assertively and aggressively, whereas Nogappa is competitive yet more friendly.

In the end, Nogappa becomes a winner of the competition because of his idea of using sunscreen and moisturizer applied on his head to prevent liquid evaporation. When the competition is over, self-confident and arrogant Kappa finally becomes a friend of Keita and admits that Nogappa is “the real Kappa.”



Figure 10. Kappa. From left to right: A picture drawn by the witness of Kappa in Oita (1624-1644) (Kawasaki Shi Shimin Myūjiamu); Nogappa from *Yo-kai Watch* ©L5/YWP-TX; Kappa from *Yo-kai Watch* ©L5/YWP-TX

In further episodes, Nogappa and Kappa decide to start a rap band, although from the beginning conservative Kappa claims to dislike this kind of music (he prefers classic *enka* or Japanese ballads); eventually, he admits enjoying rap too, saying how important it is to appreciate and try new things. These words of him may become an argument for Kappa and Nogappa representing two dichotomies (traditions and modernity) united together. In my opinion, this is a significant moment when it comes to the demonstration of the transtextuality mechanism in the series. Not only are some texts portraying the “classical” kappa tangible and decently represented (most notable features and habits of the kappa were acknowledged), they are also united to show that it is important to remember and respect both traditions and novelty – a certain lesson for children to be learned. Moreover, the example of two kappas representing different dichotomies makes us question the very notion of the authenticity of one *yōkai*, and artificiality of another. In other words, I believe that transtextuality encourages the *yōkai* culture to find inspiration in the past, but still be able to add new meanings and enlarge the understanding of the *yōkai* culture corresponding to a concrete time frame.



Figure 11. Nogappa and Kappa as rappers ©L5/YWP-TX

Yuki-onna / Fubuki-hime

Yuki-onna is a female *yōkai* representing an entity related to winter, snow, and ice. In the *Yo-kai Watch* series she is re-created as Fubuki-hime (Princess Snowstorm), a cheerful princess of the Cold clan, who is constantly freezing everybody, not because of her malicious nature, but because her powers seem to activate when she becomes too emotional.

Yuki-onna is said to appear in snowy regions of Japan such as Aomori, Akita, Iwate, etc. Similar to the kappa, her name varies from region to region: she is called Yuki-Nyōbō in the Yamagata and Tochigi prefectures, Yuki-Musume in Saitama and Niigata, Yuki-Hime in Okayama and Yuki-Jorō in Fukushima and Nagano respectively (Ine, 2011: 19). In most folktales, she is portrayed as an adult female, nightmarishly beautiful and mysterious. Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904), a writer and collector of Japanese folk stories, including the stories of mysterious and unexplainable, described Yuki-onna in the following manner:

She is the White One that makes the Faces in the snow. She does not any harm, only makes afraid. By day she lifts only her head, and frightens those who journey alone. But at night she rises up sometimes, taller than the trees, and looks about a little while, and then falls back in a shower of snow (1894: 638).

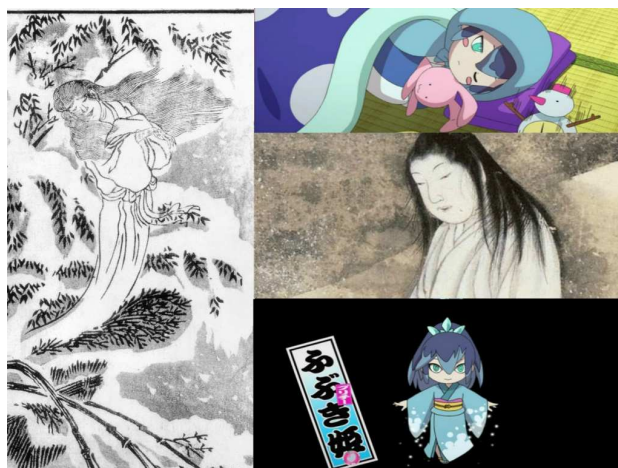


Figure 12. Yuki-onna. From left to right: A work by Toriyama Sekien from “Gazu Hyakki Yakō” (1776) (Kawasaki Shi Shimin Myūjiamu); Yuki-onna from *Yo-kai Watch* ©L5/YWP-TX; a work by Sawaki Sūshi from “Hyakkai Zukan” (1737) (Fukuoka Shi Hakubutsukan); Fubuki-hime from *Yo-kai Watch* ©L5/YWP-TX

Toriyama Sekien and Sawaki Sūshi conveniently illustrated an iconographic representation of Yuki-onna: it was a Japanese woman with long jet-black hair, skin white as snow, and dressed in white clothes (Figure 12). Fubuki-hime of the *Yo-kai Watch* series is reimagined as a little girl (possibly of the same age as Keita), with a blue-haired ponytail. She has pale skin, light-blue eyes, and wears a light blue kimono with a snow pattern on it. A small yet important detail of the character is a blue-coloured ice comb crowning her head. The comb (*kamidome* in the series) is a magical item transforming a shy creature called Yuki-onna into her “alter ego” – active Fubuki-Hime. The comb here may be understood as a symbol of magical transformations; this symbol is already present in the Japanese myths of *Kojiki*, as Vasić pointed out (2010: 7). Fubuki-hime wears a blue hooded cape; she lives in a tiny house made of snow. Regardless of her “cold” nature, Yuki-onna sleeps under a warm *kotatsu* and enjoys drinking hot tea. When transformed into Yuki-onna, Fubuki-hime is a very calm character that does not freeze everything next to her; therefore, in some episodes, her friends of were trying to hide the comb to prevent Fubuki-Hime from freezing anybody. Unlike the Yuki-onna portrayed in lore as an extremely dangerous *yōkai* who freezes people to death with her breath, Fubuki-hime does not lurk in the dark for preys. On the contrary, she soon becomes friends with Keita. Being a princess and the member of the Cold clan, she always tries to be in good terms with the *yōkai* of the Hot clan. She also promotes friendship and mutual understanding between these seemingly rival clans.

As was mentioned in the previous paragraph, Yuki-onna follows the rituals and lifestyle of a regular human because of her past. According to the story, Yuki-onna was

once an ordinary girl who got lost in the mountains (episode 125). Trying to find a shelter, she hid in the cave but froze to death in the end. There is a drastic difference in the depictions of Fubuki-hime as a *yōkai* and as a human. The “human version” of Yuki-onna looks “normal”: her hair and eyes are brown, and there is no obvious disproportion between her head and body size. On the other hand, Yuki-onna is a “big head-small body” character; there are mainly bright blue colours in her design. I find these contrasts especially interesting and possibly important for understanding the differences between the world of the supernatural and “natural” portrayed in the *Yōkai Watch* series where *yōkai* look cute, funny, and bizarre.



Figure 13. Yuki-onna (Fubuki-hime) as a human being. Episode 125. ©L5/YWP-TX

Conclusions

Yōkai characters have witnessed various transformations varying from otherworldly creepy creatures in the form of picture scrolls and to *yōkai* as vivid and fancy-looking characters of popular culture. These transformations indicate the process where traditions transforming into something more related to modernity and better perceived by the current generation. In this context, preserving traditions and elements now regarded as “classical” does not imply rejecting modern trends and neglect newer approaches. In other words, I believe that the strict differentiation between “high culture” and “mass culture” or “popular culture” hinders the perception of the latter as a culture that also stimulates a ‘moral and aesthetic response’ by the audience and represents an ‘individual act of creation’ – the premises often attributed to “high culture” (Storey, 2009: 6). Although popular culture may often refer to “high culture” and tends to re-create its contents in one way or another, it still expresses an

act of creation – especially when it comes to the creation of new meanings and perspectives on a particular subject.

Yōkai monsters seem like a perfect example of the re-creation process – more and more Japanese monsters are invading the world of anime, manga, video games, and other products.

It has been proposed that anime plays a significant role in raising peoples' awareness of *yōkai*. Major components of anime are graphics and audio effects; these premises allow portraying Japanese monsters in motion – as dynamically rendered creatures producing specific sounds or using supernatural powers such as transformation.

The re-creation of *yōkai* may be well explained through the mechanism of transtextuality, and the results of this mechanism may vary from small to distinct changes in the character design. The genre and target audience of anime as well may influence on characters' appearance, stylistics and behaviour. For instance, anime titles to be appreciated by young females (*shōjo*) often tend to create good-looking, and attractive humanized *yōkai* characters (usually male characters in this case); other genres and characteristics responding to the interests of certain viewers may as well incorporate sexualization towards *yōkai* characters. Unchanged names of *yōkai* used in anime visibly increase the chance of *yōkai* recognition by viewers – they are usually well aware of certain *yōkai* iconography.

The *yōkai* re-creation in the *Yo-kai Watch* series is chiefly influenced by its target audience – children. The anime segment targeting children (*kodomomuke*) is incredibly popular in Japan and is known by some peculiar features of the characters' depiction. Characters should not be creepy and terrifying; they are expected to be cute and entertaining. Although many of the *Yo-kai Watch* characters may be influenced by the *kawaii* and friendly *yōkai* of earlier anime projects, there are still the details worth appreciation.

Yo-kai Watch introduces a very positive outlook into the *yōkai* discourse. Each of the *yōkai* presented in the paper undergoes positive transformations and realizes the mistakes such as mischieving and “bad” actions. Jibanyan causes trouble for cars and pedestrians because he wants to be loved and remembered by his owner. Kappa is initially mean to other characters but later admits his mistakes and becomes friends with them. Yuki-onna tries hard to make friends with everyone despite their backgrounds. Kyūbi desires to become the strongest of all the *yōkai* – therefore, he is

arrogant and self-centred. However, he is ready to help other characters when they are in trouble. Being friends and supporting each other is one of the main themes of the series; even the ending song of the series called *Yo-kai Exercise No. 1* (*Yōkai Taisō Daiichi*) proclaims how ‘significant friends are’ (*tomodachi daiji*).

The majority of monsters here are *kawaii* or funny: this trend is mainly featured in the visual design of characters; the proportions of bodies are often not balanced: a big head is an element of cuteness just as big eyes and small noses; character voices are high-pitched, reminding of that of children.

Interactions with *yōkai* serve as a useful lesson for young viewers – *yōkai* can be perceived as “teachers” of these children. Secondly, key characters are ordinary children, and their explorations of the *yōkai* world are parallel to a journey to the adult world. In the context of *yōkai* narratives targeting children, *yōkai* represent the world of causes and consequences – the examples of the interaction with *yōkai* help children to grasp moral and ethical standards of behaviour, giving precautions for young viewers.

On the other hand, the series is undoubtedly specific as it reveals various layers and aspects of transtextuality by its comic references to other genres and products of popular culture that are hidden in episodes, and these details are to be appreciated and understood by grown-ups rather than children. For example, an AKB48 parody in the series will be most likely appreciated by adults who are familiar with Japanese idols and all-girl bands. Another funny moment is a reference to T-800’s (from the *Terminator* movies) iconic phrase “I’ll be back” – in episode 9, a *yōkai*-robot called Robonyan uses this phrase when leaving Keita’s house. In this regard, I would connect this idea of references and parodies to appeal to both children and their parents. In the end, it is parents who are in charge of their children’s choices when it comes to TV shows and other media targeting children.

When analyzing the series, it is important to mention that Keita has an album where he collects all the friendship medals he got from every monster as a sign of friendship. Each *yōkai*, in particular, represents a unit, a piece of puzzle helping Keita to grasp and explore the world. An identical approach to *yōkai* can be traced back to the *yōkai* catalogues popular in the Edo period – the album of Keita is on a par with a tendency of collecting and displaying the chaotic *yōkai* world into a logical order. Moreover, the monster database on Whisper’s device is a distant reference to the *yōkai* database collected and cherished by *yōkai* enthusiasts and researchers, such as Mizuki Shigeru.

Another point to consider is how the human world and the world of supernatural are interconnected through the perception of Keita. Old stories of *yōkai* and mysterious events, such as *kwaidan*, are often based on accidents when the border of natural and supernatural becomes so thin that beasts and other scary creatures are portrayed as the main antagonists. Characters of these stories accidentally happen to witness frustrating phenomena without being able to control these powers, whereas Keita of *Yo-kai Watch* becomes the “master” of *yōkai* to a certain extent. His magic watch becomes an object connecting the two worlds. Moreover, the very attempt of Keita to control or manipulate the “*yōkai* incidents” may be understood as an allusion to the attempts of humans to cope with the uncertainty and vagueness of the world – and this idea makes the series even more mindful and worth attention. In short, such an approach to *yōkai* represents a modern outlook on the world of mysterious and unexplainable, where people throw their efforts to capture and research something intangible.

Some of the *yōkai* appearing in the series are re-created as victims of tragic events and accidents: Yuki-onna, for instance, was once a little girl died in the mountains, Jibanyan was hit by a track, and Jinmenken (“a dog with a human face”) used to be a *sarariman* (a wageman), who lost his life due to his reckless actions. It can be said that the whole concept of *yōkai* is different in the series: *yōkai* are not only the spirits connected with certain natural objects, as Yanagita once proposed. Animals, former people and otherworldly entities are all intertwined and united by the concept of *yōkai*. At times, completely new characters are introduced into the series. They are a comic or satirical representation of everyday issues, not entities connected with natural powers and places: for example, a *yōkai* causing spending money on unnecessary things, or a *yōkai* not letting people go outside and communicate with the outer world (consumerism and *hikikomori* respectively). The modern monsters of the *Yo-kai Watch* series remind us of the society’s current problems, and this actuality allows *Yo-kai Watch* to be popular around the world.

To conclude, the re-creation of *yōkai* characters in anime can be analyzed through the lens of transtextuality, where relationships between the texts result in minor or major differences in *yōkai* depiction. *Yo-kai Watch* contains allusions to either historical depictions of *yōkai* and modern popular culture (including both Japanese and foreign popular topics and texts). Here *yōkai* are re-created as funny and cute entities helping children to grow up and understand the world around them, be friendly and ready to

help others. The series smartly highlights or parodies actual concerns or situations, familiar to everyone. From the viewpoint of transtextual connections, it is possible to suggest that the series relates to and appreciates the *yōkai* culture while creating its dimension of the supernatural that is relevant nowadays.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nargiz BALGIMBAYEVA is currently a Ph.D. student at the University of Tsukuba. She has been interested in Japanese culture since junior high school and later started studying Japanese Linguistics at the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. After having an opportunity of one-year studying at the University of Tsukuba as an exchange student and getting a bachelor degree in Kazakhstan, she enters the University of Tsukuba for the Special Program in Japanese and Central Eurasian Studies (1+3 Combined MA and Ph.D. Program). The main areas of her interest are Japanese popular culture (especially anime and games), Japanese folklore and mythology, yōkai (supernatural creatures and phenomena).

From *kawaii* to sophisticated beauty ideals: A case study of Shiseidō beauty print advertisements in Europe

Oana BIRLEA | Babes-Bolyai University, Romania

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ABSTRACT

Having as a starting point one of the stereotypes of Japanese women considered a purveyor of kawaii this paper aims to explore a counterexample to Sanrio's Hello Kitty mania offered by Shiseidō cosmetics through its overseas advertisements created during a long history on the European market. Even though the image of Japan is based mainly on the concept of kawaii Shiseidō tried at first on the local market to make a turn from that fragile, helpless and naïve perception of women to a more sophisticated one. Successful advertisements are made to answer a specific target audience's needs, thus in order to go global there was a need to adapt typical Asian beauty standards to European ones. Shiseidō's mission is to keep up with the times without forgetting the roots, the source of power, thus it has constantly worked in developing new strategies in order to thrive on the Western beauty market without setting aside Japanese tradition. Shiseidō corporate through its smaller brands like Majolica Majorca, Pure & Mild, Haku (meaning "white") etc. still promote whitest white skin, a beauty ideal which prevails since the Heian period (794-1185). Considering that Shiseidō has a history of more than 50 years on the European market we propose an analysis on three beauty print advertisements elaborated during 1980-2000 in order to observe the constructed image of Japan through the imaginary of the French artist, Serge Lutens, responsible for the visual identity of the brand in Europe since 1980. The question is if it is a matter of "selling" the exotic to an unfamiliar receiver or a naïve reflection of Japaneseness from a European's perspective?

Through this case study of beauty print advertisements created for the European market after 1990 we want to mirror the image of Japan in Europe as depicted through the specter of the biggest Japanese beauty conglomerate in the world, Shiseidō.

KEYWORDS

Kawaii; Japan; Shiseido; Beauty; Japanese Print Advertisements;
Advertising Discourse Construction.

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Introduction

If we admit that a culture can be defined by the sum of its discourses, then any type of discourse can be seen as a mirror of that society or more generally speaking the conventions adopted guide the specifications of that culture (Williams, 1977: 177). Advertising discourse is a multimodal type of discourse and implies a series of interconnections of social, cultural and economic nature, but most importantly it seeks for maximum effect with minimum effort. It is perhaps one of the most complex types

of discourse because of its capacity to transfer abstract meanings by mixing visual communication with text and motion with audio-video in its most complex forms, but the present article aims to describe the process used in print advertisements. When it comes to defining the term “discourse” the abundance of definitions and traits is overwhelming therefore it should be considered in particular instances. The broad use of the concept allows studies from various subjects which bypass traditional views on discourse analysis, thus this paper aims to reveal socio-cultural and linguistic relationships through the analysis of symbols and does not pretend to give answers to all the facets of advertising discourse. Traditional views on discourse regard only linguistic features such as grammar, lexicology, phonology important, but the analysis of the context of communication can explain the mechanism through which language serves its purpose. Nowadays, we encounter analysis on a wide broad of matters from feminist discourse, political discourse to food and beverage discourse etc. Through its various forms, in common speech the term has become widely used for denoting all elements belonging to a certain area or subject. Advertising discourse is explained and differentiated among others in matters of discourse construction, language use, context, content and so on and in this article I intend to analyze the process through which a facet of Japanese culture is constructed through beauty print advertisements after 1980. The “self-portrait” in this case is created by Shiseidō, the very first Western-style pharmacy (later becoming a cosmetic company) in Japan. Self-representation in advertisements can reveal significant insight in terms of culture and traditions and in the case of Japan, several theories and ideas were promoted on the basis that “each age had its own culture” (Morris Suzuki, 1995: 766) and more importantly considering that culture itself is complex and involves crossing frontiers. I shall focus on these ideas through a socio-cultural semiotics analysis applied on Shiseidō print advertisements for Europe in order to see how the Japanese wish to be perceived on the beauty global market and what are the symbols used for this goal

This article is expected to generate a positive contribution in understanding Japanese view of the world through advertising discourse adapted for European audience. Treating advertising as a type of discourse implies more than analyzing certain parts of it, it is a complex process based on the analysis of all elements. It is important to mention that due to the lack of specialization in the marketing field, I do not want to make

academic assumptions on this matter, my field of interest is constructed around cultural and sociosemiotics.

A brief history of Japanese advertising

Discourse construction seen as a common good can offer insights on a specific culture and society, thus through the analysis of advertising discourse one can gain access to existing trends in a certain zone and timeframe. Moreover, this type of discourse can be seen as a footprint marking the evolution of a language, culture and society at a wider scale. In Japan, the first forms considered close to what we call today advertisements appeared early in the Edo period (1603-1868) and were called *hikifuda* (similar to flyers), followed by woodblocks called *nishiki-e* used by merchandisers for advertising. The Meiji Era (1868-1912) set new beginnings for the future industry by developing new lithographic printing technologies called *ebira*, followed by economic growth and continuation of the Westernization process in the Taishō Era (1912-1926). After the 2nd World War it was important to regain prosperity and to revitalize the economy (Tungate, 2007: 186-187), thus the advertising industry played an important role in promoting Japanese products internally and overseas. The predominant advertisements at that time in Japan were related to toiletries and cosmetics (Moeran, 1996: 8) creating the perfect environment for a company like Shiseidō to grow.

The year 1964, the year the Olympic Games were hosted in Tokyo, making Japan the first country in Asia to ever organize this sporting event, also marked the peak in the advertising industry. All four forms of communications (newspapers, magazines, radio and TV) were used in order to promote and make Japanese values known to the world (Information Management Resources Association, 2017: 326-327). What is important to notice from this very brief description of the evolution of advertising in Japan is how attitudes and behaviours are influenced and eventually changed through advertisements (Slade, 2002: 157-158). Moreover, during the 1990s the well-defined gender roles were not as strict as before:

Men have become less career-obsessed, more spiritual. And women have become more independent. They have their own money and they spend it more freely. So women in advertising are portrayed as independent, both emotionally and economically (Tungate, 2007: 192).

The entire creative process of advertisements is not done solely internally, but with the help of specialized agencies who follow the company's vision, but the intriguing fact is that Japanese companies are sceptical when it comes to externalizing this process to foreign agencies (Moeran, 1996: 18). The world's largest single advertising agency, Dentsu, has been working on advertisements for Shiseidō (Tungate, 2007: 191), this being a clear statement for the scepticism exposed when it comes to externalizing accounts. Even though at first Asian companies were confronted with problems when it came to being perceived as creative in the European market, during the 90s the situation has radically improved (Tungate, 2007: 251) and the Japanese way was called "mood advertising" because it seemed intuitive, rather than rational, like in the West (Moeran, 1996: 19).

Understanding cultural keywords grants permission to cultural insights of a society and, moreover, the results of discourse analysis with focus on affect words (which have the capacity to stir emotions) provide vital information in order to discover existing patterns in discourse construction and thus, to achieve a more comprehensive approach to language and cultural differences. In the case of Japan, *kawaii*, an adjective meaning "cute", "adorable", "vulnerable", or "innocent" (Koma, 2013: 10), has extended its reach rapidly by becoming overwhelmingly present in various shapes and forms in everyday life. The quality of being "cute", "adorable", "lovable" is culturally determined and strongly related to human primary emotions, therefore advertising discourse construction operates with signs which have the capacity to trigger emotions with minimum effort. The concept of *kawaii* was first mentioned in Heian period writings (see Murasaki Shikibu, 'Genji Monogatari'; Sei Shōnagon, 'Makura no sōshi') (Passin, 1980: 32) and did not suffer major changes in content, but its influence over Japanese culture and lifestyle has increased significantly. In these writings *kawaii* was described as: "childish, innocent and pure" ("*kawaii to wa osanakute, muku de, jyunsuina mono*") or reduced to "anything that is small" ("*nandemo, chīsai mono wa, minna kawaii*")¹. Given its effects over society and its roots, I believe that *kawaii* can be perceived as a counterbalance in a strongly masculine society and as a need to soften the rigid norms. It seems that it has the capacity to induce powerful emotions and to create connections between the individual and the product/service. *Kawaii* style is not limited to clothes, but also influences the design of everything, basically creating a lifestyle, thus it has

also shaped Japanese beauty ideals and this phenomena can be traced and analyzed through specific symbols used in advertisements which “trigger” a feeling, rather than denote a specific thing (Pellitteri, 2018: 4).

As opposed to the European equivalent of “cute” it targets not only children, but adults through the presence of cute characters in daily use services such as banking, shopping and soon becoming a lifestyle (Kinsella, 1995: 226). As Kinsella notes, an interesting fact is that “*kawaii* syndrome” did not start in multi-media (1995: 224), but it was perpetuated by people and a specific conduct. *Kawaii* has shaped the image of women in Japan and the perception of Japanese women overseas through advertisements by promoting beauty ideals in the form of fragility, shyness, obedience etc. and by the early 1980s “cute fashion became a basic style or aesthetics” (Kinsella, 1995: 220).

Many Japanese cosmetic brands have followed the trend, targeting especially teenagers, whilst Shiseidō has followed the European pattern trying to capture the “chic”, Parisian feminine allure through their posters. This new feminine ideal had to detach from its *kawaii*, younger and naive counterpart which was extremely popular in Japan and to embrace the wave of women emancipation promoted in Europe. Why not appeal to *kawaii* symbolism for Shiseidō advertisements abroad considering that after World War II Japan became the world’s pop culture superpower? One explanation might be that Shiseidō was targeting a totally different audience and thus, even in advertisements made for Japanese market, there was different kind of approach, significantly different to that promoted by *kawaii* aesthetics. “Fancy goods” were associated primarily with their lovable nature, while in this case it was more about sexiness and emancipation.

Shiseidō: revolutionizing Japanese beauty ideals

The first attempt to integrate Japanese products into the global market took place around the 1960s and it targeted electronics. The strategy was to “erase” any trace of Japanese origin, a phenomenon known as “*mukokuseki*” in order to fit in global standards (Yano, 2013:16). The same strategy was adopted by Shiseidō, which was visible early from its start in 1916 after establishing the Design Department (the present Advertising Creation Department), in which Shiseidō’s particular style started to take shape through unique combinations of art nouveau, arabesque and art deco. The company’s mission was, and is, to deliver happiness through the fusion of Japanese wisdom and Eastern science (Roll, 2015: 162), and the very first cosmetic line was targeted towards middle-

aged women, whilst nowadays it targets a wider range (even millennials). It was designed to impress and to astonish, thus the very first authentic Japanese perfume, Hanatsubaki, was packaged in extravagant bottles with a high-quality cut-glass appearance and had the product's name and flower design emblazoned in gold leaf. In 1963, Shiseidō began its first exports to Europe, in Italy, and five years later established Shiseido Cosmetici (Italia) S.p.A. A clear statement for the desire to enter Western markets was given by bringing in the French artist, Serge Lutens in 1980 as image creator for the company. The artist confesses in an interview for Shiseidō website in 2018: 'to be precise, my first encounter with Shiseido, and with Japan, was in 1971. I was working for Christian Dior at the time and had visited Japan many times on business, and I remember it having a huge impact on me. I did not love travelling to begin with, and I did not have any particular interest in discovering new cultures in new countries' (Shiseidō, 2018). His Frenchness and his previous experience with Dior contributed to creating a prestige aura around Shiseidō products, which it is still visible today. According to Shiseidō's official website, 'after working on the development of makeup products as Christian Dior's art director for 12 years from 1968, he signed a contract with Shiseido in 1980 to work on its image creation when the company made a serious move into the European market at the time. Thereafter, he stayed on for about 20 years, taking charge of Shiseido's global image and visual identity' (Shiseidō, 2018). Anything regarding fashion and beauty industry associated with the French gained immediate prestige.

The first print advertisements made for Europe were stripped of any trace of Japaneseness in order to adapt and to maximize the effects. The only recurrent element in any Shiseidō advertisement is the *hanatsubaki* (Japanese camellia) trademark, which has seen minor changes since 1915. This emptiness of origin and nationality is described by the concept of "*mukokuseki*" (Jap. 無国籍), which works as a tool for adapting and allowing foreign elements to coexist with traditional ones. That is, for Asian companies trying to enter the European market it was important to eliminate any trace leading back to its origin in order to adapt to the new and competitive environment and this was a constant practice in other industries, too. Europeans had an extremely limited knowledge of Japan, thus making it difficult to look like a reliable provider and, moreover, could not conduct any promotional activities in mass media at that time, because of its unknown and yet unreliable background, according to Yutaka Goto, Director General of Shiseidō's Communications Centre for Europe (Japan Society, 2005).

Shiseidō first started to expand in Asia, in Taiwan in 1957 and in 1962 it had already established the company's very first overseas investment in Hawaii, whilst in the following year it started sales in Italy. Through the advertisements made for Italy (its first exports to Europe), France, and the UK, the company wanted to send messages of emancipation and liberation in concordance with European trends dominated by French influence. Parisienne-looking women figures dominated the scene in European advertisements (see Tomei, 2017; Horoszko *et al.*, 2018), so the strategy was quickly applied to Shiseidō Japan for Europe as well, starting the liberation from *kawaii* "dogma" by creating an alternative and targeting Japanese women, not teenagers manipulated by excessive cuteness. In order to have a better perspective on the core values and long-term strategies of European competitors we need to look at a French beauty and fashion giant: Chanel. For example, the supremacy of Chanel No. 5, perceived as the ultimate perfume, was mainly due to its association with movie stars like Marilyn Monroe (1954 interview) and Catherine Deneuve (1971 ad), Nicole Kidman (2004 ad) and this technique (along other strategies) was the key element in creating Chanel's legacy (Marshall and Morreale, 2018: 182). These perfect overlaps between the product (in this case Chanel No. 5) and the sexiness and confidence symbolized by Hollywood actresses perpetuated the idea that Chanel represents the real French fashion, and thus sophisticated glamour. Chanel's strategy was to create a story for the product by appealing to emotions through movie stars symbolizing high standards and luxury (Grainge, 2009: 39). The sex symbol, Hollywood actress and the square shaped perfume bottle Chanel No. 5 become a single entity in a visual narrative: 'Meshing the classical French values of restraint and elegance with a modern ideal of freedom and fun [...] in tune with the idea of a liberated world [...]' (Davis, 2006: 153). On the other hand, in Japan by the '80s beauty advertisements were overwhelmed by *kawaii* characters (Yano, 2013: 61).

This fascination towards Europe especially in arts, but also in technology (Dresch, James and Parkin 2000: 159; Honour and Fleming 2005: 562) has shaped Japan's evolution and has constantly nurtured the idea of a brighter future. Japan's long history of copying and mimicry of Western elements (Cox, 2008: 3) constitute a solid argument for 'glocalization' (Robertson, 1992 and 1995) or the need to tailor and adapt global trends to local markets (Robertson, 1995: 28). Furthermore, given the fact that the term is a combination of two separate words, "global" and "local" it is important to mention that, in our opinion 'glocalization' does not lead to the diminishing of the sense of identity,

but on the contrary, it helps to maximize those traits that make one culture unique from another. Japanese society does not accept elements bearing different values and ideologies and does not replace one form with another, thus this can be noticed in the construction of the advertising discourse, too. Cultural differences, religious beliefs, language and other socio-economical-political aspects must be taken into consideration when analyzing any type of discourse. Of course, the plead for 'glocalization' is not exclusively connected to the Japanese society, but the historical background shows that in the case of Japan this phenomenon has a significant role in discourse construction.

Shiseidō advertisements and products were not intended at first to be directly linked to Japan, thus their appeal was very much like typical European ones in order to become notorious and to gain access on the global market. The brand's long-lasting tradition, both on the national market and overseas, proved that this new perception of beauty based on a perfect balance between the East and the West that combines Western science (technology and innovations) with Eastern wisdom (spirituality, harmony, *wa*) is the secret to success and this is notable by observing the construction of the advertisements since the beginning of the 21st century.

Case study: Shiseidō print advertisements (1980-2000)

The following examples have been gathered from the online database IADDB and by using search engines. All selected advertisements appeared during 1980-2000 and target European consumers. As stated before, I am interested in understanding how this process of constructing or deconstructing stereotypical images of a society works from the lens of the beneficiary, in this case, Japan. Research on stereotypical representations focus on the recurrent elements used and try to classify them considering several aspects such as gender, role, usage, effect etc. I am particularly interested in the image of Japanese society (Hammond, 1997; Mouer and Sugimoto, 2002; Suvanto, 2008) with reference to media and advertising discourse. In a period in which Japan was more known for its technological prowess and high-quality electronics (e.g. Sony, Canon), but not for beauty products, Shiseidō managed to enter the Western market (both European and North American) due to its marketing strategies and advertisements created around the country's aura of mystique and oriental tradition.

During its long-lasting tradition on the European market, Shiseidō cosmetics had the opportunity to influence views and perceptions over Japanese culture and society through its advertisements. If in the first decades there was a tendency to follow Western trends and to camouflage Asian origins, in later advertisements we encounter an emphasis on Japanese tradition and values. Word choice is of extreme importance in advertising discourse analysis because words have the capacity to trigger emotions and achieve persuasion especially in the case of print advertisements (Tanaka, 1994; Cook, 2001; Handford and Gee, 2013). Cultural differences regarding women's behaviour, gender roles, social roles etc. can impact the effect of an advertisement. Shiseidō has tried to adopt and apply European values promoting an independent, extrovert female figure in a highly masculine society and this trajectory is visible through advertising discourse construction and through its separation from *kawaii* towards *utsukushii* and sophisticated. The idea of strong, intelligent, independent women was taboo in Japan and now even though words like *chisei* (intelligence) and *chiteki* (intelligent) are common in advertisements targeting young women, their use might be just for their cool resonance (Tanaka, 1994: 110). Shiseidō's new and fresh perspective over beauty achieved through a fusion between the East and the West was the key that granted permission to the European market and ensured its success. Only after almost 20 years after entering the European markets Shiseidō decided to customize its products and design advertisements exclusively in order to answer the buyer's needs. The main barrier that slowed down the process was due to the reticence showed towards 'outsiders'. Even though externalizing the creative process is not an easy decision for a Japanese company, considering their particular view over advertising, which was described as "intuitive" and "atmospheric", in order to succeed on the European market an insider's insight was needed (Moeran, 1996: 18). In 1980, Serge Lutens, a French artist was appointed over Shiseidō's overseas business

strategies, thus receiving access to imagining and creating the visual identity of Japan through the filter of beauty products made in Japan for Europe.

Plate 1 is the very first poster created by Serge Lutens in 1980 for promoting Shiseidō's values on the global market with Europe as a starting point. Very simple in construction, using dark, bold shadows which serve as a perfect background for the perfect red circle, a clear link to Japan, the land of the Rising Sun, while still being far enough from the nationalist symbolism of the 'Hinomaru', the poster embeds an abstract meaning based on two major aesthetic principles, *wabi-sabi*. This pair is the embodiment of the Japanese view of the world by describing its transiency, admiration towards imperfections, simplicity and austerity. The idea of expressing more by using less, eliminating excessive beautification and revealing, not constructing, beauty is the true essence. After the 2nd World War, many European theoreticians were interested in discovering the Japanese culture described by Okakura Kakuzō at the beginning of the twentieth century in terms of rituals and spirituality encompassed by the traditional tea ceremony, *chadō* (Frentiu, 2010: 22).

Following this idea, in 1970 Roland Barthes developed his own structure in understanding the Japanese way: the empty circle. In *Empire of Signs*, the French theorist finds a recurrent element which has the capacity to answer, or at least explain, the perception of the world held by the Japanese (Frentiu, 2010: 23). Also, there is also the theory of the Hollow-Center-Balanced Model, which coordinates and sustains the Japanese way of life (Kawai and Hori, 1986: 76), similar to the view of the "Void", the empty circle. By extrapolating and applying this cultural semiotic theory of the "Void" to the poster



Plate 1: A generic image, 1980, Serge Lutens.

Source: <https://www.shiseidogroup.com/advertising/talk/12.html#p.6>.

created by Serge Lutens in 1980 we can find a reflection of the same idea elaborated by Barthes, but applied at a smaller scale. In this case, the Void (or the "empty circle") is found in the red circle, 'the system of the imaginary [...] spread circularly [...]' (Barthes, 1982: 32).

This poster encompasses the perception of the world held by the Japanese and manages to seduce the European audience through powerful signals, without any embellishments, specific to the West. This new perspective, born from the fusion of Western knowledge represented by the French artist and Eastern wisdom (as per Shiseidō's motto), is a starting point towards changing the way in which the Japanese are perceived in the world. Art and beauty are regarded inseparable in Shiseidō's vision and that is why all advertisements have a scent of poetry in them. This poster (Plate 1) draws attention at first to the red circle located in the central point, but almost simultaneously we are seduced by a fragile female figure resting on the "rising sun." The nationalistic white of the '*Hinomaru*' (Japanese flag) representing international peace and development (Smith, 2018: 99) is replaced with a black tone suggesting a more sensual and dreamy atmosphere. Through the aesthetic of this advertisement, Europeans have contact not only with Japanese beauty ideals (long black hair, smooth skin and feminine allure), but with Japanese art manifested through simplicity, lack of embellishments and artificiality. The symbolism is extraordinary, and it marks the first direct contact for Shiseidō through advertising for European eyes.

The brand logo in the top centre and the *hanatsubaki* trademark opens and ends the vertical invisible line of the poster marking the central piece, the red circle, symbolism of Japan. As Yutaka Goto states '[...] the design was Japanese to French eyes while it was French to Japanese eyes' (Japan Society, 2005). This discrepancy in perception probably arose from the atypical pose of the seductive silhouette, making it too exposed to the eyes of the viewer. It creates a dreamy atmosphere, almost theatrical of a geisha surprised in her final pose. This symbolic image remained iconic for Shiseidō's overseas business.

Serge Luten's artistic work for Shiseidō was concentrated in creating unpredictable content for the European audience and even though in the first decades there was a tendency to omit the brand's Japanese origin or to send rather ambiguous signals in this sense, later works moved towards explicitly connecting the products to Japanese roots. The French artist created a series of posters in the same manner, using the red circle as a recurrent element (see Plate 2).



Plate 2: Eclat Futur par Serge Lutens, 1991, Serge Lutens. Source: <http://ergallais.tumblr.com/post/125335137796/%C3%A9clat-futur-by-serge-lutens-shiseido-1991>

Plate 2, a poster created in 1991 was constructed around a futuristic aura in order to emphasize the brand's high goals and newest technology. Considering that perceptions on beauty ideals differ worldwide, Shiseidō's strategy was to adapt to the local trends, but not to create typical and predictable ads. This poster, also created by Serge Lutens, links Japanese unique heritage and prowess to technology in order to appeal to the European audience. Based on the company's core philosophy, blending Eastern aesthetics with Western science, this poster has a Parisian scent in terms of discourse construction. In contrast to the previous analyzed poster, in Plate 2 the caption comes to support the visual message, whilst in Plate 1 the text played a mere informing

role. The caption "Eclat Futur par Serge Lutens" positioned in the lower left part of the poster along with the name of the brand written diagonally opposite make a very precise reference to the connecting of Shiseidō cosmetics to the newest and future developments, and tries to differentiate it from other brands via Japan's openness towards the new. Through this poster Japanese culture and society is presented as a visionary one while adding subtle nuances of tradition. The overall look of the model links Japan's beauty ideals described by long black hair, whitest white skin tone and red lips associated with geisha. It consolidates how the West stereotypes Japanese women's looks while adding Japan's openness towards innovation.

The “ability of language to refer to particular worlds, to invoke certain areas of ‘reality’ besides carrying a direct message, clearly gives it the capacity for uniting several meanings in one” (Williamson, 1983: 86). Created a decade after the poster represented in Plate 2, the next poster (Plate 3) shows the transition from implicit to explicit symbolism in terms of advertising discourse construction. The idea elaborated by Serge Lutens comes from the need to maximize the results of the Japanese brand on the French market by drawing attention to the origin, which was somewhat in the shadow in previous campaigns, as the artist declared in an interview with Hiroshi Wakui, Shiseidō EMEA. The content, entirely in French, ‘*Ecoutez votre coeur et liberez votre esprit*’ (which can be translated as: Listen to your heart and free your spirit) is in contrast with the visual message which represents a short-haired woman in *seiza*, a traditional formal way of sitting in Japan, which denotes respect towards the other, one of Shiseidō’s basic principles. By appealing to this precise pose an instant connection is made between the advertised product and oriental culture. Moreover, the model’s facial features suggest a typical European beauty, considerably different from the portrait

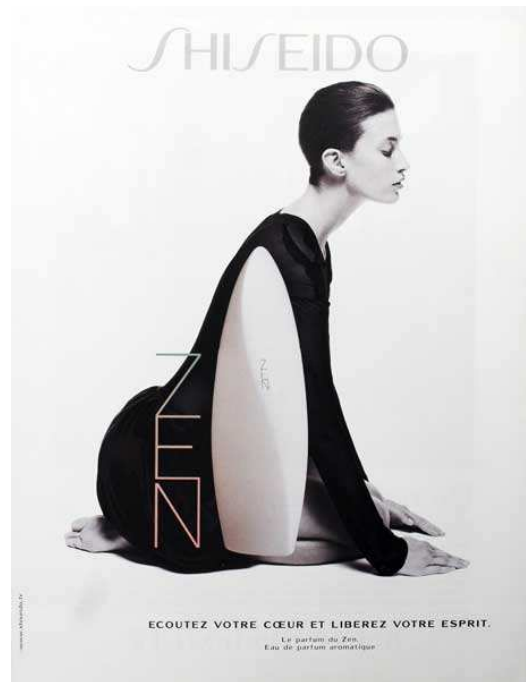


Plate 3: Zen perfume campaign, 2000, Serge Lutens. Source: <http://www.parfumdepub.com/fr/p=333>

in Plate 2. In this case there is a mix between Japanese traditional aesthetics marked by simplicity and solitude (*wabi-sabi*) with French elements. The colour pallet is also meant to suggest simplicity and serenity, thus a Zen way of life by using only black and white tones. Black is often associated with Parisian elegance and simplicity, referring to the classical “little black dress”, but incorporated in Japanese Zen aesthetics. Overall it creates the association with a Zen garden designed to stimulate meditation.

The global meaning of the poster links spirituality, discovering the inner self with the Japanese way, without explicitly stating so. The overall image resembles a Zen garden, a reference to the advertised perfume and its long-lasting tradition on the market. In his latest works for Shiseidō in the 1990s, the French artist and his team (both French and Japanese) emphasize on returning to the roots, where the essence resides with focus on

aesthetics, rather than on the product itself as seen in Plate 2. This mechanism is common for other companies as well, not only for Shiseidō, see for example Dior, Lancome, Revlon and other prestigious beauty brands (Evans and Hall, 1999; Mirzoeff, 1998) because there is a tendency to move from an explicit to a more implicit meaning. Through this poster created in 2001 Japan, via Shiseidō products, is presented to the French as a country highly bonded with its traditions, whilst still embracing what the future has to offer. The product itself, a perfume called “Zen” immediately refers to Asian culture, drawing attention towards the most important Japanese concept, “*Wa*” (harmony). Japan is associated with ‘peacefulness’ via some brand personality factors that are culture specific (Hofstede & Mooji 2010, 92). The slogan of the poster is an adapted version of the Japanese “*Wa*” for the French audience, a piece of advice to embrace your inner self and achieving freedom. Words like “*coeur*” (heart), “*libérez*” (free) and “*esprit*” (spirit) inspire tranquillity and freedom in the heart of the receiver, the main principles of “*Wa*”, but in the Japanese traditional sense words like “group harmony”, “homogeneity” and other expressions of belonging often describe this concept. In my opinion this is a technique through which cultural concepts are easily transposed from one culture to another by appealing to the existing (quasi) equivalents of that concept.

Conclusions

Beauty ideals are social and cultural constructs, and therefore a clear-cut definition of this concept would be impossible. Shiseidō, Japan’s first Western-style pharmaceutical company as adapted to the new values it has encountered and revolutionized the local industry while continuously working towards fitting the outside world’s norms. The posters analyzed above are significant in terms of revealing the process that influenced the way in which Japan was perceived in Europe through the media lens between 1980-2000. As revealed through the analysis of the above posters, Shiseidō’s vision in Europe was overall created by a French artist who followed the company’s value and constructed through beauty advertisements a bridge between Europe and the Land of the Rising Sun. Starting with being viewed with sceptical eyes in the beauty branch because of the fear of the unknown, through advertisements Shiseidō’s image and implicitly Japan’s beauty products overall have gone from being perceived exotic and “alien” to trusted and wanted (Swanson, 2012: n.p.). Thus, through the use of the iconic red circle as a symbolic image of Japan, Serge Lutens “sold”

Japan to the Europeans by betting on its exotic allure and by gradually integrating more cultural elements in the advertisements. Advertising discourse can be one of the most challenging types of discourse due to its capacity to seduce and persuade by means of reshaping the reality, or sometimes by being a mirror of the society.

Through the analysis of these three beauty print advertisements created a decade apart from one another we have described the phases through which Europeans have perceived Japanese culture and society. The chic and aristocratic allure encountered in all these posters both at linguistic and visual levels are proof of “outside intervention” from the French artist who managed through advertising to beautifully “wrap and adapt” the mystical and exoticism of Japan in order to fit European standards. Shiseidō’s strategy in this sense was to appeal to high class and exclusivity and to seduce through quality and respect, without imposing. Therefore, in the first phase we have an abstract vision over Japan symbolized only by the red circle, followed by emphasizing the company’s and implicitly the country’s futuristic views at the beginning of the ‘90s and lastly the 21st century comes with a series of posters through which the European viewer is connected to Japan’s traditional forms of arts and etiquette.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Oana BIRLEA is a PhD student at Babes-Bolyai University, Faculty of Letters, Romania. Her research is focused on the analysis of Japanese advertisements from a cultural and sociosemiotics perspective, mainly on the representations of *kawaii* in print ads. From March 2013 to April 2014, she was a scholarship student at Kobe University, Japan. Since 2016 she works as associate professor at the Faculty of Letters where she teaches Japanese and her goal is to promote Japanese culture and values in Romania. Following this idea, she was offered the opportunity to contribute to the creation of the Japanese Cultural Centre in Cluj-Napoca called "The Sembazuru Centre for Japanese Studies", a centre meant to officially mark 20 years of Japanese studies at Babes-Bolyai University possible only through prof. dr. habil. Rodica Frentiu's remarkable efforts. Her future plans include improving research and teaching methods and coordinating interactive activities for everyone interested in Japanese language, culture and traditions.

Section editorial: Mediatised images of Japan in Europe

Christopher J. HAYES | Cardiff University, UK

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As shortly explained in the general Editorial of this issue, in this second part we host four of the papers that were presented at the *Mutual Images* international workshop at Cardiff University, last year: 'Mediatised Images of Japan in Europe: Through the Media Kaleidoscope'. Below, we include the original workshop schedule, to give you a taste of the diverse range of research that was united under this theme of the 'media kaleidoscope'.

🌀 Panel 1: English-Language Journalism on Japan

- Kenn Nakata Steffensen (University College Dublin), *Bullshit journalism and Japan: English-language news media, Japanese higher education policy, and Frankfurt's theory of 'bullshit'*
- Christopher J. Hayes (Cardiff University), *Mediating Conflicting Discourses of Japan in the Press: An Envable Vision of the Future or an Eccentric, Technofetishist Nation?*

🌀 Keynote speaker 1: Marco Pellitteri, Kobe University, Japan. *When a Minor Imaginary gets Nazionale-Popolare: The Case of Japanese Animation in Italy, a 40-year Long Mainstream Presence that Reframed Japan in the Italian Media and Public Opinion*

🌀 Panel 2: European Images of Japan, Japanese Images of Europe

- Alessandro Tripepi (University of Milan, Italy), *Japan in the Gonzaga Communication Network: The First Japanese Embassy in Italy in 1585*
- Michael Tangeman (Denison University), *Avebury, Arsenic, and Thistle: Matsumoto Seichō's Celtic Travel Diary*

🌀 Panel 3: Japan as Seen Through Popular Culture

- Matteo Fabbretti (Cardiff University), *The interplay of structure and agency in the translation of Manga*

🌀 Panel 4: Images of Meiji Japan

- Andreas Eichleter (Heidelberg University), *The Treaty Port Press: Japan's Image in the Eyes of the Foreign Language Press in East Asia in the 1870s*
- Ene Selart (Tartu University), *The Image of Japanese in the Estonian Soldiers' Letters from the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905)*

🌀 Keynote speaker 2: Rayna Denison, University of East Anglia. *Adapting Europe into Anime: The Exoticisation and Elision of Europe in Hayao Miyazaki's Animated Films*

🌀 Panel 5: Displaying Japan Through Objects

- Sarah Walsh (University of California), *Postmodern Paradise, or Glorified "Trade Show"? The Reception of 1980's Japan Style Exhibition (by video link)*

- Aurore Yamagata-Montoya (MADE'IN Sainte Marie-Lyon), *Innocence and Well-Being: Exporting Japanese Childhood Abroad*
- ✿ Skills workshop:
 - Marco Pellitteri (Kobe University): *Doing social and media research on manga and anime*
 - Christopher Hood (Cardiff University): *Doing research in Japan*
- ✿ Roundtable discussion: *Dealing with the Media Kaleidoscope*

As you can see from the schedule, the broad range of topics covered in the workshop highlights the salience of representation and depiction in studies of Japan. Papers ranged from historical depictions of Japan influenced by war to the reception of Japanese popular culture in Europe, but all had in common these same issues. At the end of the workshop, during the roundtable discussion, participants pondered representations of Japan abroad today, concluding that it continues to be misrepresented, in spite of the closeness that one might presume modern technology like the Internet and services like Twitter bring. This themed issue is thus our contribution to the ongoing endeavour of researchers and scholars to educate and promote understanding of Japan.

Increasingly, Japan is present in a variety of public venues and forms disseminated on multiple distribution platforms: print, television, and online media. Indeed, much of modern life is consumed and mediated through these technological means. As Lundby (2009a, 1) notes, 'the day-to-day activities of individuals, families, networks, organizations, companies, and institutions in high modern settings involve a repertoire of technical media'. Our lives are saturated by it. With all of these different media constantly surrounding us, we have more access to knowledge than ever before, even when the country is geographically distant. Inevitably, with so many different sources of information available, we are provided with polyvalent images of Japan as traditional and modern, familiar and alien. Surrounded by these various images, it is here that we can place and make use of the notion of the 'media kaleidoscope', as explained in the general Editorial.

Those who study Japan have long been aware of the issues of the representation of Japan and the misunderstandings around it. These are not new problems, and have existed since Portuguese missionaries first returned from Asia having encountered the Japanese people. It is difficult to mention representation and depictions of an Asian country without discussing Orientalism, and articles within this issue do, but Japan represents a particular case: a non-Western country that rapidly industrialised and established an empire, a country that was seen as civilised but without being a Western civilisation. Certainly,

European perceptions of Japan, World War 2 withstanding, have been motivated by curiosity, admiration, and, arguably, voyeurism.

Not all papers presented at the two-day workshop were submitted to the journal for publication, and those that were differ from the presentations as originally given as a result of the transition from oral presentation to a peer-reviewed article. In 'Bullshit journalism and Japan: English-language news media, Japanese higher education policy, and Frankfurt's theory of "bullshit"', Kenn Nakata Steffensen appeals to Harry Frankfurt's notion of 'bullshit' in journalism in order to account for high degrees of inaccuracy. Steffensen shows the media propensity to exaggerate and to 'blag', dispelling the myth of the death of Humanities in Japanese universities. The ease with which he does so demonstrates the lack of research that can go into an article, and the danger of when one article becomes the source of countless others. As Robert E. Park might say, the news becomes fact by its very repetition.

In present times, communication is near-instant and we are more connected than ever before, but Andreas Eichleter reminds us that before the advent of the World Wide Web or even any kind of telecommunications, discourse and understandings of other cultures were also mediated. 'The Outside Perspective – The Treaty Port Press, the Meiji Restoration and the Image of a Modern Japan' examines the characterisation of Japan and the Japanese in Japan-based foreign news publications, the eponymous 'treaty port press'. Eichleter's research is fascinating because the treaty port press occupies a very particular position – non-Japanese language newspapers written in Japan for those non-Japanese who were confined to settlements within ports. This is a very different situation to other foreign language publications for expatriates, the kind that still exist around the world today, such as *The Japan Times* in Japan. Eichleter's analysis challenges ideas about images of Japan, which are often universalised and presented as a case of foreigners Orientalising a Japan they know nothing about (or to paraphrase Oscar Wilde, a Japan that does not even exist), by looking at these communities who, while on the periphery, were nonetheless in Japan.

Similarly, Ene Selart approaches the historic representation of Japan, but this time from the perspective of soldiers in 'The image of Japanese in the Estonian soldiers' letters'. Selart's research demonstrates the complexity of media representation: soldiers' letters were reprinted in Estonian newspapers allowing for a real sense of closeness to the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, but at the same time, these letters would have been subject to censorship, not only by the military but also by the press. Selart examines and deconstructs these layers of obfuscation, and shows how Estonian soldiers' depictions of the Japanese

even managed to run against official narrative. Selart's article reminds us that representation is a complex issue, affected by ideologies, discourses and personal experiences. Japan was the enemy of Russia, but elsewhere the war was watched with curiosity as a new power emerged in Asia.

Finally, in 'Utopia or Uprising? Orientalist Discourses of Japanese Robotics in the British Press', I examine press representations of Japan from a British perspective, using the reporting on robots in Japan as an example of contemporary British press coverage of Japan. My purpose was to link the present to the past, showing continuity in the way that Japan has been presented through the Orientalist lens. Surprisingly, despite being modern technologies, robotics has been given a historical 'lineage', lending authority to claims of Japan's technological supremacy. Like Steffensen, I myself was concerned with misreporting and the exaggerations that are rife within foreign news reporting of Japan. In the article, I posit that such depictions adhere to Orientalist preconceptions and understandings of Japan, but I also emphasise that these do not necessarily originate outside of Japan. Indeed, the matter of foreign representation of Japan discussed in this issue is complicated by compounding it with the issue that depictions of Japan are also influenced by official Japanese discourses. As scholars of Japan, it makes us think: how many times have we accepted depictions of Japan's uniqueness because it is the Japan that we are encouraged to see? Even when one has lived in Japan for an extended period of time, settled down into a career and started a family, how much is one allowed to see inside Japan, when one is considered *gaijin*?

Christopher J. HAYES, *Member of the Editorial Board*

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Bullshit journalism and Japan: English-language news media, Japanese higher education policy, and Frankfurt's theory of "Bullshit"

Kenn NAKATA STEFFENSEN | Independent researcher, Ireland

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ABSTRACT

The last sentence in Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale There is no doubt about it reads: 'It got into the papers, it was printed; and there is no doubt about it, one little feather may easily grow into five hens.' In September 2015 a process very similar to the rumour-mill in Andersen's satire swept across the internet. An inaccurate—and on inspection highly implausible—report was picked up and amplified by several British and US news organisations. Thus, an improbable suggestion about the Japanese government's decision to effectively abolish the social sciences and humanities quickly became established as a morally reprehensible truth. Once the 'facts' of the matter were reported by authoritative English-language media organisations, the outrage spread to other languages, and an online petition was launched to make the government 'reconsider' a decision it had not taken. In light of the 'misunderstandings' that had circulated in the foreign press, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology eventually felt compelled to issue a statement, in English, to clarify that it had no intention of closing social science and humanities faculties.

What transpired in these transactions between Times Higher Education, Bloomberg, the Wall Street Journal, Time, the Guardian, and other news outlets is of more than passing anecdotal interest. Consideration of the case offers insights into the dominant role of the English-using media in constituting Japan and Asia as an object of Western knowledge and of the part played in this by what Harry Frankfurt theorised as the sociolinguistic phenomenon of "bullshit". The Times Higher Education article and the ones that followed were all examples of the "bullshit" that arguably increasingly proliferates in both journalistic and academic discourse, especially when "circumstances require someone to talk without knowing what he is talking about" (Frankfurt, 2005: 63). It would appear that the kind of "bullshit journalism" represented by the global media storm in question is more likely to be produced when the West reports about 'the rest'. The paper uses the case of the purported existential threat to the social sciences and humanities in Japan to discuss wider arguments about the role of 'bullshit' in journalistic and academic knowledge production and dissemination about the non-Western world.

KEYWORDS

Journalism; Japan; Truth; Eurocentrism; Anglosphere; Education; Politics; Epistemology; Mediascapes; Global Cultural Flows.

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*The hen who had lost the loose little feather naturally did not recognise her own story, and being a respectable hen, said:
"I despise those fowls; but there are more of that kind.
Such things ought not to be concealed, and I will do my best
to get the story into the papers, so that it becomes known*

*throughout the land; the hens have richly
deserved it, and their family too."*

*It got into the papers, it was printed; and there is
no doubt about it, one little feather may
easily grow into five hens.*

Hans Christian Andersen, *There is no doubt about it* (1852)

Introduction

It may seem frivolous to label the work of well-meaning journalists as “bullshit”, but the phenomenon that Harry Frankfurt applied this designation to poses a very real and serious problem in Western journalistic and academic discourse about Japan and the non-Western world as such. His theory of bullshit (Frankfurt, 2005) is thus helpful when trying to understand the images of Japan produced by the Western news media led by the dominant US and British news organisations. In addition, news reporting on Japan is embedded in the wider discursive formation of what Edward Said called Orientalism, and what Stuart Hall called the discourse of “the West and the rest”, as well as within Western-dominated global “mediascapes” and “ideoscapes” (Said, 1978; Hall, 1996: 188-189; Appadurai, 1990). It must be stressed that the term “bullshit” is employed as an ideal type and hermeneutical device, not used in its everyday pejorative sense to pass moral judgement on the authors and publications discussed. Frankfurt’s theorisation of “bullshit” facilitates a contextually bounded interpretation of facts. As such, it is open to challenge in the face of new facts and through alternative interpretations of already known facts. In Popperian terms, the conjecture that some examples of writing fulfil Frankfurt’s criteria for “bullshit” is open to refutation (Popper, 1992) and may be superseded empirically or logically.

The following will first briefly – and admittedly relatively uncritically – introduce the notion of bullshit as developed by Frankfurt. Secondly, this will be followed by an outline of “the Times Higher Education affair” - a sequence of news reports on higher education policy measures in Japan that unfolded in the Western-language news media in September 2015, so named because of the key role played by an article in *Times Higher Education* (Grove, 2015). Thirdly, it will be argued that on the basis of the available evidence that these textual transactions can be considered “bullshit” in Frankfurt’s sense with far-reaching consequences, which were met by non-bullshitting responses by Japan-based Anglophone academics and journalists (Kingston, 2015a and

2015b, Harding, 2015, Steffensen, 2015), and by an exceptional statement in English by Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT, 2015b). Understanding the dynamics of the particular case requires an understanding of the unequal power relations at work between the Anglophone West and Japan and the pivotal agenda-setting role played by news organisations from the heartlands of the Anglosphere. That is to say that power and status in the global knowledge economy produce what becomes established as the truth about, in this case, higher education policy in Japan. This can only be grasped on the background of the last 200 years of global domination by English-speaking empires, which has had certain intellectually distorting effects not only for consumers of news about the non-Western world but also for academic knowledge and the truths it claims to uncover. The "Anglobalisation" that has taken place since around the end of the Napoleonic wars – and which may now have peaked and begun to decline – is only part of a longer history of the Western constitution of changing Asian others, which can be traced back at least to Books 3 and 7 of Aristotle's *Politics*, and thus to the very inception of comparative political theorising in the European tradition.¹

On the thorny matter of truth and Frankfurt's conceptual distinctions between truth, falsity and bullshit, this is an epistemological can of worms, which is better left unopened for present purposes. It should therefore be kept in mind that the question of what truth is and how to determine that something is true is *truly* complicated. Following Husserl, this question will be "bracketed" (*Einklammerung*/*Epoché*), i.e. judgement will provisionally be suspended in order to carry out the task at hand without ending up in infinite regress (Beyer, 2016; Husserl, 1995 [1913]).² Having set the question aside, we shall pragmatically proceed on the undeniably naïve operating assumption that truth is justified belief in correspondence with facts, and that we can

¹ For a concise overview of the genealogy of the idea of Oriental despotism and its Aristotelian roots, see Minuti 2015.

² This is in what Beyer calls the "local" or "weaker" sense of epoché: "Husserl actually draws upon two different versions of the epoché, which versions he does not separate as clearly as one might have hoped: the "universal epoché" on the one hand, and a weaker "local epoché" (as one could label it) on the other. The former version (as described in *Ideas*) seems to require the phenomenologist to put all his existence assumptions regarding the external world into brackets at once, at any point, whereas the weaker version merely requires him to bracket particular existence assumptions, depending on the respective "transcendental guide (Leitfaden)", i.e., on the issue to be clarified phenomenologically. This is supposed to enable the phenomenologist to make explicit his reasons for the bracketed existence assumptions, or for assumptions based upon them, such as, e.g., the presupposition that a given creature is a subject undergoing such-and-such an experience" (Beyer 2016: 5).

intersubjectively establish the truth or falsity of claims about the world by simple verification – if we check a claim against facts known to us, we can tell whether it is true or false. For now, we shall just assume that we can follow von Ranke in telling things “as they actually were”, take truth and falsity to be relatively uncomplicated matters and focus on how bullshit relates to the two.

The following presents a straightforward account of the arguments proposed by Frankfurt in his 2005 booklet *On Bullshit* in order to show what bullshit is and why it is such a problem. Without going into the critical reception of the theory, this exposition is merely for the purpose of introducing a useful perspective for making sense of what happened when *Times Higher Education* suggested in September 2015 that the Japanese government had decided to effectively abolish university research and education in the social sciences and humanities (Grove, 2015). The article instigated a global moral panic within an unequal and Eurocentric order of discourse where the English language and Anglo-American journalism occupy a privileged agenda-setting and truth-defining position. What transpired in this chain of text production in September 2015 is thus reminiscent of Hans Christian Andersen’s satirical fiction *There is no doubt about it*, where a rumour is amplified through a process of “Chinese whispers” and becomes unrecognisable when it returns to its point of origin.

Bullshit: What it is and why it matters

Frankfurt (2005) starts *On Bullshit* with the following observation,

One of the most salient features of our culture is that there is so much bullshit. Everyone knows this. Each of us contributes his share. But we tend to take the situation for granted. Most people are rather confident of their ability to recognize bullshit and to avoid being taken in by it. So the phenomenon has not aroused much deliberate concern, nor attracted much sustained inquiry.

In consequence, we have no clear understanding of what bullshit is, why there is so much of it, or what functions it serves. And we lack a conscientiously developed appreciation of what it means to us. In other words, we have no theory (Frankfurt 2005, 1).

Although phrased in different terms, the epistemological, ethical and political problems arising from the conflict between sophistic bullshit and philosophical truth is at least as old as Plato’s dialogue *The Apology of Socrates*. Bullshit is a near-universal human behaviour so culturally pervasive and commonplace that it tends to be ignored as an intellectual problem worth considering. It pervades modern culture and arguably does

so more than ever in an age where terms like “fake news”, “post-truth politics” and “alternative facts” are prominent in mainstream public discourse,³ hence the urgent need to theoretically constitute bullshit as an object of serious inquiry, to account for its ubiquity and its social, political, cultural and epistemic effects.

Bullshitting and lying are both forms of deliberate misrepresentation. But bullshit is distinct from lying. Lying is deliberate misrepresentation of a state of affairs and of the liar’s beliefs concerning that state of affairs. A lie is by definition false, but bullshit need not be false. This is where the misrepresentational intent of the two differ (Frankfurt, 2005: 53-54). Unlike lying, bullshit does not necessarily aim to misrepresent factual matters or what the bullshitter believes about those facts. Journalistic and academic bullshitters most often hope that their deception is in accordance with the truth. What bullshit tries to deceive its recipients about is not the truth but what the producer of bullshit is up to. It falsely tries to give the impression that the bullshitter knows the truth and is transmitting it. But whether what they are saying is true or untrue is not the main concern, if a concern at all. The bullshitter “misrepresents what he is up to” (Frankfurt, 2005: 54) and deliberately conceals the fact “that the truth values of his statements are of no central interest to him; what we are not to understand is that his intention is neither to report the truth nor to conceal it” (Frankfurt, 2005: 54-55).

Both bullshitting and lying aim to deceive the recipient into believing that they are true. But their objects of misrepresentation and their objectives are different. Lying is strongly orientated towards its opposite, truth-telling. The liar knows the truth; it is impossible to lie knowledge of the truth. One could be mistaken or deluded and sincerely believe an untruth to be true, but lying is by necessity in response to what the liar takes to be the truth. To tell a lie, one must know the truth and to consciously conceal it by stating something one believes to be untrue (Frankfurt, 2005: 55-56). Bullshit requires no such conviction. The liar is therefore in a certain, negative, sense respectful of the truth, where the bullshitter is not. The bullshitter “does not care whether the things he says describe reality correctly. He just picks them out, or makes them up, to suit his purpose” (Frankfurt, 2005: 56).

³ An earlier version of this paper was presented to staff and PhD students in Asian studies at Universidad Complutense de Madrid in December 2015. Since then, the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States has prompted a notable upsurge in “bullshitology” with reference to the Trump presidency, e.g. Griffin (2017) and Gavalier & Goldberg (2017). For a short 2016 interview with Professor Frankfurt, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_D9Y-1Jcov4.

What marks bullshit out as a form of misrepresentation distinct from lying is thus its orientation towards the truth. The liar deliberately tries to deceive by misrepresenting the way things really are. As such, lying is the polar opposite of truth-telling. Both the liar and the truth-teller are orientated towards what they believe to be the truth, which they either seek to represent correctly or deceitfully. They are on opposite sides “in the same game” (Frankfurt, 2005: 60). The bullshitter is playing a very different game, and this makes bullshit “a greater enemy of truth” than lying (Frankfurt, 2005: 61).

Bullshit is a “third way” that relates to the truth in a fundamentally different manner from lying. What stands at the centre is not the truth but an instrumental interest in getting away with deception. Truth and falsity are irrelevant to the bullshitter, as long as the deception furthers his or her interests.

One reason why bullshit proliferates among journalists is that they are placed in situations where they have to write about matters of which they are insufficiently informed and where few have the courage to take a consistent standpoint of Socratic ignorance.⁴ In such situations, the easiest, face-saving option is often to bullshit one’s way through. While bullshitting is not immoral, it poses a problem for journalism and academic research and is arguably on the rise due to such structural factors as the production demands of the 24-hour news cycle, the casualisation of labour, the informatisation of social and economic relations, and the epistemic dominance of the English-speaking world in particular and the Western world in general.

The “closure” of faculties in Japan: The chronological facts of the matter

The “Times Higher Education affair” played out over the last two weeks of September 2015. After briefly outlining it, we shall consider why it arguably qualifies as a case of “bullshit journalism” and how harmful it can be.

On September 14th, 2015, an article by Jack Grove in *Times Higher Education* made the sensational claim that the Japanese minister of education had “decreed” mass closures of social sciences and humanities faculties (Grove, 2015). This publication is

⁴ Although Plato did not use this word, his account of Socrates’ Apology is at one level the story of a man who was condemned to death for challenging bullshit. Reading the *Apology* through Frankfurt leads to the conclusion that Socrates’ death sentence was in no small part caused by his calling of the bullshit of his fellow citizens – the politicians, the poets, and the craftsmen. In declining degrees of severity, they were all guilty of bullshit and the closely related phenomenon of what Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont called “intellectual imposture” because they misrepresented their state of ignorance and laid false claims to knowledge. Socrates can be seen as exposing bullshit in Frankfurt’s sense or “*impostures intellectuelles*/fashionable nonsense” in Sokal and Bricmont’s sense (Sokal & Bricmont 1998 [1997]).

widely regarded as authoritative on matters of higher education. Its world ranking of universities enjoys great prestige and its news reporting is considered reliable.

It was remarkable that the article appeared more than four months after the events it reported about and that it very quickly had a global snowball effect, where other news organisations, such as Bloomberg, *The Guardian*, *Time*, and the *Smithsonian Magazine* repeated essentially the same story (Jenkins, 2015; Dean, 2015; Smith, 2015; Blakemore, 2015). This resulted in a global outrage and even a petition to reverse the supposed policy. Before discussing this chain of textual production and its impact in some more depth, let us chronologically reconstruct the sequence of events leading to and following on from its publication.

On the 8th of June 2015 the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology sent a circular to the 86 national universities called *A Review of the Organization and Operation of the National University Corporations and Other Higher Educational Institutions* 国立大学法人等の組織及び業務全般の見直しについて (MEXT, 2015a). It asked the universities to “make every effort to draw up an organizational restructuring plan in the light of the decrease of the university-age population, the demand for human resources and the quality control of research and teaching institutions and the function of national universities.” It also requested that the universities should take “active steps to abolish organizations or to convert them to serve areas that better meet society’s needs.” It was mainly targeted at teacher-training, not core research and teaching in the humanities and social sciences.⁵ The main events leading up to the two weeks of global outrage in September and the ministry’s eventual damage-limitation exercise were:

- 8th June MEXT sends a circular to the 86 national universities: *A Review of the Organization and Operation of the National University Corporations and Other Higher Educational Institutions* (MEXT, 2015a)
- 1st July the Federation of Microbiological Societies of Japan responds

⁵ What was particularly problematic from the point of view of the ministry was that many degrees in education had no practical teaching element and that their graduates were therefore not easily employable in the education sector. It was possible to graduate with a degree in education without any teaching experience, and not having the experience made it difficult for graduates to find employment as teachers. Concerned about the teaching quality on these courses, the employment of its graduates, and projected lower demand due to the changing demographic structure, the ministry wanted teacher-training to become more labour market-orientated by introducing a teaching certification as a compulsory element (MEXT 2015).

- 23rd July statement by Science Council of Japan
- 28th July the Japanese Archaeological Association responds
- 25th August UK-based publisher Sage's *Social Science Space* website anonymously publishes "Japan's Education Ministry Says to Axe Social Science and Humanities"
- 11th September. Minister Shimomura says at a press conference: "There is no objective of abolishing the humanities and social sciences." The minister puts misunderstandings in the Japanese press down to the bad writing of junior officials.
- 14th September *Times Higher Education* publishes "Social sciences and humanities faculties in Japan 'to close' after ministerial intervention"
- 16th September Time magazine publishes "Alarm Over Huge Cuts to Humanities and Social Sciences at Japanese Universities"
- 18th September Science Council of Japan states their faith in reassurances by MEXT that there is no risk of closure of departments
- 20th September *Bloomberg* publishes "Japan dumbs down its universities at the wrong time"
- 21st September a business studies lecturer from Liverpool University launches an online petition on www.change.org to "Reconsider the closure of humanities and social sciences faculties".
- 25th September *Financial Times* publishes "Japan engulfed in row over university reforms" by their Tokyo bureau chief
- 26th September *The Guardian* publishes "Japan's humanities chop sends shivers down academic spines"
- 27th September Ministry Academic Steering Committee hold an emergency meeting to "explain the true meaning" of the circular. Science Council of Japan chairman repeats that they were wrongly "worried that the humanities and social sciences would be abolished, but having heard the explanation I am relieved that this is not the case."
- 30th September *Times Higher Education* publishes Steffensen's "Japan and the social sciences"
- 1st October MEXT issues a press release in English saying: "There are some misunderstandings [among the public] concerning the notice issued by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology that: 'MEXT thinks that academic disciplines related to the humanities and social sciences are not needed for national universities.' This is in fact untrue."

The *Times Higher Education* article of 14th September and its impact

The above timeline does not include every relevant item in the chain of textual production set off by MEXT's 8th June circular. There may be other texts or statements made that are pertinent to the case. The key development is the *Times Higher Education* article published on the 14th September, and later revised, which originally claimed that

the minister of education had “decreed” the closure of humanities and social science faculties. The revised version of the article toned down its language and stated that:

Many social sciences and humanities faculties in Japan are to close after universities were ordered to “serve areas that better meet society’s needs”, it has been reported. Of the 60 national universities that offer courses in these disciplines, 26 have confirmed that they will either close or scale back their relevant faculties at the behest of Japan’s government, according to a survey of university presidents by the Yomiuri Shimbun.

It follows a letter from education minister Hakubun Shimomura sent to all of Japan’s 86 national universities, which called on them to take “active steps to abolish [social science and humanities] organisations or to convert them to serve areas that better meet society’s needs”.

Grove’s article – which was based on the Social Science Space blog post – led other news organisations to publish essentially the same story, but each time with some further embellishment. These stories first appeared in English and later in Spanish, German, and other languages.⁶ It is remarkable that none of the journalists were based in Japan, seemed to read Japanese, or contacted sources in Japan to corroborate the claims. One was not even a professional journalist but, as the biographical profile of The Guardian states, “a final year philosophy student at the University of Leeds and aspiring journalist.”

Even if one is reporting on Japan out of London and does not speak Japanese, there are plenty of officials in the Ministry of Education and other relevant organisations who can respond to a query in English. What transpired seems rather divorced from the Japanese reality it claimed to describe and to have relatively autonomous dynamics of its own. It was only when the *Financial Times* and *Japan Times* joined the fray on 25th and 26th September, and when Steffensen’s article was published in *Times Higher Education* on 30th September, that actual knowledge based on Japanese textual sources and interviews entered the non-Japanese news stream (Kingston, 2015a; Harding, 2015; Steffensen, 2015). None of the alarmist authors abroad did what Jeff Kingston did to write his column for the *Japan Times*. As Kingston summarises the procedure: “I contacted several national university professors and experts on higher education in

⁶ Of the major European languages, Spanish seems to be relatively more dependent on the English-language media than e.g. French or German, and perhaps even more so than much smaller languages like Danish and Dutch. At the same time, imperial history has made Spanish the language with the second-largest number of native speakers in the world, and Spanish media enjoy considerable prestige and influence in Latin America. A similar dependency on English-language rather than Japanese sources is also evident in Spanish-language Japanese studies (see Steffensen 2018: 267).

Japan and elicited a range of responses, including some relatively positive assessments” (Kingston, 2015b).⁷

The original article and the ones that followed painted a very alarming, but untrue, picture of what was going on. The reality is that none of the universities concerned have plans to close social science and humanities faculties. The main target of reform is the ten national teacher-training universities, for reasons to do with demographic change, academic standards and perceived societal needs. Social science and humanities faculties are also decreasing their student intake, a few will see lower levels of staffing, but none are threatened with closure. At the more general level the article also misrepresented the relationship between the government and universities. Japanese ministers of education simply do not have unchecked power to shut down entire faculties from one academic year to the next. As in most other countries, education and research policy is more plural, fragmented, and dialogical. Japanese ministers of education are not Oriental despots with unlimited and unchecked power over universities.

When taking the size and structure of the university sector in Japan into account, the situation looks far less ominous. There are 783 universities in the country, and the national universities make up a small elite proportion of this. Japanese universities fall into a small number of publicly owned and funded organisations and a much larger private sector, which accounts for 77.3% of all universities and some 80% of the undergraduate student body. The circular, to which 17 universities supposedly responded that they will “close liberal arts and social science courses”, was only sent to the national universities. If that had been true, only two percent of the universities in Japan would have been affected. As it happens, no closures are foreseen, but even if it had been the case, it would by no means amount to “many faculties”.

The *Times Higher Education* article was based on the blog *Social Science Space*, which is hosted by the publisher Sage. According to *Social Science Space*, the Japanese newspaper *Yomiuri Shimbun* reported that “17 national universities will stop recruiting students to humanities and social science courses – including law and economics”. What the *Yomiuri* actually wrote is that 26 universities “plan to restructure their humanities departments” and that 17 of them “will stop recruiting in

⁷ After MEXT’s statement in English, *Social Science Space*, from where the original inaccurate rumours had spread, also published a more measured and well-informed piece by Jeff Kingston, according to which the reforms to higher education had been inaccurately caricatured “as a barbaric assault on the humanities and academic freedom” (Kingston 2015c).

excess of 1300 new students” to the departments undergoing restructuring (Yomiuri, 2015b). They did not plan to stop recruiting but to impose stricter limits on admissions to certain departments.

The suggestion that entire faculties would be forced to close in the near future on the order of the minister was based on *Social Science Space*’s mistranslation of the *Yomiuri Shimbun* article. The newspaper did not make this assertion, nor does it seem to be mentioned in any Japanese news report or publicly available government or university source. The universities and news media in Japan only mentioned reorganisation and reduced staff and student numbers. In fact, the NHK contacted all national universities and reported on the 19th July that no universities were considering closures. Some departments would be merged or otherwise restructured, and a small number of universities would restrict their intake of undergraduates in certain disciplines. This process has been ongoing for some time as part of the wider National University Reform Plan, so any direct causality between current organisational restructuring and the letter is questionable (See Kingston, 2015c; MEXT, 2016). There is therefore not that much of a dramatic news story – the minister sent an ambiguously worded letter in anticipation of forthcoming negotiations, to which the universities and a number of academic organisations responded with their mostly critical views. As the former Diet member for the now defunct Democratic Party of Japan, Suzuki Kan, told Robin Harding of the *Financial Times*: “The reporting has been totally misleading. This is totally misunderstood” (Harding, 2015).⁸

Decisions such as closing departments or faculties ultimately lie with the university in question, which is why Japanese journalists have been asking them what their plans were, rather than simply reporting which academic units the minister had ordered closed. Many universities were already restructuring and what the eventual outcome will be depends on a process of dialogue and consultation between the ministry, the universities and other interested parties. Some disciplines and departments may be embattled, but the situation is nowhere near as bleak as represented by THE, and the regulatory framework ensures that it could not be so.⁹ Both the national and private universities receive state funding, but Article 7 of the Fundamental Law on Education guarantees university independence and

⁸ Note that as a member of the opposition, Suzuki could have motives to exploit the misunderstandings for party political gain, yet he represented what he took to be the truth of the matter – that the exaggerated news reports were misleading.

⁹ When looking at trends in research funding in recent years, the HSS disciplines have maintained their relative proportion of funds allocated and increased it in some years. This makes the picture of an all-out assault on these disciplines even more untenable.

autonomy, and in 2004 the national universities became educational corporations (*gakkō hōjin* 学校法人) and thus even less exposed to ministerial intervention than in the past when they were part of the ministerial chain of command (MEXT, 2012: 6).

By way of conclusion: Bullshit and the search for truth in an “Anglobalising” world

The main question that arises is why and how such blatantly questionable news gets produced, disseminated and goes relatively unchallenged. The answer is arguably that “bullshit journalism” is facilitated by unequal cultural power relations between the collective West and the Anglosphere in particular, and the rest of the world. As Bismarck supposedly said, the most significant geopolitical fact that would shape the 20th century was “the inherited and permanent fact that North America speaks English” (Ratcliffe, 2012: 225)¹⁰. After the end of the short 20th century, this historical legacy will continue to shape the future, just as Latin continued to serve its functions after the collapse of the Roman Empire.

The sensationalist articles in English and those in other European languages derived from them gave the impression of reporting the truth of a matter. But rather than serving as a vehicle of truth-telling, they appear to have served as means for the authors and the publications to advance themselves, with little apparent regard for whether what was written was true or false. The authors may have believed themselves to be in possession of the truth, but the basis for this belief was very flimsy, and nobody seems to have taken any measures to corroborate their belief. They thus fulfil the criteria of bullshit, as discussed above.

In the Anglophone mediascape, there is apparently less concern with accurate, truthful reporting when reporting on Japan or other non-Western countries, less journalistic rigour, and less scrutiny by readers. An “Orientalist double standard” seems to be at work – lower standards prevail and are tolerated when writing about the non-West. The journalists surely did not consciously seek to misreport facts, but also did not take very elementary steps to corroborate those facts. One suspects more care would have been taken to check facts and gather alternative information if the article had been about an Anglophone or European country. In the whole process, the truth of the matter was incidental to the authors getting away with forming the impression that they were knowledgeable about the matters when they were not. The only exceptions were the three commentators based in Japan, working with Japanese-language sources and with more

¹⁰ It is questionable whether Bismarck said this, since there are no German records to that effect, and the claim was first made in an English-language publication (Beer 1917: 186).

knowledge of the Japanese university sector and political system than stereotypes of Oriental despotism (Kingston, 2015a, 2015b and 2015c; Harding, 2015; Steffensen, 2015).

The story only became a global sensation some four months after the events, which had been reported in the Japanese press during June and July, and some reports (e.g. Blakemore, 2015) were published after it had been debunked and after MEXT's clarificatory press release in English. Although there was some ambiguity and doubt it was clear to the Japanese media, the universities, and academic associations by around mid-July that, despite a clumsy phrasing in the circular, there was nothing approaching an existential threat to university education and research in the social sciences and humanities. By the time the anonymous blog entry on *Social Science Space* went online at the end of August 2015, the affair had mostly blown over in Japan. The Science Council did voice its concerns about the Ministry's intentions but did not make as extreme claims as *Social Science Space*. Once the story was out in English, not much would probably have happened if it had stayed in relative obscurity on the blog. What made the crucial difference was that it was picked up by a publication that enjoys considerable prestige and which, it seems, other news publications follow blindly and unquestioningly. The story gained momentum in the English-speaking journalistic sphere once it had the authority of *Times Higher Education* behind it. And when *Bloomberg*, *Time* and *The Guardian* repeated the claims, it was no surprise that other Western-language media, such as the Spanish press, followed their lead. As in Andersen's fairy tale, "it got into the papers" and grew into a global "truth" that it became increasingly difficult to dislodge the more it was repeated. Here it is notable that it was only after these two weeks of global rumours that the Ministry felt they had a PR crisis on their hands and that the way to address it was to issue a denial in English. Again, it shows clearly that despite its still considerable economic and technological clout and much talk about "Cool Japan" and "soft power", Japan is a relatively weak state when it comes to control of the global mediascapes and ideoscapes (Appadurai, 1990: 9-10). For much of the world, the English-speaking media are immensely powerful when it comes to setting agendas and in effect defining the "truths we live by", whether it is in Spain, Japan, or the postcolonial world. As the case shows, English is a global pivot language, through which everybody else's knowledge is increasingly filtered, and their mutual images constructed. As the case also illustrates, the speed at which this takes place in today's world is breath-taking.

From being ignored for months, a global media storm was whipped up in a couple of days, to which the Japanese state finally had to respond.

As we have also seen, the Anglograph media exist in a world of their own with its own discursive dynamics that seem to be relatively isolated from the empirical reality it supposedly reflects. At the same time that the English language and the cultural values it represents and transmits become more and more dominant and plays a part in integrating the world, another side of the coin is that knowledge of foreign languages and cultures within the Anglosphere is generally decreasing. When comparing the average PhD student or young academic in countries like the UK or US today with those of a generation ago, there may be a select few who have mastered languages like Japanese, Arabic or Chinese as part of their research, but on the whole competence in foreign languages is decreasing. As observed by, among others, Goddard and Jeffreys, language learning is in critical decline in the UK (Goddard, 2018; Jeffreys, 2019). Today, it is by no means uncommon for doctorates in comparative studies involving texts originally written in French, German or Japanese to be based exclusively on English translation. Furthermore, the dominance of English has a knock-on effect especially for smaller language communities like Dutch or Scandinavian. For the last 20 years or more, English has come to be the almost exclusively used non-native language in parts of Europe that were historically more multilingual. This has a narrowing effect on the range of perspectives available to us. When the range of matters journalists and academics deal with becomes global and the range of languages in which they deal with it narrows, they will more often find themselves on shaky ground and have to improvise or pronounce on matters they know too little about. When pressures to publish are added to this, authors are structurally predisposed to take shortcuts. When the intellectual side-effects of the global triumph of English conspire with the legacy of Orientalism and when there is pressure to produce larger quantities of impactful news or academic publications in a shorter time, people resort to bullshit. And as Frankfurt argued, bullshit's indifference to the truth makes it a greater problem than deliberate dishonesty.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ken NAKATA STEFFENSEN is an interdisciplinary scholar working at the intersections of philosophy, political studies, history, and translation studies. He studied politics and anthropology at the University of Copenhagen and the School of Oriental and African Studies. His doctorate in philosophy was awarded by the National University of Ireland. He has held research and teaching positions in Japanese studies, politics, translation studies, and philosophy at universities in the UK, Ireland, and Japan. He is broadly interested in questions of language, culture, history, subjectivity, and interpretation in political thought and practice. His primary research interest is political thought in modern Japan in its transregional and global context. He has published on aspects of Japan's foreign relations and international relations discourse, the political thought of the Kyoto School, Japanese-English philosophical translation, British media representations of East Asia and Southern Africa, and on the international politics of translation with reference to Denmark and the North Atlantic.

The Outside Perspective: The Treaty Port Press, the Meiji Restoration and the image of a modern Japan

Andreas EICHLETER | Heidelberg University, Germany

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ABSTRACT

The Treaty Ports established by the Unequal Treaties in the middle of the nineteenth century were crucial spaces of interaction between Japan and the West. For a long time, they were the only places where foreigners were allowed to reside permanently in Japan. While the interior of the nation might be visited by Western travellers and globetrotters, the primary contacts, commercial as well as social and cultural, took place in the environment of the Treaty Ports, where the vast majority of foreigners resided and visited. Because of this exclusive role, the ports played a critical venue for the creation and formation of images of Japan, as well as their transmission abroad.

This article focuses on the image of Japan generated in these Treaty Ports around the time of the Meiji Restoration. It will look at how the Restoration and subsequent Japanese policies of modernisation were perceived and presented in the foreign language press in the Treaty Ports. This will be undertaken by examining two of the most important Treaty Port newspapers, the North China Herald, published in Shanghai from 1850 to 1951, and the Japan Weekly Mail, published in Yokohama from 1870 to 1917. Both were amongst the most influential newspapers in their respective communities, but also the Treaty Port network in East Asia and even further abroad. Their pages reflect the understanding these communities had of Japan and reveal the development of the image of Japan during and after the Meiji Restoration. This paper argues that a positive image of a Japanese efforts at modern reform was formed and diffused via the Treaty Port Press almost immediately after the Meiji government took power, and therefore much earlier than commonly presumed.

KEYWORDS

Image Creation; Meiji Restoration; Treaty Ports; Foreign Language Press;
North China Herald; Japan Weekly Mail.

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"It cannot be concealed, any longer, that the Land of the Rising Sun is taking rank among the nations of the world." (North China Herald, 4.3.1868)

This quote, taken from an article in the *North China Herald* in March 1868, reveals the impact that the Meiji Restoration had on the perception of Japan in the Treaty Port communities in East Asia. It was heralded as the beginning of a new chapter of Japanese interaction with the rest of the world, the beginning of Japanese modernity. The Restoration, or revolution as it is also frequently called, was a major turning point in the history of Japan. Whether it was a radical break with the past or rather a continuation of developments

already in progress during the Bakumatsu era may be debated, yet it remains a symbol for the emergence of a 'new Japan' (Jansen, 1989: 308, and Osterhammel, 2009: n.p.).

The Restoration was especially important for the changes it brought in Japan's relations with the West, whose framework was created with the signing of the Unequal Treaties in 1858 and embodied in the Treaty Ports established in 1859 and after. The forced opening of Japan and internal turmoil, in part a product of the foreign intrusion, resulted in a reluctance to be a full participant in the international world order dominated by the West. Although changes in this attitude began in the middle of the 1860s, the Restoration of 1868 and proclamations such as the Imperial Charter Oath that was promulgated on 6 April, heralded the beginning of a transformation of Japanese foreign policy and its image in the Western community.

This will be looked at through a qualitative analysis of the so-called Treaty Port Press, the foreign language press published in East Asia at the time. This analysis was mainly done by examining the main articles and editorials that focused on Japan's modernisation and the image they created, with specific focus on Japan's image as a nation and its burgeoning industrialisation. In addition, key phrases such as 'progress' and 'modernity' were sought, as they are intrinsically linked to the subject matter in the newspapers and are key terms in discovering relevant articles. As a time-frame, the years from roughly 1867 to 1875 were chosen in order to provide a wider perspective on the creation of Japan's image and to analyse it, not just during, but beyond the time of the Meiji Restoration. Additionally, this article is strictly limited to the Western perspective on Japan, due to the selected sources. A Chinese understanding of Japan's development within the same time frame, for example, would be an interesting subject as an East Asian 'outside perspective', but goes beyond the scope of this particular article.

The reasons for this article are twofold. Firstly, the image of Japan and its creation in the late nineteenth century were important aspects of its interactions with the West, as foreign perception played a great role in the nation's international standing. Within the Western-dominated world order of the nineteenth century, nations and civilisations were only considered modern or advanced when compared to Western standards of civilisation. Therefore, the image of Japan as perceived by foreigners was an important factor in how far Japan had managed to gain acceptance and respect in the eyes of the West. And while much attention has been given to Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War, the struggle for recognition began much earlier, in the time of the

Meiji Restoration. This article will argue that an image of a 'modern Japan' emerged around the time of the Restoration and thus the seeds for recognising Japan's modernity were sewn much earlier than is often understood. In addition, the focus of research has often been on a national-diplomatic level, yet it is necessary to look at other non-state actors as well, such as the merchants, who made up the core of the Western communities in the Treaty Ports. They as much as Western diplomats helped mediate an image of Japan within East Asia and beyond, a view which may be uncovered through the study of the newspapers published in these communities, and whose views they reflected (Fält, 1990: 25). Furthermore, the inclusion of a newspaper published in Shanghai will allow the transforming image of Japan to be examined not just within Japan, but within a wider regional Treaty Port framework.

Secondly, this article aims to bring the Treaty Port newspapers to the attention of modern scholarship. They have been researched by scholars like James Hoare and Olavi Fält in the 1990s, but changing approaches to Japanese history in the past few decades make it necessary to take a new look at these sources, particularly as they have been neglected by current scholarship. They are, however, invaluable primary sources in the understanding of Japan, written as they were by inhabitants of the Treaty Ports. Therefore, the newspapers had a vested interest in observing and understanding the transformation taking place in Japan, as it directly affected their lives and livelihoods. In this, they allow Japan's modernisation attempts to be seen from different critical and mediated contemporary angles.

The Treaty Port Press as a source

To understand the image that was formed by the Treaty Port Press, it is necessary to understand the background in and biases with which these newspapers were created and distributed, as they had an undeniable impact upon their views and reporting. Generally, the Treaty Port Press refers to the foreign-language newspapers published in the Treaty Ports of East Asia in the nineteenth century. Newspapers in the European style had been brought to Japan from Europe and the United States of America by the Western residents of the Treaty Ports, and there had been no equivalent of this newspaper tradition in Japan at the time (Westney, 1987: 147). In the West, however, newspapers played an important role in society as the first means of mass communication (Westney, 1987: 146), and it was something the new foreign resident

of Japan brought with them to East Asia. As a result, “there was scarcely a port which did not have its *Shipping List* or other similar paper” (Hoare, 1994: 141).

In general, the Treaty Port Press falls into three categories, first the *Shipping Lists*, then the weekly papers and lastly other magazines and periodicals such as the famous satirical *Japan Punch*. The *Shipping Lists* were daily newspapers, on average four to five pages long, most of which were advertisements, as well as the eponymous shipping lists, in which the arrivals and departures of ships at the port in question were listed. A one-page editorial with current news and other information usually completed the paper. The weekly papers, in contrast, were published once a week ranging from about fifteen to twenty pages, only a few pages of which were advertisements, the rest containing editorials, articles, letters from readers and detailed commercial statistics. It is these weekly papers, which are the main interest of this article, as they contain not only lengthy accounts of contemporary events in Japan, but insights into Western understanding and detailed views on them. Finally, the other magazines and periodicals were not regular newspapers. They came in a variety of formats and covered a wide range of topics from satire to academic articles about Asia (Hoare, 1994: 164-66).

In this article, two principal newspapers of the Treaty Ports will be examined, the *Japan Mail* and the *North China Herald*. The former was first published in Yokohama as the *Japan Times*, including a daily, a weekly and an overland version¹ It was founded in 1865 by Charles Rickerby, formerly the manager of the Yokohama branch of the Central Bank of India and, allegedly, a close friend of the British diplomatic corps in Japan (Hoare, 1994: 56-57). In 1870, Rickerby was forced to sell the newspaper due to financial difficulties and it was bought by a British merchant, W.G. Howell, under whom it was renamed to the *Japan Mail* (Fält, 1990: 17-19). Howell would serve as its owner and editor until 1877, after which the paper changed hands several times, but continued to exist until 1917. The *Japan Mail* remained one of the major Treaty Port newspapers throughout its existence and is an invaluable source today, due to the fact that it is still largely extant. Unlike many other papers, whose editions were lost or destroyed, the *Japan Weekly Mail* is fully preserved from 1870 onwards, while the years from 1865 to 1869 are partially available.

¹ Overland versions of the Treaty Port Press were usually intended to be sent abroad, that is, to other Treaty Ports, but sometimes even further, for example to the United States of America. Thus, they represent an interesting factor in the shaping of images abroad, as they were created in the ports but intended for readership abroad.

The second newspaper is the *North China Herald*,² published in Shanghai, the most prominent Chinese Treaty Port, from 1850 to 1951. Although it was published in a Chinese Treaty Port, it is highly relevant for the formation of an image of Japan because the Treaty Ports across East Asia formed a closely interconnected network. They did not only form an economic and social network, moving commodities and people, but an information network as well. It is almost unheard of for any newspaper issue not to report news from the other Treaty Ports, whether in Japan or China. Moreover, the *North China Herald* is particularly noteworthy for this cross-national connection, as from the late 1860s onwards each edition included a section dedicated to the 'Outports', i.e. the other Treaty Ports in East Asia. Yokohama was, for the most part, the most prominent of these 'Outports'. This is especially valuable in regards to this article, as the *Japan Times* issues from 1865 to 1869 are only partially extant today; however, they were often quoted in the Chinese paper, allowing us to fill in some gaps in the news coverage about Japan.

Throughout the existence of the Treaty Ports, the resident press thus provided a continuous exchange of information, images and ideas amongst themselves and beyond. The interest for news from across East Asia was not limited to Shanghai, but was reciprocated by the newspapers in Japan such as the *Japan Mail*, which regularly included not only mentions of Shanghai and the other ports, but extensively copied articles from the newspapers published there. As the *Japan Weekly Mail* declared in its mission statement: "We shall not omit to chronicle regularly the news from Hiogo, Nagasaki, and the other ports, and a fair share of our space will be apportioned to their representation", further promising to represent the interests and views of "the foreign Communities in China and Japan" (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 22.1.1870). Although intended mainly for the foreign communities, the papers were avidly read by Japanese officials, who translated them in order to obtain information and gauge how Japan's image was perceived by the foreigners (Westney, 1987: 152). Their readership and audience were thus not limited just to their own ports. It is this central role as transmitter of

² The *North China Herald*'s name changed several times throughout its publication and also included daily, weekly and overland versions, the weekly version serving as source for this article. For simplicity's sake, it will be merely referred to as *North China Herald* in this article, as this is the name by which it is best known, although it ran under the names of *North China Herald Market Report* from 1867 to 1870 and *North China Herald* and *Supreme Court and Consular Gazette* from 1870 to 1911.

information and shaper of perceptions, as leaders of a media discourse on Japan that makes the Treaty Port Press eminently worth studying.

The *North China Herald* was initially founded and owned by the British auctioneer Henry Shearman and passed through several hands after his death in 1856, until it was bought by Edwin Pickwood in 1860. It later remained with his widow Janet Pickwood after his death in 1866 until it was sold to her son-in-law Henry Morriss in 1881 (*North China Herald*, 5.8.1930). The main influence on its articles, however, were its editors, which from 1865 to 1878 was Richard S. Gundry, a man of journalistic background and also the China correspondent for the *London Times* (King, 1965: 128). Detailed information about editors and contributors is, however, often difficult or impossible to find as the authors within the newspapers are rarely, if ever, given. In general, it was the editor who wrote most articles and managed the final content. One exception is articles quoted directly from other papers, as well as letters from correspondents and readers, although even these are often signed under a pseudonym. The newspapers differentiated their own views from those of others, the *Japan Times* going as far as stating beneath the heading of its Correspondence column, "We are not responsible for the sentiments or opinions of Correspondents" (*Japan Times Overland Mail*, 27.1.1869). One can assume therefore, that other articles, not marked in this fashion, did in fact represent the views of the paper.

This lack of clear authorship is one of the more difficult aspects of the newspapers as a source. Nonetheless, it can be said that the newspapers were representative of their communities, as they set out to "reflect as fully as possible the sentiments, the wishes, and the wants of the foreign Communities" (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 22.1.1870). There were differences in opinions within the community and amongst the various newspapers, yet it is nevertheless true that they represented a sizeable and prominent part of the Treaty Port communities. Nonetheless, the *North China Herald's* motto "Impartial, not neutral" (*North China Herald*, 5.8.1930) might better reflect the agency of the papers and their particular biases. For one, their editors and writers remained citizens of the nations from which they hailed; in the case of the newspapers showcased here, British ones. Inevitably, they viewed the world from the perspective of British citizens. It often proved difficult to separate their perspective from their identity as British citizens and their background had an influence upon their observations, demands and the articles they published. In the case of the British merchants, this is

perhaps best reflected in their continuous demands and unquestioned endorsement of free trade (Osterhammel, 2009: n.p.).

It is no surprise that the Treaty Ports in East Asia were dominated by the British, the British Empire being at the height of its power. The British did not only dominate diplomatically, but demographically and commercially amongst the Western residents, and in regards to the publication of newspapers. The majority of newspapers in the Treaty Ports were British-owned and edited, including the ones analysed for this article. Their articles and editorials reflect their national bias with a special British brand of what Jürgen Osterhammel calls 'Imperial-nationalism' (Osterhammel, 2009: n.p.). It is a fact that the newspapers often did not even attempt to deny, but instead emphasised such bias (*Japan Times*, 5.1.1866). This occasionally resulted in different views when compared to, for example French or US nationals. However, there remained a commonality across national boundaries due to the shared framework in which these different Westerners lived, that of the Treaty Ports, in which all foreigners formed one community, identifying themselves, at least on some level, in contrast to the Japanese. It is further important to note that these views did not include the Chinese, who were the majority of the foreigners then residing in Japan, but who were not considered part of the 'Western' foreign community or represented by its newspapers.

The foreigners in Japan, with very few exceptions, regarded themselves as separate from the nation in which they resided, their spatial framework contained within the Treaty Ports. They lived segregated in the foreign quarters of the ports (Hoare, 1994: 9 and Partner, 2017: n.p.), often with little opportunity to even travel inland, a situation which changed only after the Meiji Restoration. Their physical presence in Japan only played a role for their daily lives in as much as Japanese policies affected them; in other ways, they saw themselves as completely distinct from their host nation (Hoare, 1994: 26). Furthermore, extraterritoriality removed them from Japanese jurisdiction and at the same time allowed an unmatched freedom of press (Munson, 2013: 3), resulting in frank commentary on Japan and the Japanese. Their sojourns in East Asia rarely included closer contact with the local population, except when connected to their commercial enterprises. As such it is not peculiar for the *Japan Weekly Mail* to claim that "the commercial interests of all the Treaty Powers are identical, and [therefore] we trust to make this Journal as acceptable to the American, German, and French, as to the British Residents." (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 22.1.1870). Their principal identification as a single Western community was

promoted by the separation from the Japanese, and enabled them to overcome nationalist divisions amongst themselves, although this was on occasion upset.

Another restriction in regard to who the Treaty Port Press represented is that of its interests and clientele. The newspapers mainly represented the merchants living in the Treaty Ports. "It is as a new market that we seek to open the country, we come as traders and traders only" (*Japan Times Overland Mail*, 28.10.1869). While they might share some commonality with other foreigners in the Treaty Ports, such as sojourning sailors, missionaries, the military garrisons and others, the views espoused by the press were those of commerce. Their main focus was the promotion of trade and the success of their specific communities, more principally the merchants therein (Fält, 1990: 25). Although their desires and the image of Japan they held often aligned with those of other Western observers of Japan at the time, they also differed on numerous accounts. Friction often arose with their own diplomatic representatives, if they felt that the diplomats failed to represent or enforce their interests, which did not necessarily align with those of the diplomats. "*La haute politique*, [...] its hopes or ambitions have little concern for us. They are important only indirectly" (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 9.9.1871.) According to Ernest Satow, this attitude saw the diplomats often treated more as servants of the Treaty Port community than as representatives of their nation with refusal to comply to the wishes of the merchants being followed by mistreatments (Satow, 2006: 13), such as condemnations in letters and articles published in the newspapers.

These obvious biases do not detract from the newspapers as invaluable sources on these communities, but nonetheless have to be kept in mind. The newspapers were shaped by the framework in which they were created and represented the voice of a specific part of the Treaty Port community, the merchants. While the diplomatic accounts, such as those of Sir Ernest Satow or Sir Rutherford Alcock, are famous, the views of the Treaty Port Press and the Treaty Port merchants are less well known but certainly worth studying.

The Bakumatsu Period and the Foreign Perspective

During the first decade of operation, as the Treaty Ports were establishing themselves on the coast of Japan, the newly resident foreigners had to deal with some resistance to their new commercial ventures. They regarded their presence as part of a larger belief that

international exchange, led, of course, by the Western powers, would result in mutual improvement of all involved nations and the world (Osterhammel, 2009: n.p.). Thus, the foreigners and their tools, including the Treaty Port Press, justified their demands of open and free trade with Japan (Fält, 1990: 36). Japan, of course, regarded the matter in a different light and only reluctantly participated in the new foreign relations, which is to not say individual Japanese people did not eagerly engage in the trade and were not more than willing to take advantage of the new opportunities provided by the creation of the Treaty Ports. Simon Partner's recent book *A Merchant's Tale* offers valuable insight into the perspective of a Japanese merchant, who migrated to Yokohama in search of opportunity and profit. On a wider national level, however, there remained much resistance to the foreign intrusion, which the Treaty Port communities resented and heavily condemned later (*Japan Times Overland Mail*, 10.3.1869).

The main suspect, who the foreigners held responsible for their trouble, was the Bakufu with whom they had signed the Unequal Treaties. The first years after the opening of Yokohama had not brought the fulfilment of the merchants' dreams of commercial success, and they blamed the Tokugawa, who were said to have put into place "a system of annoyance, evasion and delay" which had stifled trade (*Japan Times Overland Mail*, 10.3.1869). This, it was argued, was not only to the detriment of the foreigners, but of the Japanese themselves, as growing trade would be a mutually beneficial affair (*Japan Times*, 17.11.1865).

Meanwhile, the Bakufu was caught between foreign and domestic pressure. On the one hand, it faced domestic demands from influential *daimyō* and even the Emperor himself to expel the 'barbarians'. On the other, there remained the necessity of appeasing the foreigners, who harshly condemned any anti-foreign violence and held the Bakufu responsible for any such incidents (Jansen, 2000: 303). These tensions exacerbated the internal situation, while the failures of its foreign policy undermined the legitimacy of the Tokugawa regime, contributing to its downfall (Auslin 2006, 3).

The Treaty Port Press followed domestic affairs closely, and the internal troubles were deemed a result of the weak position of the Bakufu (*Japan Times*, 1.12.1865). They were far from enamoured with the Bakufu, but unlike the diplomatic representatives such as Ernest Satow, they did not necessarily favour a regime change just yet (Fält, 1990: 39). This was especially the case during the last few years of Bakufu rule, as the government undertook several reform programs, such as allowing Japanese citizens to

travel abroad, steps which met the approval of the newspapers, who saw them as beginnings of a positive development towards a more open Japan (*Japan Times*, 30.5.1866). However, the internal pressure eventually proved too strong, and the ensuing crisis culminated in the abdication of the Shōgun and the restoration of Imperial power in late 1867 and early 1868.

Thus, the foreign community and merchants found themselves facing a new and uncertain political situation, which provided some worries (*North China Herald*, 16.1.1868), but also a new opportunity for a better intercourse. Almost immediately after the declaration of the restoration of Imperial power on 3 January 1868, it was understood that this new government was, or at least would become, a better partner for the foreigners than the Bakufu had been (*North China Herald*, 24.1.1868). Thus, rose a new image of a Japan which had shed its past aversions to foreign intercourse and now was readily opening a dialogue with the West.

The Restoration and its appreciation by the press

The abdication of the Shōgun in November 1867 and the Imperial proclamation declaring the restoration of Imperial rule on 3 January 1868 were major stepping stones in the Meiji Restoration. Yet for the foreigners it was the opening of Kōbe-Hyōgo as a Treaty Port on 1 January 1868 which was of immediate importance (*North China Herald*, 16.1. and 24.1.1868). The entire foreign diplomatic corps was present at the newly opened port and nearby Ōsaka, just as the Restoration was happening. As a result, the foreigners were able to follow the political situation from a close distance, the news reaching China within a short time.³ Therefore, the *Herald* could report by the end of January that “the party that is in favour of opening the whole of Japan is now to all appearances in power” (*North China Herald*, 24.1.1868). While they were not particularly happy about the fact that trade in newly opened Kōbe remained limited, if not entirely prohibited by the new government, the transition of power within Japan seemed to continue relatively peacefully and give way to a promising future (*North China Herald*, 31.1.1868).

³ The *North China Herald* regularly featured a list of the latest dates on which news arrived from other ports in East Asia and England, which given the regular steamship service between Yokohama and Shanghai meant that news from Japan generally arrived within five days to a week.

The foreign observations were of course quickly upset by the outbreak of war between the followers of the Shōgun and the Satsuma-Chōshū alliance, yet from January 1868 it was clear to the editors of the Treaty Port Press that a fundamental shift had taken place in Japan. Although they had previously regarded the prospect of commerce in Japan as positive, the political situation had been regarded with much more pessimism (Fält, 1990: 37). This now changed drastically in the new year 1868, with the general tenor being that the new government was a force which would prove advantageous for the foreign residents of Japan. This change of perception happened in spite of several incidents of anti-foreign violence taking place within months of the Restoration. The most immediate cases occurred when troops from Hizen fired upon foreigners while passing near Kōbe on 4 February and the murder of eleven French sailors, the bloodiest incident, in Sakai on the 8th of the same month. For the *Japan Times*, however, these incidents were not regarded as being supported by the new Japanese government, but by individual anti-foreign elements, with the additional justification that the Japanese had in this instance been provoked by the French (*North China Herald*, 18.3.1868 and *Japan Times Overland Mail*, 13.1.1869). The seemingly unexpected rationalisations of French provocation by the *Japan Times* are in fact not too far-fetched as they must be seen with the background of the contemporary Anglo-French rivalry. In the last years of the Bakumatsu period, the French had openly supported the Bakufu, while the British had maintained ties with the opposition to the Tokugawa (Fält, 1990: 52). It is also one of the clearest signs that, while the newspapers often claimed to express a united European view, the nationalistic tendencies of Europeans in the late nineteenth century were present within the Treaty Port Press, and on occasion openly expressed in their writings. At the same time, the *North China Herald* was more critical of the violence, reporting that “the recent massacre, for the word is not too large a one to apply to so sanguinary an outrage, has no pretext that we can reasonably allow”. Yet even the China paper claimed the incidents were a result of “individual hostility” (*North China Herald*, 18.3.1868).

In addition to the justifications the newspapers gave, these instances of anti-foreign incidents were quickly smoothed over by the new Japanese government with the execution of the officers involved. The same happened after the failed attack on Sir Harry Parkes, the British Minister in Japan, while on his way to an audience with the Emperor in Kyōto. Although regarded as unfortunate according to the newspapers, it

resulted in something positive, namely an Imperial declaration against the murder of foreigners (*North China Herald* 24.4.1868). While the uncertain political situation in Japan was seen as an immediate threat to foreign lives, and in this case to their own diplomatic representative in Japan, the British newspapers deemed the Japanese responses an appropriate compensation. Unlike under the Bakufu, which was seen as unable to protect foreigners from violence, the Imperial proclamation was taken at face value and accepted as insurance against future incidents.

This belief and trust in the new government and the Imperial authority was further strengthened by the Emperor's agreement to maintain the existing treaties (*North China Herald*, 4.3.1868), always the main interest of the merchant communities whom the newspaper represented. This led the *North China Herald* to proclaim:

"It cannot be concealed, any longer, that the Land of the Rising Sun is taking rank among the nations of the world. The times are over when she was an outside nation. She has a place to occupy amongst the peoples, and she is girding herself to occupy it. We must no longer think of Japan as being caressed into following the dictates of other more advanced Powers. She will henceforth hold her own amongst the foremost na-tions of the East." (*North China Herald*, 4.3.1868)

This is a remarkable statement, as it represents a complete shift in attitude compared to the negative outlook expressed about the political future under the Bakufu. Now Japan was regarded as being on its way to becoming a modern, though not equal, partner in the international and, of course, Western world order. And this came just a few months after the Restoration had been declared, long before the new structures of the Japanese government were formulated.

Although it is impossible to tell where the newspapers received their information, the reasons for this positive commentary are most likely a genuine belief in the permanence of the changes affecting Japan. The events in Japan from January to April 1868 received almost weekly coverage in the *Herald*. The Treaty Port Press, despite its biases and agencies, honestly reflected the understanding these editors and communities had of the situation, its developments and the transformation happening in Japan at the time (Fält, 1990: 25). As for the language of the above-cited paragraph, it is entirely in line with the other regular articles published within the paper and certainly not exceptional or unique. If seemingly overly dramatic to a reader today, it is nonetheless no different to the wording and expression used by other contemporary

newspapers and editors. So, while given to a certain hyperbole, the sentiment expressed is genuine.

After the first few months however, the initial enthusiasm for the Restoration faded to some extent, even if the sense remained that ongoing events were beneficial for the foreign community (*North China Herald*, 3.7. and 11.7.1868). The continued fighting in Japan was little remarked upon, in contrast to the coverage of the first months of 1868, which had been reported in detail as the conflict had unfolded right next to the foreigners in newly opened Kōbe-Hyōgo. A certain lack of interest set in as the fighting moved away from the Treaty Ports and dragged on. There remained speculation about the result of the struggle and the future role of the Shōgun, who was still held in high regard by the newspapers (*North China Herald*, 3.7. and 11.7.1868). In the end, however, these were Japanese matters, as a *Japan Times* article copied in the *North China Herald* states candidly: “Writing chiefly in a foreign point of view, it is immaterial to us how peace is restored to the country, so that it be restored” (*North China Herald*, 3.7.1868).

It was perhaps also a boon that the foreigners were little affected directly by the fighting of the Boshin War, with few exceptions such as a naval duel between a Tokugawa and a Satsuma ship in the harbour of Yokohama in January 1868, which was regarded as more of a spectacle than a threat (*Japan Times Overland Mail*, 13.1.1869). The Treaty Ports quickly came under Imperial control⁴ and business continued, if not always “as flourishing as could be desired” (*North China Herald*, 3.7.1868). There was a return to more mundane problems affecting the ports and their communities, such as complaints about the inexperienced new customs agents from the southern domains now in power which had replaced the previous Bakufu agents with whom interaction had been tolerable in the last few years (*North China Herald*, 22.8.1868). The end of the year 1868 and the fierce resistance by the Northern domains, especially Aizu, further caused the *Japan Gazette* to doubt the stability of the Satchō alliance and perhaps even expect a revival of the Shogunate. The *Japan Times* on the other hand remained firmly behind the new government (*North China Herald* 5.9. and 19.9.1868).

This proved a short interlude, as the Northern Alliance was defeated in October effectively ending the conflict save for Enomoto Takeaki’s holdouts who withdrew to

⁴ The exception being Niigata, the smallest and least important Treaty Port, which only came under Imperial control in October 1868 (*North China Herald*, 31.10.1868).

Ezo.⁵ There, they took over the Treaty Port Hakodate and began to be referred to as “Tokugawa pirates” in the press. The remnants of the Shōgun’s forces, “the only obstacle to a complete restoration of public confidence”, now became something of an annoyance, as they occupied the Treaty Port and allegedly interrupted trade there (*Japan Times Overland Mail*, 27.1.1869). The condemnation of the remnants even included a demand to the foreign representatives to enforce the treaty clause which prevented the sales of arms to anyone but the legitimate, now Meiji, government (*Japan Times Overland Mail*, 27.1.1869). As Steven Ivings’ study of Hakodate reveals, however, this high-minded rhetoric in the newspaper was undermined by the fact that the sale of arms and provisions to the Tokugawa remnants was by far the most lucrative period of foreign trade in Hakodate’s history, the majority of foreign vessels at that time being British (Ivings, 2017: 127-32). It also shows that while the newspapers generally reflected the attitude of the Treaty Port communities, they did so in an official and respectable manner, which on occasion was at odds with the actual illicit practices of the community.

Aside from these minor issues, around early 1869, the British newspapers remained content with the new government being in power. It was not perfect and there were frequent complaints, especially about the customs. However, in attitude at least, the new government was far superior to the previous one. For, the *Japan Times* exclaimed, “in no case have they delayed to redeem their errors immediately on their being pointed out to them” (*Japan Times Overland Mail*, 24.2.1869). This willingness of accepting Western standards and superiority, and seemingly to listen to complaints and implement remedies, was for the newspapers the real change which had happened in the year 1868. The Bakufu had shown signs of change by the end of its rule, but still bore the stigma of past obstinacy. Therefore, the new Japanese attitude of accepting Western models was primarily deemed a phenomenon of the Meiji Restoration and its actors. “They have seen the futility of attempting to stop the march of progress” (*Japan Times Overland Mail*, 26.6.1869).

Whether in regards to custom enforcement or dealing with anti-foreign violence, the Meiji Restoration proved a turning point. For while it was true that anti-foreign sentiments remained located, allegedly, within the ranks of former court advisors (*Japan Times Overland Mail*, 26.6.1869), the newspapers remained optimistic due to

⁵ The historical name of modern-day Hokkaidō.

their “belief in the thorough good faith of the MIKADO’s [sic] government” (*Japan Times Overland Mail*, 6.11.1869).

It is this faith which is a striking feature of the news reporting of the Treaty Port Press from the Meiji Restoration onwards. Despite the trade interruptions caused by the conflict within Japan, anti-foreign violence or bureaucratic problems, which had in past years resulted in harsh criticism of the Bakufu, the newspapers never wavered from their belief that the Meiji Emperor and his government represented a fundamental change. Whereas attitudes near the end of the Bakumatsu period had been ambiguous, with the last Shōgun, Tokugawa Yoshinobu, having been held in high esteem (*North China Herald*, 11.7.1868), the Meiji Restoration saw all doubts about Japanese obstinacy and resistance vanish. Minor complaints remained, but were justified and accepted as inexperience, minority opinions, or other mitigating circumstances. This attitude was generally shared by both newspapers, but they did not completely agree on matters. Despite the *Herald’s* claims that the *Japan Times’s* opinions on Japanese questions “are always worthy of respect” (*North China Herald*, 15.2.1868), it maintained its own opinion, as seen during the Sakai incident, when they did not excuse the anti-foreign attack on grounds of alleged French provocation.

Perception of Modernity

The generally positive outlook on the transformation of Japan after the Meiji Restoration was not only found in regards to the new government, but also to Japan’s progress as a nation. The ‘Retrospect of 1869’ on Japan in the *North China Herald* began with the words: “It is [a] pleasant turn from a record of stolid immobility to one of active progress” (*North China Herald*, 8.2.1870). ‘Progress’ was the key term within the Treaty Port Press in reference to modernisation and civilisation, with the Restoration being the starting point at which Japan began to embrace this Western concept. These changes, unsurprisingly, drew the attention of the newspapers, which began to report and comment on the Japanese developments, most often in reference to technology such as the railroad, but also to institutional changes such as the structure of government, as well as the general image of the nation. “No one can watch the present of Japan or speculate upon its future without the deepest interest” (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 1.10.1870).

In addition, “the interest in these events is greatly enhanced to us, by the contrast they offer with the lethargy of China” (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 22.2.1872). As already

mentioned, the interconnectedness of the Treaty Ports across East Asia once again, began to show in the reporting, as now direct comparisons were drawn between the developments taking place in Japan and China. After all, one of the main self-justifications of the British presence in the region remained its civilising mission for the betterment of the world (Osterhammel, 2009: n.p.).

For the Treaty Port Press, which regarded itself as one of the transmitters of civilisation, an educator of the “benighted East” (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 9.8.1873), it was impossible to ignore the growing dichotomy between China and Japan without commentary. The two nations were frequently and intentionally contrasted with each other in articles and columns. For the *North China Herald*, China now had an example by which it could orient itself in regards to its own progress, whereas in the *Japan Weekly Mail* the comparison was used to boast of its own successful influence. The idea of the ‘mutual advantage’ of the exchanges offered by the West had always been presented and now, as Japan had accepted these ‘teachings’, it was undoubtedly to the credit of its ‘teachers’, such as the *Japan Weekly Mail*.

In contrast to its neighbour, “the key to the great change now coming over the national mind of Japan is the fact, that it is discarding as rapidly as possible the Chinese mode of thought”, which was responsible for Japan having been stuck in a barren waste “making no progress and arriving no nearer to the land of promise” (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 15.10.1870). It was only the coming of the European civilisation which “has opened their eyes, stimulated their faculties, and not only quickened their motions, but entirely altered their course [towards a brighter, i.e. European, future]” (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 15.10.1870). Japan had acknowledged its backwardness but was now striving for more, while China retained its “sulky stolidity” and refused the opportunities offered by the West (*North China Herald*, 8.2.1870). It was again the willingness to accept Western civilisation as a model and to participate in development and progress as the Treaty Port Press defined them, which set Japan apart, although actual advances remained limited. In other words, “instead of allowing itself to be crushed by the march of progress it [Japan] proposes to keep step with it” (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 2.9.1871). In contrast, China’s refusal to play by Western rules or even acknowledge their validity was condemned. The Chinese have shown “reluctance to advance, though advance is advantage” (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 2.7.1870), an inexcusable affront to Western minds.

This clear picture painted in the press is perhaps a bit surprising, as actual progress in Japan, including industrialisation, remained very much in its earliest stages. An example is the construction of a railway line between Tōkyō and Yokohama, which began in April 1870, headed by British engineers (Cortazzi, 1987: 317-18). It was widely hailed as a step forward in the newspapers, but with some reservations, as they remained unsure if the Japanese could manage and operate such advanced technology and argued that perhaps it should be staffed by Europeans instead (Japan Weekly Mail, 7.5.1870). Another piece of technology which found its way to Japan was the telegraph, which not only improved communication but could serve as tool of enlightenment. Again, the first line was opened between Yokohama and Tōkyō in 1870, and was then in the process of being extended to Ōsaka. Here, while also uncertain of the skills and ability of Japanese to handle this new machinery, the *North China Herald* nonetheless expressed its firm belief that the same minds, which had accepted these innovations could be counted upon to work out any problems. In contrast stood China, where “telegraphs would flash light through the mental darkness amid which the mandarins shine with the false light of superior learning” (*North China Herald*, 21.12.1870). It was mere superstition which caused the Chinese to turn against “both the gifts and their bearers, and stagnation is preserved” (*North China Herald*, 21.12.1870).

It is a notable contrast which arises in the reporting about the two nations and becomes all the more noteworthy as it is one of the beginnings of the dichotomy of a ‘backwards China’ and a ‘progressive Japan’, which remained one of the prevalent images of East Asia in the minds of the West until the late twentieth century, and perhaps even beyond. In the view of the *North China Herald*, a “violent contrast, not illustrative similarity, marks the efforts of the Chinaman and the Japanese to find the more excellent way” (*North China Herald*, 15.2.1871). This perhaps better than any other example illustrates the formation of an image through the press, with its calculated evocation of images of light and darkness, progress and stagnation. It is consistently portrayed within the Treaty Port Press both in China and Japan from 1870 onwards, and although its impact is difficult to trace, it is likely to have been received by its readers and beyond the Treaty Ports. As already mentioned in passing, the then-editor of the *North China Herald* was a correspondent for the London-based *Times*, and although it is beyond the scope of this article to look at the image of China formed in

The Times, it is likely that his correspondence to England reflected the views espoused in his own paper.

That is not to say a monolithic picture of Japanese progress emerged in the newspapers, as there was criticism on the process of Japanese modernization as well. While the “sudden and agile advance of Japan” was applauded, it was also cautioned in as far as “we prefer the natural process of steady growth” and not drastic and unpredictable change (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 1.10.1870). After all, “the plant that springs up, in a night usually has rather a dejected appearance before next sundown” (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 1.10.1870). These admonitions were also part of an attitude of superiority and polemic present in the newspapers, which believed that only they held the right ideas about Japan’s development and plans. Japanese fervour was to be acknowledged, but best tempered with European experience and wisdom. For example, while one of Japan’s primary goals was to strengthen its own military, having seen its lack of development in this field as a major reason for the unwelcome foreign intrusion and the conclusion of the Unequal Treaties, the commercially oriented newspapers saw any efforts in this regard as foolish. They had the luxury of arguing from the standpoint of the strong, and they did, criticizing the Yokosuka arsenal which was under construction from 1866 as “one of the most wanton and pernicious [ideas] ever put into the mind of a nation in such an early step of its progress” (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 8.10.1870). The money and resources ‘wasted’ in this project should rather have been spent on productive commercial programs. This is furthermore one of the few areas, where China was regarded as superior, as labourers in Chinese arsenals proved better workers than the Japanese (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 8.10.1870).

The *Japan Weekly Mail* further warned Japan of “Unsound Progress” and the potential loss of its national identity and traditions, which would be abhorrent. They urged the nation to maintain its national dress, virtues and sentiments and its modes of thoughts (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 30.12.1871), for these were important parts of its national identity and should not be lost. While Japan’s backwardness had been lamented, its exoticness was, and had always been, a source of fascination (Fält, 1990: 14). In the *North China Herald*, it was not the loss of identity but the rapidness of progress which was cause for concern. “The fault with Japan is not that she stops, but that she goes too fast. The Japanese have been so long in darkness, that they naturally err in the flood of light so suddenly let in upon their seclusion” (*North China Herald*, 8.2.1870).

The general criticism grew more pronounced towards the mid-1870s, as the enthusiasm for Japan's first strides faded and it became clear that the industrialisation and modernisation, not to mention the social and political changes would take longer to implement in society and the nation. In 1875, "progress [was] not as satisfactory as might be wished", with the developments of the first years after the Restoration having "inspired some unreasonable hopes" (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 27.3.1875). Yet, despite some disillusionment Japan remained a remarkable nation destined, due to its geostrategic position and talented people, to become a "Britain of the Far East" (*Japan Weekly Mail*, 27.3.1875).

Another criticism was the lack of progress in regards to a more representative form of government, which was considered a major hindrance to Japan's development. "Japan was trying to follow the examples of the Western nations, but she still retains the besetting sin of Eastern despotism" (*North China Herald*, 22.1.1874). Furthermore, Japan was still lacking in the translation and implementation of laws equal to the West. For all its progress, Japan was still far from attaining a system of laws that would ensure equitable justice for all, and it was therefore impossible to even consider the abolition of the extraterritorial clause of the Unequal Treaties (*North China Herald*, 5.2.1874). This was perhaps one of the most significant criticisms as it directly affected the newspapers themselves. They lived and operated under extraterritoriality and thus were its fiercest defenders. It remained the most problematic clause of the Unequal Treaties and one that Japan repeatedly sought to revise from the Meiji Restoration onwards, albeit without success until the abolition of the treaties in 1899. Revision attempts were usually met with no sympathy from the Treaty Port Press, revealing once again that the positive attitude towards Japan lasted as long as none of the primary interests of the newspapers and their communities were targeted.

Despite reservations and concerns, the image that emerged of Japan in the Treaty Port Press was clearly a new one, one that was different from the previous decade of interaction with the Japanese. It was one of progress and advancement, of a nation that had accepted the superior position of the European civilisation and mightily strove to emulate the West. There might have been some squabbles about how this process went about exactly, but in the end, it took place with a vigour and strength that surprised and pleased the observers in the newspapers. Even when progress began to slow by the mid-1870s, it was not necessarily a great disadvantage, and the general image of Japan remained excellent. An

image stood in marked contrast with that of China: “We had nothing to hope for from Japan twenty years ago and now we have everything that we can possibly wish. We had everything to hope for from China twenty years ago, and now we have nothing that her Rulers can possibly keep us out of” (*North China Herald*, 16.7.1870).

General conclusion

The Meiji Restoration was a watershed in the formation of an image of Japan within the Treaty Ports, as it was then, and the years in its immediate aftermath, that we see the image of a modern Japan emerging. Whereas the image had been ambiguous during the last years of the Bakufu, the Restoration was unequivocally viewed with great favour. Within the first weeks and months of 1868, it was accepted by the Treaty Port Press in Japan that a ‘new Japan’ had emerged, which espoused policies and ideas different from its predecessor and was remarkably open towards Western civilisation and its benefits. Even a wave of anti-foreign violence did not deter this basic advocacy of the Restoration, the *North China Herald* being markedly more critical, while the *Japan Times* *Overland Mail*, in a display of European rivalry and nationalism blamed the French victims for the attacks. Later, problems with inexperienced officials were also downplayed, as for the newspapers the new attitude of accommodating the foreigners remained paramount.

By 1870 the newspapers had become firm supporters of the ‘new Japan’, leading to the formation of a new image of a ‘progressive Japan’ which was perpetuated by the Treaty Port Press. Although actual progress from the import of foreign technology to a representative government was slow, the perception of modernisation appeared almost immediately. Thereon this image was spread and perpetuated by the newspapers. Their reports were not blind to this dichotomy of intention and outcome with regards to modernisation, but again it was the attitude and the desire to modernise that won over the editors. Despite this, they remained critical judges of Japan’s development, unhesitant in pointing out their own beliefs and concepts as to how Japanese progress should look and take place. This became more marked as the initial enthusiasm of the early 1870s faded, but never turned into disappointment. Thus, this article shows that an image of Japan as a modern, or at least modernising, nation was created much earlier than generally presumed. Although it would take several more decades until Japan was truly recognised as an equal by the West, the foundations were laid during and

immediately after the Meiji Restoration. In part, this might be ascribed to the nature of the analysed sources, i.e. newspapers, which tended towards hyperbole and eye-catching articles, leading to the possible interpretation that these articles were merely meant to boost sales. This is however unlikely, as the frequency and consistency with which this subject is discussed in the newspapers reveal that the reports carried the press's deep-seated belief that Japan was modernising.

It also stands in stark contrast to its neighbour, China, which was most frequently featured, in both papers, revealing not only the interconnectedness of the Treaty Ports, but the exchange of information and ideas that took place. China was remarked upon quite differently and a sharp contrast to Japan emerged in the image created by the *North China Herald* and *Japan Weekly Mail*. The colourful metaphors and language of the time, progress and stagnation, light and darkness, advances and immobility, helped evoke these images and certainly contributed to a specific image of Japan, and China, emerging from their pages.

Throughout, the newspapers remained agents of their creators and their communities, biased by the prevalent prejudices of the time, but they nonetheless portrayed an image of modern Japan as it emerged during and after the Meiji Restoration. The writers and editors of the papers were keen observers and their articles, for the most part, honestly and candidly reflected their understanding of the unfolding events and enabled them to create their own perception of Japan and its historic changes. Future research may continue in chronological order, analysing Japan's image while the nation was struggling with a revision of the Unequal Treaties and the inequality ascribed to them in the 1880s and 1890s. Alternatively, other Treaty Port newspapers, perhaps from French or German editors, may be analysed in order to compare the various Western perspectives.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andreas EICHLETER obtained his Magister der Philosophie in the field of history at the University of Vienna (Austria) in 2013. In 2014, he became a PhD Candidate in the field of history at the University of Heidelberg (Germany). Since 2015, he is concomitantly enrolled as a PhD candidate of the joint degree doctoral program (CNDC) between Heidelberg University and Tohoku University (Japan). Additionally, he is an associate member of the Cluster of Excellence Asia and Europe in a Global Context at Heidelberg. His main field of study is the relation between the West and East Asia in the 19th century.

The perception of the Japanese in the Estonian soldiers' letters from the Russo-Japanese war (1904-1905)

Ene SELART | Tartu University, Estonia

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ABSTRACT

The Russo-Japanese war (1905-1904) had a great impact on Estonian society as it instigated the discontent in the society that in the end lead to the turbulent events of the Russian revolution in 1905 and pursue of political independence that was achieved in 1918. It also changed the content of the Estonian printed media as these two years escalated a Japanese boom that was never seen before or after: almost in every single newspaper issue there were articles written about Japan (war news, foreign news, opinion stories, fiction, travelogues, etc). As a new genre, newspapers started to publish the letters of the soldiers who were sent to the battlefield in the Far East. On the whole approximately 10,000 Estonian men were mobilized that was a considerable proportion of the nation of 1 million and the Estonians back at home were eager to know every piece of information how their men are doing in the distant warfare. Consequently, the war created a genre in newspapers that was providing war news without the mediation of foreign languages or journalists.

In the context of the research of the Estonian printed media history, the soldiers' letters have not been researched as a type of journalistic genre in the newspapers. The aim of the current paper is to study how the Estonian soldiers constructed in their letters the Japanese as an enemy and which topics and comparisons they used while writing about the war. The thematic analysis was used as a research method to study the letters published in three main Estonian newspapers from spring 1904 up to spring 1905. Main topics in the letters have been divided into directly war-related issues or descriptions of the surrounding environment. In both categories the positive or negative perceptions of Japanese have been analysed.

KEYWORDS

Russo-Japanese war (1904-1905); Newspapers; Soldiers' Letters;
Perception of Japan as a War Enemy; Estonian Media History; Thematic Analysis.

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Introduction

The Russo-Japanese war (1904-1905) was the first major military conflict between Eastern and Western countries where the latter was defeated. The Russian empire was won by the overwhelming Japanese military success and tactics. At the time of the war, Estonia belonged to the czarist Russia and Estonian men were conscripted to the imperial army. At the beginning of the war there were already about thousand Estonians serving in the army and navy forces in the Far East. In addition, about 7,400 men of reserve forces were mobilized to the 37th Infantry Division of the Russian First Army and by the end of

1904 there were 3,200 young soldiers conscripted (Andresen *et al.*, 2010: 353). Although Estonians made up only marginal 0.8% of the total forces, for the nation of 1 million the conscription of men in such scale was a considerable part of the population. In total the Estonian casualties of the war were about 600 men killed, 1,100 wounded and 300 taken to prison (Andresen *et al.*, 2010: 353).¹

At the time of the Russo-Japanese war the present-day territory of the Republic of Estonia was still divided between the Estonian province and Livonian province of the czarist Russia. The first newspapers published on this land were written in German (*Ordinari Freytags (Donnerstags) Zeitung* (1675–1679)) and it took over one hundred years until the first Estonian language journal made a short-lived appearance (*Lühhiike Öppetus* (1766-1767)). From the beginning of the 19th century, the newspapers were published in German, Russian and Estonian languages at the same time but they were meant for different audiences: German language newspapers for the Baltic-German upper class, and Estonian language newspapers for the peasants of Estonian nationality. The first newspaper for the Estonians in the beginning of the 19th century – *Tarto maa rahva Näddali-Leht* (1806) – was remarkable in its time as this was the first newspaper in the world that was meant for the serfs and written in their own language, i.e. in Estonian. The first continually appearing weekly newspaper in Estonian started half a century later (*Perno Postimees* (1857-1885)).

The turn of the century and the beginning of the 20th century was a pivotal time for the Estonian printed media: in the course of the Russian revolution of 1905 many newspapers ceased to exist, yet the new ones emerged: in 1905 there were 48 different Estonian newspapers but by the end of the 1906 there were already 100 on the market.

When the war between Russia and Japan broke out, it caused an all-national surge of interest in Japan as everybody wanted to know more about the distant land where their men were sent to battle. As was characteristic of the beginning of the 20th century, the main mediators of information were larger Estonian newspapers (*Olevik*, *Postimees* and *Teataja*) and they covered extensively all kind of aspects about Japan. In almost every single newspaper issue the war news, foreign policy reviews and other articles about Japan (fiction, opinion stories, travelogues, etc.) were published. The soldiers' letters from the battlefield turned out to be one of the most popular newspaper topics among the readers, so editors

¹ The more specific overview of Estonians serving in the Russian forces is given by prof Tõnu Tannberg (2015, 62-69) in his article about the Estonians in the Russo-Japanese war.

started to make announcements for acquiring the letters from the relatives to publish them in order to share their content with wider audience (Teataja, 1904, no 55). Before the war there were customarily only travel letters published in the newspapers, so the letters from the war were a new journalistic genre and way of communication with the reader. The letters provided direct information without mediation of journalists or translations from foreign languages. This study focuses on the analysis of the content of soldiers' letters from the Russo-Japanese war, more specifically how the Japanese was depicted as a war enemy.

The course of the war was very important for the development of the Estonian society. The discontent and resentment towards the governing czarist regime and old-fashioned legal system brought along the Russian revolution of 1905 that became a landmark in Estonia which started the quest for country's autonomy and political independence from czarist empire that could not function anymore (due to the war and uprisings) (Andresen *et al.*, 2010). The defeats on the battleground initiated in towns strong dissatisfaction and general strikes in the factories, while in the countryside tens of manors were burnt down by the rebelling peasants. Perhaps Japan also set a positive example for Estonia in its striving for modernity and search for an independence as the newspapers covered the positive reforms that had changed the Japanese society in order to be equal among the other states. Consequently, Japan (although a war enemy) was respected in Estonian media as a courageous country that bravely battled against the much more powerful enemy: the weakness, corruption and bureaucracy of the Russian empire that was exposed during the war made the Estonians rather to side with Japan (Rosenberg, 2006: 31). Studying the soldiers' letters also reveals how the Estonian soldiers felt about being the subjects of the imperial Russia.

Several scholars have researched the representation of the war enemy in media (Dower, 1986; Rieber, 1991) but it has been mostly analysed in the context of World War II. In addition, little attention has been paid to the "social memory" of the war (Wells and Wilson, 1999: 61) that could be researched by the studying of soldiers' letters.

The aim of the current paper is to research how the enemy was constructed in Estonian media during the Russo-Japanese war by the example of soldiers' letters that were published in the main Estonian newspapers.

Research questions:

- 1) Which topics and comparisons are used while writing about Japanese as an enemy?
- 2) How the Estonian soldiers constructed Japanese as an "enemy"?

Literature review

The Russo-Japanese war (1904-1905) from the Estonian perspective has not been much researched by the historians in Estonia. There are some general works about the war that were compiled directly after the fighting ceased (e.g. Prants, 1904-1911) which are based on the information published earlier in the newspapers. An interesting study is authored by a folklorist A. Lintrop (2006) who analyses the events depicted in the Russo-Japanese war song and uses the soldiers' letters as a source of evidence in order to prove whether the actions described in the popular war song are really true. Also an overview has been written about the sea-battles that took place in the beginning of 20th century up to First World War (Õun, 1995), but in the history writing more attention has been paid to the other events of the Russian revolution of 1905 that happened in Estonia than to the war itself and apart from an one article by prof A.-T. Tannberg (2015) there is hardly any research work done about the war. The most outstanding overview of the historiography of the beginning of 20th century Estonia does not mention any academic work about the Russo-Japanese war (Andresen *et al.*, 2010: 342-347). The reason why the Russo-Japanese war has been left into obscurity lies in the importance of the wars that narrowly succeeded it: First World War (1914-1918) and Estonian Independence War (1918-1920), which, with their scale and influence, shadowed the distant imperial war in the Far East.

Even today the most considerable source of the Russo-Japanese war is the contemporary media, i.e. Estonian newspapers. Though several sources have suggested that Estonian media was very pro-Japanese and that Japanese military leaders were better known among readers than Russian generals (Rosenberg, 2006: 31), the profound research or proof about these assumptions are is still missing.

Out of various media content about Japan (war news, foreign news, editorials, travel stories etc.) probably the soldiers' letters offer the best first-hand overview about how the Estonians saw the Japanese as a war enemy.

Soldiers' letters have been used as a source of historical research for a long time. Some researchers have paid attention to the subject of otherness or racial issues in the wartime correspondence (e.g. Omissi, 1999; Koller, 2011). In Estonia, the general analysis of the soldiers' letters as a source of history writing by the example of letters written from the First World War have been studied by A. Rahi and P. Jõgisuu (1998). The authors stress that analysing the letters provides the objectivity and variety of the written memory of a nation (Rahi and Jõgisuu, 1998: 29). Letters of the soldiers from the First World War have

also been studied by L. Esse (2016) who has focused on the topic of war experience of the soldiers as well as the meaning of this experience in long timespan, i.e. how the war experience was perceived and re-implemented afterwards in their lives. The soldiers' letters from the Independence War have been used as a source by A. Lõhmus (2014) who in his study uses them as a material to depict the ordinary soldiers' way of thinking and perception of the war experience.

Soldiers' letters may also give an idea how the idea of nationalism developed in the course of the war as the Estonians started to construct themselves more and more *other*. The development of Estonian nationality during the Russian Revolution of 1905 has been studied by several historians (Raun, 2003; Petersoo, 2007; Karjahärm, 2012; etc.).

Researching the soldiers' letters from the Russo-Japanese war is also a part of the history of Estonian journalism, e.g. how the censorship was enacted before and after the October Manifesto that granted civil rights and press freedom for a short period (Peegel *et al.*, 1994; Lauk, 2000). The history of the war censorship during the Russo-Japanese war and the effect of it to Estonian media has not been researched. The original sources are in the archives of Russia, some articles cover the general situation of the rules of war correspondence censorship in Russian empire (Airapetov, 2004).

Airapetov offers the exact checklist of the special rules that were applied to the war correspondence in the Russian empire and what were the topics that should have been omitted from the letters sent from the war (2004: 343). Firstly, everything that was connected with actual warfare (battle tactics, weapons, movement of the troops, etc.) was to be excluded and in addition, interpretations of the conditions at the battleground that might have had negative impression on the public sentiment (like soldiers experiencing difficulties or their suffering, criticism of military leadership). Although the same censorship rules applied to the media all over czarist Russia, the circumstances in major Russian newspapers and peripheral Estonian newspapers cannot be compared (i.e. no Estonian newspaper was granted with a permit to send a war correspondent to the Far East). In spite of the fact that the mentality of the Russian newspapers at the time of the war have been studied by several scholars (Bartlett, 2008; Mikhailova, 2011, etc.), it is difficult to draw the accurate comparison between the media in Russia and the provinces of Estonia and Livonia. It can be presumed that the state censorship did not keep a stern eye on the content of Estonian newspapers and if it did, it focused on official announcements and war

news, while much less attention was paid on the Estonian soldiers' letters sent from the battlefield that had to have been already censored.

Socio-cultural context

By the time of the Russo-Japanese war the level of literacy among Estonians was considerably high - according to the census of 1897 about 97% could read and 78% could write (Zetterberg, 2010: 312) - and the Estonians who served in Russian army and navy could pursue for higher military education and also became officers. In 1870-1914 there were at least 300 officers of Estonian nationality in the Russian army (Kröönström, 2000). High level of literacy provided also the possibility that most of the soldiers had correspondence with their families in the homeland and many started to regularly send letters to the newspaper editors like Anton Suurkask (1873-1965) and Gustav Frisch (1870-?) to *Postimees* or P. Vares to *Olevik*, etc.

The majority of the Estonians were Protestant (Lutherans) and according to the census of 1897 their percentage from the whole population was 84.2% while the percentage of Russian Orthodox was 14.3% (Andresen *et al.*, 2010: 324). In the Russian army majority of the soldiers were Russian Orthodox and Lutherans remained on a low position.

Estonians had been conscripted to Russian army also in the previous wars of the czarist empire (e.g. Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, Crimean War 1853-1856, Napoleonic Wars 1803-1815 etc.) but the Russo-Japanese war was the first one that was extensively covered in Estonian printed media (war news and letters written by the Estonians from war). The Russo-Japanese war became the first war that started the practice of publishing the letters from the battlefield in Estonian newspapers. The biggest amount of the letters was written by soldiers, but also officers, nurses and doctors wrote letters to the newspapers. Some letters were also translated from Russian (e.g. *Olevik*, 1904, no 42) or from German (e.g. *Olevik*, 1904, no 28) that were written by the Baltic-Germans. Their perspective to the war and information sphere differed from the Estonians because they had access to wider spectrum of sources in Russian or German languages. For example, a Baltic German surgeon prof Zoege von Manteuffel (1857-1926) uses derogative terms for Japanese that were never used by Estonian soldiers: "And how precisely they can shoot, those little, yellow devils" (*Olevik*, 1904, no 28). While the letters written by Russians or Baltic-Germans were translated by the Estonian editors from the other newspapers, the readers of the Estonian newspapers were asked to give their private letters for publishing. Further on the soldiers

started to send their letters directly to the editors of the newspapers by themselves (in 1904 there are still few letters, the bulk of the letters is published in 1905: out of the sample 12 letters are published in 1904 and 41 in 1905).

Estonian soldiers differed from the majority of Russian soldiers by their language (Estonian), religion (Lutheran) and cultural background. The same applied to Latvians, Finns and some other national minorities who were conscripted to the Russian troops. It might be due to these aspects that they felt secluded from the other Russian imperial troops that were mainly Russian Orthodox and spoke Russian which caused them additionally to be in the separate cultural and information sphere. In some letters Estonian soldiers complain that they were deprived of Lutheran sermons (*Olevik*, 1905, no 25): they were told that due to the troops' movement there was not enough time for holding their church service. Lutheran church services were not a mere clerical procedure, it offered possibility to gain different kinds of presents (clothes, books, newspapers and even tobacco) (*Olevik*, 1905, no 25), even though some of the gifts were rather small like an envelope or a needle or some writing paper (*Olevik*, 1905, no 39), all those items were sent as donations by the congregations back in Estonia. Church service was also a place for communication and exchanging news. Even ten years later, during the First World War, Estonian soldiers complain in their letters about alien religious customs (fasting during the Easter) that they had to bear and the military drills that were purposefully held at the time of Lutheran church feasts (Kalkun, 2008: 573-574).

Data and method

The mediators of information about the Russo-Japanese war were the main Estonian newspapers *Olevik*, *Postimees* and *Teataja*. The newspapers *Olevik* (started to appear in 1881) and *Postimees* (started in 1886 and since 1891 was the first Estonian daily) were published in the second biggest town of Estonia – Tartu. The daily *Teataja* started to appear in 1901 in Tallinn. The biggest rivals were *Postimees* and *Teataja*, which competed in the freshness of the news and had their own circles of supporters, while *Postimees* was orientated on the national issues (Peegel *et al.*, 1994: 214), the newspaper *Teataja* was promoting the economy topics (Aru, 2002: 36). The newspaper *Olevik* appeared in Tartu and at the time of the war had a female editor, M. Koppel. The newspaper fought for the rights of women and supported teetotalism (Peegel *et al.* 1994, 180). All of the three newspapers were widely distributed and their circulation even grew during the war: *Postimees* increased

from 7,000 copies per day (1902) up to 10,000 (1904), *Teataja* increased from 5,500 copies (1902) to 8,700 (1904) (Lauk, 2000: 13). The war and revolution years of 1904-1905 had a great impact on the development of printed media industry as in 1897 there was one periodical per 43,935 Estonians (in comparison with Germany where the ratio was 8,000), but already by 1907 there was one periodical per 7,845 Estonians (Lauk, 1996: 14).

The current paper focuses on the analysis of the content of soldiers' letters from the Russo-Japanese war (n=53). In the sample of the current research there are 37 soldiers' letters published in *Postimees*, 10 in *Olevik* and 6 in *Teataja*. The other Estonian newspapers published also soldiers' letters (e.g. *Eesti Postimees*, *Eesti Postimehe õhtused kõned*, *Linda*, *Sakala*, *Uudised*, *Uus Aeg*, *Valgus* etc.) but these newspapers are not included in the sample analysed in this paper. In Estonia there were also Russian and German language newspapers but they remain out of the sample as foreign language newspapers. Estonia did not have its own war correspondents as the major European nations or bigger Russian newspapers had, so the direct interpersonal information about war came only via letters sent from the battle ground.

The letters from the war-field were written by soldiers, officers, nurses and doctors but only the letters of the soldiers are included to the analysis. As a matter of fact, the letters written by officers are more laconic and contain less information, although it could be expected as they were written by the educated men, thus they would be more informative and detailed. Perhaps the reason is that the officers were more cautious and applied more self-censorship to their writings than the ordinary soldiers.

Almost half of the authors of the letters are anonymous, the author is only referred as "W" or "P" (*Olevik*, 1904, no 22), the other half of the authors appear by first and family name as "Johan Orikas" (*Olevik*, 1904, no 50) or as "Soldier Kusta Rander" (*Postimees*, 1905, no 86). The anonymity is sometimes given to the authors because of the request of the relatives in order not to reveal openly who has written the letter. However, there are some soldiers, for example Gustav Frisch, who wrote several letters (*Postimees*, 1904-1905) and it seems that with great enthusiasm to cover the events and sentiments at the battlefield. On the other hand, there are soldiers who are worried that if they write too much, they are wasting the space of the newspaper (*Olevik*, 1905, no 23). Even if the author of the letter is unknown, it is still identifiable from the content of the letter whether it has been written by a soldier or an officer.

The letters reached the newspaper editorials either directly sent by the soldiers or by the soldiers' relatives or pastors who gave the letters for publishing. Sometimes the way of the receipt of the letter is defined in the beginning of the printed letter and sometimes it is left unknown. Usually the time difference between the writing of the letter and the publishing of letter is four or five months but always approximately at least a month.

Theoretically the letters were subjugated to double censorship: military and media, but in reality they might have escaped the notice of the censors because of their quantity and secondary importance from the viewpoint of war-related materials published in newspapers (top priority was given to war news). At least this can be an explanation why the content of the letters does not always correspond to the conventional censored topics and descriptions of war enemy (i.e. the enemy is described positively, different problems of food, health, command, tactics are covered, even up to the discontent that Japanese soldiers have better arms and clothes).

There are no archival sources to estimate the censorship in the soldiers' letters or how it affected the content of the letters but there are rules of military censorship (Airapetov, 2004) by which the enactment of censorship can be evaluated. Several sources have suggested that the state censorship on Estonian media was rather lenient (Tannberg, 2015: 64). The newspapers were not allowed to write about the positions of the troops or movements of the forces, nor were they allowed to criticize the leadership or show the war in negative perspective which could affect the fighting spirit or public support. In some soldiers' letters the omitted parts of the text were marked with lines but this can be also due to the limited space or personal issues of the authors that were also discarded (at that time it was not customary to reveal publicly family matters). The soldiers mention in their letters that their correspondence is opened and read by officials (*Postimees*, 1905, no 39) and they also sometimes mention using self-censorship ('I saw a lot that I would not reveal here' (*Olevik*, 1905, no 23)). Under these circumstances it is only possible to assess the enactment of censorship rules by the content of the letters.

The thematic analysis has been used for studying the content of the letters that cover the chronology (spring 1904 up to spring 1905) of the aftermath of the decisive battles where Estonian soldiers were involved (e.g. Port Arthur, Yalu, Mukden, Tsushima). The first major battle where Estonians participated was the battle of Yalu from 1-5 May that resulted in a large scale defeat of the Russian troops. In all, about 7,000 reservists and 3,000 freshly recruited men were sent to frontline where they participated the bloody

battles of Sahe and Mukden, around 350 of them were involved in protection of Port Arthur and many Estonians who served in navy participated in the battle of Tsushima (Tannberg, 2015: 65-66).

Thematic analysis is suitable for analysing the Estonian soldiers' letters as it offers the possibility to get an overview of the different subjects that were covered in the content of the letters and later on discover the notions and hidden meanings of topics described. Main issues in the letters have been divided into directly war related topics or descriptions of the surrounding environment. In both categories the positive or negative perceptions of Japanese have been analysed.

Results – Which topics and comparisons are used while writing about Japanese as an enemy?

The perception of the enemy can be estimated by the vocabulary used for naming the enemy. The terms that are used by the Estonian soldiers while referring to enemy in their letters are *Japanese* and *enemy*, there are no other (or derogatory) terms. Typically, the words *Japanese* and *enemy* are used as synonyms in the same letter (Olevik, 1905, no 23). Only in one case a diminutive term “jaapanlasekesed” (*Postimees*, 1905, no 43) was used which can be translated as “little Japanese fellows”.

Sometimes metaphors are used while referring to the Japanese soldiers. In one letter dead Japanese soldiers are referred as wooden logs rolling down the hill (*Postimees*, 1905, no 117) and in two letters the action of Japanese is described as that of ants but the comparison with these insects is in positive context: ‘spectacular is the bravery of the Japanese: like ants they are repeating their action for several times’ (*Postimees*, 1905, no 117); ‘he looked at the enemy’s camp. It looked like an ants’ nest that had been kicked with the foot. Just like a cloud the enemy was moving towards the hill where our soldiers were hiding’ (*Postimees*, 1905, no 40). In Estonian tradition the ants are valued as laborious and diligent insects which can co-operate in the name of the end goal.

In the cause of the battles and movements of the troops the descriptions of the fighting and other war situations are usually neutral and the Japanese are never accused of the horrors of the war. Instead the weapons are considered to be evil, e.g. in one case the 11-inch artillery is referred as a “monster” (*Postimees*, 1905, no 101) but not the men who are using it. In the other letter it is concluded that the arms are killing our people not the enemy (*Postimees*, 1905, no 117). The descriptions of war can be devastating, but on the personal

level the Japanese are not criticised as the participants or actors of the battles (*Postimees*, 1905, no 101). One of the Estonian soldiers was horrified how their wounded and dead were left behind as the troops were retreating during the night. It was hopeless to give them any aid as one could become a victim himself, so the wounded soldiers were abandoned in their pain and suffering (*Postimees*, 1905, no 84). The fact that the Japanese troops also had its part in retreating of the Russian troops or killing, is not at all mentioned. Sometimes the bad weather and food conditions are described but the role of the enemy is somewhat distant: 'Life in the army, is life in the army, even if for some people it shows itself in different colours. What should we do then, when the enemy manages to block the roads. Every day can bring along the confrontation with the enemy, as they are only 60-80 versts away' (*Olevik*, 1904, no 40).

In some context the Japanese are described as treacherous or cunning, e.g. during the night time the Japanese troops are shouting 'Hooray!' as if they are planning an attack or singing songs in Russian (*Postimees*, 1905, no 36). As they have a good command in Russian language and as they are tactically clever they have done a lot of mischief (*Postimees*, 1905, no 38). One Estonian soldier describes how three Japanese officers were caught spying in the port of the Port-Arthur because although they spoke excellent Russian, they said the wrong name of the ship as their origin (*Teataja*, 1904, no 57).

The Japanese are portrayed positively also because they have better clothes with good quality: 'woollen and handknitted jumpers, warm underwear and extremely warm mittens' (*Postimees*, 1905, no 41). When the Russian troops retreated from the battle field, they left behind their equipment and even uniforms, so that the replacement had to be searched from the local Chinese villages: 'we didn't look at all like the army of the civilized state anymore' (*Olevik*, 1905, no 23) is stated in one letter. From this letter it becomes obvious how the Estonian soldier was not satisfied with hasty retreatment and negligent behaviour with the supplies.

The Japanese army was also said to have better guns, or even better bullets, as their weapons were smaller and the wounds caused by shooting were not so severe and healed quicker (*Postimees*, 1905, no 30). At the same time the ability of Japanese to fight in close combat was not so good as well as their shooting from the distance (*Postimees*, 1905, no 42). However, in some other letters it was claimed vice versa that Japanese are excellent in shooting (*Olevik*, 1905, no 21). 'The Japanese are skilful warriors but not as invincible as people back at home think. If they would fight on open ground, instead of hiding

themselves in the mountains, we could win them easily!' (*Postimees*, 1905, no 42). Although there were different opinions about the capability of the Japanese in fighting, generally they were thought to be strong and courageous.

Results – How the Estonian soldiers constructed Japanese as an “enemy”?

In most cases the Japanese as an enemy was treated in the soldiers' letters with neutrality and respect. For instance, the example of neutrality is represented in the depicted scene when captured Japanese soldiers are brought to the camp (*Postimees*, 1905, no 39), their condition and blindfolded eyes are described thoroughly but there is no scolding or disdainful attitude towards them that could be expected under these kinds of circumstances. Thus, the consideration and civility towards the Japanese can be observed in many occasions.

Mikhailova points out that while the Russian upper-class view Japan from the perspective of *yellow peril*, for the ordinary people the adversary in the war was not seen as a threatening menace (2011: 44-45). This concept suits with the above-mentioned case of Baltic-German professor Zoege von Manteuffel that the nobility was much more critical about the war issues. As R. Bartlett states the anger of the educated classes were not directed towards Japanese but their own government as she quotes the memoirs of the writer and critic Vikentii Veresaev that the anti-Japanese sentiment among the troops sent to the war was whipped up and vanished in the course of battles (2008: 26).

In some situations, the relations between enemies were rather amicable, e.g description of ceasefire while bringing drinking water and greeting each other politely (*Postimees*, 1905, no 72) as it was customary to give notice with the white flag that soldiers are going to fetch drinking water so that nobody was trying to shoot at them while they were fulfilling this duty. In the same letter (*Postimees*, 1905, no 72) it is described how Japanese soldiers even brought rum to Russian troops for holidays and told that it should be already enough of blood-spilling and everybody should go home. The Japanese left a notice written in Russian where it could be easily found saying: 'Why are you Russians fighting! You will be frozen! You have no warm clothes. Put your reply at the same place' (*Postimees*, 1905, no 43). Sometimes the “amicable” relations between the enemies could have been explained with pure reasoning: they are not going to shoot at a single Japanese soldier in open space when it is sighted because the bang of the gun would bring out all the rest of the enemy troops (*Postimees*, 1905, no 43).

The war tactics and reasoning was sometimes difficult to understand for the ordinary soldiers, it was comprehensible that retreating was done in haste but it was painful to watch that all the food supplies were just burnt in order the enemy would not gain them 'all the food had to be engulfed in flames, the soldiers couldn't get from it even a piece of sugar' (*Postimees*, 1905, no 94).

One Estonian soldier who was in the hospital found friends among the wounded Japanese: 'We [he and two other wounded Estonian soldiers – E.S.] often visit the neighbouring hospital building and even more often the Japanese come to visit us. Joyful lads!' (*Postimees*, 1905, no 30). What makes the content of this letter intriguing is the fact that although there were about 200 soldiers of different nationalities in the hospital buildings as the author of the letter himself mentions, the only befriending that is described takes place between Estonians and Japanese. The soldier explains: 'One day they [the Japanese – E.S.] realized that I am not a Russian. They understood it because I don't have the cross pendant. Now a really difficult explanation began what is actually my nationality and religion. Finally, I succeeded in making it clear for them.' (*Postimees*, 1905, no 30).

However, Japanese were also considered to be cunning nation because they could learn and speak Russian well in order to pretend to be not the enemy (*Postimees*, 1905, no 29). One soldier gives in his letter (*Olevik*, 1904, no 50) a vivid description of a treacherous Japanese prisoner whom he caught in the darkness of the night. The Japanese captive was a young man and he asked his life to be saved as he was an orphan but suddenly the Estonian soldier recognized that the Japanese soldier was about to kill him, so the Estonian had no choice but to use his bayonet in order to save his own life. The Japanese action in attacking Port-Arthur was also considered to be treacherous (*Teataja*, 1904, no 57) but the general description how the Japanese sunk the Russian ships and bombed the port is without any negative connotation – it is a pure description of military movements without any judgements or pursue to blame somebody (*Teataja*, 1904, no 57), the same style reoccurs in the letter covering the Japanese attack on Vladivostok (*Teataja*, 1904, no 78).

The Estonian soldiers also antagonize with the Russian officers as one soldier complains in his letter that the officers did not realize how strong the enemy actually was (*Postimees*, 1905, no 116) or that the officers were behaving cowardly in the battle. This kind of adversity could be also the usual confrontation between soldiers and officers as for example one Estonian soldier complains that officers have their own shops from where

they can buy everything while ordinary soldiers are not allowed to purchase from there even a box of matches (*Postimees*, 1905, no 98).

Estonian soldiers distanced themselves from Russian soldiers by using terms as *self* and *Russian soldiers* (not *we* or *our soldiers*) (*Postimees*, 1905, no 116) making thus a verbal separation. Some Estonian soldiers felt homesick because in their company there was not many Estonians left (*Postimees*, 1905, no 103). One soldier described how the Japanese bombed the house where they were stationed and how one fellow Estonian soldier was injured as the 'fragments of the bullets tore his cap into pieces but didn't hurt the head that much – only a bit of skin with hair was blown away' (*Teataja*, 1904, no 78). The letter did not mention whether soldiers of other nationalities were hurt, also not a single bad word is written about them who actually launched the attack.

The other type of letters that the Estonian soldiers sent back to home were the letters written in the prison camps. From these letters it is evident that the conditions were satisfactory and comfortable: 'Life is good here, only it's dull and that is why we ask all the readers of the newspaper and also the editor of the newspaper and all the brothers and sisters to send us newspapers for reading and all kind of books' (*Postimees*, 1905, no 139).

The question of nationality was complicated on the battlefield. One Estonian soldier explains how the Buryats were sometimes taken as Japanese and therefore considered to be the spies of the enemy although they belonged to the Russian forces (*Postimees*, 1905, no 118). Sometimes the Japanese themselves are pretending to be soldiers of the Russian army and take undercover action as it was described in one letter (*Postimees*, 1905, no 29): the soldier happened to stay behind from his company and in the darkness he didn't recognize that the two men who were riding horses and turning to him in clumsy Russian, were actually the Japanese who tried to trick him and take him into prison, luckily enough, the Estonian soldier managed to escape. On the other occasion confronting the enemy was described as a humorous event while the soldiers were sent to gather fire wood during the night time and enemy started to shoot suddenly in the darkness, consequently everybody were escaping in panic and only some of them managed to bring along some twigs for the camp fire (*Postimees*, 1905, no 72).

It is difficult to estimate whether the attitude towards the Japanese as an enemy changed in the course of time and constant defeats at the battlefield. Gradually the soldiers' letters show more exhaustion and readiness to surrender but the Japanese are treated with the same respect as in the beginning of the war. In the same way it is difficult to

estimate whether the fighting spirit and mood stayed the same during the war: 'When there are four or five Estonians together, we are making jokes as the Japanese bullets fly over our heads' (*Teataja*, 1905, no 12). Sometimes the letters are deeply emotional: 'My eyes are not crying but my heart cries blood tears' (*Olevik*, 1904, no 50) and some soldiers describe the harsh conditions of the battleground: 'If you are on the front line at the open field where there are 30 degrees of cold! And you have to lie down or if you rise your head, you will have a bullet in it. Then how should one write that the spirit of the soldiers is high!' (*Postimees*, 1905, no 86).

Vuorinen states that 'every enemy is an other, but all others are not enemies' (2012: 2). This might have happened also with Estonian soldiers' interpretation of the Japanese as the enemy. The Japanese were considered to be enemies but in spite of the war they were treated as an honourable and respectful *other*. R. Kowner gives in his article several examples of mutual compassion and respect during the Russo-Japanese war and he explains it by the presence of foreign observers, lack of the civilians at the battleground and that the conflict didn't escalate to the total war as it happened during the Pacific war decades later (2000: 134-51).

Conclusion

The Estonian media gave a controversial picture of the Russo-Japanese war (1904-1905): on the one hand the war enemy was treated as an enemy in the public war news as all the actions of Japan were observed thoroughly and analysed in detail, on the other hand it was mainly neutrally and sometimes even positively observed in the soldiers' letters from the battle field. One reason for such kind of attitude might have been the distinction of the Estonian soldiers from the Russian empire (often the state was revealed as *our* but the nation as *mine*). Estonian soldiers differed from the majority of the Russian troops by being Lutheran and speaking Estonian, and they might have felt secluded from the rest of the troops. The other reason was perhaps the custom of the time to treat the war enemy with honour and respect as R. Kowner (2000: 134) points it out that the benevolent relations between the Japanese and Russian soldiers seem utterly bizarre, especially in the light of the notorious Pacific war but at the time the Russo-Japanese war the camaraderie manifestations were a commonplace (Kowner, 2000: 136). Only in few cases Japanese were accused of cunning or treacherous activities. The derogatory words for the Japanese were not used, neither were the military misfortune or defeat imposed on Japanese.

For the current paper, 53 soldiers' letters published in main Estonian newspapers *Olevik*, *Postimees* and *Teataja* were thematically analysed from the perspective of construction of enemy, related topics and comparisons used for describing the Japanese soldiers. In sum, the analysis tried to give an overall picture of the different topics in the soldiers' letters that conveyed the perception of Japanese as an enemy during the Russo-Japanese war.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ene SELART is a junior researcher of media studies at the Institute of Social Studies at the University of Tartu. Her research topics are media history (image of Japan in Estonian media as depicted in travelogues and letters from the Russo-Japanese war) and diplomatic relations between Estonia and Japan before the WWII. She is teaching courses of Japanese history and history of Estonian journalism.

Utopia or Uprising? Orientalist Discourses of Japanese Robotics in the British Press

Christopher J. HAYES | Cardiff University, UK

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ABSTRACT

For many years, Japan has held the popular image of a technologically advanced nation. This image persists, especially in the last couple of years with the introduction of service and retail robots such as Softbank's Pepper. While sometimes news publications present this as a positive image of the future, an idea of what we in the West have to look forward to, at other times, the image of technology in Japan is negative. Sometimes it has too much technology, or it has technologies that 'we in the West' would not see a use for. This paper uses Critical Discourse Analysis to investigate whether depictions of robots in the British press are characterised by Orientalism, but will also go beyond the usual analysis of news text, by setting depictions of robots against observation and interview-based research in Japan with technology manufacturers in order to see the extent to which the depictions are exaggerated. The study finds that Orientalist discourses inform the majority of reporting, but no single Orientalism is responsible; rather it is a combination of differing styles of Orientalism. Moreover, articles are often less concerned with the events occurring in Japan, but more with their implications for the British reader.

KEYWORDS

Journalism, News Reporting; Japan; Technology; Robots; Representation of Japan; Orientalism; Techno-Orientalism; Othering.

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Introduction

On 11th March 2011, Japan experienced a succession of disasters that continue to affect the country today. The magnitude 9.0 Tohoku Earthquake led to a tsunami, the combination of which led to the deaths of approximately 15,897 (National Police Agency of Japan, 2019) and the nuclear meltdown of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant in Fukushima Prefecture (Lipscy *et al.*, 2013: 6082). A week later, the British newspaper *The Daily Telegraph* expressed surprise at how Japan was struggling to deal with the consequences of these events, leading with the headline 'It has built robots to take the place of chefs, concert pianists and even sumo wrestlers, but when it

comes to staving off nuclear disaster Japan has been left relying on human efforts' (*Daily Telegraph*, 18 March 2011).

The article presented this revelation as if it were a shock: surely Japan would have robots to tackle the disaster? Before the disaster, the journalist must have been convinced of Japan's technological development, possessing incredibly advanced robots. This belief was shown to be wrong, but it raises questions about Japan-related foreign reporting. In the context of British news, it is particularly important, because news media is probably one of the most prominent sources of information about Japan for Britons, since Japanese media is not commonly consumed in the country (Hernández-Pérez, Corstophine & Stephens, 2017). News media is significant because it is produced constantly. Online news in particular allows for stories to be continuously published and updated, without the restraints of space availability in a physical newspaper, the printing schedule, and the time constraints of scheduled news programming (excluding 24-hour news channels). Online news is also accessible to anyone, anywhere, as it can be read on a desktop computer, laptop, tablet and mobile phone. Moreover, news media is ostensibly factual, presenting accounts of events that have taken place. News media has authority, and is therefore likely to be believed.

Previous studies have shown that news representation of Japan is subject to stereotyping (Hammond, 1997; Hinton, 2014; Matthews, 2019). In particular, Japan is often talked about as being misrepresented in the news and being characterised by Orientalist understandings of the country, which depict Japan as an ancient land of tradition (Hargreaves, Inthorn & Speers, 2001). And yet Japan is also home to the neon lights of the Tokyo metropolis, to video games, and to robots. It is easy to dismiss depictions of contemporary Japan which refer to samurai, geisha and Shinto as Orientalist, but how should we treat depictions of robots in Japan? Can these also be Orientalist? And if so, does that mean they are not true, even though we can see photos of robots in news articles, and see videos online?

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to investigate British news articles about robots in Japan in order to answer two distinct questions:

- 1) How can we understand depictions of robots in Japan within an Orientalist framework?
- 2) To what extent do depictions of robots in articles correspond to observable reality?

Through analyses of British news depictions of robots in Japan, Japan's close association with robots will be shown to be a defining part of discourse about the country, considered a part of Japanese culture. It will be shown that depictions of robots in Japan are not consistent, and are even conflicting: sometimes Japan is presented as possessing a high number of robots and consequently as an almost futuristic country, using robots to solve problems that may one day be faced in Britain; other times, Japan is still presented as having a high number of robots, but this use is portrayed as negative and excessive. Whether positive or negative, analysis will demonstrate that articles typically characterise Japan by its difference to Britain, and more generally, the West, which is typical of Orientalism.

To address the second question, this study must go beyond analysis of news articles. Unlike other studies of journalistic representation of Japan, this study will set depictions of robots in Japan against empirical data, namely interviews carried out with robot manufacturers, robot users, and direct observations of robots in use in Japan. While texts can be shown to possess Orientalist attitudes, it does not disprove their content. As this study will show, robots do exist, but are not used to the extent claimed by articles. This is important for gaining an understanding of how Orientalism, and stereotyping more broadly, exaggerate the truth, and how this is used by the news media.

Finally, the paper will reveal that, while ostensibly about Japan, news articles are often more concerned about how robots will affect Britain in the future than actual developments in Japan¹.

Understanding depictions of Japan through Orientalism

Although all countries and their cultures are unique, Japan is perceived in the West as being 'uniquely unique', a perception Dower argues is rooted in historical encounters with the Japanese, but was reaffirmed by Japan's experiences after WWII, which prompted 'a steady stream of *sui generis* cultural explanations' that continue to hold today (2011: 62).

This emphasis of difference between Japan and the West is part of a larger discourse of Othering, called Orientalism, developed by Edward Said in his seminal work, *Orientalism* (1978). Said describes it as the 'Western style of dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient' (1978: 2). Such attitudes, it is argued, serve to

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reinforce the idea of the West as being superior to the East (Macfie, 2000: 1-3). The terms 'East' and 'West' are highly problematic, however, something that Said himself stresses (though it does not prevent him from using the terminology and emphasising the actions of the 'West' – something that will be discussed later). They are a sociological dichotomous divide, splitting the world according to perceived differences. According to Said, the 'East' is made up of countries in the Middle East, North Africa and the Indian subcontinent, that is, chiefly Islamic countries, and those which have a history of European colonialism (1978: 1). He also widens his definition to include the 'Far East', which includes China, Korea and Japan, as these are the countries with which the United States has had long-standing relations with, and no history of colonialism in the Middle East (1978: 1). Meanwhile, according to Said, the 'West' is made up of European countries, Russia and the United States (1978: 1).

Said's work on Orientalism (1978, 1985, 2000 and 2005) approached the critique of the inherent biases of Western observers from an almost exclusively Near/Middle East perspective. As a Palestinian Arab with American citizenship, he admits his own personal interest and inclination to focus on this particular region (Said, 2005). While he recognises that his theory of Orientalism is only applied to Islamic cultures in his works, he asserts that it could be applied to the East as a whole—including the Far East: China, Japan, Korea, etc. (1978: 322). The immediate issue with this is that Said provides no justification for this assertion. His claim that *all* Eastern cultures are treated in the exact same way by 'Westerners', simply because they are all 'Oriental' (1978: 1-5), is bold, particularly as the 'East' covers a large part of the globe and includes countries with wildly different cultures and histories. This is not to say he is wrong necessarily, but he provides no evidence. Indeed, his references to Japan and other East Asian countries are limited to being listed as other countries to which his discourse supposedly applies, often crammed between parentheses at the end of a long passage discussing Orientalist attitudes towards another country, such as India (1978: 285).

As such, *a priori* Orientalism would not seem to fit with the narrative about technology and robots in Japan, so where does this fit in?

Beyond Said: Orientalism and Japan

Japan's relationship with robots is perceived as unique, and Western news media 'identifies Japan with an enthusiasm for robots bordering on the irrational'

(MacDorman, Vasudevan & Ho, 2009: 494). This description of Japan as irrational implies a rational attitude to have towards robots, the Western attitude.

To account for associations between Japan and technology, it is necessary to look beyond Said, whose work did not address Japan directly. Rather it was later scholars who applied Orientalism to Japan, and different offshoots of Orientalism have since been developed, including Techno-Orientalism (Morley & Robins, 1995), Self-Orientalism (Miller, 1982), and recently, Wacky Orientalism (Wagenaar, 2016). The term ‘Techno-Orientalism’ refers to the discourse that ‘the country has come to epitomize a hyper-technified, dehumanized and materialist society’ (Lozano-Méndez, 2010: 183). The Techno-Orientalist image of Japan is complex, since not only does it present an image of a high-tech, almost futuristic image of Japan, filled with advanced technology and robots, it characterises the Japanese as robots themselves, devoid of emotion, feeling and humanity (Lozano-Méndez, 2010: 183; Morley & Robins, 1995: 172). Although Techno-Orientalism acknowledges Japan’s technological achievements, it is nonetheless bound up in the same prejudices of Orientalism, in which the West is superior: Japan may be superior technologically, but it is at the cost of the country’s humanity (Lozano-Méndez, 2010: 184). Thus, a Techno-Orientalist understanding of Japan characterises the country as futuristic, possessing advanced technology, but it is not a positive image.

It would be remiss to suggest that the branding of Japan as a ‘robot kingdom’ is the fault of the Western observer alone. Indeed, in the 1980s when the depiction of Japan as technologically futuristic began to gain traction, the Japanese themselves ‘crowned their nation the “Robot Kingdom”’ (Schodt, 1988: 15). By doing so, the country Orientalised itself, something Miller called ‘self-Orientalism’ (Miller, 1982). Unlike other countries, which are often painted as victims of Orientalism, Japan has constructed a discourse that purposefully distinguishes itself from the West. Much as the picture of the ‘Orient’ created by Orientalists is largely fictitious, Japan has created its own imagined West. Indeed, the Japan described by American anthropologist Ruth Benedict, who did not speak Japanese nor visited the country, in the well-known *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (2006 [1946]) helped influence postwar discourse on Japanese identity and culture (Lie, 2001: 249).

Within Japanese academia, the field of *Nihonjinron* or ‘theories about the Japanese’ is heavily influenced by this discourse of Japan as unique. Many scholars have branded *Nihonjinron* a form of cultural and ethnocentric nationalism (van Wolferen, 1989). It is

worth noting that *Nihonjinron* predates Said's *Orientalism* and thus the term Self-Orientalism, but it has since been frequently discussed within these contexts. Orientalist discourse labels Japan as collectivist and the West as individualistic, but while Orientalists use this point to highlight the West's superiority, under self-Orientalism and *Nihonjinron*, Japan's collectivism becomes a strength (Iwabuchi, 1994: n.p.). Koichi Iwabuchi (1994) cites several reasons for this: (i) Western countries can be presented as 'superior, enlightened and civilised entities to be emulated' by an aspirational Japan; (ii) at the same time, however, the West is also presented in a negative light, its societies individualistic and selfish; and (iii) Japan's self-Orientalism serves as a source of national identity. By defining itself as the diametric opposite to the West, Japan embraces its otherness (Gluck, 1985). In the case of robots, then, it may be suggested that depictions are influenced by a narrative that comes from Japan itself, be it from manufacturers or from official bodies such as the national tourism organisation, JNTO, both of whom could profit from the depiction of Japan as technologically advanced: for the manufacturers it could increase sales, and for JNTO it could increase tourism to the country.

Lastly, one of the most recent contributions to Orientalist theory is Wacky Orientalism, coined by Wester Wagenaar (2016). Wacky Orientalism is the 'Western perception of Japan as weird' (Wagenaar, 2016: 51), and this weirdness is used by the West to confirm its own normalcy (2016, 51). Central to Wagenaar's argument is that this weirdness is only perceived as such because Westerners are not interested in understanding it (2016: 50). Could depictions of robots in the British news contain Wacky Orientalist discourse?

Before investigating recent news depictions of robots in Japan, it is worth examining historical depictions. As we saw in the example from *The Daily Telegraph*, in 2011 there was a longstanding assumption that Japan possessed advanced robots. The following section will review studies on robots in Japan, applying the theories of Orientalism that we have discussed.

Robots in Japan

Humanoid robots exist in the 'real world', and they exist in Japan (Robertson, 2018: 17). What Jennifer Robertson, author of the recent book *Robo Sapiens Japonicus: Robots, Gender, Family and the Japanese Nation* (2018), means by this is not that Japan has

robots living side by side with humans, but rather they exist as ‘indices of the country’s dominance in the field of robotics’ (2018: 17).

Mateja Kovacic, in her account of the history of robots in Japan, talks in terms of a robotic ‘lineage’ (2018: 573), a concept utilised by Japanese policymakers to promote the Japanese robotics and technology industries. The robotic lineage is characterised by Japanese artisanship and this long history of the refinement and reinvention of traditional crafts using modern methods. Indeed, she also explains how by embedding robots within a homogenous Japanese tradition, robots are not seen as taking over, but rather integrating with and conforming to Japanese societal norms (Kovacic, 2018: 573-575).

Robots have thus been given a historical lineage, cementing them as part of the Japanese tradition. Histories of robotics in Japan often refer to the *karakuri ningyō*, a type of wooden clockwork automaton originating in the Edo period (MacDorman, Vasudevan & Ho, 2009: 489). In the creation of a robotic lineage, there was also the development of Self-Orientalist beliefs about Japan: that the country is unique for its craftsmanship, that the country possesses longstanding traditions that persist to the present, and that these qualities contribute to Japan’s unassailable position in robotics.

Kovacic argues that this ties into *Nihonjinron* discourse, the academic concept of Japanese uniqueness, with Japan’s particular successes in technology and manufacturing attributed to the country’s history of craft-making and ‘*monozukuri* DNA’, which ‘signifies the organic cultural lineage of Japan’s manufacturing tradition as well as innovative excellence, social continuity, and homogeneity of products based on artisanship that is transmitted generationally’ (2018: 575). This has even appeared in official discourse, with a 2017 report by METI describing ‘the traditional spirit of the Japanese’ that continues to be passed down between generations of craftsmen (quoted in Kovacic, 2018: 575).

Morris-Suzuki challenges the significance of the *karakuri ningyō*, citing historians like Okumura Shōji, who have argued that the automata were only entertainment for the upper classes, as compared to European automata which would inspire practical innovations (1994: 53). Robertson echoes this by calling the relationship misleading, calling their shared humanoid design as a ‘superficial resemblance that masks their differences’ (2018: 13).

Nonetheless, a tradition of robots ascribes the technology with a cultural essence, and academics and historians have frequently rooted robots in Japanese culture, both traditional and popular. The animistic beliefs of Shinto have been used to explain the

success of robots in Japan, wherein both animate and inanimate objects can have a spirit or essence (Rathmann, 2013: 8; Kaerlein, 2015: 364).

Real-life robots began to appear in Japan in the 1920s, following the success of a Japanese staging of Karel Čapek's play *Rossum's Universal Robots*, in which the term 'robot' was coined. Of particular note is the robot Gakutensoku, created in 1928 for the accession of Emperor Hirohito (Hornyak, 2006: 35-37). Timothy N. Hornyak argues that this marked the beginning of a small robot boom in Japan, which included the regular appearance of robot characters in comics and stories, but was brought to an end by war with China in 1937 (2006: 39).

The modern robot came to be lodged in the Japanese imagination after the Second World War with the introduction of two fictional robot characters in manga: Astro Boy (originally Mighty Atom or *Tetsuwan Atomu*) and Doraemon (Kovacic, 2018: 584; Pellitteri, 2011: 152-190). Jennifer Robertson notes the particular significance of Astro Boy for Japanese roboticists working today, even observing pictures and figurines of the character on display in almost all the offices and labs in which she conducted interviews with roboticists (2018: 2).

Factory automation technology was originally pioneered in the US, with MIT producing a system that could encode programs on tape to control milling machinery, a system which prompted Japanese researchers to develop their own technologies. Japan overtook the US in automation because the technology was developed in Japan for the purpose of commercialisation, rather than military application, as in the US (Morris-Suzuki, 1994: 201). Indeed, Morris-Suzuki notes that it was official policy that pushed for technological change along this route, emphasising a shift from the 'old' Japan that would copy foreign ideas, to a 'new' Japan, with its own knowledge-industry, of which robotics was a key component (1994: 212).

By the 1980s, the success of Japanese companies was viewed with mistrust and disdain by Western observers. For example, the purchasing of iconic American properties such as Columbia Pictures & Records by Japanese companies was seen as a colonisation attempt 'through the absorption of economic and cultural assets' (Lozano-Méndez, 2010: 188). Indeed, in films such as *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982), while the setting is not Japan, but Los Angeles, the Japanisation of America is all but clear with Japanese characters in neon, countless noodle bars and Japanese women in the advertisements. Throughout the 80s, Japan was held in popular imagination as a

glimpse into the future and served as the inspiration for the cyberpunk genre of literature and film. These works often adhered to Techno-Orientalist notions of Japan, that it was technologically advanced, but its society is ‘corrupt, repressive, sexist, and racist’ and ‘trapped in the 17th century’ (Russell, 1998: 98).

While, statistically speaking, South Korea leads the way in industrial automation (see Figure 1, below), today Japan nonetheless remains associated with robots. There are a number of reasons for this: firstly, historically, Japan was the world leader in robotics developments, making significant strides in the 60s and 70s, putting it ahead of other nations (Grau, Indri, Bello & Sauter, 2016: 6159-6160; MacDorman, Vasudevan & Ho, 2009: 490). According to the International Federation of Robotics, it was not until 2010 that Japan was overtaken by South Korea, and it now occupies fourth place, behind South Korea, Singapore and Germany (IFR World Robotics, 2017).

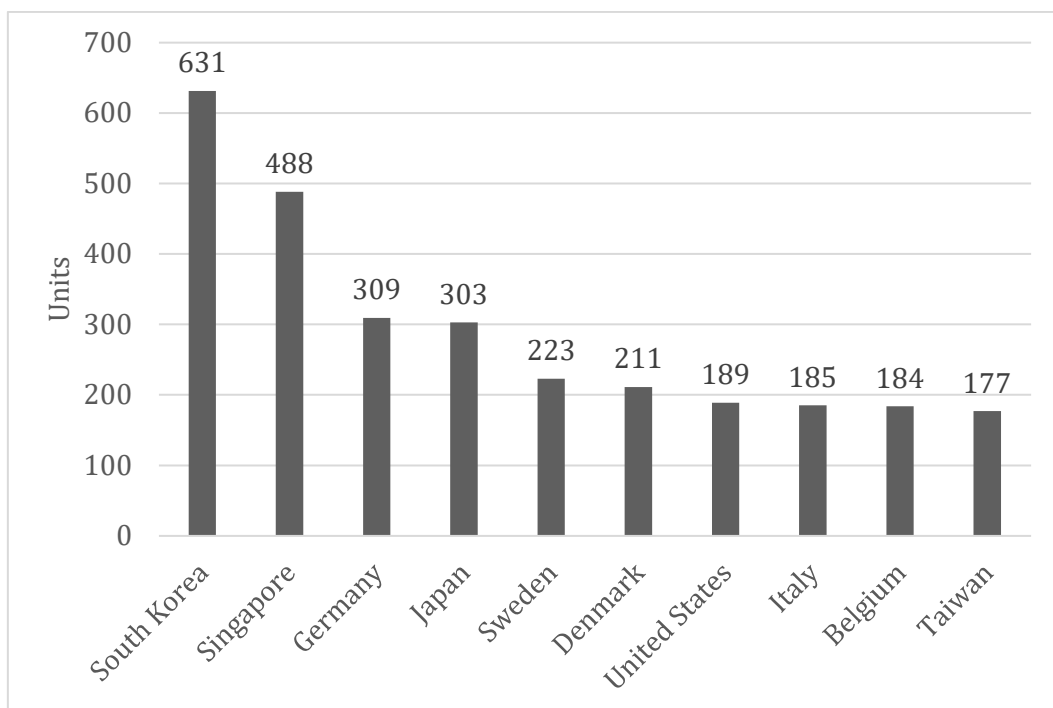


Figure 1. *Top Ten Countries for Number of Installed Industrial Robots per 10,000 Employees in the Manufacturing Industry (IFR World Robotics 2017)*

This brings us up to 2011 when the Triple Disaster occurred. As we have now seen, Japan had recently gone down in the rankings for industrial robot usage, but it nonetheless continued to possess strong associations with robots. Following the revelation that Japan did not have these advanced robots to enter the disaster zones, has discourse about robots

in Japan changed? Are they affected by these same Orientalisms? And, lastly, are these depictions purely Orientalism, or are they based in some fact?

News reporting and coverage of Japan

In 1940, Robert E. Park described news as a form of knowledge that is concerned with events, like history (1940: 670-675). Unlike history, however, news is not concerned with what has come before, but only with the isolated event (Park, 1940: 675). Park also argued that news has to be a story in order to retain the interest of the reader; it has to be 'sufficiently novel, exciting or important' (1940: 676). In the digital age, this requirement remains as important, if not more important due to the demands of social media, where 'the pressure to obtain clicks and shares will also influence decisions about what news to select, as well as news treatment' (Harcup & O'Neill, 2017). As such, we can suggest that news is an event that is deemed worthy of being written about for the reader.²

Foreign news coverage in news publications is comparatively low, and this is not just an issue for British news, but affects publications globally (Carroll, 2007; Moore, 2010; Segev, 2017). What this means for news about Japan is that it is generally limited in Western media and tends to 'report Japan in a distorted way' (Matthews, 2019: 375). In the case of British media, Phillip Hammond and Paul Stirner found that news stories about Japan were 'treated as a springboard for musing about the national character' (Hammond & Stirner, 1997: 88).

To the author's knowledge, the most recent major study of British press representation of Japan was by Ian Hargreaves, Sanna Inthorn and Tammy Speers (2001), which analysed a corpus of British newspaper articles about Japan from a range of different newspapers, spanning a period of ten years from 1990 to 2000. The study found that, despite the globalisation of Japanese goods and cuisine, news media continues to fall back on 'ancient characterisations' (Hargreaves, Inthorn & Speers, 2001: 1). The study found news about Japan in the period studied tended to focus on two points: Japan's 'strangeness' and Japan's 'economic impact' on Britain (Hargreaves Inthorn & Speers, 2001: 29). According to the study, the 'us' is an important explanatory factor in the prevalence of such stories. News is consumed by an audience, and so has to interest that audience. Strange stories are common 'entertainment' stories, whilst stories about Japan's economic impact on Britain

² For a more comprehensive discussion of news values, see Harcup & O'Neill's study which revises John Galtung and Mari Ruge's taxonomy of news, which was first presented in 1965 (2017).

are popular because they hold relevance for the reader—Japan is exerting some local influence (Hargreaves, Inthorn & Speers, 2001: 29).

In terms of our present investigation into robots, the study established that technology was a common theme in news articles, indicating that the British have the idea that Japan is a ‘nation eccentrically passionate about gadgets’ (Hargreaves *et al.*, 2001: 24). The characterisation of the fondness for technology in Japan as eccentric aligns with Wagenaar’s Wacky Orientalism, but also with Techno-Orientalism: articles depict Japan as having these gadgets, but their passion for them is portrayed as aberrant.

More recently, albeit on a smaller scale, Perry Hinton has found that representation of Japan continues to place emphasis on Japanese distinctiveness and (re)interpreting Japan through the ‘Western stereotype of the “cute, looking-down Japanese school-girl thing”’ (2014: n.p.). This has resulted in highly exaggerated and stereotyped stories appearing in the British press over the years. Hinton gives the example of news articles about *enjo kōsai*, a form of compensated dating, in which young women would provide men with company for a fee. In the Western media, Hinton says, this was hyped up and presented as a widespread practice of ‘lolitas’ engaging in underage sex, despite the fact that very few schoolgirls actually did *enjo kōsai* (2014: n.p.). Moreover, he argues that the media missed the cultural context of *enjo kōsai*, in which girls were able to subvert gender expectations by making money for themselves (2014: n.p.). This is a clear example of Orientalist discourse, wherein ‘culture’ is used as an explanatory framework and stereotypical knowledge is appealed to. The traditional Orientalist image of the subservient, passive woman is conjured to explain girls’ participation in *enjo kōsai*.

Hinton also gives the example of the 2013 BBC documentary *No Sex Please, We’re Japanese* (Holdsworth, 2013), a programme about Japan’s falling birth-rate and declining population, and yet the ‘only Japanese men under pensionable age interviewed were two men identified as otaku’ (Hinton, 2014: n.p.). Here, the presenter gives the impression that these men were typical of Japanese men, and also tried to portray them as deviants for playing a simulation game about high school students dating. Again, this is what Hinton argues is a lack of context, and he points out that simulation or ‘sim’ games are very popular with men of the same age in Britain too (2014: n.p.). Here, both Wacky Orientalist and Techno-Orientalist elements are present, as the host cannot help but comment on the what she perceives as weird behaviour by the men, which is explained by the context of the hyper-technified, manga and video

game filled world in which they inhabit. While not comprehensive analyses of British journalism on Japan as a whole, Hinton's research confirms the British media's continued predominance to define the Japanese by their differences to the British.

Methodology

In order to analyse these articles, this study uses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a form of qualitative textual analysis that, as the name suggests, focusses on discourses. Discourse can be defined as the way in which something is talked about, i.e. the kind of language used, the assumptions made, and the social context in which it is discussed. Discourses are the ways in which we talk about and understand the world (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 1). To talk about politics, for example, requires utilising political discourse, which comprises specific vocabulary, and an understanding of what is happening politically and the ideologies behind these actions. It is impossible to talk about any subject without tapping into some kind of common language or drawing upon a wider context. In this present discussion of the representation and depiction of Japan, by paying close attention to the kinds of discourses in use in articles one is able to gain an understanding of how Japan is perceived: for example, is Japan discussed primarily in economic terms? If so, is it discussed as an economic partner, or is it treated as an economic threat? In our particular case, we are interested in the discursive practices of defining Japan by its difference, using the topic of robots in Japan as an example of this.

Unlike other methodological approaches, such as content analysis, which is a quantitative method for breaking texts down into raw data and statistics, such as word frequencies, CDA necessitates close readings of a text in order to ascertain the meanings running through the whole text, that is, the discourses. Moreover, according to Norman Fairclough, who has led the development of CDA as a method, while the use of language is important, the unsaid must also be paid close attention to, as these indicate the assumptions that the reader is supposed to understand (1992).

Another proponent of CDA, Teun van Dijk, argues that all discourse serves to emphasise the distinction between us and them, or Self and Other (van Dijk: 1993). This distinction between us and them is central to Orientalism, which Wagenaar calls 'a matter of Us and Them, where the Us shapes parts of its identity by mirroring itself

against its imagining of the Other' (2016: 48). Analysis of articles will therefore pay close attention to instances of Othering and the positioning of Japan as inferior.

The sample for the CDA was obtained by carrying out a keyword search of the terms 'robot' and 'Japan' in headlines in the top 10 newspapers and news websites in the UK, based on data from SimilarWeb (2016) and the National Readership Survey (Press Gazette, 2015).³ In order to reflect reporting of Japan since *The Daily Telegraph* article, the analysis will focus on the following five years between 1 January 2012 and 31 December 2017.

By selecting such a recent period of time, we are able to address the second research question: To what extent do depictions of robots in articles correspond to observable reality? In order to facilitate this aspect of the research, the CDA will focus on articles pertaining to three specific robots as examples of robots frequently discussed in the British press as well as examples of robots known to still be in use. First, the CDA will examine the texts, analysing their structures, their vocabularies and their assumptions. In qualitative research, the frequency of words is not as important as how these words are used, which necessitates close reading. Furthermore, the purpose of this analysis is to reveal assumptions, which are not always expressed in words, but rather are assumed to be understood by the reader as pre-existing knowledge. It is in these assumptions that we are most interested, and analysis will pay close attention to how Japan is understood and whether it corresponds to Orientalist notions and attitudes.

It is not enough to identify Orientalism or exaggeration, however, because this does not immediately deny the truth of these articles insofar as these technologies exist and are used. This study seeks to gain a better understanding of how Japan is Orientalised in the media by assessing the degree to which these articles are accurate, using robots as a specific example of a technology purportedly in use in Japan. As such, in addition to analysing the discourses in articles, the content of the articles themselves will be critically evaluated through interviews with the manufacturers of robots discussed, interviews with companies that use them, and observations of the robots in situ.

³ Due to the UK's diverse and multicultural population, not all of the top 10 publications and websites were in the English language, including the Polish news sources *Wirtualna Polska* and *Onet*. These non-English sources have been excluded from these studies, and a revised top 10 was constructed from English language sources only, these being: *BBC News*, *MSN*, *Daily Mail*, *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, *The Daily Mirror*, *The Independent*, *IB Times*, *The Metro*, *Sky News* (SimilarWeb 2016; Press Gazette 2015).

Introducing the robots for this study

Three robots were selected from the sample of news articles as examples of recent robots that have received frequent press coverage: Chihira, Kirobo and Pepper (see Figure 2, below). As well as their prominence in the sample, these robots were chosen because they are robots that are still in use at the time of writing and are thus theoretically observable, allowing the author to investigate the degree to which depiction deviates from actual use.



Figure 2. From left to right: Chihira Junco by Toshiba, Kirobo Mini by Toyota, Pepper by SoftBank Robotics (formerly Aldebaran Robotics)

Below, each of the three robots is introduced, and lists are given of the articles retrieved in the keyword searches. Thereafter, the articles are analysed, drawing comparisons between each of the robots. Following this analysis, claims in news articles will be set against interviews and observations carried out in Japan.

The electronics company Toshiba is perhaps best known in the UK for its computing and audio/visual equipment. In 2014, Toshiba announced the development of a humanoid communications robot, based on its own robotics research as well as with collaboration from Osaka University (well-known for robotics and home to roboticist Hiroshi Ishiguro) in the creation of a human-like appearance (Toshiba, 2014). The robot, called Chihira, features in many articles in the sample, and is the first example robot used in this study. The robot has seen multiple iterations: first Aico, then Junco,

and most recently, Kanae (*BBC News*, 9 March 2016). Across the five-year timespan, seven articles relating to the robot Chihira were published in British news publications (print and online). In Table 1, below, headlines and leads (if available, separated by a semi-colon) are given for each of these articles.

Headlines and leads (if available) for articles relating to Chihira

<i>MailOnline</i>	7 October 2014	Dinobots, ping-pong-playing bugs and tiny cheerleaders: The latest innovations in robotics go on display in Japan
<i>Metro</i>	9 January 2015	Could this Geisha android be the very first robot sex doll?
<i>MailOnline</i>	16 April 2015	Can I help you? Toshiba puts its humanoid robot to work in Tokyo department store
<i>Independent (online)</i>	27 June 2015	Humans: Are the scientists developing robots in danger of replicating the hit Channel 4 drama?; We want robots to do our drudge work, and to look enough like us for comfort
<i>The Times</i>	5 September 2015	The robot coming to take your Job; We are on the cusp of a techno-revolution that could make us all redundant, says Tom Whipple
<i>BBC News (online)</i>	9 March 2016	Toshiba's robot is designed to be more human-like
<i>The Mirror (online)</i>	10 March 2016	Robots could take over hotel industry by 2020 as travellers welcome assistance from automatons; Machines fitted with the latest artificial intelligence technology could soon be greeting guests at receptions, cleaning rooms and serving food, it's claimed

Table 1. *Headlines and leads (if available) for articles relating to Chihira*

The second robot, Kirobo, currently exists in two iterations: Kirobo, which gained international press coverage in 2013 as it became the first humanoid robot to go to space (*BBC News*, 4 August 2013), and Kirobo Mini, unveiled in 2015. Kirobo Mini also gained international press coverage for its communication abilities (*The Sunday Times*, 1 November 2015). Twelve articles were found relating to Kirobo, the headlines and leads (if available) for which have been given in Table 2, below. Of these articles, seven refer to the first Kirobo, whilst the remaining five refer to the Kirobo Mini.

Headlines and leads (if available) for articles relating to Kirobo

<i>The Guardian (online)</i>	27 June 2013	Kirobo the talking robot makes for one very creepy space companion
<i>BBC News (online)</i>	4 August 2013	Kirobo is world's first talking robot sent into space
<i>Metro</i>	4 August 2013	One giant leap for talking robots as humanoid 'astronaut' Kirobo heads for International Space Station from Japan
<i>The Independent</i>	10 August 2013	SPACE: THE LONELY FRONTIER; Of all the hardships astronauts face, lack of company can be the most daunting. Could a talking robot alleviate the problem? Tim Walker reports
<i>MailOnline</i>	5 September 2013	'One small step towards a brighter future for all': Kirobo goes down in history by becoming the first robot to talk in space
<i>Metro</i>	5 September 2013	Meet Kirobo: Japanese robot calls home from the International Space Station
<i>MailOnline</i>	29 August 2014	Kirobo the robot is stuck in space! Japanese robot sent to befriend astronauts has his trip home delayed – and says he is 'lonely' after his astronaut friend came back to Earth
<i>The Sunday Times</i>	1 November 2015	Not a toy, but Toyota's little bundle of joy for tired drivers; The car maker's tiny Kirobo robot is designed to keep motorists happy and alert on long trips. So why does it know no jokes? Dominic Tobin reports from Tokyo
<i>BBC News (online)</i>	3 October 2016	Toyota launches 'baby' robot for companionship
<i>The Independent (online)</i>	3 October 2013	Toyota unveils Kirobo Mini, a robot baby intended to make lonely people more happy [sic]
<i>MailOnline</i>	3 October 2016	Meet Toyota's tiny 'hope' robot: Talking Kirobo Mini sells for under \$400 but its real value is 'emotional', says firm
<i>The Sunday Times</i>	9 October 2016	Gadget fix; Take your GoPro to new heights, bond with a cute baby robot, relax in a virtual world, snap up an iPhone 7 rival and size up a belting wearable, writes Graeme Lennox

Table 2. *Headlines and leads (if available) for articles relating to Kirobo*

The third robot is Pepper, developed by SoftBank Robotics (formerly Aldebaran Robotics), and announced in 2014 (*BBC News*, 5 June 2014). Of the three robots, this is perhaps the most well-known Japanese robot, yielding nineteen articles in the keyword search, the most in the sample. According to news articles, Pepper can be found in hundreds of stores and businesses across Japan, used by retailers (including SoftBank's own stores), banks and other businesses as an alternative to human sales assistants.

Headlines and leads (if available) for articles relating to Pepper

<i>BBC News (online)</i>	5 June 2014	Softbank unveils 'human-like' robot Pepper
<i>MailOnline</i>	5 June 2014	Meet Pepper, the world's first robot that reads emotions: Cute droid knows if you're upset, cracks jokes and offers support
<i>Metro</i>	5 June 2014	'I want to be loved' Meet Pepper the humanoid robot who can read your emotions
<i>i (Independent Print Ltd)</i>	6 June 2014	Meet Pepper, the kind and caring robot who just wants to be loved; It could even be used to look after Japan's elderly
<i>MailOnline</i>	23 October 2014	Would YOU be friends with a robot? Human-like droids could banish loneliness and keep the elderly company, experts claim
<i>BBC News (online)</i>	18 June 2015	Pepper robot to go on sale to public in Japan
<i>MailOnline</i>	22 June 2015	Pepper the 'emotional' robot sells out in ONE MINUTE: 1,000 models of the Japanese humanoid sell for \$1,600 each
<i>MailOnline</i>	13 July 2015	What it's like to live with Pepper the 'emotional' robot: Humanoid gives compliments, offers advice and 'prattles on'
<i>Independent (online)</i>	22 July 2015	Social robots such as Pepper can help with household chores – but at what cost to privacy?; consumers are snapping up the humanoid-looking robots
<i>Metro</i>	15 September 2015	Are you going to be replaced by a robot?
<i>MailOnline</i>	23 September 2015	No sex please, we're robots! Buyers of hit new 'emotional robot' Pepper to sign contract vowing it won't be used indecently
<i>Express Online</i>	23 September 2015	Want this robot? First you must promise not to have SEX with it?
<i>Metro</i>	29 September 2015	This is one robot you definitely can't have sex with
<i>The Guardian</i>	29 September 2015	No sex, please, they're robots, says Japanese android firm; SoftBank tells customers buying Pepper they 'must not perform any sexual act' on the humanoid
<i>The Telegraph (online)</i>	28 November 2015	My weekend with Pepper, the world's first humanoid robot with emotions; An ambitious first step towards a new generation of household robots, Pepper talks, dances and feels. Danielle Demetriou took him home for a stay with her family
<i>MailOnline</i>	30 November 2015	Dressing for cybersuccess: Japanese fans of Pepper robotic assistant create online fashion boutique with everything from \$163 kimonos to makeup and jewellery
<i>MailOnline</i>	2 December 2015	Androids everywhere: From superhero suits to realistic humanoids, Japan showcases the latest in robotics
<i>MailOnline</i>	27 January 2016	The cellphone store staffed by ROBOTS: Pepper will greet customers, answer questions and sell handsets in Tokyo
<i>MailOnline</i>	24 March 2016	The phone store run by ROBOTS: Tokyo firm replaces staff with a team of Pepper the 'emotional' humanoids

Table 3. Headlines and leads (if available) for articles relating to Pepper

Emerging themes in articles about robots in Japan

Articles relating to each of the three robots were first analysed for key themes, utilising grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). General concepts present in each article were noted down as part of a process of open coding, following Berg's approach (2001). Once these concepts were listed, they were grouped together into more specific themes in a way that 'articulates a coherent understanding or theory of the phenomenon of study' (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

Key themes in articles about Chihira

Theme	Number of articles
Robots are human-like	6
Robots are eerie, unsettling	4
Robots taking over/uprising	3
Robots taking jobs from humans	3
Robots can solve/aid the issue of elderly care	3
Robots in jobs	1
Sex with robot	1

Table 4. *Key themes in articles about Chihira*

Of the seven articles that referred to Chihira, six focussed on her human-like appearance, with four describing it as being eerie or unsettling. This discomfort with the robot is also paralleled in three articles' references to robot uprisings and the threat of robots to humans' jobs. Observable in these articles is a variance in attitudes towards robots: three articles describe how robots like Chihira can be used to aid in the issue of elderly care in Japan's ageing society, whilst other articles portray this in a negative light, instead focussing on how robots will be taking jobs away from humans, such as in the hotel industry (*The Mirror*, 10 March 2016).

Articles about Kirobo mostly focussed on the companionship aspect of the robot, with eight of the twelve articles making some reference to this (see Table 5 below). Five of the articles relate to the Kirobo Mini, the commercially-available version of the robot designed to sit in car cupholders during journeys, offering conversation and capable of connecting to vehicle navigation and entertainment systems, and yet only two of these articles actually describe this purpose.

Key themes in articles about Kirobo

Theme	Number of articles
Companion for humans	8
Childlike	4
Driving companion	2
Emotional value	2
Robots as substitutes for children	2
Disturbing future	1
Robots can solve/aid the issue of elderly care	1
Robots are eerie/unsettling	1

Table 5. *Key themes in articles about Kirobo*

The table above also shows that two articles referred to the Kirobo Mini as a substitute for a real child. *The Independent* (3 October 2016) said that the robot ‘looks like a baby – and could even serve that purpose for people in Japan, where it will be sold and where falling birth rates mean there are fewer and fewer children’. *BBC News* also writes about this, but clarifies that this is not a purpose given by Toyota themselves, but rather speculation by other news outlets (3 October 2016). Despite this explanation, the article goes on to quote Professor Dautenhahn of the University of Hertfordshire, who calls this an ‘offensive’ suggestion (*BBC News*, 3 October 2016).

Moving on to Pepper, all articles relating to the robot refer to its ‘emotional’ capabilities, often through the epithetical moniker of the ‘emotional robot’. This refers to the robot’s apparent ability to recognise emotions from facial expressions. This is part of the discursive practice of the Pepper narrative, established first in articles reporting the unveiling of the robot. Approximately half of the articles refer to Pepper’s ‘employment’ in shops and other businesses throughout Japan, but as can be seen in Table 6, below, articles differ in their representation of the motivation of this and the levels of positivity regarding this use.

Key themes in articles about Pepper

Theme	Number of articles
Emotion recognition	19
Robots in jobs	9
Japan is already in an age of robots	8
Robots taking jobs from humans	8
Companion for humans	5
Robots can solve/aid the issue of elderly care	5
Sex with robot	4
Robot taking over/uprising	2
Robots can solve/aid labour shortage	1
Japanese culture of robots	1

Table 6. *Key themes in articles about Pepper*

In some cases, Pepper's use is pragmatic—the robot will help with the issue of Japan's labour shortages, and the related problem of care for the increasing elderly demographic. These articles present Pepper as a viable solution for a real problem, similar to articles about Chihira and Kirobo, as seen in Tables 4 and 5, respectively. Table 7, below, collates examples of this depiction of Japan's use of robots in a problem-solving capacity:

Examples of Japan's use of robots as pragmatic

Chihira	The goal is to design a companion for the elderly and people with dementia, to offer telecounselling in natural speech, communicate through sign language, and allow healthcare to keep an eye on elderly people (<i>MailOnline</i> , 7 October 2014)
Kirobo	Of all the hardships faced, lack of company can be the most daunting. Could a talking robot alleviate the problem? (<i>The Independent</i> , 10 August 2013)
Pepper	During my visit I watched Pepper , an endearing 4ft humanoid programmed to read and respond to emotions, lead a group of patients in a singalong, followed by basic aerobic exercises. With its soothing childlike voice and enthusiastic hand gestures, the robot has stimulated residents who are often unresponsive to humans, according to staff.

Table 7. *Examples of Japan's use of robots as pragmatic***The danger of robots**

While the examples of pragmatic uses for robots show Japan's use of robots being presented positively, in other articles there is also a negative depiction of robots, which are taking jobs away from humans, as can be seen in the examples below:

Examples of references to robots taking jobs

<i>Metro</i> , 15 September 2015	The end is nigh. Robots will apparently take over 35% of our jobs by 2035.
<i>MailOnline</i> , 15 April 2016	Claims made by an expert in artificial intelligence predict that in less than five years, office jobs will disappear completely to the point where machines will replace humans.
<i>MailOnline</i> , 14 July 2016	it also refused to answer whether is [sic] was looking to take our reporter's job, simply waving and saying goodbye at that point
<i>MailOnline</i> , 21 July 2016	As robots increasingly make their way into the workforce, some have argued that they will soon be taking over many traditionally human jobs.

Table 8. *Examples of references to robots taking jobs*

As Table 9 below shows, some articles take this one step further and draw on Western popular culture to describe potential uprisings by robots, with references to robots like the Terminator (*Metro*, 5 June 2014). This language reinforces a discourse of fear, permeating articles about robots. Rhetoric in articles suggest an increasing pervasion of robots throughout all aspects in life.

Examples of references to robot uprisings

<i>Metro</i> , 5 June 2014	As any science fiction fan knows, Terminator robots could enslave us all. But our would-be cyborg overlords will have to get through Pepper first.
<i>The Independent (online)</i> , 22 July 2015	For all the stories about the perils of artificial intelligence, these machines are strangely disarming
<i>MailOnline</i> , 14 July 2016	[on Pepper not being able to answer whether it wants to rule the world] a worrying refusal that does not bode well for the future of humanity.
<i>The Sunday Times</i> , 22 October 2017	Yet in the West, the mantra that the " robots are coming" is still often seen as more of a threat to jobs than an opportunity.

Table 9. *Examples of references to robot uprisings*

While in many articles there is a sense of fear that reliance on robots could lead to a robot uprising, there were also articles that used the case of Japan to show that this did not have to be the case, pointing to the way Japan has produced robots that are friendly and people want to interact with them. While this is somewhat positive, it nevertheless reinforces a sense of difference between the reader, presumably British, and the Japanese. The British reader has apprehensions about robots, but not the Japanese.

In some articles, however, this is taken to the other extreme—that the Japanese are eccentrically passionate about robots, even to the point of a kind of techno-fetishism

and sexual inclinations towards the machines. Below are some examples of news articles that have made this association:

Examples of references to potential sex uses for robots

<i>Metro</i> , 9 January 2015	Toshiba has developed a Japanese Geisha-bot that will sing, talk to you – and potentially do a bit more.
<i>MailOnline</i> , 23 September 2015	Some experts now say sex robots far more sensitive, attractive and 'emphatic' than Pepper - which humans could seemingly fall in love with - are just a few years away.
<i>Express Online</i> , 23 September 2015	PEPPER is an advanced robotic companion that can offer emotional advice and make small talk with its owner. But just don't expect to have sex with it, its creators have warned buyers.
<i>The Guardian</i> , 29 September 2015	While many fret about a dystopian future in which robots turn on their human creators, experts on robot ethics have warned about the exploitation of the machines for sex.
<i>The Guardian</i> , 29 September 2015	[...] as sexual partners, Japan's new generation of android robots are off limits.
<i>Metro</i> , 29 September 2015	While he has very sweet eyes and all, we're not sure why (or even how) people would want to get down and dirty with him.

Table 10. *Examples of references to potential sex uses for robots*

The Chihira robot was referred to as a 'geisha' robot, implying that the robot had been designed for purposes of a sexual nature, though in the content of the article it makes no reference to the ways in which the robots are geisha, beyond being designed as an attractive Japanese woman. Rather, it is assumed that because the robots are made to look like Japanese women, they must be intended as geisha. The use of this word, too, evokes stereotypical depictions of Japan, specifically traditional Japan, as geisha are an old-fashioned concept, often used in an English-speaking context as synonymous with a Japanese prostitute, although this is not an accurate translation. The attribution of the 'geisha' description to the robot, a passive machine programmed to follow commands (here, give directions and answer simple questions), also invokes and reinforces the stereotype of Japanese women, and Asian women more broadly, as submissive and available sexually.⁴

In the case of Pepper, several articles took this association further by writing articles about the condition that those who lease a Pepper unit must not have sex with it (e.g.

⁴ The sexual availability of Japanese and Asian women is a stereotypical depiction sometimes referred to as 'yellow cab' or イエローキャブ (*Ierō Kyabu*). In the late 80s and 90s there was a brief sensation in the Japanese media about Japanese women rejecting Japanese men in favour of Western men. A study by Uzama in 2012 found that this belief was an influencing factor for some tourists to visit Japan (Uzama 2012, 147). For more information about the term, see Kelsky 1994.

Express Online, 23 September 2015). However, in articles the exact wording of the agreement is not given. Indeed, this is just one item on a list of eighteen 'prohibited' actions proscribed by SoftBank, among others including carrying out illegal activities, infringing intellectual property and copyright, and defamation (SoftBank Robotics, 2018), though these are unmentioned.

Within Saidian Orientalist discourse, the East is portrayed as lacking the morality of the West, and similarly within Techno-Orientalism, while Japan is technologically advanced, it is inferior to the West because it is morally inferior. In modern times, Japan's supposed immorality and sexual perversion has often been linked with *otaku* culture. Sharon Kinsella's book *Adult Manga: Culture and Power in Contemporary Japanese Society* (2000: 11), discusses the 'moral panic' that took place in Japan and internationally regarding the content of some manga, which depicted sexual violence as well as *lolicon* (cartoon girls that appear childlike) engaged in sexual activity. Hinton links this to Britain's particular situation where in the 80s and 90s, home media was subject to censorship to ensure children did not see anything inappropriate, including American horror movies and also Japanese anime (2015: n.p.). Anime was difficult to access and often assumed to be just tentacles and violence, and Hinton demonstrates that this image persists by once again taking the example of the BBC documentary *No Sex Please, We're Japanese*, in which Akihabara is presented as a hotspot for soft porn manga (2015: n.p.). Taken within the wider discourse where we already have articles about a 'geisha' robot, there are clear associations between the Japanese and sexual deviance, which these articles reinforce.

Kirobo, meanwhile, has also been included in this eccentric discourse. In 2016, Toyota appeared at technology expo CEATEAC in Tokyo, at which the author was in attendance. Here, the company showed off the commercial iteration of the Kirobo robot, the Kirobo Mini, which it had announced the previous year. While the robot was promoted as a pocketable companion robot, designed to fit into a car's drink holder, as we have seen above some articles claimed very different purposes: that the robot was a substitute baby for childless couples in Japan, or even that it served to 'stir' maternal instincts in Japanese women. This was linked to varying factors, such as the declining birth-rate, lack of interest in sex, and the busy work lives of the Japanese. Techno-Orientalist discourse is present here, too. Japan is presented as possessing advanced technology in the form of robots, but these robots are presented in the context of Japan's problems, such as an ageing population and a declining birth-rate. Its decision

to apparently choose technology as a solution is shown in a negative light, with the (erroneous) suggestion that Kirobo Mini could act as a surrogate child branded 'offensive' (*BBC News*, 3 October 2016).

Observations and interviews

Whilst attitudinally these discourses are different, they nonetheless position Japan as being either already in the future, technologically speaking, or working towards a futuristic society. By locating Japan in the future, Japan is distanced from Britain and the West temporally, in addition to its geographical and cultural distance. Indeed, in the examples shown above, this distance is used to emphasise Japan's difference to Britain and the West. What differs between the depictions is whether this difference is positive or negative.

In addition to exposing Orientalist discourse through the CDA, the state of robotics as portrayed in news articles was tested against interview and observation data gathered in Japan, in order to assess the degree to which news depictions Orientalised or otherwise exaggerated about the use of robots in Japan. Interviews were carried out with representatives from Chihira's manufacturer, Toshiba, and Kirobo and Kirobo Mini's manufacturer, Toyota. An interview could not be arranged with SoftBank, but one of the companies to have leased Pepper for retail use, Nestlé, agreed to interview.

Observing the Chihira Junco robot at the AQUA CITY shopping centre, it was evident that the description 'geisha' was inaccurate. While the news article (*Metro*, 9 January 2015) was describing the previous iteration of the robot, Chihira Aico, visually the two are identical, and Junco possesses more advanced capabilities, with more fluid movements and programmed to respond in Chinese. However, despite being more advanced than Aico, the interviewee from Toshiba said that Junco had no AI (artificial intelligence) and could not directly interact with people, although such features were in development (Hayes, 2016a). The claim that the robot would be able to act as a carer, 'sing, talk to you – and potentially do a bit more' (*Metro*, 9 January 2015) was not only shown to be an exaggeration, but evidence of confusion between the terms 'robot' and 'AI'. AI, which we will briefly define as the ability for machines to learn, reason, and correct itself. We may even extend this crude definition to include the possession of self-awareness. Importantly, a computer or machine possessing AI is capable of making decisions. Although robots can

possess AI, not all do. The robots described in this article do not, but rather are programmed to carry out specific tasks and to answer specific questions.

One of the aspects of Chihira that journalists picked up on was its human-like appearance, resembling a Japanese woman (or, as we have seen, a geisha). According to the interviewee, the robot *is* Japanese. That is, it was important that the robot resemble a Japanese woman for the purposes of establishing a relationship between the robot and those who interact with it (Hayes, 2016a). Furthermore, the interviewee demonstrated Self-Orientalism by stating that the Japanese are more readily able to accept robots than those from other countries, it being part of the culture (Hayes, 2016a).

According to an interview with a representative from Toyota, Kirobo Mini is intentionally childlike and is intended to provide ‘meaningful’ communication through its emulation of emotive responses (Hayes, 2016c), but the leap from this official narrative to the claims made in English-language foreign news sources is indicative of an attitude of Japan that is strange, pathetic and technofetishist; it is characterised and defined by its perceived difference. In the robot’s role, stated by the manufacturer itself, Kirobo Mini bears similarities to the ‘Assistant’ apps found on smartphones and in smart speakers, albeit anthropomorphised.

Regarding the reception of the robot, while at the time of the interview the robot had only just been announced and thus not on sale to the public, the interviewee was able to comment on the immediate media reception to Kirobo Mini. The interviewee was aware of reports about the robot being used as a surrogate baby, but said that this was not the intention (Hayes, 2016c). While the robot is certainly intended to provide a conversation partner to someone who is lonely, it lacks the context of *why* that person is lonely, namely because they are driving home from work with no one to talk to (Hayes, 2016c). Indeed, the article in *The Independent* (3 October 2016) makes no reference to the intention for the robot as a car accessory, not even the carry case designed to fit into a car drinks holder. Instead the article focusses on Japan’s population decline ‘where falling birth rates mean there are fewer and fewer children’, and suggests that Kirobo Mini is intended to fill this gap (3 October 2016).

Although the interviewee provided explanations that counter the Techno-Orientalist narrative of Kirobo Mini as a replacement for children, the interviewee nonetheless displayed similar Self-Orientalism to the interview from Toshiba. The interviewee said that the Japanese had a long history with robots and were thus more likely to accept them

than in other countries, citing robots from popular culture, such as Doraemon and robots in anime (Hayes, 2016c).

In an interview with a representative from Nestlé, one of the companies using the robot Pepper in a retail setting, the interviewee admitted that the robot was a marketing gimmick, designed to improve sales, due to shop staff not possessing adequate knowledge of their products (Hayes, 2016b). The company does, however, see real potential in the use of robots in a sales capacity and is continuing to develop the capabilities of the robots it has leased (Hayes, 2016b). This interviewee did not display any kind of Self-Orientalism in describing the success of the robot, but instead focussed on the effectiveness of it as a sales tool, acknowledging that it could be implemented in other countries where Nestlé operates.

Based on the author's own interactions with Pepper robots, the depiction of the capabilities of Pepper in the press is somewhat exaggerated. Most of the interaction with the robot is done through a tablet computer embedded in the robot's chest, rather than as a two-way conversation, as per the image perpetuated in the media. Moreover, while the robot has seen wide deployment, in the author's own observations, Pepper was rarely being used, or was switched off altogether, thus calling into question the depictions of Japan as robot-obsessed.

Indeed, an empirical study of Japanese attitudes to robots found that '[in] contrast to popular belief that the Japanese love robots, our results indicate that the Japanese are concerned about the impact robots might have on society and that they are particularly concerned about the emotional aspects of interacting with robots' (Bartneck *et al.*, 2007: 225). Although this does not negate the claim that the Japanese are generally more accepting of robots, it does demonstrate that this is not a blind willingness. When cultural explanations are taken away, Japanese attitudes towards robots are not necessarily different to anywhere else. For example, a 2018 paper by Jasmin Bernotat and Friederike Eyssel demonstrated that Japanese and German attitudes towards the acceptance of robots in the home were broadly similar, with both groups displaying anxiety towards robots (Bernotat & Eyssel, 2018).

MacDorman, Vasudevan and Ho (2009: 494) posit that Japanese willingness to work towards a robot-filled future is built upon a heightened awareness of the technology's current limitations, unlike the Western journalists who report on the topic. Instead, it could be argued that these depictions of robots in Japan tell us more about Western perceptions of robots and their usage in Japan, and also the limitations of these perceptions.

In the BBC Radio 4 documentary, *Misunderstanding Japan*, Christopher Harding makes the point that Japan is 'a country that's really a lot like the UK' (Harding, 2015), but that knowledge of the country is limited by its representation in the media. The issue is, however, that news is perceived as being an accurate representation of reality. If it were not, 'fake news' would not be such a contentious issue. There is an implicit trust in news reporting, particularly when it comes from sources such as the *BBC* or from publications such as *The Guardian* or *The Independent*, which, although British, have global readerships.

An Orientalism for every season

Techno-Orientalism, Self-Orientalism, Wacky Orientalism. While all different styles of Orientalism, they are rooted in the same categorisation processes that distinguish between the self and Other. The existence of multiple attitudes towards Japan's use of robots is less a contradiction, but rather represents the mutability and fluidity of Orientalism as applied to Japan.

By situating Japan in the future, where the 'idea of companion robots is already widely accepted' (*MailOnline*, 3 October 2016), Japan is portrayed through the lens of Techno-Orientalism. This is evident from the rhetoric of articles that employ a discourse of robots taking jobs or rising up, leading to a de-humanising of society. Here, Japan has become hyper-technified, and thus inferior to the West, which knows how to strike a balance.

Self-Orientalism was also evident in articles, wherein journalists had repeated the official discourse of the robots, most notably the repeated mention of Pepper's 'emotional' capabilities, which was described in SoftBank's original press release (SoftBank, 2014). The interview with Nestlé confirmed this, with the interviewer acknowledging that they have actively engaged in hype, using Pepper as a marketing gimmick, albeit a successful one (Hayes, 2016b). Moreover, the two other interviewees also perpetuated the notion of Japanese exceptionalism themselves by pointing to a Japanese culture of robots (Hayes, 2016a and 2016c). Indeed, the interviewee from Toshiba claimed that Japan's robot culture meant that the Japanese were more accepting of robots, and responsible for Japan's lead in the industry (Hayes, 2016a).

Wacky Orientalism is present, too, found in the negative portrayals of robots as solutions for childless Japanese or as potential sex partners. Japan's persistence in making robots shows that 'Japanese consortiums need to watch more films' (*The Guardian*, 27 June

2013), because, in the example of Kirobo, sending a robot to space can only result in it turning against humans.

These different kinds are activated in order to serve whatever depiction of Japan is needed at a particular time. Regardless of whether Japan is presented as a positive model for a technological future or a deviant, hyper-technified culture, it is nonetheless defined by its difference and opposition to the self, in this case the British news media, and by extension the British public reading the article.

Conclusion

This study examined the depictions of robots in Japan in British news articles written since the Triple Disaster of 11 March 2011. It particularly focussed on the underlying discourses in narratives about Japan, drawing on the theory of Orientalism and the three significant strands that have been developed with consideration to the case of Japan: Techno-Orientalism, Self-Orientalism, and Wacky Orientalism.

Analysis of reporting carried out by British news publications, both in print and online, between 2012 and 2017 show that an Orientalist framework is in place for discussing Japan, with the majority of the articles appealing to preconceived notions about Japan. What differed within these depictions was the kind of Orientalism that was applied. Traditional Orientalism as conceived by Said was for the most part absent from discourse pertaining to robots. Instead, Techno-Orientalist and Wacky Orientalist discourses were used to contextualise and provide an explanatory framework for the news articles. This study has shown commonality in the discourse about robots in Japan, but these articles were written by different journalists at a variety of publications. Further research is needed to understand why journalists write these articles, whether it is the product of a lack of knowledge about the subject, a belief based on personal experience, or the demands of the profession to write articles that will generate clicks.

By looking at articles from a variety of sources, this study has demonstrated that not only are there common assumptions in the British press about Japan and about robots in Japan, but that in many cases the article is less concerned with what is happening in Japan and more in its implications for Britain. Hargreaves, Inthorn and Speers found this in their study of press representation of Japan (Hargreaves, Inthorn & Speers, 2001: 29), but the case of robots in Japan is far less explicit. The articles sampled for this study all concerned the implementation or sales of robots in Japan, with no mention of their use abroad. In

spite of this, they are resituated within a British context. Thus, the negative attitudes towards robots in Japan say less of the successes of these robots and their implementation and more of implicit British attitudes towards the technology. Articles frequently made reference to robot uprisings and Terminators, tropes of Western popular culture, rather than Japanese culture. While typically made for humorous effect as opposed to a genuine fear, they subsequently reduce Japanese robotics to a novelty and part of the Wacky Orientalist discourse. Other articles appealed to the Techno-Orientalist discourse of Japan having too much technology and the technification of society by warning of the risks of robots taking human jobs.

The study differed from previous analyses of press depictions of Japan through its inclusion of observation and interview methods, which were used to assess the degree to which depictions of robots in Japan were exaggerated. In addition to showing that robots are not as widely used as reported and certainly not ubiquitous, by interviewing representatives from robot manufacturers Toyota and Toshiba, the study showed that the idea that Japan has a unique relationship with robots is promoted within Japan, demonstrating a Self-Orientalist attitude within Japanese robotics.

Robots and technology in general represent a useful example for examining the representation of Japan abroad. As this article has shown, since robots began to appear in factories in the 1960s, Japan has held the title of Robot Kingdom, even as it has lost ground to other countries and the Fukushima disaster revealed that its robots did not have the capabilities people thought. Will this discourse continue as developments in robotics progress and robots become more commonplace in everyday life in Britain as well as in Japan? In 2020 Japan will host the Summer Olympics and Paralympics, and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has called for a 'robot revolution' (Kemburi, 2016: n.p.) and even proposed a Robot Olympics. While such an event would imply participation from robots worldwide, it will be interesting to see whether this has the effect of showing robots to be a global technology, or if it will reinforce Techno-Orientalist and Self-Orientalist, and perhaps even Wacky Orientalist notions of Japan as unique.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christopher J. HAYES is a researcher specialising in British media representation and perceptions of Japan. He co-organised the 2018 international workshop in Cardiff, and has since worked with MIRA as Communications Officer. He obtained his PhD in Japanese Studies from Cardiff University in 2019. His thesis examined depictions of technology and Japan in the British press. Japan is often presented as a highly futuristic country, full of robots and the like. However, in the last few years, another, contradictory discourse of Japan as low-tech has emerged. His research explores how both of these depictions are presented in the British press, asking how they can co-exist, as well as investigating the degree to which these depictions rely on stereotypes. He now works as Project Officer in the Centre for Japanese Studies at the University of East Anglia, UK. From September 2019, he will take up the post of visiting foreign researcher at the Kyoto Institute, Library and Archives for 6 months while he investigates the effects of the Rugby World Cup on foreign visitor perceptions of Japan and tourism.

Teaching Japanese Popular Culture – Deborah Shamoon & Chris McMorran (Eds)

Ann Arbor (Mi, USA): Association for Asian Studies, 2016, Series 'Asia Past & Present: New Research from AAS', no. 13, 307 pages.

Review by Marco PELLITTERI | Shanghai International Studies University, China

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Deborah Shamoon, Chris McMorran, and Kam Thiam Huat organised a 'Teaching Japanese Popular Culture' international conference that was held at the National University of Singapore in 2012, with the support of the Japan Foundation. The book, however, more than a printed upshot of that athenaeum is a production of the Association for Asian Studies, which has its headquarters in the United States. In this sense, *Teaching Japanese Popular Culture* is to be framed as a US-American book, edited and produced in the United States by the Aas. I will get back to this detail in the final remarks of this review.

Now, anybody who ever edited a book formed of contributions by various and diverse authors perfectly knows about all the issues that may come along. One of the most frequent is to find an organic trajectory, a path, an overall meaningful structure out of what often is, at first, a discontinuous group of writings that not necessarily have much in common with each other.

If the editors are not inspired, or the materials selected or available aren't mutually matching enough, there is the serious risk to be in the presence not of an actual book, but of a simple — however respectable — collection of essays that are, possibly, very good when singularly considered but that do not make a deeper sense when thought of as an ensemble. I guess we all have read and used at least one of these collections, and we share about it or them that vague feeling of unaccomplishment or partial non-necessity, saving from them specific chapters that better intercepted our interests. This kind of edited collections is after all not so hard to meet in bibliographical searches or on our own

bookshelves, especially when they are the printed result of previously organised symposia, workshops, or particular conference sessions: there is a general topic that ideally bends together all the papers, but it is hard, with all your good will, to really spot an internal consistency in the whole collection in terms of theoretical framework, methodologies, writing styles, attitude toward the themes, and final ‘message’.

Therefore, when we are in the presence of a book of collected essays coming from a conference that overcomes all those possible shortcomings, it really is a pleasant reading and a useful tool. This is precisely the case of *Teaching Japanese Popular Culture*: a collective work that is not without limits (as I illustrate in the course of the review), but presents itself as a coordinated, interdisciplinary approach to the problems of teaching ‘on’, ‘with’, and ‘about’ Japanese popular culture (from now on, Jpc) or, at least, a selected set of themes from it. The editors have been very careful and able to interconnect the chapters, to insert cross-references between them, and in the end to give the reader an organic, internally consistent piece of scholarship.

The collection, after an introduction co-written by the editors, is organised in three parts: the first focuses on ‘The Big Picture: On Curriculum Design’ (three chapters), the second is titled ‘In the Media Studies Classroom: Teaching about Popular Culture’ (two chapters), and the third is on ‘Using Popular Culture in Teaching’ (five chapters). The conclusion by McMorran constitutes something like an eleventh chapter, because rather than summing up the discourses of the book, chooses to be a (useful) discussion on the future of teaching Jpc online: a destiny and, up to a point, a current situation shared by pretty much any field of academia.

Coming to a slightly closer analysis and assessment of the book’s contents.

What is Jpc? Equally important (and logically antecedent), what is popular culture? The theoretical issue of defining the meanings and explaining the dimensions of ‘popular culture’ should be the first main point to deal with in the context of this book not because every work on a given topic must reinvent the wheel, but because a collection of essays on how Jpc is taught should define in clear terms what we are talking about when we talk about it. Fortunately, the book starts in fact, in its introduction by the editors, with an indirect, by-induction-definition of Jpc, and then delves into a more explicit discourse on it: Shamoan and McMorran begin proposing an overview of initiatives, facts, and cultural forms such as the ‘Cool Japan’ project

initiated by the Japanese government, animation, comics, video games, films, pop music from Japan, so suggesting what Jpc could be intended as; and in the second section of the introduction they reflect upon 'Defining Japanese Popular Culture'. The editors show great intellectual honesty in declaring that they had and wanted to make a choice of cultural sectors and forms to include in the definition of Jpc, excluding others not out of a prescriptive attitude but because it would have been difficult to contain the entirety of the possible zones of Jpc in one book: the chapters in effect deal, besides the topics listed above, 'only' with film, fashion, tv drama, art, and design. The intellectual honesty moreover lies in that they also mention a fundamental precedent in the scholarship, that John Whittier Treat who in 1996 edited *Contemporary Japan and Popular Culture* and included, in the forms and formats by which Jpc can present itself, quite a varied array of things such as *sumo* and horse racing (Japan is a world-renown site also for this latter sport). But there also exist many interesting and informative sources for a wider audience, such as the dated and entertaining *The Encyclopedia of Japanese Pop Culture* (1997) by Mark Schilling, in which the array of Jpc's facets is very wide. We have to understand, though, that this book's editors had a precise academic goal, which was to explain how to teach Jpc and how Jpc is taught, not to illustrate the entire universe of Jpc.

Hence, Shamoon and McMorran attempt to justify and ground the choice of fields analysed in the book. Nonetheless such selection, even within the context of a book about teaching Jpc and *not* about Jpc per se, still appears as a limitation that is both theoretical and empirical. Especially to younger scholars, this choice and organisation of topics and fields of Japanese popular culture in the university classroom might lead to an overrepresentation of forms currently *à la page* among many millennials around the globe: anime, manga, 'cute'-designed commodities, urban youth trends like the 'Gothic Lolita' fashion styles, etc. There is actually space, in specific chapters, for Japanese tv talk shows and soap operas, or for the usage and evolution of kimono; that is, for *mainstream* forms of Jpc. But the attention paid in the book to *subcultural* forms of Jpc is overwhelming and constitutes, on my opinion, a conceptual as well as operational bias in framing the core aspects of any popular culture. Popular culture can be intended according to different ideas of a society, of a culture, and of a populace; you may use Fiske, Gramsci, Adorno and Horkheimer, or Marx (and many more), but I believe you should not so overtly privilege certain areas of culture over others that

would equally fall within the field of the ‘popular’ and, moreover, are consumed by huge crowds. In the book, moreover, one has the feeling that the only recipients of Jpc are youths. But we know it’s not the case.

Despite this and the other, previously hinted-at possible flaws in the theoretical ground and operational execution of the book’s proposal on the delimitations of Jpc, the collection is pure gold: it offers a rich set of didactic frameworks and practical experiences that could be followed, adopted, and reproduced by other teachers who organise courses related to aspects of Jpc. More: one of the core features of the book is, as I wrote at the beginning of this review, the fact that it deals with the three possible ways of managing Jpc (or any other topic, I would add) in the classroom: the ‘on’, the ‘with’, and the ‘about’. Great emphasis is in fact devoted to the teaching of Japanese language and of more general traits of Japanese society and history using popular culture, not as a bait and switch but as an unavoidable area to consider if we want to learn about a country, its people, and their national culture.

[A summary description of the Table of Contents.](#)

The introduction (Shamoon and McMorran) explains the book and presents some core considerations on the academic pedagogy of Jpc, crucially useful for any teacher in the field.

Chapter 1 (McLaren and Spies) is titled ‘Risk and Potential: Establishing Critical Pedagogy in Japanese Popular Culture Courses’ and is a key to understand the different ways in which Jpc can be thought of before being taught. The authors list five ‘paradigmatic approaches’ that they call *pop to prop*, *proper prop*, *pop as propaganda*, *poco pop*, and *pop to prep*. This typology is very useful for teachers or potential teachers as well as for scholars at large. However, it also repeats a frequent conceptual and lexical ambiguity between *popular* and *pop*, whereas the latter is a wide subset of the former, but they are definitely not synonyms. This ambiguity returns in the book regularly and I would say it is not a bias of *this* book but a conceptual flaw of much, multidisciplinary scholarship (not only in English) on popular culture. That said, this first chapter is a precious contribution to orient any scholar in framing Jpc.

Chapter 2 (Armour and Iida) is titled ‘Talking Japanese Popular Culture at an Australian University’. It is a beautiful case study that holds a more general validity, in that it can be applied to courses on any topic in the humanities and still, it is highly insightful on the peculiarities of teaching Jpc to non-Japanese students. Among the most useful elements,

there is the set of reflections on how Jpc influences non-Japanese observers to form representations of Japan.

Chapter 3 (Wagner) is titled 'Teaching Popular Culture through Research-Oriented Learning at a German University'. I looked at this specific chapter, personally, with particular consideration and curiosity for two reasons: because it is the only European example in the book and because the initiative that Wagner recounts about her didactic work (2007-13) at Goethe University in Frankfurt included invited lectures by external scholars, and I happened to be one of those scholars who gave a lecture there, in June 2009. The 'Cool Japan working group' established at that university saw the active participation of teachers and students, and consisted of many classic and less conventional activities, informed by a critical and interactive teaching method, typical enough of German approaches to humanities. The initiative ideally culminated in a student trip to Japan in 2010. It consisted of official meetings with local authorities and scholars in important universities, visits to some key sites such as big comics publishers and video game companies, and the writing of individual and group reports, as well as more informal but highly useful visits to core places of Jpc, namely in Tokyo and Kyoto.

Chapter 4 (Sugawa-Shimada) is titled 'Contested Classrooms: Reconstructions of "Japaneseness" through Anime'. It opens the second part of the book and is a particularly revealing essay because it is about a Japanese professor teaching on Jpc in a Japanese university to Japanese and non-Japanese students, using both the English and Japanese languages. The author explains her experience about a daily reality of Japanese Studies departments around the world these days: the main motivation of many students who pick courses on/with Jpc is their previous and current engagement with specific forms of Jpc such as manga, anime, or subcultural trends linked to Japan's youth cultures at large. From the relative familiarity with Jpc, a diversified range of ideas about 'Japan' and 'Japaneseness' stem in the minds of young students, and these ideas largely vary among *Japanese* and *non-Japanese* students. Here steps in the concept of 'contesting class' introduced by Sugawa-Shimada, who illustrates how notions of what is supposed to be 'Japanese' in Jpc may be in mutual contrast not only between Japanese and foreign students but also within the subgroups of Japanese students and non-Japanese students. The experience of teaching to multinational student groups, however, is to be assessed (as the author did) positively, in that it constitutes a rough portrait of the variability of Jpc's impact on the ideas about

Japanese culture and society, and can constitute a solid base upon which to conduct educational discourses on stereotypes, prejudice, and misconceptions.

Chapter 5 (Barsdley) is titled ‘Teaching Fashion as Japanese Popular Culture’. It is perhaps the most explicit essay on how an entire course on Jpc is built and carried out: Barsdley explains the features and technicalities of her course on Japanese fashion, opening her chapter with a thorough discussion on the conceptual aspects of her course’s topic. In this sense, this chapter can be used as a very solid paradigm on how to lay out a course for today’s students; and it also constitutes the tale of an actual experience, in that Barsdley explains the reactions of her students to the classroom activities. The essay is, besides, a very pleasant reading per se, because it illustrates elements of Japanese clothing and fashion that are not the daily bread of most scholars of Jpc (this reviewer included). Notwithstanding the absolutely interesting facets of Japanese fashion related to the negotiations of gender through (or in spite of) clothes.

The book’s third part starts with Chapter 6 (King), titled ‘Confessions of an Anime and Manga Ignoramus: Approaches to Japanese Contemporary Popular Culture for the K-12 Classroom’. While the chapter does not offer particular insight on Jpc — as the author candidly declares — it gives a very useful and technical description and explanation of some internal mechanisms of academic pedagogy and didactics in the humanities. King is a scholar of Japanese modern and contemporary art, hence her courses involving Jpc have the broader aim to introduce arts to students, at times also through popular culture (and, by extension, popular arts). The key case she uses to illustrate her teaching is a discourse on Takashi Murakami and the problematic threshold between ‘high’ and ‘popular’ art, in general and in Japan especially. In Murakami’s art works are (not so) hidden many critical aspects of past and current Japanese history and society, and King explains how she handled them for/with her students. Particularly interesting and cogent is the section on cultural appropriation/‘appreciation’, with reference to the famous/notorious music video-clip *Unconditionally* by US pop-star Katy Perry. The discussion opens the floor in the classroom to lively and educational debates on sensible topics such as Orientalism, ‘white privilege’, stereotypes, exoticism, and other related themes.

Chapter 7 (Shamoon) is titled ‘Co-Teaching and Foreign Languages Across the Curriculum’. It recounts the important experiment of explaining Jpc through teaching Japanese language *and* vice versa, conducted with a fellow teacher. After contextualising and illustrating the practice of co-teaching and its pros and cons as established in the

field so far, Shamoon tells us how she engaged, at the University of Notre Dame (United States) in 2004-5, in co-teaching Jpc together with Japanese language teacher Noriko Hanabusa. The account is very precious in that it explains the delicate measure to take in order to build and conduct a functional, clear course and at the same time valorise the role of both teachers, without penalising the figure and academic authoritativeness of the language teacher as a mere support to the Jpc teacher. However, the chapter is not only this, and it delves into many more details and pedagogical considerations on both aspects of the course: critical thinking upon Jpc's contents and effective language learning in context, through examples and situations that are more lively than usual.

Chapter 8 (Yamada) is titled 'Using Japanese Television Media in Content-Based Language Learning'. Like all the chapters that focus on areas of Jpc going beyond the holy trinity of manga-anime-video games, this is a very interesting essay on how mainstream popular culture is used to teach Japanese. Television, in Japan like everywhere, is an extraordinarily precise looking glass of real language used by real people in real situations. The tv programs selected by the author, moreover, offer the chance to learn much about the representations and representational reinforcements of some aspects of Japanese society, such as differences in wording as class- or gender or psychological markers, and the usage of certain terms or phrases as mean of confirmation of national cultural identity that is underlined by these television shows. The validity of these materials, I will add, go far beyond the teaching and understanding of Jpc and Japanese language, and can be used in courses of sociology and mass communication.

Chapter 9 (Dorsey) is titled 'Performing Gender in the Prisonhouse of a (Foreign) Language'. It is an essay 'Blending Japanese language teaching and cultural studies', as its subtitle explains, and was for me a very intense reading, one that should interest any sociologist and any scholar in gender studies, besides researchers and teachers of Jpc and Japanese language. The chapter, however, looks to me a bit too engaged and thesis-driven in the topic from a heavily 'western' (read: US-American) standpoint. In other words: it bears an implicitly judgmental approach to the ways gender roles and conventions are reproduced in the Japanese language. In this sense, there is some exoticist, top-down perspective involved here that can hardly please scholars sharing instead more disenchanted and relativistic attitudes towards the symmetries and asymmetries of Japanese (or any) language in positioning and reinforcing societal norms.

The last chapter (Seaton) is titled ‘Pop(ular) Culture in the Japanese History Classroom’. The author is the one who, on my opinion, more clearly and explicitly posits the fundamental distinction to be made between *popular* and *pop* culture. Seaton is a historian of Japan and what he provides is a lively example on how to teach Japanese history using popular and pop cultures, putting them in a diachronic perspective and thus explaining and recontextualising not only the facts of Japan in the modern and contemporary ages, but also the transitions and evolutions of Japan’s pop/ular culture over time and space. The most significant contribution of this excellent chapter (among many others) is the notion, very useful to students and historians alike, that artifacts pertaining to popular and pop culture — manga, advertising, cinema, etc. — do bear a historical value and documental validity as objects of analysis that can tell us much on the era and the people such items come from. What is additionally interesting is that Seaton does not limit the materials of his classes to *Japanese* artifacts, historical pictures, and comics dealing with historical topics — magnificent in this sense his analysis of a wartime picture of uncertain origin and the political manga books by Yoshinori Kobayashi — but also includes cultural products made abroad and representing, in various ways, ‘Japan’.

The factor I highlighted in the review’s opening (that the book implicitly presents itself an US-American production, despite being composed of chapters written by scholars from different countries) makes the collection highly interesting both in positive and, if you will, somewhat in negative. I will argument this perception of mine in three short, conclusive remarks.

The first remark that came to my mind after having read the book is that, although some of the approaches proposed may give the feeling that they could be applicable to classrooms and universities located in English-speaking countries only, the general issues explained and the methodologies suggested can hold a more general validity.

The second remark is that it appears to me that the teachers/contributors are, anyway and in partial contrast with the above observation, mainly speaking to an audience of fellow scholars who teach in the English language, no matter what country they are working in. This may be read as a limit, if we see a book in English as necessarily, inexorably in a ‘globalist’ perspective; however, what should be underlined and respected about this preference is — as far as this reviewer sees it, at least — that the editors apparently chose a specific audience for their book that is not, vaguely, anybody

teaching Jpc but, more cogently, either Anglophone scholars teaching in English or, anyway, non-Japanese teachers delivering mainly to a 'foreign' (that is, here, a non-Japanese) studentship. I believe this notion holds its validity also when pointing our attention to the chapters written by Japanese contributors and/or by teachers working in Japanese universities, because today many courses on Jpc offered in Japan see a growing participation of students from overseas.

The third remark is that the references of almost all the contributors oscillate between sources in Japanese and sources in English, bypassing or ignoring the many and necessary existing sources in other languages (or even those originally written in other languages but also available in an English translation). The only exception, from a summary check, seems to be Cosima Wagner's chapter, which also presents a couple of sources in German, given the author's nationality. Saying it more explicitly: the linguistic 'monism' of the book, as that of the majority of the books mainly or exclusively composed by English native speakers, entails what to this European reviewer appears as a disarming and self-isolating cultural localism. Which, in the context of Area Studies, is only mitigated by the presence of sources in the studied Area's idiom— Japanese, of course, in our case. I wonder: is it really so hard to expand one's bibliography to non-Anglophone, non-Japanese sources?

Finally, two sharp notes on the editorial choices. These are meant as suggestions not only for the future publishing endeavours of this book's authors and for scholars at large, but also and especially for academic publishers and for any wannabe or professional editor.

1. The book places endnotes at the end of each chapter. After the endnotes, the chapters also present their own bibliography. The problem is that, a few discursive notes aside, all endnotes have the mere function of hosting long and detailed bibliographic references. This generates a nonsensical and (to me, at least) irritating duplication of the very same information in every single chapter: endnotes and bibliography redundantly repeat exactly the same data. I wonder how this editorial absurdity was even possible. If the editorial norms chosen by the publisher had been more rational and elegant, the book would have been about 50 pages shorter and therefore a few cents or dollars cheaper. Without mentioning, easier to read.

2. The logotype of the Japan Foundation is not displayed in the frontcover, or the backcover, or in the book's colophon. Given that this institution supported the initiative the book stemmed from, this reviewer would have spontaneously included the logotype in the book instead of merely (however graciously) mentioning the conference funder in the Acknowledgments — even if, as it seems the case, the JF took no part in the funding of the book itself. But a direct display of the logo of an institution that anyway played a certain role in the overall endeavour, usually, implicitly favours in the future new successful outcomes from the same applicant...

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marco PELLITTERI is a media sociologist. He teaches in the School of Journalism and Communication of Shanghai International Studies University. He has published extensively on histories and theories of Japanese pop cultures and soft power, television, video games, animation, and comics. Among his publications, the books *Mazinga Nostalgia* (1999, 4th ed. 2018, 2 vols) and *The Dragon and The Dazzle* (2008, Eng. ed. 2010).

The Citi Exhibition: Manga マンガ – **Exhibited at the British Museum**

London: British Museum, 23 May - 26 August 2019

Review by Bounthavy SUVILAY | University of Montpellier III and University Paris-Ouest, France

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Since the British Museum is not primarily an art museum, but an institute that preserves and presents the historical products of human culture, it has some impressive collections of Japanese graphic art, dating from the 1600s to the present. Among these works, 110 are described as manga. There were also three small manga exhibitions prior to this. So, it is not surprising that this museum holds one of the largest ever exhibitions of manga outside Japan for 2019.

The three curators, Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere, Uchida Hiromi and Matsuba Ryoko, worked for two years with the Japanese artists, publishers and the OPMA (Organization for Promoting Manga and Animation), in order to display real *genga* (original drawings). This is a very unique feature since sketches are very fragile and never meant to be displayed more so than paintings or Japanese woodblock prints. That is why the Tezuka's *genga* have to be rotated in order to preserve the ink and paper from the bright lights. Even in Japan, most manga exhibitions only display facsimilia.

Alluding to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland's* rabbit, the mascot Mimi-chan leads the visitors and invites them to explore six thematic zones. The first one, 'Understanding Manga', describes manga's visual grammar and the editorial process with drawing with live footage and video interviews of staff members from four major publishers. 'Power of Storytelling' is an area dedicated to manga history: different formats are displayed in order to draw parallels between woodblock print industry and modern publishing. Influences from film and animation are highlighted in order to show early media convergence. These two zones are a starting point and obligatory

element of passage in order to help visitors understand the basics of the manga and then wander around the rest of the exhibition. The third zone, 'Seen and Unseen Worlds', displays various themes and genres from Boy Love to giant robots, sport, horror and transformation. The influence of manga on Japanese society is shown in the fourth zone through short films shot during the Comiket and the World Cosplay summit. The fifth exhibition zone is devoted to a selection of major historical and modern manga artists' works in original drawings and blown-up versions of their iconic characters. The last zone examines avant-garde expression, media crossover, gaming and manga's growing international reach and cultural influence.

The event presents 50 manga artists, 70 titles and 162 works from historical art to digital experiments. A wide range of images are displayed: large-scale reproductions on the walls, original drawings and illustrations preserved from direct light, traditional prints, film and video games excerpts. The curators took into account the other manga events available at the same time in London in order to make the exhibitions complementary and show the greatest variety of artists. But they still have to select only a few panels and drawings and it is always complicated to show a single page extracted from a manga that can span through several volumes. There are very brief descriptions in the exhibition and longer ones in the catalogue in order to summarise the narratives. "We felt very strongly that if you just can get an idea of the story and you see some really iconic images, then you'll be compelled to look at it yourself", said Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere. "So, this is about giving you the skill to read manga, introducing you to the stories and inviting you to find the ones you like and then you could look for them." That is why there is a dedicated space where the visitors can handle and read manga in order to feel the various book formats. "The idea of the bookstore came because a lot of comments were made to us that people were saying manga are things you should read not look at on a wall", recalled Nicole Rousmaniere. QR codes are also available so people can have freely download or stream digital manga.

Unlike a traditional British Museum exhibition, there is a lot of modern technological devices as the curators try to attract a younger audience. For example, there is a digitally led display of a bookstore, a digital experience based around Hoshino Yukinobu's *Professor Munakata's British Museum Adventure*, and a rendering of Comic Takaoka, the oldest surviving manga bookshop in Tokyo. In the themed exit, the visitors can be 'manga-fied' in a special photo booth.

But the exposition does not intend to alienate the British Museum older audience. There are a lot of historical works such as drawings from Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849). A highlight is the majestic 17 metres long and 4 metres high Kabuki curtain created in 1880 for the Shintomiza theatre in Tokyo by Kawanabe Kyosai (1831-1889). Of course, *ukiyo-e* is not the direct ancestor of modern manga which has been shaped by the newspaper technology coming into Yokohama from Occident. This foreign influence is underlined in the exhibition title by the katakana used to write manga: マンガ is the modern comic format whereas 漫画 refers to Hokusai's work. However, Nicole Rousmaniere stated that there is a link in the publishing industry as forms and technique (as a method that involves practical skills) tends to get passed on, even if that doesn't mean that the aesthetics is exactly the same. She used the example of the fudepen (筆ペン) which came into Japan from Tang China in the 8th century. Japanese fudepen had consistently stayed the same: it still has a stiffener in their brushes whereas Chinese brushes diverged a long time ago. That doesn't mean that contemporary calligraphers are the same as before but that they are using a brush that is informed in the same way.

Finally, I must emphasise that many items have been made specifically for this exhibition. The films were shot by teams from the British Museum in Tokyo and Nagoya. The mascot was drawn by the manga artist Kōno Fumiyo. The giant tones panels hanging from the ceiling were drawn by a local manga artist Shangomola Edunjobi, who won a silver at The Twelfth Japan International MANGA Award organised by the Japan Foundation in 2019. This exhibition is not only an invitation to explore the manga world but it's also an attempt to build bridges between times and civilisations.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bounthavy SUVILAY is a PhD candidate in University of Montpellier III. Her research is focused on the transmedial adaptations of narratives (manga, anime, video games, toys) and their transnational circulation. She uses the Dragon Ball IP as a case study of Japanese media mix that is transformed according to different editorial policies over time by French content industries. Her research interests also relate to video games and she is the author of Indie Games: Histoire, artwork, sound design des jeux vidéo indépendants.

***The Citi Exhibition: Manga マンガ* –**

Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere & Matsuba Ryoko (Eds)

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Review by Bounthavy SUVILAY | University of Montpellier III and University Paris-Ouest, France

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The catalogue of *The Citi Exhibition: Manga マンガ*, held at the British Museum from the 23 May to the 26 August 2019, is a mix between a “coffee table book” with coloured illustrations and detailed panels, and a reader’s digest about manga written by scholars and the curators of the exhibition. It provides a complete initiation to manga, its creative process, formats and genres.

Edited by two of the three curators, Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere and Matsuba Ryoko, the six sections of the book mirror the exhibition zones. The first one shows the manga production from drawings to the final book through interviews with artists, editors and publishers. The second section examines the medium’s evolution from its historical roots to present reality with an emphasis on female audience manga in order to challenge the assumption that comic storytelling is solely for males. In Section 3, different manga genres are featured to show the wide range of themes of these narratives. The fourth section explores the manga’s interrelations with society through fandom and museum collections. Section 5 displays the relationships between modern manga artists and the works of ukiyo-e artists, 19th century political cartoonists. The last section focuses on the influence of manga on modern artworks, American graphic novels and *anime*.

The interviews are all the more interesting in that they are conducted with artists who have marked manga history (Chiba Tetsuya, Hoshino Yukinobu, Takemiya Keiko) or who have novel approaches of the narratives (Kōno Fumiyo, Nakamura Hikaru, Inoue Takehiko, Yamazaki Mari). But because the target audience is mainstream, the questions are often identical and do not sufficiently emphasise the artists’ differences.

In order to highlight the editorial process and the collaborative works, four interviews with professionals from major publishing companies are also featured: Furukawa Kōhei (Kodansha), Nakaguma Ichirō (Shogakukan), Suzuki Haruhiko (Shueisha) and Torishima Kazuhiko (Hakusensha).

Most essays from scholars are shortened versions of their book or previous research. For example, in “The power of manga in comparative historical perspective” Adam L. Kern restates what he wrote in *Manga from the Floating World: Comicbook Culture and the Kibyōshi of Edo Japan* (2006). He describes the 18th century massive woodblock-printing industry and the early comic book. Co-author of *The Graphic Novel: An Introduction* (2014) with Jan Baetens, Hugo Frey examines the manga influence on Frank Miller, Chris Ware and other artists in “Manga and the Rise of the Graphic Novel”. Rayna Denison, who published *Anime: A Critical Introduction* (2015), explains how manga and *anime* are interwoven in “Anime’s Trajectory”. The essay “*Garo Magazine and Alternative Manga*” is written by Ryan Holmberg, who is also in charge of the occasional series “What is Alternative Manga?” for *The Comics Journal*.

The essays written by the curators may be more interesting for scholars: they provide insights into the history of Japanese graphic art. In “Did Hokusai Create Manga?”, Matsuba Ryōko explains why manga are not really related to *ukiyo-e* beside the name “manga”. Sadamura Koto links the drawing technique of ancient artists and contemporary authors in “Return of the Demons: The Power of Kyōsai’s Brush”. Ishigami Aki explains the evolution of sexually explicit art in print and book form from Edo period till modern manga in “Sexual Expression in Printed Form”. Takemiya Keiko’s interview focuses on the Genga’ (Dash) technique, which exactly replicates manga manuscripts in order to create an archive in the Kyoto International Manga Museum. Since the drawings are not created for display, even short-term exhibition can lead to deteriorations. Genga’ (Dash) is a way to reproduce the original artwork as a whole, including the creation process and technological history of printing that could be observed through the different textures and techniques.

Two papers are especially interesting because they highlight the international influence of manga. In “*Captain Tsubasa: Soft Power*”, Thomas Lamarre explains how the heroes of a soccer manga somehow acted as a diplomatic intermediary in 2004 when Japanese troops were deployed to Iraq. He insists on the fact that “the transformation of manga into an interactive medium, however profitable to certain parties, was not first

and foremost the result of marketing strategies or editorial authority. It did not advance in a top-down fashion. If a source of energy is to be located, it lies in the passionate creativity of readers.” (Lamarre, 2019: 157). In the last essay, the Japanese critic Itō Gō wonders what the Westerners call the "manga style" and why drawings can be so compelling for the readers. He establishes that duality of expression is the key concept that distinguishes Japanese comic, since manga “maintain values that are fantastic, multiform and inverted, while simultaneously allowing the possibility of a realism that reflects actual reality. On the basis of this duality, lines assemble to form faces and bodies: this is the special form of expression that is manga.” (Itō, 2019: 327).

Richly illustrated, this exhibition catalogue published by Thames & Hudson, Limited may not be really attractive for academic researchers, but it is an essential work for any comic book lover wishing to understand how this artistic medium has developed in Japan.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bounthavy SUVILAY is a PhD candidate in University of Montpellier III. Her research is focused on the transmedial adaptations of narratives (manga, anime, video games, toys) and their transnational circulation. She uses the Dragon Ball IP as a case study of Japanese media mix that is transformed according to different editorial policies over time by French content industries. Her research interests also relate to video games and she is the author of *Indie Games: Histoire, artwork, sound design des jeux vidéo indépendants*.