Perfection and Performativity in Print:

Visual Analyses of Gender and Sexuality Portrayals in Popular

Japanese Graphic Arts since the 17th Century

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Contents

List of Illustrations

Abstract

This thesis analyses the portrayals and representations of gender and sexuality since the Tokugawa period (1603-1868) in Japanese graphic arts. Changes in gender recognition since the 17th century have impacted on the way that gender and sexuality is portrayed visually, with innovations in artistic technologies forging new aesthetic representations and portrayals. Focusing on popular graphic arts, this study explores the idealised portrayals and representations of femininity, masculinity and cross-gender performances in *ukiyo-e* and *manga*. These popular graphic arts were and are part of a mass-producible popular culture that depicts counter cultures not located in the normative imagery or lives of the audience, but which illustrate ideals, that is perfection, and, in some cases, fantasy.

The research utilises a cross-disciplinary approach regarding the scholarship consulted to enable a variety of contexts relating to femininity, masculinity and cross-gender acts to be explored. As the work is situated within the field of visual cultures, art historical and visual methodological processes including compositional interpretation, iconology, iconography and case studies are used in the analysis of the imagery; thus ensuring the analyses are positioned within the broader contexts of reality versus idealisation.

Beginning with a study of femininity this thesis explores how women, as subjects, consumers and creators, have impacted upon *how* genders and sexualities are represented throughout Japanese artistic practices. Gender performativity as an illustrative as well as theatrical performative convention is investigated through cross-gender and cross-dressing acts within theatrical, visual arts and popular culture spheres, leading to an exploration of masculine representations. This is achieved by questioning the idealised 'male' forms in Japanese art that range from androgynous or ambiguously gendered beauties, through to hyper-masculinity. Through the interpretation of these representations it is clear that societal changes and attitudes towards gender and sexuality have impacted on the ways in which graphic arts and media represent people, despite continued aesthetic influences.

However, these ideals are not necessarily reflective of the material body or sexuality being portrayed and can in fact act as an illustrative surrogate. This is evidenced in the way 'male' homoerotism is prevalent in *manga* created for a young female audience as, Fujimoto asserts, a means of escaping expected gender roles. This study extends these findings by evaluating the historical formulation of gendered representation through rigorous scholarship, which is then applied to visual portrayals through detailed case study analyses of *ukiyo-e*, illustrations, and *manga*. These interpretations of graphic arts consider the extent to which ideals impact on the ways in which gender and sexuality are represented in imagery. Ultimately, the performative nature of gender is vital to these analyses. Despite differences in aesthetics and attitudes, the thesis concludes that influences can be found in Japanese popular graphic arts and the portrayals of gender since the Tokugawa period.

Keywords:
bishōnen, gender, illustration, Japan, *manga*, *onnagata*, sexuality, *shōjo*, *ukiyo-e*

Declaration

I, Jennifer Louise Lynch, declare that no portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank and dedicate this work to my dad, David Lynch, who was always so supportive of my academic career choices and so excited that I planned to pursue PhD study, but unfortunately did not see the acceptance of my application proposal. Dad, everything I do, I do to make you proud.

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Notes on Conventions (Language & Imagery)

As this research is an investigation relating to Japanese graphic arts from an art historical perspective, Japanese terminology is used consistently throughout the thesis. In the text Japanese phrases will be italicised and in Roman characters, with a brief definition and/or translation in footnotes; the use of macrons (ō, ū etc.) indicates a long vowel. Where Japanese language texts have been consulted my thanks goes to Angela Davies, Mori Koji and Samuel Rosen for their translations and assistance, and the Faculty of Arts Professional and Social Sciences at Liverpool John Moores University for funding translation support.

Specific terminology will be used throughout the thesis in relation to gender and sexuality; these terms are appropriate and relevant at the time of writing which is important to note as certain terminologies have changed since the beginning of this research in 2014, because language is constantly evolving. Some phrases used are very contemporary, and as such may not necessarily be appropriate or correct to use when discussing historical aspects of gender and sexuality; however, where appropriate this is more explicitly stated within the thesis text in order to provide context and a contemporary equivalent for these historical discussions.

Following Japanese convention, family name will be given first unless an alias/pen name is used, or the author chooses a different custom, in which case the relevant convention will be followed instead. It should also be noted, following these conventions. that historical persons are referred to by their given name; for example, Kitagawa Utamaro will be referred to as Utamaro.

Please be advised that this thesis analyses and includes some imagery that is sexually explicit, some of which include themes relating to abuse and rape. These are analysed with the most sensitive approach and are included as a means of enhancing scholarship within the field of art history and visual cultures. Some imagery cannot be reproduced due to copyright, so full image referencing has been provided where appropriate and possible. Image referencing has been given in metric (cm), in line with British museum and gallery conventions.

The abbreviation loc. in the in-text referencing relates to eBook sources that use a location as opposed to page system.

Introduction

This art historically-based[1] research explores the field of popular graphic arts with a focus on how gender and sexuality representations can be interpreted across different centuries in these works. As such, it focuses on mass-producible visual arts which target a mass-audience by utilising themes and processes which can be considered lower in the hierarchical framework of 'fine art'. Graphic arts are defined as works with a focus on line, or in a print medium such as screen or woodblock, with popular referring to the popular culture element of the graphic arts on which this research concentrates: *ukiyo-e*[2] and *manga.*[3] The aim of this thesis is to analyse how gender and sexuality are represented and portrayed within these works since the 17th century and how different representations of gender and sexuality in Japanese graphic arts are conveyed. The research considers why certain aesthetics within these practices have become the norm whilst also evaluating the extent to which society and arts influence and impact on each other in the formation of gender and sexuality expressions. This broad time frame was selected as a means of researching the evolutions and developments of representations and portrayals in art as societal attitudes regarding gender and sexuality shifted. Whilst it is not within the scope of this research to investigate arts from every period,[4] efforts have been made to provide contextual discussions and examples to bridge the gaps between the detailed visual analyses' within the chapters.

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[1] The work is conducted from within the Liverpool School of Art and Design.
[2] 浮世絵 *ukiyo-e* 'Pictures of the Floating World'
[3] 漫画 / マンガ *manga* now used to refer to 'Japanese' comics, though it has become a transnational and transmedia form of graphic arts and popular culture.
[4] See Appx. Two for an overview of the Tokugawa period and Appx. Three for a full chronology of Japan.

The focus on *ukiyo-e* and *manga* stems from a continuum of themes and aesthetics; though these are separate art forms, created with different ideologies and goals, the two-dimensional graphic aesthetics and continued influences across different visual arts and popular culture are key to the visual analyses in this thesis.[5] As Chino Kaori stated: "… works of art from the past are not only powerful in their own time, but continue to exert an influence in our time as well." (1996, p.20).[6] Therefore the evolutions and changes that occur within graphic arts, as well as the social and political climates, should be considered together when analysing representations.[7] With this in mind, the thesis also considers the questions: to what extent are representations of gender and sexuality in contemporary artistic practices influenced by historic aesthetics? How have societal attitudes and relationships impacted on the formation of these representations and portrayals? And finally, how do different genders and sexualities, as represented in graphic arts, cross-influence other aesthetic conventions in visual culture? Consequently, imagery is referenced consistently throughout the thesis as a means of illustrating gendered representations, but to also address *how* these representations have developed visually. Each image discussed furthers the main thesis arguments, which is achieved through visual methodologies outlined in Chapter Two.[8]

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[5] The historical precedent of visual narratives and visual storytelling in Japan can be seen in *emakimono* 絵巻物 picture scrolls (usually handscrolls) dating back to the 8th and 10th centuries (Ito, 2005 & 2008), through to the *ehon* 絵本 picture books (絵 *e* picture/painting; 本 *hon* book) that remained popular up to the modern era; which is regarded as the end of feudal rule and the start of the Meiji period in 1868.

[6] Taken from a reprint in Mostow et al. (2003) *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field*

[7] As Mostow et.al. (2003) states, "*Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field* refuses to be confined by standard periodization: it represents a forceful rejection of those periodizing schemes that would isolate Japan's early modern period (1600-1868) from its later emergence as a modern nation-state" (p.15).

[8] A list of illustrations can be found on p.iv; whilst illustration plates are provided at the end of the thesis.

Although embedded within art historical and visual cultural studies, this research utilises resources from a range of disciplines in order to investigate the cultural significance of gender and sexuality as it is represented in Japanese graphic arts. This depth of scholarship across disciplines enhances the original contributions of this research as it aims to place graphic art practices at the forefront of communicating, and enabling the understanding of, a culture's societal attitudes towards gender and sexuality. The theories within this research expand on the previous scholarship of academics such as Fujimoto Yukari, Mark McLelland, Joshua Mostow, Ayako Kano and Timon Screech who have each analysed specific areas of gender, sexuality and sex within societal, art historical and popular cultural spheres. This is achieved through the evaluation of gendered representations and historical attitudes that previous literature has not explored from the perspective graphic arts from different periods of time in a single thesis.

Due to the abundance of Japanese popular culture within western society, which caters and appeals to a wide variety of tastes, there can be assumptions about the freedom of expression in regard to gender and sexuality in Japanese society. As such, there are often portrayals of Japan in western media which seems to show open-minded, or potentially extreme,[9] attitudes regarding gender and sexuality. In juxtaposition of this assumed freedom of gender expression, however, there is suppression and discrimination[10] just as in other heteropatriarchal societies, as seen

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[9] This is most often shown in television and radio programmes such as *Stacey Dooley Investigates: Young Sex for Sale in Japan* (2017) *Crossing Continents, Should Comics Be Crimes?* (2015)

[10] For instance the scandalous revelation that Tokyo Medical University has been altering scores on female entrance exam applicants since 2010 in order to limit the amount of women accepted to the university (Japan Times, 2018). However, in 2022 it was reported that women had overtaken men for the first time in being accepted to the University, perhaps indicating further shifts in gender balance (Japan Times, 2022).

through movements such as #MeToo[11] and #KuToo.[12] These gendered discussions are not just based on contemporary assumptions, however, with historical representations being assigned specific meaning without different contexts. For instance, *samurai* are often considered the epitome of hypermasculinity whilst *onnagata*[13] assume an acceptance of cross-dressing or non-binary identities in a wider social setting. In order to interpret the imagery within this thesis, and to discuss the representations of gender and sexuality found herein, discussions of the histories and society more broadly is required:

> In practicing art history, one should not be limited to studying only subject matter and style, a limitation that tends to divorce art from its historical, social and political contexts. When studying a work of art, it is important to place it in its sociohistorical context.
>
> (Chino, 1996, pp.17-18)

This is achieved in the main chapter sections for each of the three parts of the thesis, alongside visual analyses. Nonetheless, Chino did continue to say that these histories cannot be formed "objectively" and as such the positionality of the researcher and their interests will always become a factor (1996, p.18). Thus positionality must be disclosed.

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[11] The involvement of Japan in the global #MeToo movement was significant in 2017, as discussed by Jennifer Coates, Lucy Fraser and Mark Pendleton, partly due to journalist and activist Itō Shiori's public press conference regarding the dropping of her sexual assault case by authorities, due to a reported lack of evidence, and her intentions to reopen the case in a civil court (2020, p.1-3) when, in December 2019, she was awarded $30,000 in damages (BBC News, 2019; Frühstück, 2022, p.1). Itō's case and subsequent work surrounding sexual assault and the way it is dealt with in Japan has been reported on worldwide.

[12] #KuToo in reference to the requirement of heels in workplaces for female workers. Play on words: *kutsu* 靴 shoes & *kutsū* 苦痛 pain/agony (Allen, 2019).

[13] 女形 *onnagata* female role actor or impersonator in *kabuki*: *onna* meaning woman and *gata* appearance/shape/form/style. It is important to understand that *onnagata* from the Tokugawa period and today are not 'drag' acts or comedic representations, as would be understood of performers from a Western perspective; the gender acts of the *onnagata* themselves are not supposed to be comedic interpretations of femininity. Though their performance could be considered parody within performativity theories (Butler, 2006).

My perspective is that of a North West British art historian who has been surrounded by Japanese popular culture since childhood, with the likes of Nintendo and *Pokémon* becoming mainstays despite not understanding the cultural links at the time. As a teenager I was introduced to *manga* and Japanese language *anime*[14] and was immediately captivated by the aesthetics of the drawings and animations, as well as the narratives; from here I began to explore other avenues of Japanese culture and language from a personal interest, as the connections between these different forms of popular culture that had impacted on my life finally became clear. However, during an arts-based research project at Sixth Form College, I was discouraged from my plan to explore contemporary Japanese illustrations due to tutors' views on what I now understand as the 'high versus low' debates around visual arts. As such, my project at that time became a discussion of Aubrey Beardsley's works, which led to a personal appreciation and passion for woodblock prints due to the influence that these Japanese arts had on many European 19th century artists and critics.

Regarding the choice to investigate gender, this again relates to personal experiences that eventually connected to my interests in Japanese popular cultures and arts. As a child, outside forces started to impact on my understandings of gender as a form of social pressures and attitudes. A particularly formative moment was around the age of seven. Whilst playing with neighbour children, I mentioned I liked the colour blue; immediately I was told by the boys present I could not like blue because I was a girl and, therefore, pink was the colour I was allowed to like. This sparked a rebellion about gender expectations: if I was told I was supposed to like something

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[14] アニメ *anime*, shortened form of animation used in the west to refer to Japanese animation specifically, though technically the distinction does not exist in Japanese language.

because "I was a girl" I refused to engage. Eventually a realisation happened that one could enjoy anything and everything regardless of gender position, so I was able to reconcile pink and videogames together. However, my interest in gender generally remained as I was drawn to performances that 'played' with gender in arts and media through the likes of David Bowie and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*;[15] this extended further with my introduction to *manga* and *anime* in which androgynous and 'gender play' characters seem to prevail. Therefore, this research is a culmination of personal interests in Japanese arts and popular culture, alongside an interest in how gender is understood, performed, and represented in graphic arts.

The research itself has been conducted with an experimental approach of working out of the UK in the new context of a digitally connected world. This has been achieved by utilising digital collections from global museums, galleries, and illustrator/artists' personal online galleries, UK-based exhibition and permanent collection visits, global exhibition catalogues and art books, as well as print and digital *manga* manuscript consultation. The methodological approaches relating to these works and the expansion on the physical act of looking in visual methodologies, is clarified in Chapter Two (see also Rose, 2012, pp.16-17). Due to this British-based perspective, the research has relied primarily on English language texts and translations, and as such some Japanese texts have been inaccessible.[16] However, as the focus of this thesis is the visual analysis of graphic arts, every effort

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[15] Both the film and musical play versions. More contemporarily gender and sexuality are still interpreted and expressed by artists, musicians and actors but now in more mainstream global contexts. For instance Rina Sawayama a Japanese-British singer/songwriter and model is open about her sexuality, and an advocate for LGBTQIA+ rights as well as telling queer and Asian stories through her music.

[16] Though where Japanese language texts have been accessed, I give thanks to the LJMU Faculty of Arts Professional and Social Studies for funding, and to Angela Davies for translations. It should also be noted that personal Japanese language study has been ongoing throughout this research.

has been made to reference relevant and appropriate scholars and texts in the 'readings' of the imagery, this is illustrated further in Chapter One. Thus, the significance of this study is the combination of visual methodological approaches, which provide new insights in relation to gender representation, whilst also further expanding the contributions of art historical research within the realms of graphic arts, print media and popular culture.

The decision to study both gender and sexuality as part of the image analysis was born from the early stages of the research process. At first, the decision had been made to focus solely on gender as one's gender does not signify one's sexuality and vice versa. However, as the research evolved it became clear that, although gender and sexuality are two separate concepts, historically, culturally and visually there are important correlations between them that needs to be analysed and discussed to interpret representations in the arts. This was in part due to Judith Butler's seminal work *Gender Trouble* (1990; 1999; 2006),[17] in which theories of gender performativity and links between gender and sexuality started to form. Butler questioned:

> …how do non-normative sexual practices call into question the stability of gender as a category of analysis? How do certain sexual practices compel the question: what is a woman, what is a man? If gender is no longer to be understood as consolidated through normative sexuality, then is there a crisis of gender that is specific to queer contexts?
>
> (2006, p.xi)[18]

These questions bring together the basis of "gender trouble" as Butler outlines (2006, p.xi) as a means of attempting to understand people's "terror and anxiety" in relation

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[17] Originally published in 1990, with a second edition in 1999 and a reprint in 2006 which this thesis references.
[18] Preface to 1999 publication.

to homosexuality through a "fear of losing one's place in gender" (2006, p.xi). These ideas formed the basis of considering sexuality and gender together in the ways they are portrayed in graphic arts; as despite the separate nature of gender and sexuality, "under conditions of normative heterosexuality, policing gender is sometimes used as a way of securing heterosexuality" (Butler, 2006, p.xii). From here performativity became a key theory in the analysis of gender representations in this thesis, in part due to the close links between graphic arts and theatrical performance, but also because: "Gender itself, one might say, *is* performance: a cultural construct or system of learned codes." (Thompson, 2006, p.23). Codes are essential in the reading of imagery, so these links between performativity became an important theoretical focus for this research. Performativity of gender, then, relies on the "stylized repetition of acts" (Butler, 2006, pp.191-193) that are constructed within social spheres. These acts are then repeated in visual and graphic arts as versions of an ideal, but can also fall within discourse of imitation as parody (Butler, 2006, p.188).[19] Therefore, gender and sexuality representations in graphic arts are intertwined both in the content and context of their creations. For these reasons, feminine, masculine and androgynous representations are analysed throughout this thesis, with discussions of performativity alongside sexuality. Another important framework that underpins these analyses is that of ideals, or perfection.

The ideal as referenced within art historical contexts, has links to German philosophers Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Kant's theory of transcendental idealism is embedded within the notion that the mind is central to the

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[19] Olga Antononoka (2018) discusses this further as meta-performance and drag in relation to *manga* specifically.

understanding and processing of objects, leading to subjective connotations. Hegel's

theories sit within absolute idealism, which succeeded Kant's discussions, and takes

the mind out of subjective being into objective or absolute thought. Whilst these

developments of transcendental idealism, subjective and objective (or absolute)

idealism sit more specifically within the realms of philosophy, the discussions of art

within both Kant and Hegel's works, specifically in relation to aesthetics, has

impacted on the development of understanding of the ideal within art historical

contexts. Eric Fernie, when describing Hegelism and Hegel's viewpoint, said: "…art

develops according to an intrinsic logic which is intelligible to the historian, history

of art can be seen as one of the most important ways of understanding the processes

of world history." (1995, p.342). Therefore, art historical studies relating to the

processes of representation are supported by Hegel's aesthetic ideologies. Kant in his

Critique of Judgement stated:

> In order to decide whether anything is beautiful or not, we refer the
> representation, not by the Understanding to the Object for cognition but, by
> the Imagination (perhaps in conjunction with the Understanding) to the
> subject, and its feeling of pleasure or pain. The judgement of taste is
> therefore not a judgement of cognition, and is consequently not logical but
> aesthetical, by which we understand that whose determining ground can
> be *no other than subjective.*
>
> (1892, para.126)

Subjectivity in relation to art is prominent and persistent; we react to imagery based

on our own tastes, feelings and interpretations. Therefore, matters of taste are not and

cannot be universal as individuality impacts on the way in which we engage with the

world. However, ideals in relation to beauty as represented within arts relates

directly to the social and cultural attitudes of the time as to what constitutes as

'beauty', which relates to some interpretations of Hegel's work in relation to

"communal taste" (Bungay, 1984, pp.190-191). This relates particularly to western-

centred views of idealism and philosophical ideologies, however, as David Kelley,

an expert in objectivism, stated regarding the role of art and the formation of ideals:

> Art is the most powerful means of creating embodied abstractions… Art is
> especially important in conveying ideals. An ideal is a high point on some
> dimension of evaluation. It is the heroic act, the perfect day, the man of your
> dreams, the person of unimpeachable character. The need for ideals is
> inherent in the very nature of normative abstractions.

(2010, para.12-20)

Therefore, ideals in art equate to the perfect representation, which can be considered

within different cultural or societal specific boundaries. The reoccurring themes of

beauty and idealisation threaded throughout this thesis is thus underpinned by the art

historical understandings developed here, as an ideal to strive for but also the perfect

example of object/subject.[20]

However, this notion of the ideal within the art historical field stems from

Eurocentric philosophies meaning they were not embedded within non-western

cultures in the way that Kant or Hegel discussed them.[21] Outside of European, or

western, spheres idealist concepts are found within Buddhist philosophies; Indian

Buddhist philosopher, Vasubandhu, in particular, is linked to idealism, though not in

relation to arts, and his philosophy: "thematizes subject/object duality in this text,

arguing that although ordinary subjectivity presents its objects as distinct from itself,

this is illusory, and the consummate nature is in fact nondual." (Garfield, 2009,

p.37). Though Garfield's work relates Vasubandhu to a metaphysical idealist (2009),

which appears to have links to Hegel and absolute idealism, some of Vasubandhu's

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[20] Olga Antononoka references *onnagata* and maids within the maid cafés of Japan as "perfect object" (2018, p.126; p.135; 214) which can be linked to the understanding of ideal outlined here, as well as arguments of passive and the gaze which are outlined in Chapter One.
[21] Though there appears to be some debate as to whether the terms ideal or idealism should be linked to Vasubandhu.

discussions around representation and concepts of the subjective link to Kant's

ideology; although ultimately the 'knowable' and 'unknowable' world focus in these

philosophies remain at odds.

In Japan specifically, Max Weber's theories began to be adapted within economic,

social and religious discourse, due to his works being introduced and disseminated

from 1905 onwards (Zhou, 2021, para.1).[22] Weber's "ideal type" has been a key

theoretical construct within the social sciences, though as Richard Swedberg

discusses, its uses within 'empirical research' has been complicated, due to being,

"surrounded by an air of difficulty and unresolved theoretical questions" (Swedberg,

2018, p.181). The 'ideal type' is based upon a theory not of perfection, but of

common elements within specific phenomena as the 'ideal' of that phenomena:

> Weber's methodology is primarily about conceptualization and the problem
> of producing intersubjectively meaningful selections from a vast reality. The
> tool around which Weber addressed this problem and reflected on its
> difficulties is the ideal-type, which Weber recognized to be drawn from
> culture and shaped by evaluative implications that are present in the cultural
> sources from which ideal-types must be constructed.
>
> (Eliaeson, 2000, p.250)

This differs from the development of ideal in art historical contexts of the perfect

representation.[23] As this research is art historical in nature, this was the initial

approach understood of the term. However, as Weber's theories were disseminated

in Japan during the early 20th century, this influenced the intellectual discourses and

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[22] The impact of Weber's discourse is still felt in Japan today, as a special issue journal comprising 24 articles that critically examine Weber's concepts was published in the journal *Gendai Shisō* in 2020 (Zhou, 2021).
[23] It should be noted that Max Weber was "as a neo-Kantian nominalist, and an anti-Hegelian in his view of concept formation" (Eliason, 2000, p.261) due to the ideologies and time of his works. Whilst Kant influenced aesthetics and discussed subjectivity, Hegel placed art more centrally in his philosophy. As such it was roughly half a century after his essay's that Hegelian discourse in art history re-developed and was "appropriated" to form the discussions of T.J Clark (1974 reprinted in Fernie 1995).

the changing social and political attitudes of the country, broadly speaking. As such, the ideal of femininity and masculinity as a social construct, that is referred to by scholars of Japanese studies referenced throughout this thesis, may reflect notions of the perfect but also Weber's ideal type. Therefore, the ideal of femininity may not be the perfect representation, but actually the ideal representation based upon the common factors associated with femininity in that society. However, once this is epitomised within graphic arts, the representation reverts to a focus on aesthetics and beauty which can then be impacted upon by art historical ideas of the ideal that Kelley described (2010).

Returning to the application of idealism to arts, beauty is the crucial focus of the discussions. In fact, Hegel discusses Eastern art specifically in relation to 'Symbolic Form' as 'primitive' in comparison to classical arts (n.d. a, para.1). He continues in this vein to describe the 'symbol' as a "precursor of art" which "belongs especially to the Orient, and will conduct us, by a multitude of transitions, transformations, and mediations, to the true realisation of the ideal under the classic form…" (Hegel, n.d. a, para.1). He completes this, quite elitist take, on "the Orient" by stating: "… the peoples of the Orient have sought to express their ideas, but have been able to do so only in an equivocal and obscure fashion. Instead of beauty and regularity, these works of art have a bizarre, grandiose, fantastic aspect" (Hegel, n.d. a, para.1). These deliberations by Hegel actually enforce the subjective issues in interpretations of the arts, as it is clear through his writings that 'classical works', i.e. European arts, are of particular beauty in his opinion. Despite not developing points of subjectivity concerning individual taste, like Kant, Stephen Bungay states that: "Hegel excludes the question of personal taste from his considerations and reflects upon the

differences in norms of taste… distinguishing those ethical norms from the question of aesthetic quality" (1984, pp.190-191). In other words, one must acknowledge high quality, "even though we may not like it very much" (Bungay, 1984, p.191). However, Hegel does not extend this beyond European art considerations, other than to criticise and conflate "art of the East" as a means of holding up classical art of Europe.[24] Bungay also stated: "The Idea of Truth implies commitment to *saying* something about the way things *are*; the Ideal of Beauty implies commitment to *showing* something about the way things *appear to be*." (Bungay, 1984, p.44). Thus, Hegel's ideals in relation to beauty can be re-applied in relation to all arts showing an ideal, i.e. the way things appear but are not in reality: a perfection.[25] The ideal as a concept is then subjective in nature, but also the culmination of aesthetic and social codes dictated by societal 'tastes' of the time. Thus, the ideal and idealisation that is observed within this thesis refers to the perfect manifestation of gender and sexuality represented in graphic arts.

Though as Bungay emphasises (1984, p.192), it must be remembered that Hegel's lectures regarding aesthetics were held two centuries ago. We can oppose theory, as we may, "not accept the values implied by the theory" and, "If we are condemned to have been understood by Hegel, we can either acquiesce or rebel. The only course of

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[24] "The character of the primitive artistic pantheism of the East, which either charges even the meanest objects with the absolute import, or again coerces nature with violence into the expression of its view. By this means it becomes bizarre, grotesque, and tasteless, or turns the infinite but abstract freedom of the substantive Idea disdainfully against all phenomenal being as null and evanescent. (Hegel, n.d. b, para.39)" This conflates the arts of many different cultures into a single form – symbolic – that does not reflect beauty or the ideal that Hegel attributes to the second stage or 'classical', which, again in Hegel's opinion, goes beyond abstraction into concrete forms as Kelley discussed.

[25] This is continued in Hegel's works as a hope that art would come to perfection (Houlgate, 2020, para.85). Though Stephen Houlgate, like Stephen Bungay, emphasises that there is "no definitive edition of Hegel's fully developed aesthetic theory that would trump all others and settle all debate" (2020, para.8).

action clearly not in our interest is to ignore him" (1984, p.192). It is this point that, albeit made years after, art historians of the 1960s and 1970s adapted in their goals to move art history out of the realms of modernism, with concern for the social context coming to the fore.

T.J Clark outlined this in his 1974 article 'The Conditions of Artistic Creation.'[26] Clark states, "In art history – and, I believe, elsewhere – it is precisely the Hegelian legacy that we need to appropriate: to use, criticize, reformulate" (Clark, 1974, p.250). Therefore, despite the idea and communication of Hegel's work regarding aesthetics and ideals now being perceived as quite elitist, the theory behind this became adapted and reworked within art historical contexts. Eric Fernie notes that Hegel's ideologies[27] influenced the likes of Marxists in "transforming the spirit into the conditions of production." (1995, p.342), which influenced the advancement of art history and visual culture (Jones, 2003, p.34). According to Fernie, Clark emphasised that:

> …we should study the way in which social classes use works of art to maintain their position; style should be analysed as if it were an expression of an ideology in visible form; we should explore the extent to which the conditions and relations of artistic production explain that relationship, and how it was received and perceived by patrons and audiences. Such an investigation could result in telling us how ideologies work. This should be the scope of the ambitions in the history of art.
>
> (1995, p.246)

This thesis does not explicitly attempt to answer each of these 'ambitions', but it does use the ideology of art as a means of exploring the "extent" to which relationships of artistic representation can be used as a means for interpreting the

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[26] Reprinted in Fernie, 1995, pp.248-253.
[27] Specifically surrounding the 'spirit', that is the idea within his symbolic, classical and romantic form frameworks in the creation of the ideal.

imagery encountered within this research. The social elements that impacted on the creation of imagery and subject matter particularly is discussed in relation to the ideals of beauty and perfection represented within them. The focus of the analysis remains on the content and context of imagery, but discussions of the production and development of graphic arts in Japan is needed to illustrate the historical and contextual relevance (see also Appx. One & Two).

These histories and contextual discussions have been conducted through extensive literary research to provide a synthesis of research in Chapter One, and to illustrate how such representations may have been developed in response to and as a reflection of wider cultural and societal attitudes. This reflection, however, was not of the realities of life, but the representations of ideals as communicated through popular cultures and arts. In the mid 20th Century art historians: "began to interrogate the structures, psychic and social, motivating representation rather than accepting it as a given" (Jones, 2003, p.34). This thesis continues the question of motivation by analysing *how* and *why* gender and sexuality is portrayed in these ways in *ukiyo-e* and *manga* particularly. This is achieved by illustrating historical and cultural attitudes through the sources consulted (Chapter One), and employing visual methodologies to 'read' the imagery (Chapter Two).

The decision to focus on popular graphic arts stems from previous research undertaken by this author which analysed the legacy of *ukiyo-e* and the impact that prints as a form of creative practice and aesthetics has had on more contemporary media and arts. *Ukiyo-e* has had a global impact on arts since its 'introduction' to the west; artists like Van Gogh, Mary Cassatt and Aubrey Beardsley drew inspiration

from the perspectives and themes of *ukiyo-e* in the 19th century, and this has continued today with contemporary artists often referencing the graphical elements of *ukiyo-e* prints, as well as themes, as inspirations for their works. This has also been prominent within Japan, as can be seen in the works of Hashiguchi Goyō in the early 20th century, and contemporary artist, Chiho Aoshima.

Whilst gender and sexuality are the visual representations being interpreted within the imagery of this thesis, the depictions found in the woodblock prints that the historical aspects of the research explores, actually equate to social outsiders or the countercultures of Tokugawa Period[28] society. In other words, the subjects of the prints belonged to the entertainment and pleasure districts and thus did not reflect the everyday lives of Japanese people at this time. In fact, the representations of these quarters were glamorised and idealised versions. This is illustrated throughout the thesis, but it is crucial to state here that despite the imagery's prevalence and popularity across the city of Edo and the broader society, the viewers of the time understood these representations to not be reflective of their normative daily culture. The same can be said for the contemporary graphic arts observed throughout this thesis, as *manga* often deals with the fantastical but also ideals. Despite contemporary understandings that *ukiyo-e* and *manga* are different branches of graphic art, links can be seen in the themes and representations in the works. This is considered throughout the thesis as a means of understanding the evolution of visual portrayals of gender and sexuality within graphic arts, revealing that despite

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[28] Also known as the Edo Period, 1603-1868. Edo 江戸 was the name of the city from which the Tokugawa family ruled as *shōgun* or military leaders, and is now known as Tokyo 東京.

changing attitudes and artistic processes, cultural artistic influences are still

informing the ways in which gender can be represented.

Since the mass introduction of *ukiyo-e* to the western world in the late 19th century,

these prints have been regarded as beautiful works of art that take pride of place in

many museum and gallery collections. However, the meaning to Japanese culture at

the time of their creation has been thought to be very different to that interpreted by

the European artists and art collectors, as Atkins states:

> To the bafflement of Euro-American visitors in the mid-1800's … Japanese
> considered ukiyo-e to be about as valuable as calendars from a petrol station.
> Japanese were equally flummoxed by Westerners who snatched up these
> disposable prints and revered them as artistic masterpieces
>
> (Atkins, 2017, p.41)

In this respect, *ukiyo-e* and *manga* are both forms of popular culture that could be

considered to be 'throw away culture'; both were mass-produced,[29] paper-based

works aimed at the general public as opposed to aristocratic or upper-class society.

In some ways this extends to definitions of illustration: "[which] is contextualised

visual communication commissioned for target audiences, often reproduced in large

quantities and distributed via the ever-expanding creative, media and communication

industries" (Male, 2019, p.9). Regardless, the mass-producible element of these

ukiyo-e meant that luxury was not necessarily the aim: "Paintings had to be treated

with care as they were luxury items. Prints were cheap, stainable and disposable"

(Screech, 2009, loc.600).[30] Therefore, these prints did not represent luxury so much

as pleasure that reflected the economic changes: "…those who migrated to the

castle-towns or port cities, re-inventing themselves as urban commoners, became the

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[29] After the initial ink paintings and drawings by the artist that is, see Appx. One.
[30] In reference to erotic prints specifically, but the point stands for *ukiyo-e* more generally.

makers and shapers of popular culture" (Leupp & Tao, 2022, p.36). Thus *ukiyo-e* mirrored the interests of their audiences by emphasising leisure and pleasure with depictions of the entertainment districts (Fister, 1988, p.47).

The focus on everyday life and pleasure was central to the creation and popularity of *ukiyo-e*, as they reflected the exciting and idealised urban life[31] that was unattainable for some who viewed them.[32] Beauties, especially from the pleasure quarters[33] and *kabuki*[34] actors were the most popular subjects for *ukiyo-e,* until various restrictions and censorship laws impacted on their design in the mid-19th century.[35] 'Fans' of particular actors would collect prints depicting their various roles; owners of *kabuki* theatres would utilise the medium to advertise the latest stage production; brothels in the pleasure quarters would also be advertised through these prints and the women depicted would inspire the latest fashion trends. The combination of 'art' and popular culture within *ukiyo-e* creates further connections to the ways in which representations of gender and sexuality can be explored across time.

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[31] This included major cities and towns with flourishing entertainment and publishing industries, most often Edo and Osaka.

[32] Although unattainable in reality, the imagery was more recognisable to them than the 'fine arts' of previous generations and of the upper-classes.

[33] 遊廓 *yūkaku:* Red light district/ pleasure quarter; there were multiple quarters throughout Japan at this time, but the Yoshiwara became the most famous.

[34] 歌舞伎 *Kabuki* has become one of the most famous traditional theatrical art forms in Japan and was awarded UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2005 (inscribed in 2008), alongside other traditional Japanese forms of drama: *nō* and *bunraku.* 能 *nō* or *noh theatre* deriving from the word for skill or talent, a type of dance drama developed from the 14th century and most commonly linked with the aristocratic classes. It is said to be the oldest form of theatre still performed today. 文楽 *bunraku* Puppet theatre also known as *Ningyō jōruri.* Founded in Osaka at the start of the 17th century its popularity across Japan grew and now has UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage along with *nō* and *kabuki*

[35] Known as the Tenpō reforms – see Appx. Two for further Tokugawa period discussions, and Appx. Three for a full chronology of Japanese periods.

Analogously, art and popular culture have merged in artistic practices, with one of Japan's most famous contemporary artists working directly at the intersections of popular culture, merchandising and 'art'. Takashi Murakami, has spent the last twenty years establishing a movement known as Superflat (Vanatarian & Iwada, 2011; Lisica, 2010). As Vartanian said, "Superflat collapses dualities of high vs. low, uniqueness vs. multiplicity, and art vs. craft." (Vartanian & Wada, 2011, p.51). It is Murakami's 'mission' to have high art and 'low' or subcultural works considered as equal; indeed, this is another justification for examining traditional Japanese visual cultures alongside contemporary works in this thesis. Whilst *ukiyo-e* are now considered a traditional art form, the subject matter relates more readily to pop cultural phenomena, like that of contemporary *manga*, and so different interpretations of what constitutes as 'high' or 'low' art can be observed within graphic arts practice.[36]

Extending the discussion of 'low' arts and how this is considered in wider contexts, Toku Masami (2015), conducted a case study in which she examined the progress of a young child's visual development in drawing, and the way it advances in relation to engagement with *manga*. In relation to arts education, Toku states that before 1998 *manga* was not recognised as a valid or valuable form of arts education in Japan (2015, p.11), despite her research and case studies showing that outside the

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[36] Nobuko Anan (2016, pp.153-159) discusses Murakami's 'Superflat' further, as Murakami extended the meaning of this movement in reference to his "Little Boy" thesis of Japan being "Superflattened" by the US Occupation and the "systematic castration" that forced Japan to "adopt the status of "Little Boy"" (Anan, 2016, p.153). All the same, Anan does then state that Murakami spins this back to a 'positive' relating to the two-dimensional elements of Japanese arts and media: "… takes Japan's Little Boy status as a badge of honor. In his view, Little Boys in superflat Japan would eventually be able to reign over the world's art scene." (Anan, 2015, p.159) Therefore, Superflat is inspired by the 'flattened' two-dimensional aesthetic styles of *ukiyo-e*, *manga, anime* and other visual arts that this thesis analyses, though this research concentrates on the representations of gender within the pieces.

classroom students[37] choose to respond to her drawing requests using styles, especially in relation to "spatial patterns" (2015, p.10), found in *manga*. Toku's research showed that students were developing their visual literacy skills through *manga* association, in terms of their own creative expression but also as a means of engaging with the world around them.[38] Toku's research and applications of *manga* to arts education, and the 'Superflat' movement, emphasises the importance that different kinds of art, in this case graphic, as a form and means of communication can possess; this also relates to the development of visual culture as a mode of academic inquiry:

> Visual culture was initially developed by scholars frustrated by the limitations of art historical analysis (which insists upon the separation of "high" from "low" cultural forms) and the separation of models of visual analysis according to disciplines (for example film theory and television studies).
>
> (Jones, 2003, p.1) [39]

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[37] Elementary school specifically, ages 6-12 years.

[38] From 2002, *manga* has become part of the national arts curriculum in Japanese textbooks (Toku, 2015). However, from personal experience, *manga*-inspired work was still suppressed in British schools and college arts education in 2008/9.

[39] This also emphasises that classifications of imagery, such as popular culture as opposed to 'fine art', does not render works as being unimportant or lacking any artistic relevance and value. This also raises the much debated question, 'what is art', or 'what is art history?' as Toshio Watanabe reflected following a symposium entitled 'Art History Considers Manga': "Art history is surely not just the history of so-called `high art'…If art history is a discipline which explores art, it should surely change and adapt when the definition of art changes. The concept of `art' is expanding and its boundaries are being blurred. With this in mind I feel strongly that art history should tackle the history of visual culture in the broadest sense, utilising the arsenal of methodologies of others and the discipline of our own." (Watanabe, 1998, pp.18-19) Whilst this thesis does not answer the questions of what art or art history is, it does discuss the importance of different artistic practices to societal research through the use of art historical methods.

Amelia Jones continued this explanation of visual culture in relation to "high versus low culture" specifically as sharing the "impulse of culture studies to reject disciplinary hierarchies," (2003, p.3) and that the driving force was revising how meaning takes place within imagery. This specifically relates to the shift of focus from the meaning endowed by 'artists-as-creators,' to how viewers interpret the works: "Visual culture, then, cuts through the conventional art-historical notion of meaning as inherent in an image, as presumably embedded there in perpetuity by the willful [sic] intentions of the artist…" (Jones, 2003, p.3). Therefore, the ways in which imagery can be interpreted as representing different ideologies, in the case of this thesis, the ways in which graphic arts represent and portray gender and sexuality, is an important means of academic inquiry.

Despite the assertions of *ukiyo-e* as popular culture and being artistically 'unimportant' to Japan at the time, it should be noted that *ukiyo-e* and the artists who created them were very popular (like *manga* and *mangaka*)[40] and were appreciated for their artistic skills.[41] Therefore, if these prints were truly seen as only 'disposable' there would not be as many beautiful examples of this art from still in existence today, nor so many different print editions of popular series needing to be created or recreated. In fact, there has been a continuous narrative that when first introduced on a mass scale in Europe during the 19th century, these prints were 'discovered' as wrapping paper for ceramics. In her 2021 publication, *Ukiyo-e in Context*, Julie Nelson-Davies tackles this point immediately by saying in her career thus far she, and others she has worked with, have seen no evidence of prints being

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[40] 漫画家 *mangaka* meaning *manga* artist.
[41] As well as the printers and carvers involved in the printing process themselves, see Appx. One for further production discussions.

used in such a way: "…[it] probably originates in a misunderstanding of an event that in turn may have been misremembered." (2021, p.1 & p.21). She then goes on to offer a possible explanation for the development of this myth as being related to a sentence in a letter relating to an illustrated book from Japan being wedged between porcelain pieces being shipped some fifty years after the event in question took place, and heard second hand: "… the people doing the packing were French exporters, not Japanese dealers. The book may have been used to fill a gap, but this case likely alludes to something else: the French exporters probably added the little book as a gift for a good customer." (2021, p.1). This discussion itself brings into question ideas of how prints were really used and valued, and how we as art historians approach these areas.[42]

Though the imagery interpreted within this specific thesis may not be considered to be illustration in the conventional sense, Alan Male states that illustration is rooted in an "objective" need to "fulfil a particular task," (2007, p.10) usually in connection to communicating a "specific contextualised message to an audience." (2007, p.10). From this visual language is an essential part of this research and the analyses within, as some imagery can only be understood, or 'read', with the relevant visual literacy (Ishida, 2019). Images communicate differently to text; they allow personal imagination and individualism to be expressed, all whilst, potentially, communicating different messages. This also leads to various interpretations and readings of these messages depending upon a multitude of factors; including, but not limited to, class, race, gender and age. Thus, arts of all kinds should be studied as a

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[42] Nelson-Davies switches the focus of this by asking how we know how prints etc. were used and valued. The basis of which formulates her questions within her publication.

means of interpreting different ideologies and perspectives, and how this could sit within wider social contexts; in the case of this thesis, these contexts relate to gender and sexuality.

Returning to *manga*, a brief definition of terms is required. *Manga* evolved from many global influences and creative disciplines, to become a leading 'comic' phenomenon in the 20th century,[43] and are demographically split: *shōnen manga* focuses on action-packed storylines aimed at boys, whereas *shōjo manga* explores emotional tales targeting a female readership; whilst *seinen* and *josei* follow more mature themes for young-adult male and female-target audiences respectively. However, it should be noted that '*josei manga*' as a term appears to be used as a description by fans and online forums or *manga* list sites, as *josei* is another term for woman or female, and not necessarily as a common term by *manga* scholars:

> The 1980s saw the arrival of manga genres aimed at adult women, along with specialized magazines that continue to be published today. It strikes me as notable, however, that for some reason we have no term to describe as a whole the genre of manga aimed at adult women, and that for the most part even manga aimed at adult women are categorized as *shōjo* manga.
>
> (Yamada, 2019, p.121)

However, there appears to be some discrepancy in this as Deborah Shamoon does make reference to *josei manga* as an "offshoot genre… for older readers" (2018, loc.6300) whilst discussing *shōjo manga*. Nevertheless, there is an area of *manga* for adult women with a recognisable and accepted term, 'Ladies' Comics' or *rediisu*

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[43] Elements of handscrolls such as *Chōjū-jinbutsu-giga (Frolicking Animal Scrolls)* from the 12th Century, or *kibyōshi* 黄表紙 *Kibyōshi* 'Yellow books' a cheap picture book created during the Tokugawa Period, similar to contemporary comic books or *manga* (Kern, 2006) of the Tokugawa period, can be seen in the continuation of visual narratives, however, British cartoons and caricatures such as those found in *Punch* and by Charles Wirgman, and influences from cinema in the 1950s, such as Disney, can all be found in contemporary *manga* (Ito, 2008).For a more detailed discussion of manga production and serialisation see Appx. One

komikkusu[44] which explores much more explicit adult themes than the more mainstream works that *josei* may be applied to.

Regardless of these gendered demographics and generalised themes, each area of *manga* features works that include but are not limited to: history, sci-fi, supernatural and slice-of-life[45] storylines. The fact that *manga* in the first instance are categorised by the, presumed, gender of the target audience, make them an interesting and apt form of visual media to analyse representations of gender and sexuality, but *manga* also "reflect both the reality of Japanese society and the myths, beliefs, and fantasies that Japanese have about themselves, their culture, and the world" (Ito, 2008, p.27). Again, this emphasises the need to study graphic arts and imagery within academic research to understand a variety of social and historical ideologies, but also as an art form, since the content as well as the context of these works is important. This combination of visual analysis and gender examination is a new study that offers fresh perspectives on the impact of visual and graphic arts on cultural attitudes and interpretations of gender and sexuality.

These interpretations are presented throughout the following chapters, which explore different elements of gender and sexuality in imagery since the 17th century, although some analysis concentrates more directly on 18th century *ukiyo-e* and 20th Century *manga*. However, in order to provide detailed discussions of the evolutions of these later 20th century images more accurately, examples of works from the Meiji, Taishō and Shōwa periods (Appx. Three) are analysed to enable a wider

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[44] レディースコミックス *Rediisu komikkusu* Ladies' Comics, also can be shortened to *redikomi,* see Part One, Chapter Five.
[45] This refers to stories that focus on the everyday occurrences and lives of the characters with settings such as high schools, junior high schools, offices etc.

contextual understanding of developing and evolving creative themes, practices and ideologies relating to gender. The gap between the 18th and 20th centuries was an extensive time of change, both in terms of political and societal attitudes, but also in terms of artistic creation. For that reason, an extended discussion of these periods is not possible in the scope of this project, but the relevant graphic or illustrative arts are explored in order to illustrate the important visual representations.

Each thesis component studies a specific element of gender as the focal point, though other gendered elements may be referenced throughout to support and provide further contextual discussions. Part One focuses on feminine representations, Part Two explores cross-gender performance and Part Three considers masculinities. The choice to split the thesis by perceived gender representations is reminiscent of *manga* demographic splits, but this is also to provide space for detailed analyses of differing representations within these sub-sections. The Literature Review (Chapter One, p.29), provides a synthesised overview of the cross-disciplinary sources and theories that have shaped the research; the thesis then outlines the methodological processes that are utilised in Chapter Two (p.59). The methods illustrate how the physical act of looking leads to detailed examinations of the signs and codes that are communicated in graphic arts, whilst also acknowledging that the subjective nature of art, and the cultural positionality of the researcher, can lead to differing interpretations.

Chapter Three examines the ways in which femininity has been represented through the subject of female sex-workers during the Tokugawa period, and the glamorisation of their lives in print format. The passivity and sexualisation of these

women is explored in relation to the societal expectations of the time. This then leads to the establishment of *shōjo* culture in the Meiji and Taishō periods as discussed in Chapter Four, when a change in political and societal structures led to new categories of woman and their place in society; this meant that women were suddenly seen as important consumers[46], and imagery created about them was suddenly *for* them as well. The final chapter in this section (Five) explores less mainstream artistic representations of women, such as in Ladies' Comics, alongside works created by and primarily for men that show women in a more 'active'[47] light, bringing the section full circle from the passive woman stereotype to *femme fatale*-type interpretations.

Following these binary female representations, an examination of cross-gendered acts takes place in Part Two. The imagery explored throughout this section include female and male-coded imagery, but from gender performative interpretations. Chapter Six concentrates on historic representations established in *kabuki* performances, with historical analysis regarding the development of the art form. *Ukiyo-e* about *kabuki* was especially popular, and, therefore, an interesting art form to utilise the discussion of gender representations. The precedent of male-to-female cross-gender performance in Japanese art forms paved the way for more mainstream forms of female-to-male cross-gender performance in the Takarazuka Revue[48] to emerge in the 20th century, as explored in Chapter Seven. The Revue has been an

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[46] Although Amy Stanley (2022) does outline women's place as consumers during the Tokugawa period, which also led to outcry from men in positions of power. This is explored in relation to the Meiji/Taishō in Chapters Four and Five.

[47] Due to the nature of this specific study, other 'active' representations of women in *manga* created by and for women cannot be explored in detail here, though the cross-gendered active representations will be discussed in Part Two.

[48] 宝塚歌劇団 Takarazuka Kagekidan.

integral part of the development of *shōjo manga* narratives since the 1950's and 1960's, and female coded 'gender-bending' stars of *manga* are analysed in this section. The final chapter in this part (Eight) explores some of the common tropes and themes in contemporary *manga* visuals, such as that of the mistaken identity trope, before concluding with male-coded gender-play and performance.

The final section of this thesis interprets masculinities within Japanese visual culture. Beginning with Tokugawa Period discussions of the role of 'male youths',[49] Chapter Nine, explores what masculinities can actually mean in relation to androgyny and 'third genders', historically speaking. The ideal of androgyny as a part of 'masculine' beauty is significant within Japanese visual cultures and the second chapter of this section explores the 'birth' of *bishōnen*[50] as a core visual character in *manga*. Though *bishōnen* can be traced throughout Japanese history, Chapter Ten analyses the role of masculine beauty in relation to female audiences specifically.[51] The final chapter (Eleven) then examines different ideas of masculine beauty in relation to male readership before concluding with sexuality specific representations.

Whilst multiple images are explored and analysed throughout the chapter text, each chapter concludes with an individual case study to illustrate the discourse of the chapter. The case studies have been selected throughout the research to reflect a variety of representations and portrayals relating to gender and sexuality. The images are initially discussed individually, and then in conjunction with any accompanying

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[49] *Wakashu* specifically as will be explained further later in thesis: 若衆 youth/young person often used in reference to 'male youths'.
[50] 美少年 literally 'beautiful boy' *bi* meaning beautiful and *shōnen* which is now used to mean boy
[51] ボーイズ ラブ Boys Love/BL, a genre of *shōjo manga* with homoerotic themes.

imagery where appropriate. The methodological approaches of this are outlined in Chapter Two. As is further discussed in Chapter One, the majority of the thesis has utilised English language sources and translations, this includes *manga* that has been consulted. Though cross-disciplinarity has been used in the consultation of sources to assist the interpretations of the graphic arts, particular arguments relating to wider media, such as *anime* or novels, or thorough histories of queer representation in reality, cannot be covered in detail within the scope of this particular research project. However, where appropriate, relevant connections are made that relate to other media, and also deeper discourse surrounding the history of 'queerness' in Japan, but the focus on graphic arts is maintained.

This research aims to discover new areas of discussion in relation to the artistic practices that gained momentum during the Tokugawa period, and how gender was formulated and represented within graphic arts since this period. As this thesis uncovers, Japan's attitudes to gender and sexuality can be extremely complex, with minute details affecting the interpretation of these ideologies. However, in order to make these new discoveries, an understanding of the literature that already exists is required. The following literature review examines key sources and theories, across various disciplines, that are utilised throughout the thesis in the application to artistic practice evaluation.

Chapter One:
Literature Review

This research employs a cross-disciplinarity approach in order to understand and analyse accurately the breadth of already existing discourse surrounding gender, Japan and art. Cross-disciplinarity,[52] in terms of the literature explored, is vital to this research as it allows for a deeper and more nuanced reading of the imagery in relation to gender and sexuality by creating a synthesis from these sources. These disciplines include but are not limited to areas such as queer studies, art history, visual cultures, theatre studies, *manga* studies, sociology and history. It is also important to re-emphasise that whilst the focus of this research is within Japanese arts, the majority of sources consulted are English language texts and translations, though some original Japanese language sources have been consulted. As the focus of the research is the analysis of graphic arts through the lens of art history, the texts examined have assisted in the comprehension regarding contexts and histories, as well as more general discussions of performance, gender, sexuality and Japanese culture. This in turn has enabled the interpretative discourse surrounding the imagery to develop and to illustrate how representations and portrayals can be formed. The following review examines the texts and theories that have influenced and shaped the development of this thesis.

As already mentioned in the Introduction, gender performativity is a crucial theory to this research. The basic discourse states that cultural and societal impacts influence gender and create performance, as opposed to a biological imperative of gender

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[52] As this research focuses upon approved and recognised art historical and visual methodological processes, the thesis is not classed as interdisciplinary. However, cross-disciplinary is relevant due to the use of sources from across disciplines to make connections (Polaine, 2010, para.2).

expression. The main arguments of Butler (2006 & 2004; Jagger, 2008) are pivotal

to the discourse of non-/normative gender as a series of acts, or performance,

however: "one does not "do" one's gender alone. One is always "doing" with or for

another, even if the other is only imaginary" (Butler, 2004, p.1). This relates to

"learned codes" (Thompson, 2006, p.23) as a means of understanding and informing

the ways in which gender can be performed. Codes can be influenced from differing

social and cultural ideologies that in turn impact on artistic representations of gender.

These theories and ideas surrounding codes and cultural influence in the formation of

gender performance have also gone beyond cultural/critical theory within arts and

humanities discourse. Gina Rippon (2019) examines the myths within cognitive

neuroscience of "gendered brains," to determine to what extent 'sex' plays a role in

the formation of gender, with a focus on the female brain. Ultimately, she concludes:

> …that our brains are rule-seeking systems, generating predictions based on the world in which they are functioning in order to guide us through that world… we need to be much more aware of exactly what social rules (right or wrong) are out there to be absorbed.

> (2019, p.347)

Therefore, theories relating to the learned codes that we absorb in order to express

(or hide) our genders lead to a need to examine ways in which these codes could be

shown. Imagery is an impactful area of codes: photography, illustration,

advertisements and art (as well as televisual and gaming imagery) surround us

constantly in our daily lives, and can impact on the way we understand, learn and

interact with the society and culture we live in. Hence the imagery we see daily is

involved with the learned cultural and societal codes of gender – alongside the more

intangible aspects of culture.

Moving on to art historical studies specifically, particularly in western discourse, there was a shift from modernist and classical modes of thinking in the 1970s, which was related to the feminist interpretations that began to be applied to readings of visual imagery (Jones, 2003; Bell, 2007).[53] Around this time visual cultures began to take shape as a separate mode of study to differentiate between the 'high and low' arts, as discussed in the Introduction (pp.20-21). Jones continued these discussions in relation to feminist responses that began to develop the analysis of imagery in arts research (2003, p.3) as forcing a change in representation and art historical discourse. In light of this change leading feminist art historians, Linda Nochlin (1989; 2021) Griselda Pollock (2003), and Rosemary Betterton (1987; 2003) proposed ways that art history, visual cultures and feminism could develop together to create new readings within art practices.

Additionally, at this time John Berger (1972) developed vital theories in *Ways of Seeing* relating to the physical act of looking and the gaze in relation to visual arts; that is men look, women are looked at. Later, Laura Mulvey (1989) then expanded Berger's discussions of the gaze within film theory and related it to women by developing the theory of the female gaze.[54] This gaze meant a move away from the previously perceived norm of the male gaze, which positioned women as object and the male as voyeur: "women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness.*" (Mulvey, 1989b, pp.47-48, emphasis in original);

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[53] Which more recently is moving towards practice based research as a mode of understanding and re-creating (Biggs & Karlsson, 2010, loc.307)

[54] Mulvey originally published 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' as an article in *Screen* Vol.16 No.3 1975 pp.6-18 (Gamman & Marshment, 1988, p.189). This thesis uses the 1989 *Visual and Other Pleasures* publication as well as a re-print in The Feminism Visual Culture Reader (Jones, 2003).

though it should be noted that the 'gender' of the viewer did not matter so much as the intent. In other words, regardless of the person viewing, the gaze that was perpetuated was male. Therefore, the female gaze does not necessarily equate men with object as a form of reversed gaze, but that women do not need to 'look' in the same way as men, meaning the gaze can also relate to identification, as well as subjective and objective means of engaging with imagery.[55] Lorraine Gamman also commented that:

> …the active female experience except in terms that assume a masculine position in language… but also doesn't allow conceptualisation of how other dynamics of identity – such as race, class and generation – may well affect how viewers of the visual media identify with protagonists.

(1988, pp.24-25)

Ultimately, the development of the female gaze through popular culture and visual arts became about empowering women (or non-heteronormative peoples) in their different acts of looking (Gamman, 1988, p.23). As Gamman noted regarding feminist and feminine representations on screen: "femininity is also intertwined with its own reflection: that there is no single reality simply awaiting its 'accurate' representation." (1988, p.23). These theories of the gaze are vital in the developments of art historical depictions and readings of imagery, as they situate passivity and activity within gendered portrayal in arts (Berger, 1972; Mulvey, 1989), but also question how these different 'acts of looking' can affect the interpretation (Gamman, 1988; Pooke & Newall, 2008, pp.146-150). This is an important theme that this research expands upon in relation to the graphic arts analysed.

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[55] Early developments of the female gaze related to psychoanalytic readings relating to the threat of women due to the "lack of a penis, implying a threat of castration" (Mulvey, 1989b, p.49) which Gamman stated led to continued readings of "*strong* women in terms of 'phallic replacement'" (1988, p.24; emphasis in original).

Another aspect that emerges throughout the development of these theories of the gaze and performance is the "white minority-world focus (Barker, 2016, p.131). Nochlin in her 'Why have there been no great women artists?' article[56] emphasises that feminist art historians should not try and find "female Michelangelos" (Pollock, 2003, p.2) but consider the "white-male-position-accepted-as-natural" (Nochlin, 2021, p.22) in readings and developments of art historical discourse. Though Nochlin's work is primarily concerned with feminist ideologies and the impacts in art history, she acknowledges consistently the white-male patriarchal institutional focus and the "natural" structure of these institutions have also negatively impacted upon ethnicities and social classes (2021, p.32). Chino also noted this as a standpoint, that in North American art historians were endeavouring to question:

> From the standpoint of "gender, race and class" these art historians see the traditional "universal" and "objective" art historical discourses as a set of values clearly based on those of "white-middle-class men". The assumptions of traditional art historical practice put others in an inferior position. It seems only natural that these art historians would have a difficult time accepting such a situation.
>
> (1996, p.18)

Therefore, the move to question the white male focus in art history expanded after Nochlin's 1971 essay, as Meiling Cheng stated: "Within feminism, the confrontation with gender oppression alone proved insufficient when the interlocking effects of race, ethnicity, class, age, physical ability, and sexuality were laid open and critiqued." (2003, p.30).

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[56] Originally published in 1971, with a 'thirty years later' (2001) and 50th anniversary (2021) editions subsequently published.

This is intersectionality, as coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 as a means of directly examining how individual people's different lived experiences affect the way they interact with and view the world in which they live, or, more specifically, how their overlapping identities relate to the discrimination they face (Coaston, 2019).[57] Intersectionality then, could also be viewed as an expansion of feminist theories to involve more than white, cisgendered, middle-class women's experiences in discourse, and as such brought oppression, discrimination and privilege related to race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and disability to the fore more prominently (Bloom, 1999; 2003). However, as Brittney Cooper explains, intersectionality was not supposed to be a means of exploring identity or subjective identity politics, but to explain the power dynamics within law that left black women as invisible: "Never did her work indicate that intersectionality was an effective tool of accounting for identities at any level beyond the structural" (Cooper, 2016, p.390). On the other hand, it perfectly explained that different lived experiences by various (in this case) women meant that they experienced oppression and privilege in distinct ways. Therefore, the feminist theories regarding intersectionality continued to develop so that race, class, sexuality and gender could be explored as they intersect together.

Chino also stated that: "Consciously or unconsciously a researcher's individual and personal viewpoint conditions her or his methods of study" (1996, p.18). This also applies within these discussions and also within conversations of how art histories can be explored, as Chino asserted that concepts such as gender should be applied to

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[57] The initial examinations by Crenshaw in 1989 and 1991 examined Black women's experiences specifically within law and critical race theory: "What she [Crenshaw] named "intersectionality", encapsulated and expanded a body of work about a set of social problems that black women thinkers had been grappling with and attempting in various shapes and forms to name for nearly a century." (Cooper, 2016, p.389).

historical readings in art history in order to: "take a new look at the very discipline

and history of Japanese art history and to offer new interpretations." (1996, p.17).

Barker acknowledges this further by discussing criticisms of queer theory for not

engaging with race (2016, p.126) and points to some stereotypes that emerge in

gender and sexuality discussions as "at polar extremes from white people" for

instance, "Asian men are stereotyped as feminine and black men as hypermasculine.

Asian women are stereotyped as innocent and black women as hypersexual" (Barker,

2016, p.128). Barker continues: "One issue with a white minority-world focus is that

– as anthropologist Gilbert Herdt points out – many cultures globally don't view

gender and sexuality in the essentialist, binary ways common in the minority world."

(2016, p.131). This point is vital to the discussions and research of this thesis,

because as already illustrated, performativity is key in gender discussions.[58]

Despite the western or 'white minority-world' focal point of these gender, or queer

theories, they have been indispensable as a starting point for global gender

examinations for western-based scholars, as this is the world in which they have

engaged with these theories and ideas personally.[59] This is perhaps why Lisa Bloom

(2003) specifically extended feminist theoretical discussions by regarding

transnational and Asian feminist points of view in relation to visual cultures,

following a 1999 edited publication that considered race and gender more broadly, as

Asian feminist theories and discourse had not been widely acknowledged within

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[58] Although it should be noted that performativity through Butler's research and theories have been related more closely to queer theory than in feminist work since: "Some feminist activists perceive Butler's work as undermining their struggle, but gender instability is central to *queer theory*." (Pooke & Newall, 2008, p.159; emphasis in original).

[59] However, as Joshua Mostow in the introduction of the edited collection *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field* (2003) notes, edited or collected feminist art history publications began to re-"restrict" the scope of feminist theory by focusing on European and non-ancient works in the 1990s, despite exhibitions and publications dedicated to Japanese and Chinese women artists being produced (2003, pp.1-3) with examples including Fister (1988) and Weidner (1990).

these western feminist publications. However, within Japanese arts specifically, the 1990's saw an increase in translations of feminist seminal texts such as Nochlin and Pollock, as well as original Japanese works with a feminist focus (Mostow et.al., 2003, p.4). More recently, there was a re-examination of feminist thinking in Japan, through arts, education and transnational viewpoints (Bullock, Kano, Welker, 2018); as well as the championing of leading Japanese feminist voices (Buckley, 1997) through interviews and translations of key works.

Scholars of Japanese studies relating to gender, have also utilised Butler to ground the discourse and provide theoretical discussion in relation to the historical and cultural attitudes towards different gender expressions (Antononoka, 2018 & 2019; Robertson, 1998; Strickland, 2008). Sabine Frühstück stated: "sex, gender, and sexuality are sociocultural constructs that have historically evolved – perhaps never more dramatically than during the modern era" (2022, p.9). This statement relates directly to the theory that gender is constructed by the codes and signs we interact with on a daily basis within differing cultures (Thompson, 2006; Rippon 2019). Frühstück then specifies: "In Japan, female, male, and other individuals have transgressed the binaries and boundaries, have refused to be either, or have insisted on being more than both," (2022, p.12). Thus she stresses that western ideas of binaries and non-binaries do not apply in the same ways to other cultures, but that theories of performativity can be universal when engaged with the correct histories and contexts. Therefore, the theoretical discourse regarding performativity that has been outlined relates to this thesis as it establishes a base from which visual representations in Japanese graphic arts can be interpretated.

Performativity in theory has been adapted to include non-binary discussions, but initially binaries were the focus in determining performativity (Butler, 2006). However, the use of performativity to express feminine examples is explored widely in a range of disciplines, most notably within literal performances relating to *kabuki* theatre. Thompson's (2006) point about gender being performance was in relation to the formation of femininity by the male-in-female acting roles of *kabuki*, and also in relation to Shakespeare, as was the focus of Fujita Minoru and Michael Shapiro's 2006 edited collection. By the same token, Olga Antononoka (2019) examines "female modes of address" in *kabuki*-themed *manga,* bringing together feminine codes, cross-gendered performativity and visual narratives. This is a continuation of her PhD research which utilised the performativity theories outlined by Butler to illustrate gender as portrayed by *bishōnen* and *onnagata* in *manga* – ultimately this is a study of performativity and meta-performativity in reference to drag (2018). The representations that Antononoka explores are visual narratives developed from the on-stage personas and performances of gender executed by *onnagata,* which have developed over centuries from the extensive study of *kata*[60] but also the changing societal and political regulations of the body and gender on stage (Mezur, 2005; Leiter, 2012; Isaka; 2016).

With this in mind, theatre studies scholar, Katherine Mezur, asserts that the formulation of *onnagata* characterisation relies on the impact of *wakashu* and the "beautiful boy body" (2005, pp.2-3) as the basis of the development of the *onnagata* art form, and that the female roles they play have no basis within a real feminine

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[60] 型 *kata* form or style of acting that represent the role / type of role being performed through gestures and movement.

form but are in fact the representation of another created idealised gender identity.

On the other hand, Samuel Leiter asserts that the *onnagata* art form is reliant on observation of women combined with idealisation (2012; 1999). This was because, "the actors playing/inspiring their creation were men whose artistic status was dependent upon the authenticity with which they captured the truthful essence of another gender for an audience in which women generally outnumbered men" (Leiter, 1999, p.496). Leiter continues that the ideal of femininity within Tokugawa Japan[61] was that of the virtuous or gentle woman: "In a society where such an ideal of femininity was worshipped, one would expect to see this image reflected in *kabuki*." (1999, p.497). The emphasis on virtuosity as an ideal for women, Leiter also asserts, comes from the: "Confucian-based moral tracts that stressed women's lowly place," (1999, p.497) such as the *Onna Daigaku* (*The Greater Learning for Women)*. Similarly:

> While Confucianism, and eventually Neo-Confucianism, regulated most of the social aspects of their lives, Chinese and Japanese women sought spiritual comfort and intellectual stimulation in Buddhism. This Indian religion… was at heart no less misogynistic than Confucianism, but it was more flexible and capable of adapting itself to different audiences.
>
> (Weidner, 1990, p.9)

The "Three Obediences" of obeying the father, husband and son was one such philosophy that dominated women's lives of the period.[62] However, Marsha Weidner's (1990, p.9) comment about Buddhism is also important in relation to attitudes towards and about women, as there were "negative female images" perpetuated due to the ideology of women as: "temptress…Women arouse desire and

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[61] The era in which *kabuki* was formulated and popularised.
[62] The "three obediences" known as *sanjū* from Chinese Doctrine: "A woman has no way of independence through life. When she is young, she obeys her father; when she is married, she obeys her husband; when she is widowed, she obeys her son." (Quoted in Fister, 1988, p.15). Further developments of this can be seen from the Meiji period onward in the shape of "Good Wife, Wise Mother."

desire means attachment to the physical world. Attachment results in bondage to the

cycle of suffering – birth, death and rebirth – from which every Buddhist seeks

release" (Weidner, 1990, p.9). These 'misogynistic' attitudes and the ideals of

virtuosity in women was evident within Buddhist discourse to varying degrees as

Bernard Faure discusses (1998; 2003), however, the 'women' depicted in *kabuki*,

and prints, were not the typical townswomen or merchant class women that attended

the *kabuki* performances; they were often the glamorised sex-workers of the pleasure

quarters, as Cecilia Segawa Seigle outlines in her 1993 monograph.[63]

In view of these femininity discussions regarding performativity and idealisation,

Seigle discusses sex workers as exaggerated and sexualised versions of themselves

(1993, 2004), which an *onnagata* performing as a 'courtesan'[64] had to interpret

(Leiter, 1999). This shows how performativity as a theory transcends across

disciplines and readings of performance, both as a dramatic performance and as a

gendered one. It also brings parody and "meta-performance" (Antononoka, 2018,

p.22) into the discourse. Therefore, since *onnagata* as well as the sex-workers of the

Tokugawa Period were popular subjects of prints (Nelson Davies, 2021; Fister,

1988) the examination of different gender performances is needed to illustrate how

this was then communicated in a two-dimensional mass-producible art form. This is

a gap this thesis aims to explore, as the literature relating to performativity and

theatrics so far discussed, does not explore Japanese popular graphic arts across

centuries together. However, Antononoka explores 'drag' within *manga* and

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[63] The life of these sex workers during this period was indeed glamorised to the populaces, as Siegle emphasises in her tracking of the history of the Yoshiwara quarter.吉原 Yoshiwara: pleasure quarter located on the outskirts of Edo modern day Tōkyō. Siegle also examines the realities of indentured sex-slavery and the ways in which the female workers of the quarters were idealised, idolised and immortalised in literature and arts (1993).

[64] See Chapter Three for language discussion.

emphasises that there are two categories for cross-dressing within *manga*: "when a character is constantly in-drag, and when the character alternates between drag and conventionally gendered clothing." (2018, p.52). This is addressed through female- and male-coded cross gender performance in Part Two of this thesis.

This thesis also considers the importance of femininity in the construction of cross-gendered acts that contemporarily could be considered androgynous or nonbinary. For example, as *onnagata* are to *kabuki*, *otokoyaku*[65] are to the Takarazuka Revue,[66] in that these roles are cross-gender acting specialities of female-in-male roles.[67] As *kabuki* had been in the Tokugawa period, according to Leiter (1999), the Takarazuka audience has been primarily female since the adaption and popularisation of *otokoyaku*[68] (Robertson, 1998; Strickland, 2008). Unlike early *onnagata*, however, the performativity of *otokoyaku* was not to extend beyond the stage as a form of genderfluidity (Isaka, 2016) but to remain firmly in the realms of fantasy so that the femininity of the actors could not be questioned (Robertson, 1998; 2001).

Jennifer Robertson, a key scholar in English language texts regarding the Revue, examines the history and sexuality interpretations of the Revue in her 1998 publication, and states that the creator of the revue firmly believed in the 'good wife, wise mother' doctrine and that, when the time came, women should 'leave the stage' and marry (Robertson, 1998). Therefore, the performative nature of the *otokoyaku,*

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[65] 男役 *Otokoyaku* male role actor.
[66] Established in 1914 as a form of family entertainment, the focus soon turned to an all female musical revue with inspirations from western musicals and plays as well as later adaptions of Japanese popular cultural content.
[67] Though Anan does discuss a theatre company called Studio Life established in 1985 with an all male cast (since 1989) which could be considered a closer opposite to the Takarazuka Revue (2016, pp.99-107) however, the "realistic" acting style of this company does make it different to Takarazuka.
[68] Previously the revue was advertised as a family form of entertainment.

whilst appearing to be the antithesis to *onnagata*, was in fact enforced within strict boundaries. Robertson's research also revolved around the sexual politics of the revue and established elements of eroticism and sexual connections on behalf of fans. However, Karen Nakamura and Hisako Matsuo (2003) disagree with this conclusion and state that the Revue is an asexual space (2003, p.61) in that there is no sexual connections regarding fan interactions: "… do not connect their sexuality with the appeal they feel for Takarazuka." (Nakamura & Matsuo, 2003, p.64).[69]

Leonie Strickland (2008) continues to analyse the gender play on- and off-stage from not only an ethnographic researcher point of view, but also as a fan, translator and voice actor within the institution. In relation to the sexual politics, Strickland's view is that due to the Revue motto of "Purely, Righteously, Beautifully" (2008, p.32),[70] the 'purity' element, "indoctrinates fans to the extent that they are unwilling or unable to recognise sexual desire as a facet of their fandom, even if it exists." (2008, p.138). Whereas Robertson focused on sexuality aspects of the Revue and fans, Strickland examines the gender implications of both the *otokoyaku* and *musumeyaku*; again with an emphasis on all forms of gender expression being a 'performance': "even a female-role player… exposes the constructed nature of gender by her exaggerated performance of femininity, which is not necessarily simply an extension of her everyday persona as a female" (Strickland, 2008, p.5).[71] Ayako Kano discusses this paradox of female actor and entertainer versus normative female roles and representations (beyond the popular revue) but in relation to the outcry against (or for) the loss of *onnagata* with the re-introduction of women to the stage during

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[69] It should be emphasised that this is in relation to lesbian sexuality discussions specifically.
[70] "*Kiyoku, tadashiku, utsukushiku*".
[71] This also has connotations with the *tachiyaku* male role performers in *kabuki*.

the Meiji period and through the Taishō periods (2001). The cross-gendered acts of the Takarazuka however, became so popular that they in turn impacted on the popularisation of female-to-male cross-gendered acts and representation in *manga* - specifically *shōjo manga*.[72]

Leading scholars within *manga* studies, such as Jacqueline Berndt (2016, 2017, 2019), have discussed the place of *manga* within art historical practices, but also how *shōjo* have impacted on the expansion of media relating to and created with 'Girls' Culture' in mind; as such 'Girls' Culture' has become one of the most prominent fields of study relating to *manga* and media in the last decade. Following this, other leading scholars in the realm of *shōjo*, such as Ogi Fusami and Nagaike Kazumi (2019 & 2019b), have expanded the sphere of *shōjo* culture, and by extension, Boys' Love (BL) (McLelland et.al, 2015) beyond the confines of Japan's borders to examine the impact these media have internationally. Still, the importance of the *shōjo*'s impact on the development of contemporary visual expressions of gender in arts, as well as print media in Japan, is paramount.

Shōjo as a gendered category emerged in the Meiji period (Prough, 2011; Robertson, 1992; Shamoon; 2012), and was linked to the shift in social and political ideas due to the mass-introduction of western ideologies to Japan. This reinforced gendered ideas of one's place in society, perpetuating a lower status of woman, but also created 'girls' as a separate category to 'boy' (Robertson, 1992). During the Meiji Period,

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[72] Some of the most famous *manga* stories incorporating female-to-male cross-gender acting or dressing have become staples for the Takarazuka Revue but in turn were originally influenced by the performances of Takarazuka (Welker, 2008, p.48). This intrinsic connection between *shōjo manga* and the Takarazuka Revue was also highlighted in the 2019 *Manga* exhibition at the British Museum where posters of key performances were displayed alongside namesake *manga* such as *The Poe Clan* (*Pō no ichizoku* 1972-1976; and sequels 2016-present).

changes in education also impacted on the formation of youth cultures, and girls'

cultures specifically, which continued through the Taishō period, as Deborah

Shamoon (2012) and Alisa Freedman (2019) discuss regarding 'same-sex' schooling

and the emergence of *shōjo* magazines. 'Girls' Culture' advanced throughout the 20th

century as girls became seen as specific consumers of goods, leading to illustrations

being produced that accompanied the magazine articles aimed specially at them

(Masuda, 2015; Ajioka, 1998). This brought about new ideals of femininity

(Shamoon, 2012) that continued virtuosity, but from a place of innocence, as

opposed to the 'filial piety' that could lead one to selling themselves to the brothels

or pleasure quarters to save their family (Weidner, 1990). These discussions are

applicable to the visual analysis within the thesis due to the transformation into

idealised gendered imagery, explored in Part One.

Themes within *manga* are also important discussion points, with *shōjo* being equated

with the psychological and emotional, whereas *shōnen* is associated with action in

most *manga* analysis (Takahashi, 2008; Schodt, 1983).[73] However, a further case

study by Toku (2015) involving a young boy, shows the impact of *shōjo manga*

aesthetics on the development of drawings (i.e. injections of 'cute'), possibly

illustrating that *manga* of all kinds can be and is enjoyed and embraced by a range of

audiences. On the other hand, Toku concludes that: "This may be an example of the

fact that the influence of shojo manga has spilled over into boys' manga," (2015,

p.19) meaning that it is possible that young boys are not necessarily reading *shōjo*

manga, but that these aesthetics have become an accepted part of other *manga*

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[73] These themes were also evident in Toku's research (2015) in which girls tended to focus on emotional or less tangible representations of their time with friends, whereas boys focused on the physical play in their drawings (2015, pp.10-11).

categories. This is an area that this thesis intends to explore further to develop these ideas in relation to the aesthetics and visuals portraying and representing gender.

However, as the 20th century progressed, the ideals outlined by Shamoon (2012) from the viewpoint of women and girls themselves began to shift, as Fujimoto Yukari (2004, 2014, 2015) examines. Fujimoto specifically discusses the emergence of cross-gendered acts within *manga* from a female-to-male perspective as a form of escapism from the realities of a heteropatriarchal society, and that *yaoi*[74] or later BL works provided a space for girls to "play with sex(uality)" (2015a, p.80). However, Fujimoto also asserted that in her previous works she had not "(and would never say) that *shōnen-ai* is a safe simulation of physical sexual experience." (Fujimoto, 2015a, p.79). However, safety as a theme and theory within the discourse of Boys' Love and cross-gendered themes have became a common point, and also, perhaps due to the interlinking of the early media, with the Takarazuka Revue.[75] Buruma (2012) continues the theory of safety in his discussions of the Revue, by referencing a conversation with a producer who likens the idolisation of the female-in-male role icons as being safer, or healthier, than idolising 'real' men or "long-haired pop groups". This statement implies that the *otokoyaku* were also more beautiful than real men – again illustrating evolving masculine ideals, but also recalling perpetual

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[74] *Yaoi* is the most common term for explicit male-male sexual depictions in *manga,* and is most often used today in relation to the *dōjinshi* created around *bishōnen* characters. It is an abbreviation of the saying "*Yama nashi, Ochi nashi, Imi nashi*" meaning "No climax, No punchline, No Meaning" (Galbraith, 2013, p.238). Though terminology is again scrutinised by Mizoguchi, Baudinette, Kim Hyojin and Santos across Asia during a group lecture session regarding the history, transformation and transnational impacts of BL (Japan Foundation New York, 2022b) in which different meaning is placed on terms in different countries of Asia, including meaning Japanese *manga* over regional variations specifically.
[75] These links are discussed further in Part Two, but relate to the development of *shōjo* narratives from Tezuka Osamu, a fan of the Revue due to his mothers influence and being from Takarazuka prefecture (Nakamura & Matsuo, 2003).

arguments that *onnagata* are more beautiful or capable of portraying a female character than a woman (2012, pp.114-5; Isaka, 2016; Kano, 2001).

Accordingly, the theory of cross-gender acts as a means of escapism from patriarchal society then extended to narratives of 'male homosexuality' that have become epitomised within *shōjo manga* in recent decades. The theory of safety in the experimentation with sexuality has become an aspect of the discourse surrounding BL, however, there was discourse in the 1990's that equated BL with perversion. For instance, Sakakibara Shihomi (1998, pp.160-163) examined escapism in *yaoi*/BL but from the perspective of negative feelings in reaction to the critics who cause the readers to feel they need to suppress their interest and enjoyment of *yaoi*/BL:

> The suppression of their preference for yaoi is something that is tremendously difficult for some people and it is precisely this, along with its accompanying feelings of censure and contemptibility, to which is added the burden of self-loathing, that drives some people to turn away and immerse themselves completely in "yaoi novels".

> (Sakakibara, 1998, p.163)

Thus, Sakakibara concludes that the patriarchal society and critics of the media cause a self-loathing which leads to *yaoi*/BL as a form of escapism from reality: "So it may be said that the vicious circle that they are falling into is that their actions create new disgust and guilt, and in order to escape from it, they become more absorbed in works that deeply satisfy their BL preferences." (1998, p.99). This leads to discussions of the 'perversion' that is equated with the BL and *yaoi* genres, which is also discussed by Nagaike Kazumi (2012) as a reaction of female authors of male-male homosexual literature that began in earnest in the 1960s. The terminology is also used by Kano when briefly discussing the changes in sexual 'acceptance' throughout the Meiji period: "By the end of Meiji, male homosexuality was

interpreted through the code of "perverse sexual desire," and this marginalizing and pathologizing of male homosexuality went hand in hand with a new emphasis on heterosexuality" (2001, p.30). Thus, this created a link between fantasy portrayals and realities of homosexuality in a negative context.

Significantly, in her 2015 chapter Nagaike also makes comment on the *Yaoi Ronsō,*[76] a dispute in 1992 between gay men and the fans and authors of *yaoi* and BL-themed works (2015, p.65). This argument stemmed from the idea that women were "plundering" (Nagaike, 2015, pp.64-73) imagery related to gay men and causing harmful stereotypes. Nagaike emphasises that a surrender of sorts was reached when female authors, readers, and critics, "recognized their shame and guilt as plunderers of gay images. Thus, some BL creators/readers/critics end up viewing BL as a guilt orientated activity" (2015, p.67). This guilt then became a theme within Japanese discourse surrounding BL and *yaoi*, as evidenced by Sakakibara:

> Increasingly, both authors and readers of *yaoi* material feel compelled to play down their preference for this kind of literature due to criticism of *yaoi* novels, which serves to reinforce their own internalised misgivings about the genre, and engenders a strong sense of guilt amongst them.

> (1998, p.96)

Nagaike also examines the inherent and perpetual misogyny that can present itself in these works, despite the headline of them being 'created by women for women' (Prough, 2011), that Fujimoto also highlights. Comparably, Ueno Chizuko (2015), a leading feminist sociologist in Japan, also discusses the internalised misogyny of women and how this is manifested in *shōjo manga*: "It represents the rift which is

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[76] *Yaoi Dispute*. Also discussed by Akiko Mizoguchi during an online group lecture and seminar *Boys' Love: The History and Transformation of BL in Asia* (Japan Foundation New York, 2022b, 1:32:54-:1:34:50).

the reality of girls brought into the idealised world. Girls are unfairly treated because they are "female" [in shonen'ai/BL]. And they know this very well." (p.264).

However, it is due to these escapist theories that the discourse of BL *manga* as not necessarily representing true male sexual desires developed, as Nagaike posits: "male homosexual characters and the concept of male homosexuality itself within yaoi narratives are constructed and represented as fantasies within the female imagination, and do not refer in the least to the realities of male homosexuality." (2012, p.6). The ideas that Nagaike develops stem from a psychoanalytical framework, primarily Freudian,[77] and the fantasies of female readers are perceived as a "proxy for the absence of an object" (2012, p.14) as opposed to the desired object i.e. male homosexuality itself. Tamaki Saitō, a psychiatrist, expresses this in slightly more direct and psychoanalytical terms: "*yaoi* desire is the desire "to become". *Yaoi* readers are not trying to possess the homosexual relationships in yaoi texts; they are trying to identify with the phallic relationship itself" (2009, p.167). He also discusses the woman as "becoming one with the object" in terms of identification, as she can take on both the passive or active roles expressed by the characters (2009, p.162). This echoes elements of Fujimoto's argument that the popularisation and adoration of male homosexual narratives and imagery in *manga* removes the reality of female gender and sexuality. Nobuko Anan (2016) takes this further to discuss the material bodies of girls and how these stereotypical ideologies of them (e.g. motherhood) can be rejected through the use of androgynous male youths, with whom girls identify, "…thereby allowing girls to imaginatively and

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[77] Nobuko Anan discusses her use of 'Western' Freudian psychoanalytical theory and that as far as some scholars are concerned it should not be "imposed" in contexts of Japanese culture, but concludes: "while it is important to be sensitive to cultural differences… Japan shows many traits with Western countries including patriarchal oppression of women." (2016, p.29).

queerly experience various forms of sexuality… Here, immaterial bodies are freed, not only from fixed gender/sexual roles, but also from obligatory reproduction" (Anan, 2016, p.80). However, Saitō does not necessarily agree with the "feminist critic" statement that "*yaoi* fictions are allowing girls to avoid adult female sexuality, to reject "socially mandated" gender roles, and to express contempt for masculine heterosexism." (2009, p.163). He stated in his opinion, that this is too political and also denied by fans and creators of the genre. Conversely, in support of *yaoi* and BL audiences:

> … many of the people who are drawn to BL literature are transsexuals and those who are F-T-M[78] gay, so it can be surmised that their "reality" has some terribly harsh aspects; it is a fact that not everybody is accepting of transsexuals[79]. Although having said that, it may just be that many people are simply unaware of the concept.

> (Sakakibara, 1998, p.163)

This discussion potentially brings into question the theory that *yaoi* and BL are surrogate forms of visual representations by and for women; perhaps it does have gendered and sexuality recognition outside the realms of heterosexuality and heteronormativity. This idea is explored in relation to visual stimuli in Part Three of the thesis, particularly in terms of 'masculine beauties' and the relevance of sexuality in the depictions in Chapter Eleven.

However, if these narratives are in fact a performative extension of femininity as opposed to a reality of male representation, examinations of masculinities in terms of gender and sexuality need to be analysed in relation to the perpetuation of these

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[78] Shorthand for female-to-male.
[79] Transgender has become a more common term in daily life and is preferred by many, however transsexual as a term is considered a subset of transgender and is preferred over transgender by some people. The text (Sakakibara, 1998, p.163) specifically used トランスセクシャル and so the translation has used transexual as opposed to transgender.

bishōnen as ideals. Though, as explored throughout the thesis, and outlined in the discussions of Fujimoto and Nagaike specifically, 'male' homosexual narratives within Japanese arts and print media is not a new phenomenon. Predating the often male coded, but androgynous, youths of *manga* known as *bishōnen* are the *wakashu*.

Joshua Mostow developed his theory surrounding *wakashu* as a 'Third Gender' from 2003[80] into an exhibition that focused completely on *wakashu*[81] representations in *ukiyo-e* in 2016.[82] This exhibition and catalogue follow Mostow's theory that *wakashu* are a separate 'Third Gender' following their advancement from childhood but before they reach adulthood.[83] The evolution of Mostow's theory through the visual medium of exhibitions, highlights that using imagery as a means of research is not only valid, but is also essential, to examine and understand different ideologies across cultures and time. The crux of the exhibition, and Mostow's developed theory, revolves around a single 'gender' that Mostow classes as a separate gender to the preconceived binaries. From this exhibition clear links can be seen between *wakashu* representation and that of contemporary *bishōnen* aesthetics, to which Mostow and Asato Ikeda very briefly allude. In fact, Akiko Mizoguchi in her PhD Thesis references a comment by Ueno regarding *bishōnen* as: "'the idealized self

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[80] In a chapter in his co-edited publication *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field*, 2015, pp.49-70.

[81] Though *wakashu* are the main historical visual representation of 'masculine beauties' discussed within this thesis, other examples of sexual relations between 'males' did exist in the form of *chigo*. (Faure, 1998 & Schmidt-Hori, 2021). *Chigo* were temple-boys that engaged in relations with monks, leading to Faure's (1998) examinations of sexuality and Buddhism. Similarly to *wakashu, chigo* were immortalised in fiction and in imagery, but the popularisation of the idealised and androgynous *wakashu* was portrayed more often in *ukiyo-e* (Leupp, 1997; Saikaku, 1996 - Saikaku was a Tokugawa period author. His book *The Great Mirror of Male Love* (*Nanshōku Ōkagami)* was published in 1687 originally, and this thesis references a 1996 translation by Schalow).

[82] Initially at the Royal Ontario Museum May 7 - November 27 2016, with a second display for Japan Society New York March 10 - June 11 2017

[83] The gender and sexuality of *wakashu* is explored through different sections reflective of the exhibition within the catalogue, such as their representation alone, with women and with men (Mostow, 2016). This is an advancement of Mostow's earlier research (2003) which considered desire and *wakashu*.

image' of girls, and they are neither male nor female. They belong to a 'third sex'."
(Ueno 1998[84] cited in Mizoguchi, 2008, p.59). This point brings direct parallels,
though different terminology, between the *wakashu* and *bishōnen* which this thesis
further analyses in relation to graphic arts specifically, thereby bridging this gap.

However, these ideas of separate genders, or non-binary genders, are not the sole
realm of *wakashu,* historically speaking, nor are they the only 'reading' of the roles
of *wakashu* in Japanese society. This highlights a potential gap in Mostow's
analysis. As Isaka (2016) establishes, *wakashu* evolved throughout the Tokugawa
period to reflect the change in social climate, but that there were also different
classes of *wakashu* depending upon the status of the person in question.[85] Mostow
does not emphasise this change in *wakashu* status, but does acknowledge Isaka's
comments, and accedes that there were other forms of *wakashu* and representation,
but that this is dependent upon the *wakashu's* role in society (Mostow, 2016, p.26).
Isaka, on the other hand, does not class any *wakashu* as a separate gender in the same
way as Mostow does; she (Isaka, 2016, p.28) refers to them as floating between
masculine and feminine but 'male sexed': "In other words, they discretely
maintained the sex identity of male and the gender identity of androgynous, implying
that the two types of identity were not necessarily in a binding relationship" (Isaka,
2009, p.27). Additionally, she places *wakashu* in similar contexts to the 1970s
bishōnen of *manga* in terms of androgynous-type appearances and the duality of

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[84] This thesis references Ueno 2015, the 'New Edition' of the 1998 publication.
[85] *Samurai wakashu,* for instance, held a very different role to a *wakashu* within entertainment circles,
due to the status and expectations of that class (Isaka, 2016). *Samurai wakashu,* in fact, were regarded
as 'in training', and were learning their roles from older *samurai,* which Isaka refers to as
"homogenderity": i.e. they were aiming for the same gender as their superiors (2016, p.23). However,
as aesthetics and the 'peace time' of the era progressed this need to emulate the gender of their
superiors waned, and as such the androgynous-type aesthetics displayed in the *Third Gender*
exhibition became a more common standard.

femininity and masculinity, but does not explicitly draw these comparisons, although from the above quotation clear links can be drawn. Again, this gap emphasises a need to explore the historical precedent of androgyny in relation to contemporary aesthetics. This then permits the analysis of changes and developments regarding visual representations relating to genders and sexualities; a gap which is filled by the visual analysis in Part Three.

Isaka's use of the term "floating" (2016, p.28) is also an important one to acknowledge here, as it can directly link to the translation of *ukiyo-e* as pictures of the floating world,[86] as well as explorations of non-binary genders. As Matsuba Ryoko asserts they were ambiguous in their gender and, "In whatever sphere, it was not their true form, and we can call them the perfect embodiment of the illusion of the "floating world"" (2016, p.50). The development of the *bishōnen* in the 1970s as 'floating' between masculine and feminine is also examined by the likes of James Welker (2006), however, he does so from an androgynous male-coded ideal of the likes of David Bowie "layered on top of a beautiful girl" (2006, p.842). Welker also notes the influence of nineteenth century European dandy-type aesthetics on this development (2006), due to the popular setting of European boarding schools in these early female-created but 'male character'-driven *manga*. Here the influence of women on the creation of these works is also paramount as though there is historical precedent in male-male relations, the use of them within narratives by and for female creators was innovative, and again refers back to Fujimoto (2004, 2014, 2015) and also Shamoon's (2012) points of a form of escapism from the restrictions in heteropatriarchal societies.

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[86] See Appx. One for further discussions of this.

Regarding the creation of art by women, Anan (2016) examines 'girl aesthetics' within visual and performing arts from the perspective of 'girl' creators and the rejection of stereotypically defined female material bodies (2016, p.2). This differs from other texts relating to *shōjo* which perpetuates the themes already discussed and the ways in which *shōjo* engage with 'cute'[87] (Kinsella, 1995; Lunning, 2015). Conversely, Mizoguchi (2008) examines these ideas with inclusions from her own perspective as a young girl in Japan as *yaoi* and BL in *manga* and novels gained momentum in the 1970s, and later as an out lesbian woman. The key aspects she examined throughout her doctoral thesis relate to fantasy, reality and representation in the formation of identity and that: "… yaoi does not represent any person's "reality", but rather is a battlefield where straight, lesbian and other women's desires and political stakes clash and representations are born." (2008, p.vii). This premise relates back to Nagaike's (2012) examinations from *yaoi* novel perspectives specifically, and that of Fujimoto, that the androgynous male characters are not the reality of gay men, nor the manifestation of women's desires to *see* or fantasise about "real" gay men, but to express sexuality through characters that are apart from themselves, but on whom they can project. This could be seen as an extension of Sakakibara's discussion of female-to-male people being "drawn" to *yaoi* and BL (1998, p.163), as this could be argued that the imagery within is a means of youths safely exploring their own genders and sexualities through *yaoi* and BL, and therefore, whilst not being a "reality" of homosexuality it is perhaps a gateway to people understanding themselves.

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[87] Though the group lecture and seminar discussion about *kawaii* (cute) aesthetics from the Japan Foundation New York, (2022c) does bring new insights and questions regarding *kawaii* ideals and how this can be applied differently then the stereotyped idea of cuteness.

Concerning masculine ideals and the examination of visuals from a non-female perspective, Waiyee Loh (2012, 2019) began exploring this in relation to continued identification with 19th century Victorian aesthetics and masculine fashions in 21st Century *manga*. Loh uses *Kuroshitsuji* (*Black Butler*; 2006-present)[88] as a case study to examine this, as this *manga* was again created by a woman, but not strictly as a *shōjo manga* due to its serialisation in Square Enix-owned *Monthly G-Fantasy* magazine that has a more *shōnen* or *seinen* target audience; though in reality, like most *manga* magazines, the audiences can be broader. The connotations here show that the aesthetics of 1970's *shōjo manga* has continued and permeated all forms of Japanese popular print media for all 'genders', as Toku began to outline from her research (2015, p.19). The male-coded beauty ideals that Loh began to analyse through fashions, is continued within this thesis but from an explicitly gendered perspective using art historical methods as examined in the following chapter. However, despite 'types' of gender-coding in the characters throughout *Black Butler* intending to appeal to and titillate the assumed primarily female audience (Loh, 2012; 2019), the representations of gender and sexuality are stereotyped with the 'gender bending' or cross-gender performative characters illustrated as sexually predatory towards the 'lead' beautiful male character. These types of harmful stereotypes can be found from a variety of perspectives throughout Japanese culture, but in relation to male homosexuality specifically, as Mark McLelland (2000; 2005) and Thomas Baudinette (2021) examine.

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[88] Set in Victorian England the series follows the life of the young head of the Phantomhive family, Ciel, and his butler, Sebastian.

First, McLelland examined the ways in which male homosexuality was portrayed in popular entertainment and observed that it was tolerated within these very specific media, but in reality, and for the everyday, the expectation is still heteronormativity. This has then been expanded by Baudinette (2021), with examinations of male homosexual realities and media in Shinjuku Ni-chōme,[89] the 'gay district' of Tokyo. The realities of the lives of these homosexual males is very different from those portrayed in the now 'mainstream' BL media narratives. As discussed, these visual narratives in *shōjo* BL *manga* established new masculinised ideals, in quasi-queer relations that were primarily aimed at women (Fujimoto, 2015a). For gay men, however, the imagery they sought after, or that was created by and for them specifically, is (often) very different. Hypermasculinity is key in this realm, as a rejection of "effeminate" representations, as Baudinette has re-asserted (2016; 2021, p.19), and the imagery produced for gay men in magazines was imitated in the *manga* and *dōjinshi*[90] works of artists. Anne Ishii, Graham Kolbeins and Chip Kidd, in their 2014 and 2016 publications, brought gay *manga* artists' work to wider audiences through interviews and translations.[91] The hypermasculine was key to these depictions to differentiate them from the 'effeminate'-as-negative connotations of 'homosexuality' that *shōjo manga* was communicating – though not necessarily intentionally or advertently. This is because *shōjo manga* were creating feminine ideals using masculinities, whilst gay *manga* was expressing particular homosexual

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[89] Often referred to as simply Ni-chōme.

[90] 同人誌 *Dōjinshi* self or fan published magazines/ *manga* i.e. non-commercial works.

[91] Gengoroh Tagame is one of the leading gay *manga* artists known outside of Japan. Tagame's work has also entered the 'mainstream' with his *Otōto no Otto* (*My Brother's Husband*; 2014-2017) in which his artistic style of hypermasculine, 'bear'-like men remains, but the subject matter tackles homophobia in Japan, and is not graphically pornographic unlike his previous works. Tagame also created a three-volume bi-lingual art historical series (2003; 2006; 2018) examining the history of gay art in Japan, which explored the themes and styles of the art, as well as the reactions from audiences and fellow artists.

fantasy ideals (Ishii, et all, 2014; 2016).[92] These negative connotations also relate to

body image, "a beautiful young man is often described as if (he) popped out from

pages in *shōjo manga*"… a slender and smooth male body has dominated as an

aesthetically pleasing example" (Monden, 2020, p.272). These examples are

discussed in this thesis to illustrate the different ways in which gender and sexuality

have been represented and portrayed in contemporary imagery to bridge the gap in

the current discourses that have so far kept these areas separate.

Sexuality and sex, as represented in visual arts, also has a precedent in Tokugawa

period Japan, with hetero- and homo-representations, as we would class them today,

being portrayed. However, it would be incorrect to apply certain contemporary terms

to historical incidents of non-normative (by western standards) representation, as the

terms did not exist in the culture or time (Pflugfelder, 1999, pp.5-6).[93] The erotic

works, in particular, both implicit and explicit, included a variety of imagined

partnered situations in a single set or collection of prints (Screech, 2009, loc.4380). [94]

These collections would include homo- and hetero- depictions together, suggesting a

different 'normative' culture and that, "Such combinations assume that a reader is

not intended to be aroused by some images and displeased by others "(Screech,

2009, loc.4380). This shows a 'normative' approach to sexual partners in some

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[92] However, it would also be incorrect to state that the *bishōnen* ideal that has been created by *shōjo manga* is the only masculine representation in mainstream *manga*, as Shamoon (2018) discusses in relation to *Ōoku (Ōoku: The Inner Chambers*; 2004 – 2020) and is extended in Chapter Five and Chapter Ten of this thesis.

[93] That being said, in order to provide context and examine the portrayal in a nuanced way, at times terminology, such as 'bisexual' and 'homosexual' is required. For instance, Mostow (2016) includes bisexual and pansexual in his discussions of *wakashu* as these youths featured in art relating to sexual relations with men and women.

[94] For the purpose of providing context, Screech makes reference to European ideas of gender and sexuality when referring to 'gendering' in sexual relations of the Tokugawa period.[94] For example 19th century homosexual men in relationships are referred to as having a 'male' and 'female' persona; the 'female' man in the relationship – i.e. the one being penetrated – would take on a 'name' such as "Molly" and the two would carry on as if "married." (2009, loc.1380).

respects that would not be considered the 'norm' now. This acknowledgement of different normative ideas when considering gender and sexuality is crucial to the analysis in this thesis, as Barker states, "… we don't have any kind of fixed, stable identity that we *are*…We come to *occupy* these identities through our relationships with the world in which we reside (which offers us different identity possibilities in different times and places)" (Barker, 2016, p.57). This again illustrates the modes and codes of culture as having an impact on the formation and performance of self, as examined by Butler (2006; 2004) and Rippon (2019). Mizoguchi's doctoral thesis also supports Barker's points about not having a fixed identity so much as being and becoming, as she examines from her own personal perspective: "becoming" lesbian via "reception" to BL-styled works in the 1970s, and also the application of a "lesbian identity" due to the "clear-cut convictions" of others that a woman in a relationship with another women meant lesbian (2008, p.vi & p.8).

Screech's research was innovative in its approach and subject matter when first published in 1999, as until very recently *shunga* and sexually explicit works could not be displayed in Japan[95] (Screech, 2009, loc.30; Ishigami, 2013, p.288). Correspondingly, cultural and historical differences in normativity- i.e. what was normative in the Tokugawa period- is different from what is normative in the Reiwa period, and therefore, the kind of 'identities' discussed will be vastly different. This idea is crucial to some of the gendered representations, but also as a contextual

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[95] It was only between 1989 and 1991 that books about *shunga* without censorship of the imagery and redacted text were published without interference from laws (Ishigami, 2013, p.286). In fact, one of the first displays of *shunga* in a public exhibition in Japan took place in 2015 at the Eisei-Bunko Museum, following the success of the 2013 exhibition *Shunga: Sex and Pleasure in Japanese Art* at the British Museum (Pronko, 2015).

explanation for some of the cultural differences of gender in Japan during the Tokugawa period specifically.

Regardless, western ideologies began to permeate Japan, as Sabine Frühstück (2003; 2022) Gregory M Pflugfelder (1999) explore. The introduction of sexology, and the like, from European academics of the late 19th and early 20th centuries impacted on the normative culture of the preceding feudal culture by establishing the heteronormative relations of 'man and wife' as the ideal (Furukawa, 2004; Winston, 2009). Pflugfelder (1999) examines the popular, legal and medical discourses from the Tokugawa period to the mid 20th century relating to male sexual relations specifically. Within this he defines the various terms used throughout the period to communicate specific types of relations, such as *nanshōku*[96], *shudō*[97], and *joshoku*[98] (1999, p.30), however, he specifically outlines the reasons why homosexual/ity are terms he chooses to avoid when referring to historical periods, "as they would not have been understood in the same sense that they are currently understood, if indeed at all" (Pflugfelder, 1999, p. 5). Mizoguchi furthers this by stating that sexual practices were not considered a "defining essence of personality" (2008, p.29) as a means of differentiating homosexuality from the likes of *nanshōku* or *joshoku*. As earlier discussed, in order to communicate some ideas, other scholars (such as Mostow 2003; 2016) have labelled practices such as this as pansexual or bisexual, although there is the acknowledgement that the practices do involve very different ideologies to sexuality in general today.

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[96] 男色 *nanshōku* 'male colours' term used for male-male love/ male homosexuality, can also be read or pronounced as *danshōku* (Appx. Four, Davies, 2020d).
[97] 衆道 *shudō* "way of youths": pederasty; 'male homosexuality'. Occasionally 若衆道 *wakashudō*.
[98] 女色 *joshoku* 'female colour' i.e. love of women; not related to female-female relations.

Continuing from Pflugfelder's discussions of sex in the transitioning periods of feudal and modern, Frühstück (2003) concentrates on modern Japan specifically, with examinations of women's, men's and children's sexual health and sexuality as changes in governmental structures, education and medical influences developed after the fall of feudal systems of governance. These changes, and the impacts of sexologists' works gaining prominence in Japan, also impacted on the role of women, and the "Good Wife, Wise Mother" mantra became a core element of feminine ideals. These continued and then overtook the "Three Obediences" and filial piety ideologies to some extent (Kano, 2001; 2011). The 2022 publication by Frühstück develops these ideas further by concentrating on gender and sexuality in modern Japan, thereby applying some of the 'sex' discussions previously examined into wider social and visual contexts. The treatment of women in the Meiji and Taishō periods have led to a number of feminist studies (Kano, 2001; 2016) and the development of the 'New Woman' in Japan. These women were considered to challenge and reject the 'good wife wise mother' as the "definition of womanhood" (Kano, 2001, p.128). However, they created a paradox in that: "the New Woman also *reinforced* the prevailing definition of womanhood as biological essence, rooted in the woman's body. To put it differently, New Woman is a sexual subject" (Kano, 2001, p.128). This can also be connected to representations of women within *ukiyo-e,* however, the sexual subject that Kano is referring to here is in relation to the feminine communication *by* the women, as opposed to by the audience and circumstances of the sex-workers in the pleasure quarters. Again, this brings the importance of 'gaze' to the fore in interpretations of imagery. Kano also discusses female actors (2001), and the changing representations of women in performance:

women performed by women as opposed to cross-gendered acts. This again is reminiscent of the theories around performativity – but specifically the performativity of femininity by women, and how this change was perceived by the society and culture as both innovative and 'disreputable' – as it went against the 'good wife, wise mother' ideal: much like the sex-workers of the Tokugawa period rejected the moral ideals of the time by remaining (unless bought out of their contracts) unwed. Yet, this is a paradox, as by entering the service of the pleasure quarters, these women were the epitome of filial piety (Weidner, 1990).

These complexities and paradoxes of gender and sexuality representations in history and culture then extend to representations in graphic arts. The links between different perceived gender or sexuality representations are vital to interpreting imagery. However, the gaps that have been perceived throughout relate to how these theories of performativity, safety and reception can be interpreted within imagery of *ukiyo-e* and *manga*; and in the fact that many of these representations are kept separate in the discourses to maintain what is "real" and what is "fantastical." Therefore, using art historical methods, as now discussed, these gaps can be bridged between gendered representations in the texts to illustrate how these discourses in fact impact on the different visual portrayals.

Chapter Two:
Research Methodologies

To achieve the aims of this research and answer the questions outlined in the Introduction, qualitative research methods have been employed for the purpose of analysing visual materials and interpret how the subjects within have been represented. Qualitative or interpretivist methods, according to Gary Thomas (2017), requires the researcher to be involved as part of their observations; subjective as opposed to objective (Thomas, 2017, pp.43-44). However, Thomas' definition (2017, p.44) relies on the assumption of ethnographic research where the researcher is literally involved in the observations they are conducting with participants, as opposed to art historical or visual cultural research which this study employs. Therefore, qualitative research methods as they relate to this study, involves the analysis of imagery and the interpretations and reflections of the researcher in relation to these analyses.

Due to the focus on visual analysis of Japanese graphic arts, secondary sources are the focus throughout. Therefore, the primary and original research elements are established through the combination and application of methodologies to these works and the analysis conducted. Art historical and visual methodologies, particularly compositional interpretation, iconography and semiotics are used in combination to 'read' and 'understand' the works in terms of their content and context. Visual methodologies, as outlined by Gillian Rose (2001; 2012; 2017), encompass a range of visual material from paintings and photographs to advertisements and television programmes. As such, different methods are more appropriate for different types of visual material, but also for the questions and

answers one wants to achieve through the analysis. From an art historical point of view, the most appropriate methods for this research includes iconography, semiotics and compositional interpretation. However, methods such as discourse analysis and intertextuality are also discussed and linked to visual methodologies later in this chapter. Subsequently, the image analysis within this thesis benefits from different methodological processes. This then means that further frameworks are needed to explore imagery that requires a more detailed approach; this is achieved through the use of case studies alongside the visual analysis. Thus, an examination of case studies as a methodology is first required to outline how visual methodologies and case studies collaborate.

Case Studies as a Methodology

As stated in the introductory paragraphs of *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture,* case studies are a means of "demonstrating the application of the knowledge presented earlier in the volume" (Coates *et al*. 2020, p.5). The case studies within this thesis are employed to allow the visual methodologies, outlined below, to be applied. These applications include detailed visual analytical processes, which encompass compositional interpretation to semiotics, at the end of each chapter, as well as shorter visual analyses within the main chapter themes, for example the analysis of *femme fatale* in Chapter Five, or visual codes in singular characters in Chapter Eight.

Case studies, as outlined by Robert Yin (2014), and Gary Thomas and Kevin Myers (2015) are a means of analysing data and are most often used in social sciences. A definition of case study research by Helen Simons states: "Case study is an in-depth

exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a 'real life' context," (2009, p.21). Thomas continues this definition by placing case studies within a wider range of methodological use, as case studies "should not be seen as a method in and of itself… Choice of method, then, does not define case study: analytical eclecticism is the key" (Thomas & Myers, 2015, pp.5-6). Analytical eclecticism as a key element of utilising case studies shows that this is an appropriate methodological framework to use for visual methodological research. This is because the method of case study examinations creates a space that has specificity and detail in mind (Thomas and Myers, 2015, pp.7-8). This research requires intricate study so that the wider context and understanding of gender and sexuality as represented in these works can be explored. Each case study in this thesis begins with specific visual methodological applications, such as compositional interpretation or pre-iconography, before taking into account the contexts and symbolisms of the illustration, then finally discussing the piece in relation to the societal and cultural significance as discovered through 'decoding' and reception theory.

The visual imagery that is explored in the case studies has been selected by examining a variety of Japanese graphic arts, such as prints, *manga* and digitally created pieces. The chosen works reflect immediately different elements of visual portrayals relating to gender and sexuality. As interpretation of these representations is an important part of this thesis, the immediate connections of the researcher when 'looking' at these pieces formed the basis of the individual images inclusion. As such, the following methodologies outline *how* the research has been conducted in relation to the visual analysis of these works, whilst the literature review and

preceding chapter sections to the visual analysis indicate *why* the images have been included.

Compositional Interpretation

Compositional interpretation (Rose, 2001 & 2012), sometimes referred to as form or formalism in art historical contexts (Pooke & Newall, 2008, pp.33-36), is the initial method used within this thesis. This method takes into account aspects of the image such as colour, lighting, perspective, texture, line and size; essentially it is concerned with the formal *content* not *context*. As this method has a focus entirely on what can be seen with no other influencing factors, it allows for all elements of an image to be described, therefore, smaller details that may otherwise be overlooked are included and analysed. Compositional interpretation is a vital first step for this research, because the initial act of looking is itself essential to visual analysis.

This has many similarities to Kawamura Yuniya's object-based research description which includes the investigation of colour, shape, silhouettes and construction, but concludes "the downside of object-centered methodologies is that they may be restricted by too close a focus on aesthetic or physical considerations" (2020, p.93).[99] In relation to this thesis, object-based analysis is also an important method as the imagery discussed are both tangible and virtual objects. Therefore, whilst the works used in this research are secondary sources in the sense that they were created by others, the engagement with them in exhibition or archival spaces blurs the lines

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[99] Whilst in reference to fashion specifically, Kawamura's discussion relate directly to art historical methodologies as well.

between secondary and primary research, and by extension the object-based analysis can be influenced by the setting or display of the object in question.[100]

The composition of a print or painting can provide inference of gender representation, however, without other contexts the truth of the representation cannot be verified because what we see in an image is very subjective and reliant on the individual's opinions and understanding of what they see. For example, an 'experiment' was conducted in relation to this method as part of a paper presentation in 2015 (Appx. Five) using three *ukiyo-e* prints that appear to show a man and two women. The presentation began with a compositional interpretative analysis to describe the images and discuss the subject of the prints in relation to only what could be seen. However, in order to understand the images in relation to the historical, cultural and societal relevance this method provides no information outside of the image itself. Therefore, upon revealing that one of the three images was in fact a male actor in the role of a woman,[101] it became apparent that imagery can be misleading. This also indicates the importance of the learned codes involved in the formation and interpretation of gender. The image in question clearly indicated to people during this presentation that it was feminine in its portrayal; whereas for others a different conclusion may have been reached. Therefore, cultural impacts can also be a subconscious factor in the reading of imagery. Without the social and historical knowledge behind this image it could be unknown to viewers that this was in fact an *onnagata* print. Even the title of the image, *Actor Nakamura Tomijūrō I as*

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[100] The works analysed in this thesis have been examined through both physical and digital means including: attending exhibitions; exhibition catalogues; viewing physical copies of *manga*; digital exhibitions; online collection databases; digital *manga*; and viewing personal online galleries of contemporary artists and illustrators.
[101] The print used for this presentation and point relating to visual methodologies was: Torii Kiyohiro, *Actor Nakamura Tomijūrō I as Izumo no Okuni,* 1754, Museum of Fine Arts Boston.

Izumo no Okuni (1754), would not communicate that this is a cross-gendered performance representation. It is only with the historical and cultural knowledge that women were not allowed to perform publicly in this way after 1629 in Japan that a print with the title of 'actor' would indicate the person in the print was actually a male-in-female role performance. Consequently, the act of looking that dictates the compositional interpretation stage needs to be paired with other methodological practices relating to cultural, historical or social implications of the piece.

As a method compositional interpretation is very useful for focusing on the aesthetics of an illustration or art work, but this preoccupation with only the content and composition can lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations of imagery as could be the case with 'mistaking' an *onnagata* for a 'woman'. Thus, compositional interpretation must be combined with other visual methodologies that are commensurate with art historical analyses for the purpose of illustrating the varying gender and sexuality interpretations found within.

Discourse Analysis & Illustrative Research Methods

As demonstrated, context is important when interpreting imagery, as graphic arts are not created in a vacuum. Therefore, methods that take into account historical, cultural and societal impacts are needed in conjunction with compositional interpretation. One such method is discourse analysis. Rose defines discourse as:

> … a particular knowledge about the world which shapes how the world is understood and how things are done in it… 'art' becomes not certain kinds of visual images but the knowledges, institutions, subjects and practices which work to define certain images as art and others as not art.

> (Rose, 2001, p.136)

This is a complex and, in some instances, seemingly contradictory method due to the huge variations in resources to which it can be applied, which include but are not limited to: text, books, paintings, newspaper articles, posters and maps. This wide range of sources means that intertextuality is key to this style of method i.e. the way similar or related sources influence, reflect or differ from each other. Anne D'Alleva states that, "… the concept of intertextuality reminds us that each text exists in relation to other texts, to other cultural expressions – texts owe more to other texts than to their own makers." (2005, p.136). In other words, it is important to take information from various sources relating to the period of research in order to explore the social implications of these sources, and 'understand' the era on which the research is focused. Rose states the method, "pays careful attention to images, and to their social production and effect" (Rose, 2001, p.142). This relates to other methodological and theoretical discussions of reception theory and decoding, which are directly linked to illustrative research methods.[102]

For example, in Susan Doyle, Jaleen Grove and Whitney Sherman text, *The History of Illustration* (2019), illustrative research methodologies are placed under four headings of context, encoders, code and decoders. According to these categorisations the context takes into account the research, often historical, surrounding an illustration; encoders relates to the illustrator and/or publishers (clients) of the illustration; the code refers to the message being communicated which can then be split into three subheadings of form, iconography and format; and decoders are the audience both intended or otherwise which also takes into account the use of the

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[102] Which can be considered a separate field of study to art history.

illustrations (Doyle et.al, 2019, pp. xviii-xix).[103] The approach displayed here,

emphasises the differences between visual disciplines in regards to research and

methodologies. The imagery examined within this thesis can fall under the banner of

illustration by some[104] and therefore, illustrative specific methods have been

consulted as well as art historical and visual cultural methods to examine the works.

Iconography & Iconology

Whilst linked to code in illustrative conventions, Rose includes iconography in her

discussions of discourse analysis as it relies heavily on historical and social context.

This is because iconography and code are both concerned with the meaning or

message of the image in question (Doyle et.al, 2019; Fernie, 1995, p.345). D'Alleva

defines iconography in practice as: "identifying motifs and images in works of art"

(2005, p.20) and was developed specifically by art historians as a means of art

analysis (2005, p.20). Elements of the iconographical method as it is known and

used today have a history spanning centuries, however, the development of the

method is attributed to Edwin Panofsky, because he wanted to distance himself from

methods that primarily focused on how an image looks (Rose, 2001). Panofsky

stated that: "Iconography is that branch of the history of art which concerns itself

with the subject matter or meaning of the works of art, as opposed to their form."

(1939, p.26). This takes the act of looking beyond the, potentially, initial passive

phase of description, into the realms of examination. Iconography, therefore, can

only be successful as a method if it has the 'correct' historical and social contexts. In

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[103] This description and categorisation of illustrative research methodologies establishes a combined visual methodological approach immediately; unlike art historical or visual methodologies which are presented initially as individual methods to be explored and then used in collaboration with other methods as and when appropriate.
[104] *Ukiyo-e* is included within Doyle *et al*'s history, and *manga* in Male's illustration-focused publications (2007; 2019).

order to understand these contexts, there are two important factors to iconography according to Rose: first a deep familiarity with the sources being used and second "synthetic intuition" (Rose, 2001, p.147). Synthetic intuition, or common sense, was considered to be a very important aspect of this method by Panofsky (1939, pp.38-40). Rose summarised this by stating texts: "could never provide full explanations for a particular image, and their relevance thus had to be judged by the critic on the basis of his or her intuition." (Rose, 2001, p.147).[105]

Panofsky outlined three stages of iconography and iconology: "primary or natural subject matter", "secondary or conventional subject matter" and finally "intrinsic meaning or content" (1939, pp.28-31; Pooke & Newall, 2008, pp.68-70). These levels are known as pre-iconographical, iconographic and iconological (Panofsky, 1939, p.33). The first level is concerned with compositional interpretation, the second with identification of motifs or characters, and the final with deciphering the meaning. Despite the intention to complete this analysis following these levels, the notion of the "innocent eye" that is essential to pre-iconographical analysis has been "challenged" by art historians because: "viewers come to art as individuals shaped by their experiences, values, and historical and cultural knowledge" (D'Alleva, 2005, p.22). This presents another issue with compositional interpretation, as pre-iconographical analysis involves the same method of analysis, but one that is a direct opposite of the problem already discussed. Here a researcher undertaking compositional interpretation despite, in theory, not taking into account the context of

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[105] Rose also states that iconography was beginning to be used "in a loose sense to refer to the kind of approach to images that I am calling discourse analysis I" (Rose, 2001, p.147) thereby highlighting the different theories and methods that can be used under an overarching method of discourse analysis. Rose also outlines a discourse analysis II (2012, pp.227-260) which focuses on museums and galleries in relation to visual methodologies.

an image, cannot help but be informed by their own contexts and world views upon initially engaging it. This is reminiscent of semiotics and the understanding of signs as is discussed momentarily, because we inherently 'decode' imagery as a means of processing what we are seeing and place it in our own cultural or societal understandings.

This also relates to the discussions of gender performativity in Chapter One, as that is also affected by the learned cultural codes encountered in every-day life. It is vital then, that the positionality of the researcher is outlined ahead of these discussions given the subjective nature of art. As a white British woman, western influences have impacted upon the understandings and formations of reference points throughout my life; as Faure stated: "my own Western standpoint, as well as Western references or counterpoints, are constantly at work behind the scenes." (1998, p.12) As such, this positionality may impact upon the "innocent eye" in the initial steps of the visual analysis, despite the best intentions to ignore personal experiences.

The final stage of Panofsky's theory is the interpretational iconological stage: "Iconology, then, is a method of interpretation that arises from synthesis rather than analysis." (Panofsky, 1939, p.32). This is because iconology utilises the identification of the symbols established by iconography in "attempts to explain how and why such imagery was chosen in terms of the broader cultural background of the image. The idea is to explain why we can see these images as "symptomatic" or characteristic of a particular culture." (D'Alleva, 2005, p.21). In regard to this thesis, these understandings and interpretations rely on the synthesis of research conducted through the cross-disciplinarity of the literature consulted (Chapter One).

This stage of the analysis was influenced by the theory of significant or symbolic form that Ernst Cassirer, a German philosopher, championed and established (Wood, 2019, p.324 & D'Alleva, 2005, p.23). This theory gives precedent to the cultural aspects of imagery that formalism removes:

> Cassirer… argued that images represent fundamental principles or ideas (symbolic values) in a given culture, so that we can see works of art as "documents" of an artist, religion, philosophy, or even an entire civilisation… Cassirer noted that the researcher's own personal psychology, experience, and philosophy will shape her interpretation – an interesting precursor to ideas of reception and identity politics…
>
> (D'Alleva, 2005, p.23)

Due to the focus on cultural ideas and "works of art as "documents"", textual as well as visual analysis is needed for iconographical/iconological methodologies. Rose (2012) discusses iconography as an intertextual method within her Discourse Analysis I examinations and states that a "thorough grounding in historical context" (2012, p.204) is needed for successful iconographical interpretations alongside the previously mentioned 'synthetic intuition' (Rose, 2001, p147; 2012, p.204).

Rose continues to discuss the 'looser' use of iconography as a methodological term in relation to intertextuality and her use of Discourse Analysis I, by using Mary Cowling's work regarding Victorian art and 'representation of type and character' (1989) as an example (2012, pp.205-208). Here Rose describes Cowling's use of textual and visual analysis to examine how audiences of the time and place (1800's East End of London) would 'read' and 'decode' imagery to understand the type of character(s) they were seeing. It is the wide use of sources that Cowling utilised that is key to Rose's discussion that the discourse analysis she is examining is related to iconographical methods (2012, p.208). Though the research within this thesis does

not examine historical, or classical, Japanese language written texts directly, the range of sources from multiple disciplines and translations, as Chapter One shows, does establish methodological links to Rose's Discourse Analysis I.

Iconographical methods of visual analysis became an important aspect of art historical research as it was a method developed specifically by and for art historians, or the analysis of art, in comparison to other methods previously used in the field that had been adapted from other disciplines (D'Alleva, 2005, p.21). However, as art history developed further throughout the 20th century, other forms of critical theory impacted upon the way in which art history was viewed (Pooke & Newall, 2008, p.29). This also relates to the discourse around developing visual cultures (Jones 2003 and Fernie, 1995, pp.248-253). The art historians of the mid 20th century began to question "assumptions, methods and aims of art history" by emphasising social contexts and the viewer of the role of the artist: "the work of art wasn't a neatly packaged message delivered by the artist to the viewer, but a complex text that could be read (or misread) in any number of ways." (D'Alleva, 2005, p.25). Part of this argument was centred on the time that Panofksy had developed the method, with the focus on the analysis of Renaissance painting, and that to apply this method, "indiscriminately was to suggest, falsely, that Renaissance art – especially Italian Renaissance art – provided a universal model of image-making." (D'Alleva, 2005, p.25).

However, the basic principles of examining the imagery in terms of the cultural and historical relevance and importance has remained essential to many art historical discussions. Therefore, iconographical means of analysis is an essential starting point

to this research in order to analyse images both as a separate entity but also as one that is influenced by the culture in which it is created. However, when considering the use of iconography within illustrative research fields, code is essential: "An illustration is a "code" because it uses recognizable visual conventions such as mimicry, composition, style, and other attributes to convey meaning." (Doyle et.al., 2019, p.xviii). Another method concerned with the reading of symbols and signs that is prevalent within arts, illustrative and advertisement focused imagery is that of semiotics, which is now considered.

Semiotics and Reception Theory

Semiotics, or semiology, is concerned with signs and meanings and developed from linguistical studies (Pooke & Newall, 2008, pp.90-95). The signs as understood through semiotics also have three separate categories, as explained by Eric Fernie. The first is called the iconic which means the sign "resembles what it stands for" (1995, p.359); the second is the indexical, "where the sign is related to what it stands for by association, as with lightning and speed" (1995, p.359); and the final category is symbolic representation, although as D'Alleva states, signs are not exclusive to each category and can in fact have characteristics that represent multiple categories (2005, p.31). Due to this semiotics can be more about *how* these signs are understood and interpreted on a wider social or cultural level as, according to D'Alleva, signs can only work as signs if they are able to be interpreted as such (2005, p.29). D'Alleva also states that, in comparison to iconography, semiotics provide a "more precise" framework for "understanding not only *what* works of art mean but *how* the artist, viewer, and culture at large go about creating those meanings." (2005, p.29). This has clear links to the encoders and decoders that Doyle, Grove and Sherman

reference, but also the reception theory that is linked with decoders, i.e. the audience. Audiences or viewers of imagery may see something within the art work that was not intended by the creator: "When the unintended reading is provocative (sexual, rude, political, or funny, for instance), it can subvert the aims of the illustrator or client," (Doyle et.al, 2019, p.xviii) as the intended meaning by the illustrator or client has been denied, ignored or twisted to reflect the audiences preferred meaning. This relates again to the changing role of art history in the 20th century as a move away from the artist to the viewer for interpretative analysis, and also to reception theory.

Reception theory is concerned with how audiences "decode media messages" (Doyle et.al, 2019, p.xviii). This correlates to Rose's discussions in relating Cowling's study within her discourse analysis examinations, but also to Cassirer's significant form as a "precursor," as D'Alleva noted. Although separate from semiotics, it has some clear links in terms of how signs are interpreted, as unintended 'decoding' could then lead to a new meaning and sign across further images.

Fernie (1995) discussed reception theory as being developed by Hans Robert Jauss in response to the "death of the author" concept proposed by Roland Barthes. D'Alleva discusses the 'death of the author' and intertextuality together (2005, pp.134-136), and examines these ideas within structuralism and post-structuralism and the similarities to reception theory:

> …for the artist her intention to communicate and what she intends to communicate may be important to her as an individual; however, meaning, in a larger cultural sense, cannot be reduced to her intentions. An artist may, for instance, communicate things without intending to do so.
>
> (2005, p.135)

This unintentional communication relates back to Doyle, Grove and Sherman's discussions of decoding and the ways in which a 'reader' or audience can imbue works with differing meaning or 'misread' the original intentions of an image. This is also important when examining works in an iconographical and iconological respect; Panofsky's assertion of the appropriate knowledge and common sense is key, as without it mis-readings or misinterpretations also happen with this method. However, who is to say if something is misread or misinterpreted just because it goes against or differs from the artist's intention? As outlined in this chapter as well as the Introduction and Chapter One, advancements in the field of art history in the 1960's and 1970's led to a change of focus away from the artist to the social. The re-examination of the reception of art proposes:

> …that there is a 'question' implicit in the work which is what first awakens our interest, and that we also see the work of art as a kind of answer. Being in the present, within a changed horizon of aesthetic experience, the question no longer is asked as it was when the text was new.

> (Fernie, 1995, pp.357-358)

This different aesthetic experience is vital to many of the discussions and analysis throughout this thesis, as the images are from both a different culture and, for some, period in time. Therefore, elements of reception theory are needed in collaboration with semiological or "decoding" forms of methodological analysis in order to investigate and comprehend the wider context of the imagery. Following Barthes' declaration of the 'death of the author,' there became an emphasis that the art or literature in question is "an artifact that brings together any number of codes available in the artist's or author's culture." (D'Alleva, 2005, p.136). This extends to all imagery we encounter, as Sandra Weber states: "In our everyday lives, we interpret, create, and use images as a matter of course, often without much conscious attention and using whatever social codes and conventions we've picked up along the

way." (2008, p.42). Although this is a general statement about the impacts and abundance of imagery in everyday lives, Weber here has encapsulated what semiotics and reception theory emphasise: the understanding and reinterpretation of images as signs and social codes. The social codes in terms of this research relate to the context and understanding of historical and cultural society alongside the meanings and expressions of gender and sexuality.

Rosemary Betterton also emphasised that different readings of images "proceed from different positionings and knowledges… opens up a productive space in which to explore questions of *how* meanings are made and *for* whom" (2003, p.13). Therefore, what was understood and accepted as a signifier in *ukiyo-e* created in the 18th century may not be understood or recognised in the same way today, or outside of Japan at any time, because the set of social codes has changed as society has developed. The reinterpretation of imagery is a factor in the understanding of signs and symbols, but also in how society has evolved. Betterton's discussion is in relation to feminist art historical and visual cultural readings specifically, and how these differing readings could be used as a means of furthering theoretical analyses by moving away from the "traditional concerns of art history with producers and texts towards a model of reading in which greater attention would be paid to the multiple inscriptions of women in and through visuality," (2003, p.13). She also emphasises the importance of feminist readings on the creation and interpretation of imagery to then allow for the understanding of, "how these texts are mobilized and made meaningful in different ways" (Betterton, 2003, p.13). This focus then, though primarily concerned with feminist visual culture readings, emphasises the points raised in semiotics and reception theory but applied to art historical approaches; thus, the need for visual

cultural methodological processes is paramount when analysing imagery which is considered to be "high" or "low" culture.

As outlined throughout this chapter, a visual analytical approach for this research is the most appropriate way to explore graphic arts, print media, illustration and art more generally to achieve an original contribution to research. These methods in collaboration with the case study elements of the thesis, and in combination with the textual research, allows for the analysis and interpretation of these images which illustrates the representations of gender and sexuality. The images used and evaluated throughout this thesis each contain their own messages, codes, symbols and signs that have different meanings when taking into consideration contemporaneous context and cultural influence on the creation and the audience interpretation of the works. The range of methods outlined here ensure that the analysis of graphic arts in combination with textual evidence are explored in ways that have not yet been conducted in a single thesis.

Part One:
The Female Body in Japanese Visual Art

Part One of this thesis examines the ways in which femininity has been represented across prints, *manga* and digitally created illustration since the 17th century, with particular focus on 18th and 20th century works. Some key themes that emerge in relation to feminine representation include passivity and sexualisation, illustrating that whilst there are aesthetic shifts and differences, the overall subject matter has remained popular, to some extent. However, as with every culture there are juxtapositions and 'exceptions to the rule' in terms of representation and there are many examples of active female representations that are also examined, particularly in respect to the evolving medium of *manga* from the mid 20th to 21st centuries.

Japanese history has many examples of strong and influential women, however, the relationships between Japanese society and the binary female gender have been contradictory and complex (Leupp & Tao, 2022, pp.36-37). Whilst in neo-Confucian and Buddhist doctrine women were considered inferior and associated with lust, "in practice, women could lead households, serve as co-partners with men in businesses, join literary circles, and travel independently." (Leupp & Tao, 2022, p.37).[106] The three chapters in Part One examine these complexities by exploring the 'place' of

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[106] An example of these contradictions since the beginning of the modern period relates to the Imperial line. Initially women were able to reign as Empress, as opposed to just consort, whereas today the Imperial Crown cannot pass on to a woman to 'rule' but must go to a man from the paternal line. Officially, this as a policy was only instated in 1947, but the final female Empress in their own right was in 1771. This policy has been recently debated as Emperor Naruhito who ascended to the Chrysanthemum Throne in 2019 only has a daughter. However, as of November 8 2020, Prince Fumihito, younger brother of the Emperor, was declared heir, meaning his son, Prince Hisahito, will follow in the line of Succession (BBC, 2020). This is despite the mythology surrounding the birth of the Imperial family, and Japan itself, as eulogised in Shintō, the indigenous religion of Japan. Shintō is based within nature and is not a monotheistic religion; as such, there are many Gods and Goddess within the Shintō belief system, the most important of which is the Goddess Amaterasu, daughter of the creation Gods, Goddess of the sun and founder of the Imperial line.

women within Japanese society, historically and contemporarily, for the purpose of analysing the artistic representations that took women as their subject.[107]

As religion within Japan evolved and gained influence from Chinese ideologies throughout the early pre-modern eras, so too did the way women were viewed in Japan. Buddhism became an integral part of Tokugawa period Japan, and later Confucian philosophies began to be adapted:

> While schools of Buddhism dominated thought in the medieval period, Confucianism – with its ethical and civic preoccupations, and stress on the maintenance of fixed class categories – dominated ruling-class thought from the seventeenth century.
>
> (Leupp & Tao, 2022, pp.37-38)

A core point that these philosophies enforced was that women were inferior to men: "… as religions became more sophisticated and more politicised the simple focus on fertility, and hence on women, generally weakened….Some Buddhist sects even considered women to be fundamentally evil and incapable of salvation." (Henshall, 1999, pp.9-11). Due to the continued emphasis from religious sects, intellectuals and those in political power from the Tokugawa through to the Taishō period, restrictions of women's rights began to be implemented, and therefore, the precedent for gendered stereotypes of women as passive and less capable was set.[108]

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[107] As graphic arts are the focus of this thesis visual analyses, the subjects often do not represent the 'normative' lives of the audience. 'Normative' in this respect relates to the mainstream societal expectations, not gender or sexuality-related 'heteronormativity.'

[108] More contemporary examples can be found in the 2020 World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report, in which Japan ranked 121st of 153 countries, compared to 110th in 2018 (World Economic Forum, 2019). However, the 2022 report shows Japan has risen to 116th (World Economic Forum, 2022).

Regardless of the argued inferiority of women through Buddhist doctrines, women remained key subjects of Japanese arts for centuries - although their inclusion in the creation was often overlooked.[109]

It should be emphasised that women from various social groups had different expectations upon them throughout the Tokugawa period.[110] For instance, 'samurai' women, despite being in a 'higher class', were much more restricted, as they could be used as political assets to bring peace between families, or for power and financial gain, through marriage (Fister, 1988, p.10).[111] Otherwise, they were required to remain apart from other men and largely within the household (Stanley, 2022, p.322). In terms of the aristocratic families of previous periods, on the other hand, the duties required of women within the *samurai* level of the hierarchy shifted the

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[109] This is despite one of the most celebrated works of literature in Japanese history, but also globally as the first novel to have ever been written, which has led to the creation of thousands of visual artistic representations, is *Genji Monogatari* or *The Tale of Genji* 源氏物語 *Genji Monogatari* The Tale of Genji c.1000-1021by Murasaki Shikibu, a lady-in-waiting at the Imperial court, around the year 1000. During the Heian period, when this monumental work was created, many female courtiers were involved in the creation of literature and published diaries, including one of the most famous by Sei Shōnagon, *Makura no Sōshi* (*The Pillow Book*), 枕草子 *Makura no Sōshi* The Pillow Book c.1002. Interestingly Joshua Dale discussing an excerpt in this book relating to 'adorable things' (1979, Folio Society edition, p.162) as the potential beginnings of *kawaii* culture in Japan (Japan Foundation New York, 2022c) a 'rival' to Murasaki Shikibu. The story goes that the rivalry was 'manufactured' as Sei Shonagon was deliberately appointed as a means to rival Murasaki Shikibu in order to elevate the reputation of the opposing court. Although the texts themselves do not necessarily portray women in a favourable light, and at times could be seen as glorifying dubious male morals, they are important in highlighting the status of women during the Heian period, and how the place of women in creative pursuits, and indeed Japanese society more widely, shifted in the coming centuries; which is explored in Chapters Three and Four.
[110] As Amy Stanley outlines, it was status and household which dictated many of the rules for everyday life. For instance, a peasant woman marrying into a samurai family would "shed her former status and became samurai herself" (2022, p.322). Her previous life as a farmer or peasant class women would mean that she would assist her husband in his work. Likewise, merchant class women assisted in the family businesses and had an impact on the progression of said business (Leupp & Tao, 2022, p.37). Though again contradictions abounded as Stanley states: "women were assets – units of value – that could be liquidated or exchanged by their husband or male household head." (2022, p.319)
[111] Arranged marriages were the norm during this period, and still take place in Japan to some extent today. Although Fister notes that, as the Tokugawa period progressed, some women disobeyed family wishes and married who they wished, this would not have been in the upper classes such as *samurai* but lower classes such as merchants (1988, p.11)

paradigms of their places in society as they no longer enjoyed "the independence, influence and social status known by the women of the Heian aristocracy, they often lived much more physically active and busy lives." (Weidner, 1990, p.16). Weidner continued that if "leisure" is a factor in the "creation of great literature and art by ladies of Heian court" then surely the "press of domestic responsibilities" during later periods restricted women in creative endeavours (Weidner, 1990, p.16). The factor of leisure in the pursuits of creative outputs could be classed as a key factor in the artistic developments of the Tokugawa period.[112] However, this same logic was not applicable to women in this sense, as they had more familial duties to perform than the aristocratic women of previous centuries, meaning fewer women were recognised or remembered within these artistic realms. This is also a point raised by Nochlin when considering women in arts, as she states the "kind of demands and expectations placed before both aristocrats and women… simply made the total devotion to profession art production out of the question, indeed unthinkable… rather than it being a question of genius and talent?" (2021, p.40) Thus, the question of recognition for women artists is a global one. However, the women that were represented most often in prints during this time in Japan were neither aristocrats nor from merchant or military classes, they were in fact, entertainers and sex workers who held a very complicated place within the Tokugawa period societal hierarchy.

However, in 1988 the Spencer Art Museum, Kansas, then the Honolulu Academy of Arts, held an exhibition that explored Japanese female artists from 1600-1900. The accompanying catalogue (Fister, 1988) discusses the lives and careers of women

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[112] Whilst not perhaps leisure, as one would understand today, the peace time of this period led to the expansion of infostructure as well as technologies for arts such as printing (see Appx. One & Two). It could, therefore, count for why many of the (male) artists from a range of disciplines came from the military class, as the peace time afforded more 'leisure'.

artists from poetry to visual arts, showing that despite these ideologies, it was still possible for women to be involved and successful in the creation of arts. A comparison could be drawn in this sense with Western, particularly European, attitudes where women also had restrictions implemented as centuries went on, such as the right to inherit, but were involved, and at different points respected, for their involvement in the arts. Women as creators, both historically and contemporaneously, is also explored within this part of the thesis in order to scrutinise how femininity is represented in arts.

It should be noted, however, that, "Though in subsequent history Japan may represent a particularly clear example of the subordination of women, in general the historical decline of female status appears to have been a worldwide phenomenon." (Henshall, 1999, p.9). This is important because this thesis is focused on representations within Japanese visual arts, and, therefore, utilises literature focused on Japanese culture and history, the wider global context (especially western) of binary female suppression and "declining status" also influences the discussions throughout this research.[113] Regardless, or potentially because of these suppressions, female depictions in illustration and other forms of visual arts are wide-spread throughout Japan and can be found not only in *manga* and *anime,* but as advertisements for shops, products and even public service announcements. On the surface, the differences between Tokugawa era and 20th /21st century artistic outputs are paramount; however, there are many similarities, including context, ideology and content, but above all, in this researcher's opinion, is that of idealisation.

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[113] This influence is in part due to personal positionality as British female researcher, and the need for wider contexts relating to gender and sexuality as discussed in Chapters One and the impact of subjectivity and personal positionalities in relation to 'reading' imagery in relation to methods in Chapter Two.

Chapter Three:
Passivity and the Female Body

This chapter investigates how popularised and idealised femininity in Japan was formed through *ukiyo-e* representations. Women within *bijin-ga,*[114] as this chapter asserts, were often passive subjects to be gazed at. Some were observed directly in a voyeuristic sense, such as in after the bath scenes, whilst others appear active as they are involved in movement within the depiction but are still in fact utilised as beauties to attract attention and, therefore, sales of the prints. Before continuing, the subject of language must be broached.

Historically when discussing the women of many *ukiyo-e* prints, particularly relating to the Yoshiwara or 'pleasure quarters' of the time, the term 'courtesan' has been applied to them. This creates a glamorised perspective and interpretation for the lives of these women and is one that many scholars have worked hard to dissuade. However, the term has in many respects persisted due to historic use and as a means of differentiating the different ranks and roles within the quarters.[115] On the other hand, 'prostitute' as a term also implies different connotations, usually negative and derogatory, so this has also become a term to be avoided within discourse of sex work. To this respect, following the lead of Julie Nelson Davies (2021, p.36), the use of language in this thesis has adapted to this change and now uses 'sex-worker' to refer to those who engaged in such work, or were tied to the Yoshiwara.[116]

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[114] 美人画 *bijin-ga* Pictures of Beautiful People/Women: the term *jin* 人 as used here could be translated more literally as person, which would technically remove the gendered element of beauty as applied here. However, despite this the term is used almost exclusively for depictions of female beauties – often courtesans – within *ukiyo-e*.

[115] See Seigle (1993, pp.229-232) for a breakdown of the different ranks and roles within the Yoshiwara since its inception.

[116] Outside of quotations and titles that include 'courtesan' or when commenting on the idealisation and glamorisation the term invokes.

Yoshiwara and 'Morality' Overview

The Yoshiwara had a hierarchical system[117] for the workers in the quarter which adapted to the societal changes of the period (Seigle, 1993, p.pp.229-232). The highest-ranking, the *tayū*[118] in the 17th and early 18th centuries and the *oiran*[119] after the mid-1700s (Seigle, 1993, p.125) were considered to be the stars, and would be trained in arts as part of their role.[120] However, that does not mean that all those working in the pleasure quarters were endowed with these skills and rank; there were many 'low-ranking' women who were primarily regarded as 'prostitutes'. Again, this terminology and usage continues to enforce misogynistic connotations on the lives of these women; they were not considered beautiful or skilled enough within arts to be elevated to an idolised, desired or glamorised, status (Nelson Davies, 2021, p.36).

Although it was not the first or only pleasure quarter in Japan, the Yoshiwara became the most famous thanks to the *ukiyo-e* created depicting the quarter and the 'high-class' reputation of the women who resided within the walls.[121] In the 1920's Basil Stewart mused about the depiction and reputation of these women:

"Considering that all great masters of Ukiyoye [sic] lavished their highest skill upon

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[117] By contemporary standards these 'women' would in fact be more akin to teenagers as it was common for *kamuro* (attendants) to be 'promoted' to 'courtesan' rank around 14 or 15, with the highest ranking being around 26 (Seigle, 1993).

[118] 太夫 *tayū*. This term also has links with *nō* theatre

[119] 花魁 / 華魁 *oiran* a more generic term used for the higher-ranked workers after the retirement of the term *tayū* (Segawa-Siegle, 1993, p.125).

[120] In many respects, the sexual activity was secondary for these women, as they would hold a certain amount of power over whom their clients were and how they interacted with them, making their position less subservient in some ways than one might typically expect of a woman in these quarters. This was a tradition and rule of the Yoshiwara which became part of the 'game of love' as the sex worker would have to adhere to expectations of their rank, for instance initial rejections of a client to increase passion (Seigle, 1993, p.44).

[121] Although this reputation did diminish as the period went on, particularly by the late 18th century through the 19th as Seigle explores (1993).

her portrayal, she must have been a very different person from the moralless [sic] creature of the streets of our cities" (Stewart, 1922, p.182).[122] It is also important to note there were not just *female* sex workers within Tokugawa society,[123] nor were the licensed pleasure quarters solely places to legally engage in sexual pleasures: "… customers also frequented these communities in order to enjoy music, dance, poetry, and other sensual pastimes." (Foreman, 2005, p.38). This is because after the 1629 ban of public female performance, performers were restricted to these quarters to "control audience size as well as the incomes and whereabouts of both performers and prostitutes" (Foreman, 2005, p.38). The restriction of these performers to the quarters is more understandable with the knowledge that female performers prior to the ban were said to engage in sex work, with the performances as a means to promote themselves. This is something that was also linked to the successor of female performers, *wakashu*, which is explored in latter parts of this thesis (Chapters Six & Nine).

Stewart's comments about the Japanese female sex worker being a person versus the European 'creature' is also an interesting comment on the visual representations of women, and how these can be read by different audiences. In Stewart's opinion the fact that artists "lavished skill" upon these women as subjects puts them above other women engaged in sex work, despite European sex workers being common subjects in European art in similar eras. The use of 'moralless' [sic] is also quite important when referring to Tokugawa period culture; it could in fact be argued that the *bakufu*, despite constant concern with upholding morality, allowed the Yoshiwara to

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[122] Originally written in 1922, the 1979 reprint is referenced in this thesis.
[123] This is examined in relation to *onnagata* (Chapter Six) and *wakashu* (Chapter Nine).

open in order to achieve this goal. When applying in early 1612 for a licensed

pleasure quarter in Edo, Shōji Jin'emon, a merchant class proprietor and attributed

founder of the quarter (Seigle, 1993, pp.20-23), put forward arguments that outlined

the positive impacts that a pleasure quarter could have in the city of Edo. These

arguments included the ability of the pleasure quarters to limit criminals from

utilising illegal brothels as hideouts, stopping patrons' reckless spending and

neglecting duties in unsupervised brothels, and the protection of young women and

girls from kidnapping and trafficking (Seigle, 2004, p.9; 1993, p.22). Despite the

popularity and seeming approval at various times from the government towards

pleasure quarters, the attitudes towards women who did not adhere to the 'Three

Obediences', or the societal expectations for them to marry and have children, were

akin to Stewart's 'moralless creature' insinuation. This also emphasises that these

idolised depictions of beauties did not sit within the normative social structure of the

time. Whilst prints, in theory, depicted real women, the portrayals were idealised

versions that glamorised the reality of pleasure quarters.

In order to maintain the idea of morality, instruction books aimed at women

concerning what constituted 'good behaviour' were produced in the Tokugawa

period. These books emphasised the "obediences" by maintaining that a woman's

place was in the home and that women were inferior to men.[124] Therefore, it can be

inferred that sex workers, by not adhering to the expectations of marriage and

motherhood, were 'bad girls'. The choice to use this term stems from the book *Bad

Girls of Japan* (2005) in which Kelly Foreman states: "In Japan, the avoidance of

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[124] The most important or well known of these books was *Onna Daigaku* (*Greater Learning for Women*) which became a household staple and, "… became the primary educational text for women… the principle it expounded of *danson-johi* (predominance of men over women) was thoroughly embedded in the psychology of Japanese society." (Fister, 1988, p.12).

family responsibility and monogamy to focus on careers in the performing arts renders geisha as "bad" within a society that measures female "goodness" on humility and loyalty…" (2005, p.33). She continued: "bad girls who concentrate on art and fame arouse suspicion and disapproval. Geisha epitomize this aspect of "bad-girl" behaviour because they remain committed to this "non-female" role, potentially for their entire lives" (2005, p.42). Although specifically referencing *geisha*[125] in this discussion, the inference is that any woman who 'rejects' their 'moral duty' and therefore by extension the 'Three Obediences' are 'bad'.[126] Regardless of their popularity in *ukiyo-e*, some women depicted in them were thus, in fact, going against the expected morality of the culture and society as dictated by these religious and philosophical ideologies. Again, it should be emphasised that *ukiyo-e* as a mass-producible form of art and popular culture, did not depict the more normative culture and society of the time; they deliberately depicted imagery to entice and attract - hence, beauties within the quarters were the ideal subjects, regardless of their actual societal status and reputations. Foreman also implies a choice in continuing the rebellion or rejection of expectations, but for sex workers there was seldom a choice to leave the profession.

It was these higher-ranking women, their attendants and apprentices that featured most often within *bijin-ga*.[127] In order to achieve this high status, the woman had to

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[125] 芸者 *geisha* female artisan performers, skilled in music and dance. See Appx. Two for further discussion of *geisha.*
[126] Later during the Meiji period there was a shift towards the 'Good Wife, Wise Mother' emphasis in moral codes as Kano explores (2001, p.41 & p.55) and is discussed further in the following chapter.
[127] Whereas *yūjo* (遊女 *yūjo* 'prostitute' 遊 part of the *kanji* meaning play *(asobi)* and 女 *onna* meaning adult woman) or lower ranking sex workers, were often omitted from these specific prints, these women can be seen in some Yoshiwara prints that provide an insight into the interiors of the brothels.

be highly skilled in conversation, music, dance, poetry and other art forms, as well as being extremely beautiful and elegant. Many *bijin-ga* focus on the physical beauty of the woman, but some artists did depict them carrying out some of the artistic pursuits with which they were required to engage or the more common letter reading-themed print (Fig.1) usually inferring a love letter from a patron. These images gave the impression of a highly elegant woman living a luxurious life, but those living and working in the Yoshiwara, were essentially trapped. Young girls were sold to owners of businesses in the pleasure quarters to pay off debts, or they could sell themselves in order to help the family; these women would still be considered honourable and marriageable once the debt of servitude, usually ten years, was complete, as they had 'sacrificed' themselves to save their families (Stewart, 1922, p.182 & Seigle, 1993). According to Melinda Takeuchi (2015, p.5) this sacrifice was also linked to ideals of filial piety as a means for the government to justify sex work during the early years of licensed pleasure quarters: "Filial piety… could require a virgin to enter a brothel if her father so commanded" (Weidner, 1990, p.6). In theory, once the debt was completed, the woman could leave the Yoshiwara behind and begin a new life; however, it was common for women to be forced to extend their years of service due to debts they would incur whilst working within the brothels (Seigle, 1993, p.182). In 1906, Ōkubo Hasetsu commented on the other ways in which one could escape the pleasure quarters, which Seigle relayed as:

> …contract being bought out by a patron; contract paid for by the parents (this was seldom possible); free choice; business closed by law; suicide or double suicide; changing the brothel; death from illness. His description suggests that, by this time, prostitutes were free to quit at will… But such luxury as "free will," especially in the matter of leaving the quarter, was practically unknown to Yoshiwara prostitutes and courtesans before 1872.

> (1993, p.182)

The buying out of a contract by a wealthy patron, as mentioned above, did mean the women left the Yoshiwara behind, however, this often meant that a marriage between the now ex-sex worker and previous patron took place, and a different type of servitude began – that of a Tokugawa period wife. As already established, this would be seen as moral or good behaviour as the woman would now be adhering to the expectations of marriage and potentially motherhood, but she would also be re-joining society as a subservient woman.

The discussion of free will is also unusual in terms of leaving the quarter, as this was not realistically an option for these women during the Tokugawa period at least. Being able to act on "free will" would also not necessarily be a common trait among the wider female populace of Japan at the time due to the laws of the government and restrictions established by their husbands, fathers and, potentially, sons.[128] However, with regards to the end of their contracts, sex workers potentially did have an opportunity to enforce their own will. If they completed their term of servitude with no unpaid debts, they then had to make the decision as to whether they left the Yoshiwara or if they remained to fill other roles such as supervising a brothel and teaching future sex workers: "some women preferred such an arrangement to marrying a man as an unpaid maid/sex object" (Seigle, 1993, p.183). This would, potentially, be the feeling of many previous sex workers upon entering marriage and finding the expectations of the 'obedience's' upon them. This is perhaps one of the few cases where women had a 'choice' regarding their marital status, though choice of partner was possible for some classes.

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[128] However, Stanley (2022) does examine the ways in which adapted to changing societal status and exerted an amount of control.

The morality aspect of Tokugawa society impacted on the lives of women in many ways; however, those within the realms of entertainment and sex work, on the surface, seem to have escaped these gender restrictive codes. The popular inclusion of them within *ukiyo-e* and other forms of arts such as literature would indicate, as Stewart (1922) discussed, a different status to sex workers in other cultures. However, this was not necessarily the case in wider society; the Yoshiwara may have played a vital role in terms of artistic and creative endeavours, however, it was the prints and literature that were more widely encountered than the quarter and the workers themselves, meaning that an idealised vision of them was 'accepted,' as opposed to the workers and culture more specifically.

Women as Subject: Symbolism in Ukiyo-e

Within *ukiyo-e* prints of the Tokugawa period, the idealised 'feminine form' is best represented by *bijin-ga*. As Miller states, "We know much about the beauty norms of the Edo period," as they were documented in *bijin-ga* (2006, p.21). The emphasis of beauty has been especially important to cultural and societal ideologies for centuries, as discussed frequently throughout this thesis, but the meanings and connotations of this beauty are constantly changing due to societal and cultural influences and changes. For instance, in the Heian period "plumpness" was considered ideal as well as long, straight hair (Miller, 2006, p.21). Whereas in the Tokugawa period, the idealised vision of a female body within arts included an elongated figure, a rounded face, small mouth and eyes, as evidenced in Torii Kiyonaga's work, such as *The Courtesan Wakakusa of the Chōjiya Brothel* (c.1783; Fig.2).

These idealised visions are key in the examining and analysis of prints during this time, but also in understanding certain signifiers through the use of iconography and semiotics. For instance, *geisha* are depicted differently from the sex workers, with one of the main signifiers that a print is depicting a *geisha* and not a specific Yoshiwara, or pleasure quarter-worker, is the way in which the *obi*[129] is tied. In Eizan's *Courtesan Reading a Letter* (c.1810-20; Fig.1), the *obi* can be seen prominently tied in the front; this means that the print is depicting a sex worker specifically as only they would tie their *obi* this way. *Geisha*, and other non-sex-trade working women, would have their *obi* tied in the back, as is still the custom today. The presence of a *shamisen* in the print could also be an indication that the print is depicting a *geisha*, as this was an instrument of choice for them. Although the popularity of the *shamisen* meant that many 'higher-ranking' sex-workers also could and did play the instrument, these women began to leave this musical entertainment for other professionals to provide (Seigle, 1993, p.171); in this case male and later female *geisha*, perhaps as a way to differentiate themselves from other ranks.

As the Tokugawa period progressed, so too did the techniques and skills of those working with woodblock printing technologies, and by the mid 1700's full colour prints called *nishiki-e* were being created.[130] This brought about great changes for *ukiyo-e* and what the artists could now depict, as previously only black ink[131] prints with occasionally hand-painted colours such as red or green were possible. Although women featured often in these 'early' black ink prints, the genre of *bijin-ga*

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[129] 帯 *obi* a sash tied around a *kimono* 着物.
[130] 錦絵 *nishiki-e* colour woodblock print.
[131] 墨摺絵 *sumizuri-e* black ink prints/paintings.

benefitted from these new full colour prints that could depict these women in all their beauty with more elaborate *kimono* designs and settings. Clothing was very important in *ukiyo-e* depicting women for a variety of reasons. Firstly, these prints would show the latest fashions amongst the ranked sex workers who were in many ways considered celebrities alongside *kabuki* actors, and as such wealthy merchant class women would then take up these fashions. Clothing was also important to signal the status of the sex workers within their social circles, as Allen states:

> … clothing stimulated the passions of men who judged a woman's value partly on the basis of what she wore. (Courtesans received new garments from favored patrons four times a year, and the wearing of those garments signaled [sic] the status of both wearer and patron alike)… the display of expensive, up-to-date robes is as important a focus of attention as the courtesan's high-stepping pose and attractive features.
>
> (2015, p.xvi)

As such, rich fabrics and clothing signified the status and popularity of the women. The way in which clothing was worn could also add to the suggestive undertones of a print, for instance a glimpse of a bare foot, or neck would imply erotic connotations. This is also because, as Ueno discusses (2015, pp.92-93), nudity (or nakedness depending on the context) was not particularly highly valued as in Western art history: "It is clear that compared to Western paintings of the same period the nude in Japanese paintings is not highly valued… For Japanese people sex appeal is not merely a process of removing clothes but is the refined culture of restraint and mere glimpses" (Ueno, 2015, pp.92-93). Therefore, a bare foot or the nape of the neck revealed in a print would symbolise and communicate this erotic aesthetic more titillatingly than a nude or completely naked body.

Other important scenes and motifs of these specific prints were the 'courtesan parades'[132] and cherry blossom viewing parties.[133] The parades became popular in the 18th century with increasingly large retinues and expressions of the 'eight figure steps' as the era progressed. The steps, as outlined by Seigle (1993, pp.225-228), would ensure a slow progression during the procession with intricate footwork including taking a step forward, then to the side; or later swinging the foot outwards in a large arc whilst stepping forward. These parades allowed those that could not afford to visit or be patrons of the higher-ranking women to receive a glimpse of the most famous and beautiful (Figs.3 & 5). The parades became such a key part of Yoshiwara and Japanese cultural history that during the Asakusa Kannon-ura Ichiyo Sakura Matsuri, a festival held annually in April, an *oiran* procession[134] takes place which re-enacts the parades of the Yoshiwara sex worker. The later version of the figure eight steps, that involves the turning and swinging of the foot outwards in an arc before placing it back on the ground in front, are recreated by the chosen participants in these contemporary festivals. These processions were also depicted in hanging scrolls such as *Courtesan Promenading Under Cherry Blossoms* (c.1815-19; Fig.4) by Hokuun, who was a student of Hokusai. Hokuun's scroll shows the elaborate hairclips and multi-layered *kimono* that became common for workers in the later parts of the Tokugawa period, whilst executing the figure eight steps as part of her procession. *Ukiyo-e* are often thought to just be prints, however, the genre of *ukiyo-e* extended to include all visual media, and at times literature, that reflected the

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[132] A procession that higher ranking sex workers participated in upon their accession in the ranks, and also to specific engagements at an *ageya* 揚屋 or later equivalents when these houses no longer existed in Edo. The retinue would include the apprentices, assistants and attendants to provide a grandiose statement.

[133] Known as *hanami* 花見, cherry blossoms are also called *sakura* 桜 in Japanese

[134] 江戸吉原おいらん道中 Edo Yoshiwara Oiran Dōchū

pleasures of Edo; as such conventions popular in prints, such as the elongated female body, were also found in paintings.

Later in the Tokugawa period as fashions for sex workers became even more extravagant and extreme the eight-step footwork became much more difficult to execute, as the footwear became akin to a platform shoe at 18–20 inches high by the early 1800s (Seigle, 1993, p.186; Fig.5). This meant that in order to complete the parade the steps were simplified and the woman would have to lean onto a male attendant to keep her balance. This aspect is not often shown in prints, perhaps to emphasise the ideal of the parades further by removing the reality of men in the image, and whilst illustrating the beauty and elegance that was essential for women of this rank in sex-work. Again, these processions were a way to advertise the brothels of the Yoshiwara as well as introduce the new appointees of the *oiran* rank, whilst illustrating the latest fashions, much like the *bijin-ga* and other *ukiyo-e* created about them. Another popular form of print in a similar vein to the procession prints is that of the cherry blossom viewing.

Today cherry blossoms are synonymous with Japan; in April, cherry blossom viewing parties are still extremely popular. However, it is important to note that nature and the seasons specifically have always been important to Japanese arts and culture, with paintings, prints and poetry including season specific motifs, symbols and, especially, flowers. Due to this, cherry blossoms themselves were not the single important flower to Japan or Japanese culture as they are often thought to be today, but their popularity and symbolic significance did become entwined with the Yoshiwara and sex workers within.

Cherry blossoms, as well as signifying spring in imagery, reflect the fleeting, transient nature of life as they only bloom for such a short space of time. As such they became symbolically linked with aspects of life that were also short lived, in the case of the Yoshiwara, it was the short space of time when a sex worker's beauty,[135] and therefore, popularity were at their peak. They also reflect a gendered aspect of symbolism in nature imagery: "The blossoming plum conveyed a sense of maturity and fortitude, which was supposed to equate with the human male. (By contrast, cherries are finest on younger trees, and buds open only when warm, so they denoted women.)" (Screech, 2006, p.266). More generally, however, cherry blossom trees were important to the Yoshiwara as they set a precedent for seasonal flowering plants to line the main boulevards enhancing the quarter. From 1742 it became a tradition to plant cherry blossom trees along the boulevard in the Yoshiwara for the spring seasons, before removing them, "on the last day of the third month because cherry trees without flowers were not needed for the rest of the year." (Seigle, 1993, p.109). They would soon be replaced with other seasonal flowering trees and plants that reflected the seasons, such as maples in autumn, and these would be portrayed in *ukiyo-e* to symbolise the season being depicted. Due to this, and the symbolism of fleeting beauty, cherry blossoms became important to the Yoshiwara and a specific holiday was declared called "Flower-Viewing Day" where workers were allowed to leave the confines of the quarter for a single day[136] in order to view the blossoms and to picnic (Seigle, 1993, p.110).

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[135] *Chigo* (similar to *wakashu* in that they were 'male' youths, but in this case linked with monks and Buddhist temples) were similarly linked to cherry blossom in this way (Faure, 1998, p.253).
[136] Though earlier in the Yoshiwara's history (before 1640) the women were not confined to the walled quarter in the same way, as they could be hired to entertain at parties of government or high ranking *samurai* (Siegle, 1993, p.39).

Naturally, this became another iconic theme for *bijin-ga* and *ukiyo-e* of women, and as Screech states: "The Yoshiwara was quintessentially a place of cherry blossoms, they being the prime icons of female beauty. Among the thousands of pictures of the Yoshiwara, barely one is set in a season other than spring." (2006, pp. 272-273). This triptych by Torii Kiyonaga (1785; Fig.6), entitled *Courtesans Viewing Cherry Blossoms* brings together a series of conventions for these prints, including the cherry blossom viewing and picnic, as seen in the background of the right-hand print and edge of the centre print, and the tall elongated bodies that became significant to depictions of women for centuries to come. The lanterns barely visible in the left- and right-hand prints, and partly obscured in the centre, represent the house crests of the women in the print; these crests, or *mon,*[137] can also be seen on their robes, and those of their attendants.[138] The presence of the lanterns also insinuates a night-time viewing (Nelson-Davies, 2021, p.80), again illustrating semiotic codes within prints because the background, and by extension the sky, is limited and does not reveal a time of day. The coming together of this group is also most likely an idealised or imagined fantasy, as Nelson-Davies discusses (2021, p.91). This is another popular element within *ukiyo-e* of beauties as well as actors, as this would place representations of popular and recognisable 'characters' and real people into idyllic and fantastical settings. Another element of this print that emphasises the beauty of the women in fact relates to the usage of standardised ideals, as is now explored.

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[137] 紋 *mon* crest/family crest.
[138] Which include sex-workers and workers in training; *kamuro* being the child attendants and trainees and s*hinzō* attendants and practicing sex-workers (Seigle, 1993, p.232 & p.275).

Standardisation of Feminine Depictions in Ukiyo-e

As mentioned by Miller (2006, p.21), beauty ideals shifted from plumpness to statuesque-ness during the Tokugawa period, and Kiyonaga was a vital artist in this shift of representation: as Nelson-Davies says he was a "trendsetter" (2021, p.89). Kiyonaga popularised the elongation of female subjects in prints which can be seen clearly in *Courtesans Viewing Cherry Blossoms* (Fig.6), as all 'adult' subjects, regardless of status or age, appear tall and statuesque. This particular print was also considered to represent the "characteristically elegant Kiyonaga type" (Nelson-Davies, 2016, p.80) and became a kind of touchstone for other artists. It is also interesting to note that Kiyonaga was from the school of Torii artists who specialised in *kabuki* visual arts, from prints to advertising boards; but whilst Kiyonaga became most famed for his *bijin-ga* prints (Nelson-Davies, 2021), the aesthetics he conveyed were also evident in his *onnagata* works (Kominz, 2011; Chapter Six, p.200).

Another aspect of *bijin-ga,* particularly around the time of this print's creation, is that all of the subjects have the same facial structure with minimal differences in expression: "… the degree of realistic depiction of actual facial features routinely accorded to (male) kabuki actors in this period was by convention not extended to beautiful women." (Asano & Clark, 1995, p.41). This lack of realism meant that despite *bijin-ga* being a tool to advertise the beauty of specific women for the Yoshiwara, they also reflected an idealised aesthetic and expectation of this beauty. In other words, regardless of the tales of individual beauty of the Yoshiwara sex workers found in various forms of literature and poetry, the artists of *ukiyo-e* who depicted them in print maintained a single beauty ideal where the only identifiable markers were that of the house crests. This was also apparent in other feminine

representations of beauties depicting *geisha* and tea-house waitresses, who were also

popular subjects in *ukiyo-e*, especially as the period went on; although higher-

ranking workers in the Yoshiwara remained most prominent until reforms in the mid

19th century restricted their depiction.

The conclusions of women's passive existence within visual arts can be drawn from

Berger's discussions of the gaze: *"Men act* and *women appear*. Men look at women.

Women watch themselves being looked at." (Berger, 1972, p.38). This can be found

in *ukiyo-e* prints, particularly *bijin-ga* that tend to focus on the beauty of women[139]

as this was the main goal: the appreciation and advertisement of their beauty. This

places the female subjects in a passive role as they often have their own gaze averted

from the viewer to allow the subject to be inspected more openly. However, it should

be stated that whilst this tends to focus on the idea that only men are viewing the

women, these prints were available to all and, therefore, women would also be

watching women within these frameworks. The ideology is what shifts here; whilst

the assumption is that the men gazing at the women do so from an erotic,

sexualisation standpoint, how do women gaze at themselves?:

> From earliest childhood she has been taught and persuaded to survey herself
> continually… she comes to consider herself the *surveyor* and the *surveyed*
> within her as the two constituent yet always distinct elements of her identity
> as a woman.

> (Berger, 1972, p.37)

In this respect, Berger is emphasising that the women survey themselves in order to

project how they wish to be treated and in the formation of their own presence

(Berger, 1972, p.37). Therefore, in this sense perhaps the women viewing the passive

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[139] Though *bijin-ga* technically refers to beautiful people as opposed to women specifically, but has
over time come to be referred as pictures of beautiful women more regularly.

portrayal of other women are viewing them from their own ideals and projections of self that they wish to emulate – as was the case with the popularisation of fashion trickling through the merchant class women from the Yoshiwara.

However, one of the most celebrated and famous *ukiyo-e* artists working within the full colour *bijin-ga* subgenre of *ukiyo-e*, Kitagawa Utamaro, began to challenge this particular convention of complete standardisation and potential lack of personality:

> … [his] genius was that he radically altered the existing manner of drawing beautiful women in ukiyo-e. He injected passion, immediacy, and a degree of psychological nuance to add to the genre's habitual elegant sophistication, and created compositions that literally seduce us into the world of his female subjects.
>
> (Clark in Asano & Clark, 1995, p.35)

"Psychological nuance" with regard to Utamaro and his *bijin-ga* works was something that did not necessarily exist within female-subject focused *ukiyo-e* prior to him. As Seigle stated, "Utamaro's interest was primarily visual, yet he had developed an approach that was much more than that, something that might be called "psychological" for lack of a better description." (2004, pp.18-19). This discussion is interesting because despite the popularity of women subjects in *ukiyo-e* there was very little emphasis on anything other than women as subject. The discussion of psychological nuances insinuates that regardless of their expected place in society Utamaro, perhaps, wanted to reflect more about these women in his works, creating more personality and potentially power for them, as Seigle noted: "Psychological and subtle nuances were something Utamaro strove to express in his art" (2004, p.19).[140] However, despite these psychological elements of his works, Utamaro's

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[140] This is also the case in *shōjo manga* where psychological and emotional emphasis is paramount compared to *shōnen manga*.

beauties were still highly idealised as he, "developed a representation of women that suited his own image." (Seigle, 2004, p.7); meaning Utamaro still inherited traditions and previous ideals for female depictions within *ukiyo-e* from artists such as Kiyonaga. The most immediately recognisable of these conventions is that of the elongated body which gives the figure a "statuesqueness" (Seigle, 2004, p.19) as previously seen and discussed regarding cherry blossom viewing prints. Kiyonaga left this type of idealised elongated female body behind by the 1790s, instead focusing on more realistically proportioned figures; however, the trend for this type of female depiction had set in and Utamaro continued the elongation of his figures, "in search of an elegance and dignity in the female form," (Seigle, 2004, p.19). As an ideal, female sex workers of the Yoshiwara, especially those of the higher-ranks were expected to be elegant, dignified and almost ethereal which the elongation of their bodies in prints encapsulated. Of course, aesthetic choices and ideals of beauty were constantly in flux and reflected the opinions of different generation's on these matters. As such, there are subtle differences in what is considered beautiful throughout the Tokugawa period, but there are also some who completely disregard the elongated body ideal that was popularised and considered to be the height of *bijin-ga*. According to Takeuchi (2015, p.21-22) these "cute dumpling body" figures were only popular in art for a very short time, as concurrently the elongated body was being popularised.[141]

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[141] An example can be seen in Allen, 2015, p.122/3; Kubo Shunman *Courtesans Promenading Under Blossoming Cherry* c.1781 -89. Contemporarily these smaller and potentially 'squashed' features have developed to become a popular trope in some *manga* and other forms of illustration in Japan to reflect the influx of *kawaii* aesthetics in the form of *chibi* illustration meaning short, usually with negative connotations outside art conventions. Now, this style has extended beyond Japanese illustration in popularity and has been adopted worldwide as a sign of cute culture with popular characters from a variety of media worldwide being re-created by fans as *chibi*. Nonetheless, Hiromi Tsuchiya Dollase explores (2015) the early developments of small round characters in *manga* as a potential 'rejection' of the stereotypical *kawaii* presentation of frills and ribbons that filled the *manga* magazines of the time. This rejection stems from the characters personalities that exposed flaws, as opposed to the shy and ordinary that heroines in previous stories tended to present (Dollase, 2015, p45).

When a particular series, or individual print proved popular, re-issues were made; this is why there can be different versions and years for, what appears at first glance to be, the same print. For some *bijin-ga* prints, this re-issuing could also mean a re-creation. In comparison to actors, women in prints rarely had any individual identifying facial features and remained stylised, whereas *kabuki* prints did develop in such a way that the subjects were identifiable by their faces and not just the titles or *mon* (Chapter Six, p.195). Due to this lack of facial difference or interest in physiognomy, as far as female depictions were concerned prior to Utamaro, meant that woodblocks depicting women could be sold to other publishers or reused by the same publisher to create a 'new print' of a different woman by simply changing the name on the key-block (Takeuchi, 2015, p.7). Utamaro did not just mimic these 'traditional' or popularised standardised depictions, as he pushed the boundaries of composition by creating half-length prints and *ōkubi-e*[142] in the *bijin-ga* style and also began to apply subtle differences to the faces of his *bijin-ga* prints in order to identify the different women to some extent. Some of his more famous series, as discussed below, establish this psychological nuance and physiognomy quite clearly. A way in which he brought focus to the women was to reject the complex backgrounds that other artists of the time had used, drawing attention to the central female figure in a variety of situations. The following discussion, in combination with the case study at the end of this chapter, furthers the existing discourse about idealised femininity in the Tokugawa period through a synthesis of visual and narrative practices.

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[142] 大首絵 *ōkubi-e* bust portraits. Utamaro is credited as having a major influence in the creation of *ōkubi-e* prints: "The cropping of compositions to show "close-ups" and the exploration of the new expressive potential this provided were to be the major artistic preoccupations of ukiyo-e artists in the 1790s with Utamaro taking the lead" (Asano & Clark, 1995, pp.41- 42).

One of Utamaro's most celebrated series, *Twelve Hours of the 'Green Houses'* [143] (c.1794), depict sex workers at specific times of the day going about their expected (and idealised) routines; the clock during this period counted an hour as two (Screech, 2006, p.274) hence twelve not twenty-four hours for this series. The series incorporated revolutionary types of composition: "In order to depict the external beauty of the courtesan as well as hinting at their psychological states without necessarily mirroring reality, Utamaro isolated them from the ordinarily present figures of male customers" (Seigle, 2004, p.19). This innovative depiction allows the viewer to focus solely on the women and their apprentices within the images, and not to be distracted by overly filled backgrounds that had previously been the norm.[144] It also allows us as the viewer to be consumed and drawn into the compositions as if we are a part of the print, not directly engaging with the subjects but being voyeurs - a crucial aspect of many *ukiyo-e* especially *shunga*: "… there remains the implication that the subject (a woman) is aware of being seen by a spectator. She is not naked as she is. She is naked as the spectator sees her." (Berger, 1972, p.38) Indicating that this is not her true self, naked, but the self that the viewer wishes her to be through the naked (or nude) portrayal.

Shunga are erotic prints and include implicit and explicit illustrations as part of the genre. The implicit *abuna-e* imagery often include prints, such as *The Hour of The Snake* (c.1794) from the *Twelve Hours* series (Fig.7), and are known as 'After the Bath' scenes as they often depict a woman with a partially open robe as if she has

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[143] 青楼十二時 *Seirō jūnitoki Twelve Hours of the 'Green Houses'* Kitagawa Utamaro c.1794.
[144] And would later become again with artists such as Kunichika utilising different perspectives and spatial manipulation as the Tokugawa period came to an end.

just emerged from a bath. These are implicit as they hint at erotica; the woman is

perhaps preparing to meet a lover or has already had a tryst. In many ways, these

prints epitomise the voyeuristic elements of *shunga*, as many after the bath scenes

include in the composition a child or animal that is gazing up at the women in a

private and perhaps vulnerable moment; but we the viewer also become part of the

voyeurism as we are watching the woman without her knowledge. Continuing the

elements established by the male gaze that Berger examines, we see the subject

matter as eroticised because we place this meaning on the nude or naked female form

– particularly in relation to *bijin-ga* and other *ukiyo-e* of women – as they most often

depicted sex workers, and therefore, the implications were always of beauty and

sex.[145] The more explicit imagery, *makura-e*, such as this print by Utamaro (1788;

Fig.8), part of his famous *Poem of the Pillow (Utamakura)*, are pornographic in

representation and use. Most *shunga* series, including Utamaro's, include a mixture

of implicit and explicit imagery of lovers from a variety of backgrounds. They also

often incorporate voyeurism more explicitly with the inclusion of others openly

watching the couples that are entwined, as this print attributed to Koryusai

demonstrates (c.1772-3; Fig.9). This all enhances the erotic since strategically

draped clothing was regarded as much more sensual and erotic than the naked body:

> Even men and women making love in the erotic art of Ukiyo-e Shunga are
> often depicted fully clothed. In Utamaro's paintings of beautiful women, even
> erotic ones, where the women are in a state of undress, such as after bathing
> or putting on makeup, one will almost never see a beautiful woman
> completely naked.
>
> (Ueno, 2015, pp.92-93)

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[145] Especially, as for many, prints were much more accessible or attainable than actually spending
time with these women. Therefore, the prints emphasised the fantasy further, perpetuating the myths
of the Yoshiwara.

Most professional artists involved in the production of *ukiyo-e* were involved in creating *shunga,* which, despite the draped cloth approach, still depicted genitalia in the more explicit love scenes, and these were always exaggerated. Ory Bartal notes that the imagery of *shunga* was also used as a form of advertisement for the pleasure quarters as subjects were often linked to the sex workers of the quarters, or involved the "sexual poses and techniques associated with the life of courtesans in the "floating world" (*ukiyo*) of entertainment on theatrical stages, restaurants and tea houses." (2009, pp.88-89). These themes of sex and 'adult' representations are continued in Chapter Five.

During Utamaro's active years creating beauty prints, the Yoshiwara was in fact heading towards a decline, as Screech said: "The Yoshiwara was an inversion of reality, not an alternative to it, and it was quite unsustainable in the long term." (2006, p.268). The decline in standards by brothel owners, the need to make more money, and evolving tastes for showiness all contributed to the changing attitudes towards the pleasure quarter; therefore, the highest-ranking sex workers, the *tayū,* who had relied on natural beauty and simple, elegant tastes, disappeared and new ranking systems had to be employed to keep up the pretence of an hierarchy (Seigle, 1993, p.35 & p.205). Styles and tastes began to lean more towards elaborate hair pieces, *kimonos* and over the top make up that was, "decadently ornate and garish, bordering on outlandish," (Seigle, 2004, p.47) and prints of the Yoshiwara and sex workers began to reflect these new decadent and extreme tastes. Despite these changes beginning to develop as Utamaro created his works, his female beauty designs continued to reflect the more tasteful and elegant ideals for which the Yoshiwara had once been revered: "It is ironic, even poignant, that just as the

terminal decline of Yoshiwara set in, Utamaro was to produce some of the Quarter's most beautiful imagery." (Asano & Clark, 1995, p.41). The continuation of portraying the Yoshiwara with these beauty ideals could have been a conscious choice on behalf of Utamaro to reminisce, or as a means of recreating an ideal with which he wished to be a part. On the other hand, this could have purely been a requirement from the publishers, in league with the brothel owners, to continue selling an ideal and dream that no longer truly existed. Despite the terminal decline in the late 1700's this did not mean the end of the Yoshiwara as it continued to function until an official 'prostitution prevention law'[146] was passed in 1957 – albeit with a very different atmosphere to that of the Tokugawa period that is documented in literature and art.

Despite these changes in reality, prints depicting the female sex workers of the Yoshiwara remained popular. Utamaro's advances and subtle changes to the standardisation of the form established him as a key player in the genre, and solidified his status as a painter of beauties. Nevertheless, Utamaro's beauties still adhered to ideals of the time by being ethereal in their depictions of elongated bodies and rounded faces. They were also passive despite their activity; often looking away from the viewer and engaged by an assistant, client or fellow worker. His works may have altered the reputation of these women in the eyes of art critics like Stewart and created a glamorised view of them for many today, however, the truth behind the prints remains the same: that these women were indentured sex workers.

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[146] 売春防止法 *Baishun Bōshi Hō* Prostitution Prevention Law, passed in June 1956, starting in April 1957 with full effect from 1958.

Case Study: *Three Beauties of the Present Day*

Immediately we are focused completely on the faces and upper torsos of three women depicted together in a half-length style portrait print (Fig.10). It is unknown if the women are sitting in a raised position, with one placed above the other, if the one behind is sitting or rising to meet or leave the composition, or if this is simply a combination of individual portraits put together adhering to a traditional – by western art historical standards – pyramidal composition which provides balance to the image. There is also the question of the decision to place one above the others – is this a hierarchical decision? An implication of favouritism? Or is this simply the way the composition had to be created to maintain a harmonious image? Balance is clearly important to this image, with the text either side of the women clearly and deliberately placed so as not to distract or throw the composition off balance. The lines are delicate and deliberately created to reveal the layers of the print through the curves of the figures' outlines.

At first glance, the figures' faces appear almost identical, which would suggest a certain favoured aesthetic when depicting women in prints. However, the more one simply looks at the faces, subtle differences become apparent. The figure to the left (as we look at the image) has a straighter nose than the figure on the right, who has a slightly larger and more curved nose. The eyes for each figure are also distinct from each other, with the figure above having slightly wider and more open eyes with shortened and more angular eyebrows above. This suggests that whilst there must have been a specific and favoured aesthetic for the depiction of women, either by this artist or for this type of art more generally, there was still a want or need to show some individual characteristics between figures. There is also a potential argument

here that differences would be needed since these women are appearing in a print together, and therefore, it would be more obvious that a specific facial type had simply been copied for each woman. Regardless, there are very subtle yet significant differences visible in the faces of each woman that are not immediately detectable upon first viewing this print.

The positions of the women in the front of the print give the illusion they are interacting with each other; however, the eye line of each does not seem to connect with the other, but in fact peers just beyond their faces and away from the viewer. The figure behind and above the other two women is also gazing to the side and away from the viewer – this invokes a feeling of passivity from the women: that they are objects to be looked at, not engaged with which continues arguments of the male gaze outlined by Berger (1972). However, the figure to the right and the figure above appear to be gazing in the same direction; perhaps they are discussing something out of our eyesight and the figure to the left has turned back to comment. The mouths of all three women are parted slightly as if in conversation; this removes an element of passivity as, although they are not engaging with the viewer, they appear to be engaging with each other. The mouths of each figure are also subtly different with the figure above and to the right's teeth showing slightly.

The hairstyles for each woman also appear to be the same at first glance, which hints that there is a strict code or popular way for women to wear their hair. Much like the facial expressions, it becomes clear that each woman has a sense of individualism where the ornamentation of the hairpins are concerned. The figure on the right has a white ribbon just visible behind the hair at the far right of the print, and the silver

hairpin appears to have a leaf or flower petal design. The figure to the left has a much simpler leaf design on the silver pin, and only the top of a bow is visible above her head. The final figure, who is sat above the other two women, has a more intricate flower or star-like pattern on the silver pin and the distinctive yellow edge of a comb that is present in the middle of the other two figures' hairstyles is missing.

The clothing of each woman is distinctly different; perhaps to illustrate individualism so that they can be identified quickly. The woman above appears to have a plain outer robe in a shade of blue that appears muted, or has perhaps faded with time, with a brighter and more patterned collar, or underclothing. This appears to match the *obi*, which cannot be seen around the waist, but the knot of it can be seen behind the head of the figure to the left. The only design that can be seen on the blue area of the outer robe is a bouquet-like image of small white flowers and stems grouped together on the arm by the face of the figure on the right. The woman on the left has a white *kimono* with a simple pattern of lines, that when analysed more closely, reveals a leaf pattern between the lines that is most visible around the shoulder and down to the chest on the right. There is also a hint of red in the under robe and for the *obi*, which is barely visible in the bottom left-hand corner of the print. She also appears to be pulling a white scarf from around herself; the way she is clutching the scarf, the bunching of the fabric and the placement of it gives the illusion of movement. Beneath the scarf appears to be a small patch or badge with a leaf design in more clear detail that seems to mimic the design of the *kimono*. On first inspection, the woman on the right has the most decorative and coloured *kimono* of the print. It is black with crosshatch-style designs throughout the outer robe; the inner robes have a thick white collar and a glimpse of a red under robe that again

matches the *obi* that is just visible beneath her arms at the bottom of the print. The *obi* itself also has designs visible that show swirls and flower like patterns. She is holding her hand across her body and clutching a fan in the *uchiwa* style that has a large leaf and flower design at the top that is part cut off at the edge of the print as if the image continues beyond what we see.

The text within this image starts to reveal the identities and key aspects of this print. The box to the right contains very deliberate and clear writing indicating that this phrase is important; the small designs to the left-hand side seem deliberate and important signifiers. The circle has a series of patterned lines within it, and below is a set of three lines that resemble mountains with a flower beneath. Next to the box and the left figure, is some calligraphy, which could perhaps indicate the content of the print, or perhaps a poem, as many prints such as this have. The text in the box is in fact the title of this print, *Tōji san bijin*,[147] using what is now referred to as pre-war *kanji*[148] and is translated to *Three Beauties of the Present Day*. The designs to the left of the print are publisher and censorship seals. The small round design is the censorship seal known as *kiwame* due to the *kanji* character inside the circle,[149] and had to be included on all prints to prove that they were approved for publication by *bakufu*[150] laws (Reigle Newland, 2004, p.6). The seal below this indicates that the publisher of this print is Tsutaya Jūzaburō, the founder of the Tsutaya publishing house. Publisher seals were also important parts of *ukiyo-e* prints and along with the censorship seals, would be taken into consideration for the composition of the print.

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[147] 当時三美人 *Tōji san bijin* – *Tōji*; at that time/in those days *san*; three *bijin*; beautiful person.
[148] Following the Second World War *kanji* characters were simplified due to the American occupation, therefore, *kanji* and writings on woodblock prints from the Tokugawa period use a slightly different writing system.
[149] 極 *Kiwame* used in censorship seals to signify that the print has been examined and certified.
[150] 幕府 *bakufu* military government i.e. *shōgunate*.

Tsutaya's seal is a stylised three peak mountain, reminiscent of Mt. Fuji, with an ivy leaf beneath, as the name Tsutaya can also translate to ivy shop.[151] The calligraphy beneath the seals to the left of the print is the artist signature – Utamaro *hitsu*. The use of *hitsu* in the signature means 'from the brush of,' so the signature means 'from the brush of Utamaro' (Newland, 2004, p.6). The calligraphy at the top of the print is in fact the names of the three women depicted: Tomimoto Toyohina, Naniwaya Kita and Takashima Ohisa. The identity of the women is key to this print, as they were very popular subjects for Utamaro's *bijin-ga* prints. Although the names of the women have been included, it could be difficult to identify which woman is whom without the key signifiers that Utamaro has used – initially the inclusion of crests.

On the right of the image, is Naniwaya Okita, identifiable from the *kiri* or paulownia flower design on the fan. Okita was a waitress at the Naniwaya tea-house; her beauty attracted customers to the shop with a poem about this being included on an individual print in which she is depicted (Fig.11). At the time of the group print, as well as the individual depiction, it is estimated she would have been fifteen years old (Asano & Clark, 1995, p.120). This version of the individual print has a visible sheen to the background that was created using mica powder and was something that Utamaro often used in his half-length and *ōkubi-e* prints. In reference to the use of the luxurious mica: "…a key element in the perfection of this genre – suggestive of mirrors, self-absorption, even narcissism." (Asano & Clark, 1995, p.38). This suggestion is a continuation of Berger's gaze (1972) discussions, by extending metaphors and stereotypes in relation to women and 'looking'. Here, Okita is

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[151] 蔦 *tsuta* ivy 屋 *ya* as a suffix meaning 'shop' in this instance. Tsutaya Jūzaburō was one of the most prolific publishers of *ukiyo-e* and *ehon* during the Tokugawa period and as such often worked with a select group of *ukiyo-e* artists.

depicted in a half-length style that is synonymous with Utamaro. She is carrying

what can be assumed to be a cup due to her work as a waitress. Her crest is

represented in the *kimono* pattern, with the *obi* a more intricate flower and stem swirl

design, below which a red piece of cloth with a bow is just visible – perhaps this is

part of an apron worn whilst at work. This version of the individual portrait print

does not include a poem slip[152] that is present on other printings, (Fig.12) which is

thought to be a pair with the individual print of Ohisa (Fig.13).

The woman to the left of the print is Takashima Ohisa (sometimes written as Hisa),

and she is identifiable by the small crest on her robe beneath the scarf of *mitsu-*

gashiwa or the triple oak-leaf. In *The Passionate Art of Kitagawa Utamaro*

exhibition catalogue it states that Ohisa's, "beauty was popularly judged to be on a

par with that of Naniwaya Okita." (Asano & Clark, 1995, p.120). Ohisa was the

daughter of a *sembei*[153] shop proprietor and it is thought she also served in a

teahouse as part of the business. As with Okita, Utamaro created individual prints of

Ohisa (Fig.13) which, due to the poem slip located in the top left hand corner, are

thought to be a pair. Both poems allude to the beauty of the woman depicted and the

effect they had on the patronage of the teahouses at which they worked. The

individual print of Ohisa depicts her turned very similarly as with the positioning in

the *Tōji san bijin* print, only in this instance she is alone, so perhaps she is

conversing with someone outside of our view and is unaware of our gaze on her.

Again, links to Berger (1972) and Mulvey's (1989) discussions of the gaze can be

drawn here, as once more the female subject is portrayed with little to no agency,

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[152] Potentially due to restrictions impacting the printing of later editions, or possibly to create a cheaper version of the print.
[153] *Sembei* rice cake.

and as an object to be 'looked at'. This has clear links with the voyeuristic elements of *ukiyo-e* that are often present within *bijin-ga* prints, and particularly within *shunga,* which is also apparent within the individual print of Tomimoto Toyohina.

Here (Fig.14) Toyohina is depicted gazing intently at what at first glance might be mistaken for a letter, but is in fact, "a large *hōsho* sheet folded in half, which must be either a special-edition *surimono* print, or else a decorated letter-paper (*e-hankiri*)." (Asano & Clark, 1995, p.121). She is unaware of our presence, a trait Utamaro utilises in many of his *bijin-ga,* especially those that show women in more intimate settings: "We are shown women apparently obsessed with the business of make-up and toilette, all the while being lulled into forgetting that we are behaving as voyeurs, having every aspect of these intimate moments orchestrated by Utamaro." (Asano & Clark, 1995, p.41). Unlike Ohisa and Okita, Toyohina was a *geisha* employed at the Tamamuraya House in the Yoshiwara pleasure quarter. Her name, Tomimoto, derives from the Tomimoto School of Chanting of which she was a qualified performer (Asano & Clark, 1995, p.121). She is identifiable in prints by the *sakurasō* or primula crest that is visible on her sleeve in both the individual and group prints here. Regarding the 'group' print, Toyohina's *obi* is visible behind the head of Ohisa (Toyohina is turned to the side so her back is behind Ohisa) supporting that she was a *geisha,* and not a sex-worker, as only they tied their *obi* in the front.

An interesting inclusion in this print, that can only be seen by looking very carefully and specifically at the mouths of the women, is the inclusion of teeth. They are not

blackened, which would signify married women, and are usually the only inclusion

of teeth in prints. Miller comments about the showing of teeth:

> According to some scholars, baring one's teeth is a threat display, so covering or de-emphasis of the teeth is a submissive signal. Covering the mouth while smiling or giggling is etiquette dating back to the Edo period (Casal, 1996) and, like teeth blackening, might be related to a desire to subdue a woman's animalistic or aggressive potential.

> (2006, p.31)

The covering of teeth, as said here, was common from this period onwards, and

many images of women would have either the mouths closed, something, such as a

fan, placed over the mouth, their teeth blackened, or showing the process of

blackening. The inclusion of the teeth by Utamaro here, then, is interesting as it goes

against the beauty ideals and aesthetics of the time as they are not visibly darkened,

but they are also not particularly prominent: so why were they included? Are they a

comment on reality, bringing more naturalism into his prints in an unexpected yet

subtle way? Is it a comment on these women's personalities, showing a form of

strength, as opposed to submission? Most likely they were included as an

enhancement to the individualism of the piece, as they are presented almost as if in

conversation, and therefore, their mouths would be open so teeth would be seen. The

fact they are not covering their mouths would insinuate they are not aware of being

watched or viewed by others; in essence they are not 'on guard' to being viewed as

Berger insinuates as a constant (1972, p.37), so therefore they need not show signs of

submission or follow etiquette.

These identifications make the print an interesting departure from the previous

artistic discussions, as the women in focus are not part of the popular Yoshiwara sex-

worker depictions in *ukiyo-e*; however, some of the innovative techniques that

Utamaro brought to his portrayals can be seen within *Tōji san bijin.* For instance, beside the inclusions of crests, Utamaro has attempted to make each of the women individual, due to his, "interest in physiognomy - the study of an individual's facial features as an indication of their character" (Toledo Museum of Art, 2017). This interest and attempt to go against the previous conventions of *bijin-ga* to not realistically depict the faces of beauties, led to this print being "particularly prized for the manner in which certain distinctive facial features of each woman have been subtly subsumed into Utamaro's standard idealised style of depicting beauties." (Asano & Clark, 1995, p.119). This combination of idealisation, yet with individualised features, is often referred to when discussing Utamaro:

> … de Goncourt highlights the coexistence of two concepts in Utamaro's prints: idealisation and naturalism. I would not necessarily agree that prior to Utamaro the depiction of women was "dans l'ingrate façon", but certainly his beauties draw away from stereotyped traditional methods and come closer to the living beauty of real women. De Goncourt calls this "idealisation". But he by no means see this as contradicting to "naturalism…."

> (Tsuji, 1995, p.16)[154]

Tsuji Nobuo continued his discussion of de Goncourt's analysis by stating, "De Goncourt sees this "idealisation" as the core of the creativity of Utamaro's art. His concept of "idealisation" is to take reality and beautify it" (Tsuji, 1995, p.19). Whilst there are differences in Utamaro's *bijin-ga* prints, which implies an attempt to create individualism and not just offer a standardised aesthetic for all female depictions, the idea that Utamaro is beautifying reality is potentially an overly simplistic expression. His inclusion of subtle differences hints at a naturalism that was not extant prior to Utamaro's work, however, the subtly of these features shows there is very little

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[154] *dans l'ingrate* façon 'in a thankless way'.

interest in reality for female depictions and that a true idealised image was

preferred.[155]

As was the nature of *ukiyo-e* prints, after the initial run of prints, popular designs

were reissued with another run and, in some cases, this would lead to slight changes

in the print. In this instance, the second printing (Fig.15) does not include the names

of the women, nor the title, making the sole focus of this print the visual of these

three women. In many ways, this also adds another layer of passivity as their

identities have literally been stripped away, except for those who are able to identify

the crests. This is due to the Kansei Reforms[156] that in 1793 forbade the naming of

women[157] within prints, and led to Utamaro creating picture-riddles within many of

his later print series to reveal the name of the women depicted as a means to,

"circumvent the governments' regulations." (Tsuji, 1995, pp.20-21). Although this

reform meant that names could not be included on the print as part of the actual

design, handwritten inscriptions were sometimes added. According to the catalogue

entry for the 1995 exhibition *The Passionate Art of Kitagawa Utamaro,* there is an

example of this with an impression from the second print run that says, "Naniwaya

Okita went to Osaka", "Takashima Ohisa [married into] a rice-cake business in

Asakusa" and "Tomimoto Toyohina became the concubine of a feudal lord," (p.119)

which provides further detail about the women and gives an element of humanity

back to these idealised, beautiful women.

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[155] Of course, the inclusion of the three women together in the first place could be an example of "dream-casting" as mentioned in relation to Kiyonaga, and discussed later in regard to *kabuki* prints showing favourite actors that had not starred in certain roles together with others. These women may never have interacted together in such a way as shown here, signifying the comradery depicted may also be an idealisation and fantasy.
[156] Series of reforms throughout the Kansei era (1789–1801) to restore the morality of the people, see Appx. Three for a full chronology of eras.
[157] Outside the pleasure quarters.

Throughout this chapter the idealised yet standardised portrayal of women within *ukiyo-e* has been examined. These examinations have illustrated that the representation of the female form within graphic arts of the period maintained the assumed passive nature of women at large by subjecting the female form to that of a subject to be gazed at. The women, often sex workers with very little agency in reality, also have that agency stripped away in their artistic portrayals and representations. The continuation of passive representation as a popular means to convey feminine beauty within *ukiyo-e*, in comparison to other forms examined in the later parts of this thesis, illustrates the ideals of the time. These ideals included ethereal beauty, artistic skill and just a hint of sexual implications (outside of *shunga*). The old adage 'sex sells' can be seen throughout the feminine depictions of sex workers throughout *ukiyo-e*; their lives are glamorised to advertise the Yoshiwara and brothels; their beauty standardised to create a specific ideal that must be striven for, but above all they become objects for the gaze of consumers to fantasise about. Despite this passive 'object' reading of imagery during this time, the societal changes of the dawning Meiji era would lead to new roles and representations of feminine forms and beauty.

Chapter Four:
Birth of Shōjo

In 1868 the Meiji Period began, which brought about a change in the governing systems of Japan and an end to feudal rule.[158] From this point on, Japan began to 'modernise' and put the feudal systems of the past behind: this meant that new government policies began to be instated that would in turn influence the ways in which gender and sexuality would eventually be viewed. For women, however, these new policies and ideologies would become double-edged swords.

Despite the changing political and social climate, *bijin-ga* prints continued to prove popular. Prints of the late 1800's continued to depict *geisha* and sex workers but with differing styles to those that had preceded. Immediately recognisable motifs from earlier *ukiyo-e* experts were still utilised by Meiji period artists, as can be seen in this print by Toyohara Kunichika (Fig.16), which is from a series entitled *Scenes from the Twenty-four Hours a Pictorial Trope* (1890), and depicts women in a variety of roles and settings including sex workers, mothers and *geisha*.[159] However, as the Meiji era progressed the industrialisation of Japan continued apace and along with it came further advancements and changes to Japanese society including the role of women and young girls. This was in part due to new education laws that meant all children had to be educated to a certain age, which was later expanded to mean that girls remained in education for longer:

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[158] The end of the Tokugawa period was hastened by the arrival of U.S Naval ships that lead to the more widespread 'reopening' of Japan to the world from the likes of Commodore Matthew C. Perry in 1854. Japan became subject to the split loyalties towards the *shōgun* and Emperor that culminated with the last *shōgun*, Tokugawa Yoshinobu, resigning his post and thereby reinstating Imperial rule.
[159] The title shows a change in the way time was counted and depicted between the Tokugawa Period and the Meiji era, perhaps due to modernisation / westernisation.

The schoolgirl (joshi gakusei or jogakusei) was one of several new classes of people that emerged in the new social order of Meiji. The Meiji schoolgirl was the first iteration of shōjo in the public imagination, but her fictional representation had little to do with the realities of school life and adolescence for girls.

(Shamoon, 2012, loc.337)

This was the birth of the *shōjo* and her culture.

Growth of Shōjo Culture

The term *shōjo* is used in reference to young girls, usually between the ages of 7-20,

and has connotations and associations of innocence and virginity (Prough, 2011,

p.8). However, the term is much more complex, as Prough and others attest:

There is no clearly apt English translation for the term *shōjo*. It is frequently used to mean little girl or young girl. But neither captures the essence of what the category has meant since its emergence in the Meiji era. Coined originally for unmarried women, *shōjo* signified the stage between being a girl child and an adult woman. Jennifer Robertson defines *shōjo* in its origination as a "not-quite-female" female, to highlight the liminal quality of this social category. In line with this betwixt-and-between space, what keeps the *shōjo* from being a woman is her sexual inexperience.

(Prough, 2011, pp.7-8, quoting Robertson, 1998 & Treat 1996)

This definition bears striking resemblances to the definition of *wakashu*, as explored

in Part Three, as a stage between childhood and adulthood as a different gender

category. However, where *shōjo* are and were concerned, their gender category

remains feminised as is analysed from this point onwards. Therefore, Robertson's

"not-quite-female" (1998, pp.63-65) explanation appears to be more in relation to the

sexual inexperience 'requirement' of *shōjo* as a gender category. Further definitions

from John W. Treat and Takahashi Mizuki, respectively, focus on the sexuality of

shōjo: "the term shōjo specifically indicates a young woman who is not allowed to

express her sexuality" (Treat, 1996, pp.281-283 quoted by Takahashi, 2008, p.115)

and "While a shōjo may be sexually mature physically, she is socially considered

sexually immature and is therefore identifiable as neither male nor female."

(Takahashi, 2008, p.115). Again, this is similar to Robertson's "not-quite-female"

discussion, however, here Takahashi appears to be emphasising an adult reading of

the genders and linking this to sexual experience. Thus, Robertson and Takahashi's

gendering of *shōjo* must reflect Meiji attitudes towards gender as being identifiable

only in adulthood, as prior to this *shōjo* as a category did not exist, and that this was

embedded in the sexual experience of the category in question.[160]

An element of the *shōjo*'s identity, especially within literature of the early Meiji era,

not explicitly mentioned in these definitions is that of the male influence: "… as a

new class of female, the shōjo from her first appearance in novels about schoolgirls

was a symbolic representation of male desires and anxieties, on both a personal and

national level." (Shamoon, 2012, loc.337). This is noteworthy as it creates a direct

link between *shōjo* representations and *bijin-ga* due to male desires. However, the

anxieties that Shamoon mentions are more explicit in early *shōjo* representations, as

they were more commonly created by men and referenced new ideas to Japanese

culture and society as introduced through 'westernisation'. In other words, *shōjo*

often represented and symbolised the conflicts that arose between traditional

Japanese values with that of increasingly adopted western ideals, many of which

Shamoon discusses as related to the desires of men and the sexualisation of *shōjo*.

This relates back to Treat's discussions of *shōjo* sexuality specifically, as Shamoon's

analysis of Meiji literature shows that once the *shōjo* show any form of sexuality or

sexual expression themselves the anxieties are unleashed and the *shōjo* is no longer

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[160] Kano (2001, p.29) also emphasised the "category of woman" as a new emerging idea due to the sexual and gender differences being highlighted in Japan with the increasing connections globally, due to the influx of sexologist texts from the Meiji period onwards influencing the way all genders and sexualities began to be treated.

desirable as they no longer represent the ideal being placed upon them of innocence, purity and sexual immaturity (Shamoon, 2012, loc.687).[161]

The *shōjo* in illustration or graphic arts on the other hand signified a shift from woman or girl as just subject, to that of subject and consumer. This is not to say that women did not consume *ukiyo-e* or *bijin-ga*, but that they were not necessarily the target audience for these illustrations in the same way that the Meiji and Taishō era *shōjo* were.[162] The pre-war illustrative *shōjo* was an ideal specifically aimed at young girls to aspire towards as they accompanied stories and poems that reflected the expected roles and comportment for them; whereas post-war depictions evolved to communicate 'active' stories and represent different 'types' of girls as opposed to a single societal or cultural ideal. As such, the term *shōjo* has now become synonymous with the style of *manga* aimed at young girls, although the audience is wider reaching, and all genders and age groups engage with a variety of *manga*.

Woman as Consumer: Development of Shōjo in Illustration

Towards the end of the Meiji period, and the beginning of the Taishō, increased opportunities for women emerged, though restrictions and discrimination due to their gender abounded. These opportunities were in the realms of work, with the need for

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[161] Changes could also be seen in the adult populations of Japan during the Meiji and later Taishō periods, particularly in relation to women. Kano notes that there was a change in the ideal of feminine beauty relating to adult women at the time of the *shōjo* culture development too, specifically relating to women on stage as the ban on this had been lifted in the 1890s. She states that the focus of feminine beauty shifted from the performance of these ideals to that of the body specifically, and this was assisted by the adoption of western clothing that accentuated the contours of the body: "In general, it seemed to draw attention to the body beneath the surface." (Kano, 2001, p.31). Therefore, the performance of femininity, as examined from a cross-gendered performance perspective in Part Two, suddenly relied on the body of the performer to communicate femininity as was established in the 'new gender' categories of *shōjo* and 'woman' in the Meiji period (Kano, 2001, p.29).
[162] However it should be noted that *kabuki* actor prints had a clear female audience, due to the plays largely being attended by women (Leiter, 2012)

typists, store assistants, and bank clerks as the allure of city life increased (Ajioka, 1998, p.29). Nevertheless, the stigma of a working woman remained, and their value was underplayed – meaning they remained underpaid – an issue that continues globally today as outlined in the Gender Pay Gap reports by the World Economic Forum (2019; 2022). However, these new roles allowed for, potentially, more freedom for these women and increased developments in the cultures with which they engaged. Change was also happening more universally in Japanese cities and society at this time,[163] which led to individual welfare beginning to gain priority or preference over the national interest that had previously dominated (Ajioka, 1998, pp.30-32). This was then reflected in the developing arts and media that was created as a way to engage the newly emerging youths – *moga* and *mobo.*[164]

Moga, a shorthand for modern girl, were said to typically: "…cut off her hair (considered almost a mortal sin by her family in the country), wore Western dress (including a hat), and shopped in the Ginza district which became the most fashionable district of Tokyo in the mid 1920s." (Ajioka, 1998, p.29). This shift in the role and the way in which these women could present themselves to the world, meant that they were becoming recognised as an important consumer base; trends, particularly western, became essential parts of their culture (de Vries, 2021, p.109). They, along with *mobo*, would visit the increasing number of cafés, cinemas and theatres within the cities, establishing themselves as consumers in a modernising world. Consumerism became a key part of Japanese 'culture' at this time, and the image of the *moga* became a part of this (Ajioka, 1998; de Vries, 2021).

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[163] End of Meiji through Taishō and into the Shōwa period.
[164] *Mobo* was the equivalent for modern boy.

But, as with every generational change such as this, there were critics of the *moga*,

and the values to which women seemed to be turning.[165] For some they were seen as

a liberation from heteropatriarchal society, whereas others just saw them as being

"scandalous, flirtatious and promiscuous." (de Vries, 2021, p.109). This also created

links with the 'New Woman' (Kano, 2001, pp.125-128). As Strickland stated, the

moga could also be categorised as a 'New Woman' and she quotes Sharon Sievers

by saying the term 'new woman' describes: "an indulgent and irresponsible young

Japanese woman, who used her overdeveloped sexuality to undermine the family and

to manipulate others for her own selfish end." (Sievers, 1983, pp.175-176 quoted in

Strickland, 2008, p.11).[166] This led to the discourse around the 'Woman Problem'

that had begun to arise throughout the Meiji period in relation to the "New Woman"

and the questioning of the traditional roles of women within society:

> … Japan had a clear interest in maintaining rigid boundaries between male
> and female, as women demanded more rights and gendered labour (women in
> the home, men on the battlefield or working outside the home) was viewed as
> necessary to a vigorous economy and powerful state. That there was a term
> *fujin mondai* (woman problem) demonstrates the state's concern in
> maintaining social order.
>
> (Winston, 2009, p.73)

Art at the time reflected these differing ideals, with some works promoting the image

of western influence in Japan that *moga* epitomised such as the works of Takabatake

Kashō (Winston, 2018, pp.133-153), but others, such as Takehisa Yumeji, rejected

the 'New Woman' idea in his works. He depicted the "dreamy, languid young

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[165] Although women had faced similar criticism relating to consumerist tendencies during the later
parts of the Tokugawa period: "Fashion-obsessed young women were accused of upsetting hierarchies
within households as well as out on the streets" (Stanley, 2022, p.328).

[166] Again, this was not necessarily a new criticism as similar points were raised in the Tokugawa
period: "[women] provoked elite male concern over their sexual behavior, their spending, and their
rejection (real or imagined) of patriarchal authority" (Stanley, 2022, p.330).

women in kimono [who] represented the 'ideal' woman: not one of the so-called 'new women' who advocated for women's rights… but the passive women who accepted their place… and conformed rather than rebelled" (Ajioka, 1998, p.48).[167] He reflected the ideas and society in which he was living by appealing to the individual: "they [the art] express sentiments that are personal, appealing to the dwellers of the increasingly anonymous urban environment." (Ajioka, 1998, p.48). Takehisa also emphasised innocence of children in his works, which reflected the developing ideas throughout the Meiji period that children were in fact apart from adults in that they were, "not small adults but are entitled to a culture of their own." (Ajioka, 1998, p.48) These were the ideas which led to increased development of *shōjo* culture.

Magazines from the 1910's through to the 1930s (Masuda, 2015, pp.23-26), aimed at girls and young women, started to define the visual representations that *shōjo manga* would adopt in the 1950s and 1960s. The *shōjo* body portrayed within these magazines were, "pale, frail, and fresh" (Takahashi, 2008, p.116). Similar to Ajioka's discussions of Yumeji's works, these idealised bodies were supposed to promote the model *shōjo*, as based upon upper class girls, to those of the 'lower classes' to whom the magazines were marketed (Takahashi, 2008, p.116). This is a reflection of Shamoon's discussion of male desire and fear, as *shōjo* were portrayed in a gilded dream-like cage and kept away from worldly realities, potentially, out of fear that they would lose the innocence and purity that had suddenly been ascribed to

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[167] Joshua Dale also referenced Yumeji as using *kawaii* to describe his works, again showing a change in attitudes and ideals in the representations of women and girls in graphic arts (Japan Foundation, 2022c, 14:47-15:30). This ideal replicated imaginings of the glamorised 'courtesan' in her clothing or the brothel interior, but Ajioka Chiaki emphasises that despite these links to the past Takehisa's work sat firmly in the modern as his work was created with the masses in mind (1998, p.48).

them. These works of art and illustration became known as *jojō-ga,*[168] and

"contributed significantly to the aesthetic style that distinguished shōjo manga in the

post war period" (Takahashi, 2008, p.118) with one of the most influential *jojō-ga*

artists during the 1920s being Koji Fukiya (Fig.17). This particular cover epitomises

the *moga* aesthetic of fashionable short haired woman/girl, with the added presence

of a book or folder emphasising education and independence. This combination

summarises the ideal being created on behalf of and advertised to girls through these

magazines. Takahashi continues that Fukiya's 'girls' maintain a childish innocence

compared to *jojō-ga* art of earlier illustrators, but the "empty wandering gaze" that

was typical of this style of illustration was still present (2008, p.118). This gaze

insinuates day-dreaming which fits with the innocence and childlike ideal of *shōjo* at

this time, but is also reminiscent of *bijin-ga* where the female subject's gaze is also

pulled away from the viewer. This can be seen in the snow scene (Fig.22) as the gaze

of the girl has been diverted behind her and away from us as the viewer – though

there is a coquettishness within this choice and body language holding the scarf and

matching hat close, which again harkens back to *bijin-ga* themes. The body of the

jojō-ga shōjo also appears to draw on aesthetic ideals from *bijin-ga* as there was an

emphasis of a "willowy" figure (Takahashi, p.119; Shamoon, 2012, loc.1183), which

can again be seen in the *Shōjo gahō* (*Girls' Journal*) front cover.

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[168] 抒情画 *jojō-ga* lyrical painting or illustration (Takahashi, 2008). The *kanji* 叙情画 was also used in the Taishō period, but the first reading is more commonly used today (Appx. Four, Davies, 2019). *Jojō-ga* illustrations accompanied poetry and novels in magazines targeted at young girls during the 1920s and 1930s.

After World War II these types of magazines began to evolve, and with it so too did the illustrations.[169] Nakahara Jun'ichi,[170] (Fig.18) along with Takahashi Makoto, stylised as Macoto, brought about an important change in female depictions within these magazines: that of the *shōjo* directly engaging with the audience. This was "… illustrated by means of the light shining in their clear black eyes. While… Fukiya had already invented this special effect, Nakahara's achievement was to use light to animate the previously doll like shōjo." (Takahashi, 2008, p.120). This animation was taken a step further by Macoto, who turned the small shining light into a star within the growing size of the illustrated *shōjo*'s eyes (Fig.19). He created a variety of illustrations and *manga* that greatly influenced the development of *shōjo manga* aesthetics (Takemiya, 2011, p.19) whilst inspiring other contemporary Japanese illustrators and artists, as can be seen in the now iconic *manga*, *The Rose of Versailles,* and also evolutions of this in Nishimata Aoi's work, which is examined as the case study for this chapter.

Some *manga* critics state that large shining eyes signifies the love and dreams of a character, whereas Takahashi references an assertion that it plays two roles: first to identify the main character, and second to "serve as mirrors that reflect the character's emotions." (2008, p.124). Takahashi continues: "…the eyes are literally windows of the soul; by looking at the eyes, the reader can intuit the character's feelings, which remain unexpressed in dialogue." (2008, p.124). The eyes became a

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[169] From this point magazines began to include manga more than the poetry and articles that had been the previous norm, until eventually becoming manga exclusive.

[170] He combined traditional Japanese and contemporary western influences into his work, which also linked to the emerging *kawaii* styles according to Joshua Dale (Japan Foundation New York, 2022c, 15:32-16:10). His work also expanded into the fields of fashion and design, but his illustrations of and for *shōjo* are some of his most famous and popular pieces (junichi-nakahara, n.d). He also married a leading *otokoyaku* star, Ashihara Kuniko (Strickland, 2008, p.53) which potentially reflects some of the aesthetics in the work.

key convention of *shōjo manga*, not just as aesthetic qualities, but because of the purpose of *shōjo manga* as a genre: "[shōjo] was often misunderstood by Japanese manga critics… what these critics overlooked was that the main purpose of shōjo manga is to show the complex inner psychology of the characters, not to create a realistic or action filled tale." (Takahashi, 2008, p.122). The eyes were just one of many conventions that allowed the readers of *shōjo manga* to, "engage emotionally with the story" (Takahashi, 2008, p.122), as there was a visually striking connection being communicated, because of the expressive eyes (Masuda, 2015, pp.24-25). Another visual convention important to this engagement is that of the full body portrait.

As *shōjo manga* was not about the action and swift pace of a story but about psychological and emotional elements and characterisation, the format and panel structures were essential to the engagement of the audience. As such, more complex and creative layouts[171] were designed to enhance this emotional style of illustration. During the 1970s and 1980s, critics of *manga* appeared to misunderstand this essential aspect of *shōjo manga* which enhanced the psychological and emotionally engaging form of storytelling, as opposed to the fast-paced action-filled equivalent within *shōnen manga*. This led to critics accusing *shōjo manga* of being badly drawn and calling the full body portraits unsophisticated and clumsy; as far as the critics were concerned, they felt it interrupted the narrative as they appeared seemingly out of nowhere (Takahashi, 2008 p.125).

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[171] *Manga* is read right to left, from the top right hand corner to the bottom left.

The full body portrait, also known as the "three-row overlay style pictures"

(Shamoon, 2012, loc.1887), is an essential part of the viewers' engagement with

shōjo manga that was adapted by Macoto as "style pictures" (Takemiya, 2011, p.19).

Takahashi states that, "part of their allure for women has always been that they were

all about fashion – full-body images appear on the page like mannequins modelling

the latest ensembles in store windows." (2008, p.125). This is similar to the purpose

of some *ukiyo-e,* and has some stylistic links as well (Friedman, 2022, p.34).[172]

However, a significant difference between *manga* full-body portraiture and that of

the *ukiyo-e* convention is that *manga* is not literally selling the woman in the work –

just the *shōjo* idealisation and fashion trend. The use of full body portraits in *manga*

was also to encourage readers to identify with the main characters (Shamoon, 2004,

p.83; Shamoon, 2012, loc.1908) as well as to communicate more emotive and

interesting narratives through the art:

> …shōjo manga are always in danger of becoming visually monotonous
> because the stories generally do not contain much physical action. Showing
> the full figure not only adds visual interest to the page but also encourages
> the reader to see the main character as literally full and complete.

> (Shamoon, 2004, p.84)

Whilst vital for *manga* characters, regarding the women depicted in full-length

ukiyo-e, this was not the overall goal. During the Tokugawa period, sex workers

were, as described by Seigle, merchandise (1993, p.75).[173] This shows an

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[172] *Ukiyo-e* were used to advertise the pleasure quarters and by extension show the latest in
fashionable trends. Once a beauty, be it a *geisha* or sex worker, was depicted with new styles, these
would filter through to the merchant classes and be adapted within society, although as stated, this
was not necessarily aimed at women so much as a by-product of the print's advertising power.

[173] These prints not only sold the idealised version of the Yoshiwara and the star sex-workers, they
also sold the idea that one should go and visit the Yoshiwara, see the sights themselves, maybe even
visit their favourite woman in reality.Originally it was expensive and unattainable for most during the
late 17th century to visit the Yoshiwara, however, by the late 18th and 19th centuries a "lowering of the
standards" of the quarter which coincided with the decline of high-ranking patronage took place to
accommodate more clients of lower classes (Seigle, 1993, p.35 & p.209).

advancement in representation for women and girls, whilst connecting to aesthetics in the, by this point, traditional art of woodblock printing.

Together, the eyes and body illustrations in *manga* serve an important purpose:

> …faces and figures serve opposing functions; close-ups of the former draw the reader inside the emotional life of the character, while, simultaneously, more distanced views of the latter allow for a consideration of external aspects like physical appearance or clothing style.
>
> (Takahashi, 2008, p.125)

Although the origins of these conventions can be traced throughout the post-war development of *shōjo manga*, the setting of them as true conventions comes from the works created in the 1970s, where new ideas, narratives and aesthetics were introduced into *manga* targeted at a young female or *shōjo* audience. Prior to this, the creators of *shōjo manga* were primarily men; however, from the 1960's and 1970's, onwards more female *mangaka* began to enter the profession. Women were now the subject, consumer and creator of graphic arts.

Women as Creator: Evolution of Shōjo Manga

Despite the expectations placed upon women during the Tokugawa period, women were still able in some areas to be creators of art. Literary endeavours, particularly poetry, was an acceptable and encouraged creative avenue for women, due to the historical impact of female writers. Many of these female poets would collaborate with male visual artists for works that incorporated poetry, such as on the privately published *surimono*,[174] as discussed by Nelson Davis (2015). In terms of graphic arts

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[174] 刷り物 or 摺物 *surimono* literally printed matter. Surimono were privately published works that utilised more expensive techniques. They were generally in a square shape, and usually used as new year gifts, or as part of poetry circle exchanges.

however, fewer women have been remembered or included in the canon, as has been an issue globally, as Nochlin (2021) and Pollock's (2003) works attest.

In pre-modern Japan women painters were most often considered amateur. According to Weidner, this status was one of the only common aspects of these women between the Heian and Tokugawa eras, though she does note that other art historians, particularly Patricia Fister and Akiyama Terukazu, discuss the move from amateur to professional that some women were able to achieve (Weidner, 1990, pp.14-15). However, Weidner emphasises that despite the later removal of women in some respects from the canon, the role of these early female painters as amateur should not be forgotten as they did in fact have an important impact on the development of styles that professional painters would then continue: "Thus women, who painted as amateurs were by no means peripheral to the artistic mainstream; they were an integral part of it." (Weidner, 1990, pp.14-15). This was because the "amateur ideal" within Japanese and Chinese cultures, meant painting was considered appropriate for upper-class women: "It enabled them to discover and cultivate their brush skills without breaking the rules of feminine decorum or even so much as leaving the protection of the women's apartments" (Weidner, 1990, pp.14-15). However, with the change to military rule under the *shōgun*[175] in the Tokugawa period, this changed: "artistic leadership was claimed by the men who painted to the taste of the new military elite" (Weidner, 1990, p.15), leading to styles being "derived from the professional traditions of China, and within this context there were no socially sanctioned places for female artists." (Weidner, 1990, p.15).

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[175] 将軍 *shōgun* military general/leader

Despite these changes in relation to aristocratic women's place in art practices in Japan, during the Tokugawa period, daughters and wives of artists were able to begin advancing female visual artists once again. Fister (1988), discusses the different artistic areas in which women were able to be creators during this time, including *ukiyo-e*. She states that due to the nature of *ukiyo-e* subject matter revolving around the 'floating world' an acceptance of women artists was possible: "because of the relative freedom of behaviour in the pleasure quarters, the ukiyo-e world was more receptive to women painters than were traditional art workshops." (1988, p.47).[176] However, many of the works created by these women no longer exist and the knowledge of their work and involvement in art is due to contemporaneous reports. Therefore, despite there being active women working in the visual arts in the Tokugawa period, their position as creator has often been overlooked or considered to be less impactful or wide spread as that of their male counterparts, as their lives, and in some cases art, were not being recorded or preserved. However, during the 19th century women, including Katsushika Ōi,[177] were involved in the creation of *ukiyo-e* prints as well as paintings, although again some of these artists works have not been located.

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[176] She then goes on to list a series of women artists working in *ukiyo-e* during the 18th Century, including students of Moronobu and Utamaro (Fister, 1988). Even so, some *ukiyo-e* paintings of artists Yamazaki Ryū-jo and Inagaki Tsuru-jo do remain. The work of both of these artists revolves around depictions of female sex workers, perhaps revealing that despite their primary focus as subjects for men to look at they were also important to women in some ways. Fister speculates that due to the nature of female sex workers and the way they were depicted in stories and art which glamorised them, that perhaps the 'common' woman was jealous of them implying that Yamazaki and Inagaki were, possibly, "acting out a dream" by portraying them in their art (1988, p.49). This is pure speculation due to the scant biographical information available about these women artists, so we do not know why they chose to depict sex workers, if they were self-taught or students of particular schools or artists.

[177] Hokusai's daughter, who had a successful artistic career herself, but also assisted her father in some works. The extent of her involvement, however, is currently unknown.

Regardless, after the Tokugawa period women were again being portrayed as graceful beings adhering to male expectations through ideal feminine representation; though as noted the rejection of these patriarchal ideals from the likes of *moga* were also illustrated. From this, links between the women *ukiyo-e* artists of the Tokugawa period, and *manga* artists can be drawn, as similarly women's influence and input in the development of *manga* was often overlooked until the 1960s and 1970s. Since then more and more women have become involved in creating *manga* for all audiences. However, the editors and directors of the publishing companies and *manga* magazines are not necessarily specialist within the genre in which they work; Prough discusses the industry structure and explains that editors are often moved between sections, e.g. from *shōjo* to adult magazines (Prough, 2011, pp.90-93). She also highlights that there is a two-track system within the publishing industry relating to editors: managerial and clerical (Prough, 2011, pp.90-93). This is significant to note because Prough states the majority of women editors she spoke with were on the clerical track, where there is less overtime, little to no upward mobility, and an assumption that, "a woman will quit working when she marries or has a child" (Prough, 2011, p.93). This means that despite the encouragement of 'by and for women' and "what girls like" (Prough, 2011, p.3), those in leading decision-making roles are, potentially, men being ruled by heteropatriarchal assumptions.

Nevertheless, as women began to create the illustrations and stories for *shōjo manga* the genre began to evolve away from what had come before in the male dominated eras. At the *What is Manga?* Symposium at the British Library in July 2019,

Takemiya Keiko[178] discussed the development of *shōjo manga* and implied that there was a sense of freedom within *shōjo manga* specifically when she was creating works in the 1970s. She said that female *mangaka* could break rules within *shōjo manga* that could not be broken within *shōnen manga* due to a lack of attention by the *manga* editors (Takemiya & Yamada, 2019). This implication and discussion by Takemiya further supports the negative views that critics had of *shōjo manga* during the 1970s and 1980s, and the idea that *shōnen manga* was more important and required more attention and stricter rules about what could and could not be changed or improved. This also links with Kinsella's discussions of *dōjinshi* and the increased popularity of the form throughout the late 1970s, and especially the 1980s, due to the larger publishing companies' changes in output: "[they] ceased to systematically produce radical and stylistically innovative manga series around 1972 because these no longer matched sufficiently closely the changed interests of their mass audiences." (Kinsella, 1998, p.295). This led to increased numbers of 'amateur' *mangaka,* many of whom were women, and commercial female *mangaka*. This 'amateur' *manga*[179] continues today with a variety of established or professional artists, as well as fans of all ages creating works to sell and share in spaces such as Comiket.[180]

The early women innovators of *shōjo manga* began to change the development of *shōjo manga* by creating storylines that defied expectations. They continue on the route of romance, but began to draw male characters as their leads thereby creating idealised *bishōnen* characters and homoerotic narratives. This is the basis of Chapter

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[178] a *mangaka* linked with the Year 24 Group and previously the Dean of the Faculty of Manga at Kyoto Seika University
[179] It should also be noted that one of the 'favourite' forms of 'amateur' *manga* is that of *yaoi.*.
[180] Comic Market, also known as Komiketto or Komike (Comike).

Ten's discussions, but as they are created by female *mangaka*, a brief introduction is relevant here. These aesthetic and narrative changes played a major role in the development of the *shōjo manga* genre and the way in which female-centred arts and popular culture would evolve. Whereas in the past men commonly portrayed female subjects often with sensual or sexual appeal (both implicitly and explicitly), now women portrayed men in a similar fashion.

Despite these advancements, and depictions which show more engaging and 'real' women, as the following chapter explores, there are still stereotypical depictions of emotional and romantic women alongside new ideals as stylised by *manga* and influenced by the contemporary popularity of 'cute'.[181] Contemporary Japanese illustration, and indeed illustration globally, has been influenced by 'cute', which in many respects has some heritage in the early years of *shōjo manga* development, and the identity established for *shōjo*.[182] As *manga* critic and scholar, Yamada Tomoko stated in an interview: "I think the appreciation for "kawaii" [cute]… over "kirei" ("beautiful") in Japanese shojo manga has been a strong influence on girls' comics and related culture outside Japan." (Toku, 2015, p.142). The large, rounded eyes of Nakahara Jun'ichi and Takahashi Macoto, for instance, are now embedded

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[181] Cuteness is an aspect of Japanese culture that is well documented and discussed in television programmes as well as academic discourse. According to Matt Alt (2020) this 'Culture of Cute' began with a simple cat design on a coin purse that took Japan by storm due to the popularity amongst young girls. The brand and cat would eventually evolve into Sanrio and *Hello Kitty*.™ Sanrio's limited background for Hello Kitty insists that 'she' is a girl in kitten form, which Anan critiques: "Hello Kitty, a cute "girl" with no mouth, might symbolize Japanese women's voiceless status." (2016, p.1). Nevertheless, 'cuteness' as an ideal became a commodity that can be found in almost all aspects of Japanese society, as it would be incorrect to say that cuteness is just about objects (Kinsella, 1995). It is present in fashion, writing, language and illustration; but the impact of Sanrio's simple designs of large heads on a small body can be found in the development of *chibi* style drawings.

[182] These ideals of cuteness are not kept to young girls and do apply to young women as well, for instance 'Idols' often use the cuteness ideals as part of their acts (although Idols and Idol groups' age ranges can go from 7 – 21). アイドル *aidoru* Idol, a type of Japanese female pop star, usually groups, that are 'manufactured' by record labels.

conventions in all kinds of illustration and add a certain level of 'cuteness' to a character, of course depending on the overall aesthetics and aims of the *manga*. In *shōjo manga* these conventions of large eyes in conjunction with larger heads and smaller bodies became convention when drawing children or teens and elevated these ideas of cuteness. Due to this cuteness, as an ideal and aesthetic, can lead to accusations of infantilisation[183] and expectations to adhere to these idealised forms of femininity.[184]

As *shōjo manga* developed throughout the 20th century, the aesthetics that have become synonymous with the genre has extended beyond *shōjo manga* into other forms of popular culture. There has been an adaption of arts and pop culture to incorporate these popular aesthetic styles with many artists and illustrators creating works that emulate the *shōjo* ideals already explored. Some of these artists have taken these ideals and aesthetics into the digital world, with creations that blend together the already existing and recognisable motifs and styles from *manga* into completely new realms such as virtual reality, or even Vocaloid's (Annett, 2015) such as the infamous Hatsune Miku.[185] The following case study combines these digital advancements with the *shōjo manga* aesthetics outlined in this chapter.

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[183] There are other elements of infantilisation that is not necessarily completely 'mainstream' but widespread such as *rorikon* – "male girls' created manga" (Kinsella, 1998, p.305).

[184] Megan Rose discusses that the women who identify with *kawaii* aesthetics in their fashion do not agree with an infantilised reading and that the pervasion of this in fact removes their voices and agency (Japan Foundation New York, 2022c, 00:31:40-00:32:40). It should also be noted that these fashions and aesthetics are not restricted to girls, despite the academic focus of Girls' Culture.

[185] These new technologies again advance the creative processes and bring representations of femininity into new realms. In the case of Hatsune Miku, 'she' is a completely digitally generated pop star, 'she' does not age and therefore adheres to the innocent portrayal of *shōjo* culture through the aesthetics outlined in this chapter. It must be stated however, that there are elements of sexualisation within these seemingly innocent portrayals, which warrants further examinations that is currently beyond the remit of this thesis.

Case Study: *Kaguyahime*

This illustration (Fig.20) evokes a sense of childlike wonder due to the bold colours and the floating specks of light that are reminiscent of magic or fireflies. This idea of magic or fireflies is enhanced when the background of the image is taken into consideration, as it places our subject in a forest at night with the hint of tree trunks and a moon – these are immediate signifiers of otherworldly ideas. It is assumed that the figure here is female from the long flowing hair, facial shape, clothing and position she is holding, as well as the border frame of geometric roses that are very reminiscent of stained glass window designs. There is a sense of childlike innocence emanating from the figure; it could be assumed that this is a young girl – perhaps in her mid to late teens.

The eyes are large and staring at something out of our sight. The expression at first glance appears vacant and blank. However, upon further consideration it appears to be more complex and difficult to determine – is she afraid? Curious? Shocked? Perhaps a combination. Her mouth is small and opened slightly as if ready to speak; one arm is crossed over her body as if to hold herself, or her clothing, in place, which implies a level of vulnerability, whilst the other is almost slack across her body falling to floor. Is she trying to protect herself? Is she leaning forward, readying her arm to reach out to whatever is beyond our vision? The tilting of her head to the side could also suggest curiosity: has something appeared that has taken her by surprise, and is she trying to understand what she is seeing? The robe around her is heavily embroidered with a variety of flower motifs and geometric designs in bold bright colours which suggest a level of richness, and potentially, wealth. The fall and flow of the robe suggests she may be sat on the ground, with her right hand just visible

beneath the *kimono* sleeves at the bottom of the illustration, potentially reaching to support herself on the floor. Has she in fact just fallen, albeit gracefully, to the ground and that is where the movement of the robe and hair comes from? The angle of the illustration suggests that we, as the viewer, are looking up slightly at the figure. The trunks and moon in the background are also imposing; giving a feeling of danger and vulnerability that is only enhanced by the darkness surrounding the character. Perhaps it is we who have startled this young woman, and on whom her gaze is focused.

To understand this illustration and the significance of each individual element, the identification of the figure is paramount. This illustration depicts Kaguya-hime, the protagonist of the Japanese folk tale *Taketori Monogatari (Tale of the Bamboo Cutter),* that is also known as *Kaguya-hime no Monogatari (The Tale of Princess Kaguya).* The story begins with an old man, a bamboo cutter, discovering a glowing bamboo shoot; when he cuts the bamboo a baby is revealed. The old man takes the baby home to his wife, and they raise her. Kaguya is regarded as a great beauty, and tales of her start to travel throughout Japan until five suitors arrive at her door. In order to prove their worth, they are each sent on a quest to find mythical treasures and return them; they all fail. Eventually tales of Kaguya's beauty reach the Emperor, and he too tries to win her hand in marriage but she rejects him. One evening the bamboo cutter finds Kaguya crying at her window staring at the moon and she is forced to reveal the truth – that she is a princess and not of this world but from the moon and must return there. A retinue arrives to take the princess back to the moon, the Emperor tries to intervene and stop Kaguya-hime's departure, but

fails. A bright light shines out, stunning those around her, before Kaguya-hime

ascends to the moon.[186]

Nishimata Aoi's *Kaguya-hime* appears to depict the moment before she returns to the

moon. In the story a cape, cloak or robe depending on the translation, is placed

around her shoulders causing her memories of Earth and her life there to be erased.

In 2013, *Studio Ghibli*[187] released an animated film of the tale. In the final scene as

Kaguya-hime talks with her parents, one of the celestial beings drapes a purple robe

over her and immediately her expression becomes vacant and her memories of her

life on Earth are forgotten. In Nishimata's illustration there is a very elaborately

decorated robe, that would be fit for a princess, and her expression could perhaps be

mimicking the erasure of memories in the *Studio Ghibli* version, as the stare could be

considered blank or vacant. However, there are also added layers of emotion visible

in Nishimata's illustration due to the highlights in combination with the slight tilt of

the head and full body language. As Kaguya-hime looks back at Earth on her ascent

to the moon in *Studio Ghibli's* production, tears appear in her eyes which shows that

other more recent interpretations of the tale have added more emotion on the part of

Kaguya-hime, and not just from those she is leaving behind. This can be seen in this

print from the Meiji period,[188] (Fig.21) where the bamboo cutter-turned father is

lamenting as Kaguya-hime is escorted into the sky. This print also depicts the robe

that Kaguya-hime is wearing as a coloured but multi-layered robe more reminiscent

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[186] The story continues beyond her departure; she leaves the Emperor an elixir of immorality which he orders to be burnt along with a letter atop of Mt. Fuji in the hopes the content will reach her. This story is the basis of Mt. Fuji's symbolism of immortality and links to the fact it is an active volcano.
[187] Though unlike in the tale where a more mature reading of Kaguya could be interpreted given the suitors for marriage, *Studio Ghibli's* portrayal of Kaguya is of a young girl. This also highlights and emphasis on youth, and a blending of these aesthetics by Nishimata.
[188] (*Tsuki kugei Taketori*) British Museum 19th century; other sources give 1888 as the date.

of the official noble court wear of the Heian period, from when this tale originates. The long, loose black hair, as briefly discussed in relation to Heian period beauty aesthetics (Miller, 2006), is present in both versions of this illustration. This implies that the artists, whilst adhering to the illustrative conventions and aesthetics of the time in which they were creating these works, are still paying homage to the origins of the story they are illustrating.

The background of Nishimata's illustration also becomes more significant than simply being a forest setting at night with the understanding of the folktale. The trunks are bamboos, which symbolises the beginning of the tale and illustration, whilst the moon now looms menacingly, watching the exchange and awaiting the return of its princess. These codes are immediate signifiers to those with the contextual understanding of the story – a form of visual literacy as outlined by Ishida (2019).

The corner border flower motifs are evocative of the flower motifs that became important illustrative techniques within *shōjo manga*. They were used most often to frame a full body portrait of a character and often alluded to the personality of that character (Takahashi, 2008; Shamoon, 2012, p.83). This particular image was exhibited as part of a solo exhibition of Nishimata's in 2017,[189] where, alongside *Kaguya-hime,* Nishimata exhibited illustrations of *Cinderella, Little Mermaid, Little Red Riding Hood* and other iconic female folk/fairy tale characters. Each image has a floral border, some of which appear to be specific to the tale or character depicted,

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[189] 妄想少女劇場 *mōsō shōjo gekijō Fantastical Girl Theatre* (exhibition title) *mōsō* also has connotations of dreamy or delusional (Appx. Four; Davies, 2020a).

for instance sea foliage for the *Little Mermaid*, whereas others have the same stained glass rose design, as depicted here. The roses are very similar to those seen in the stained glass illustrative designs from Disney, specifically *Beauty and the Beast*, which could also be an important factor as some of the characters depicted by Nishimata are known more immediately due to Disney productions. Perhaps Nishimata is likening Kaguya-hime's importance to Japanese culture to that of the Disney princesses to western culture by including the same rose design for *Cinderella* and *Kaguya-hime*. Nishimata also has a direct personal link with Disney, as she married at a Tokyo Disneyland in 2015,[190] and collaborated on a Disney Princess Line featuring her illustration of Tinkerbell in 2011 (Nishimata, 2011). There is also the fact that early-animated Disney productions had a profound impact on Tezuka Osamu, the *manga* artist often credited as the godfather of *manga* and *anime*. Tezuka combined illustrative conventions with the influence of cinematic productions such as Disney to create a new way of visual storytelling during the early post-war era. This series by Nishimata shows a combination of influences including contemporary Japanese idealised female forms, traditional subject matter and the impact of *manga* conventions on all forms of graphic arts.

Despite the multiple layers of influence found within this depiction of Kaguya-hime, one of the most important is that of the eyes. Eyes are essential to the formation of *shōjo manga* illustration and storytelling as they brought about a change in female illustrative representation from a passive to an actively engaged depiction. This emphasis meant that eyes became windows into the inner psyche of these characters.

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[190] In 2016 Nishimata published a book, *Why Aoi Nishimata Decided to Marry a Voice Actor,* featuring photographs from the wedding, but also a book cover illustration in a wedding dress emulating her style that is evident in these case study discussions.

As an illustrative convention that has continued since its appearance in the 1960's, the large gleaming eyes were originally reserved for the female characters, perhaps as these were the main characters of these *manga* stories. As the medium progressed the use of large shining eyes became a convention across all forms of *manga* and all characters within, which in turn has become a more generalised illustrative convention synonymous with Japan. Nishimata incorporates this convention in her works as an aesthetic choice, but in regard to Kaguya-hime the large shining eyes also reflects the events of this tale specifically.

Nishimata's *Kaguya-hime* evokes all of these emotions and aspects of *shōjo manga* in a single full colour digital print. Her eyes are key to unveiling the conflicting emotions taking place, although it is also reminiscent of those early *jojō-ga* illustrations where the character is gazing away from the viewer with the implication that they are day-dreaming and unaware of the attention. Here Kaguya-hime is gazing towards the viewer just like the early more 'active' female representations in the 1950s and 1960s, despite the lack of recognition. There is sense of action or movement in the way her body is framed, there are intense conflicting emotions visible, but there is still idealisation; she adheres to the contemporary illustrative conventions of female beauty and she is presented as someone to be 'looked at' as part of that.

However, Nishimata is a woman not a man, which is an important distinction in understanding the creation of the illustration. The original creators of *jojō-ga* illustrations and *shōjo manga* were men. By the 1970's women began to take control of the creation of *shōjo manga,* and today women still dominate in the *shōjo manga*

market. A key selling point for *shōjo manga* that editors focus on is "what girls want." (Prough, 2011, pp.127-134), which is thought female *mangaka* are more capable of representing.

The young women in Nishimata's print series are not merchandise in the sense that the sex-workers in *ukiyo-e* were; the illustrations are not to serve as an advertisement for their beauty and time. Instead, they are created as a part of the *shōjo* fantasy world created through different conventions that make up the world of *shōjo*. The characters are all fictional, and even more so they are traditional fictional characters, reimagined in contemporary popular culture and graphic arts aesthetics, but still remaining loyal to the original subject material, such as Heian period aesthetic influences for *Kaguya-hime*, the red cloak for *Red Riding Hood* and the blue ball gown-like dress for *Cinderella*. The fact that each of these characters are related in some way to princesses and fairy tales also plays into the escapism elements of *manga* and links of fairy tales with young girls. This series of digital prints emphasise the ideal in a fantastical way; these are the fantasy images of an ideal world young girls, perhaps stereotypically, dream of. Simultaneously, *Kaguya-hime* adheres to the aesthetic ideals that have been shaped by *shōjo manga* since the 1960's; a passive daydreaming representation of a beautiful *shōjo*.

To conclude, this chapter has explored and analysed the evolving portrayals and representations of *shōjo* since the end of the Tokugawa period, highlighting some of the most common and popular illustrative and artistic tropes and conventions when depicting women/girls. The emerging arguments are that, irrespective of time or aesthetic style, women have been idealised; and, despite the restrictions and

oppressions women face due to their gender, they have influenced the direction and evolution of artistic practices in ways previously not explored in visual analytical detail. From being the subject, to the subject and consumer, to subject, consumer and creator, women have been represented in a variety of ways in Japanese graphic arts. Similarities can be seen between *ukiyo-e* and the beginnings of *shōjo* illustration in the form of *jojō-ga* aesthetics which continued a passive reading of the subjects, but now with added emphasis on the woman consumer to want to idolise the day-dreaming *shōjo* depicted, and to encourage them to strive to attain such a representation of femininity for themselves.

As the Tokugawa period gave way to the Meiji era, and Western ideas began to be implemented in Japanese society, the ideal of a sexualised beautiful woman in art shifted to an emphasis on innocence and purity. This innocence and purity would impact on the way in which women and girls were depicted in illustration for the next half a century – where passivity and daydreaming were key features. The daydreaming innocent girl pervaded in Japanese art throughout the 20th and into the 21st century, with *manga* focusing on the emotional, psychological, inner lives of the *shōjo* being the focus. This continues some themes from *ukiyo-e* in that the women, or *shōjo*, were subjects that warranted attention only in terms of emotional or romantic portrayals. However, the major differences that occurred, beyond stylistic changes, were that women, or *shōjo*, were the target audience of these depictions in *manga* and so the sexualisation aspects shifted to one of encouraging innocence. This again later shifted as works began to be created for a wider non-female exclusive audience; but also as these *shōjo* began to mature.

Chapter Five:
"Adult" Themes and Women in Graphic Arts

As the 20th century dawned, new ideas from the west, including sexologist texts, began to infiltrate Japanese political and social life. This led to the adaptation of more rigid gender categories, such as the "category of woman" as Kano stated (2001, p.29) and eventually the "New Woman" (Kano, 2001, pp.125-128). This in turn led to the new ideals of femininity and what it meant to be a woman, as Kano discusses in relation to performance specifically, moving from the performance itself to the body. The 'New Woman' was a product of western ideals that subsequently arrived in Japan through the introduction of feminist ideologies:

> New Women are considered to have challenged the conventional definition of womanhood, "good wife, wise mother". New Women were critical of marriage as an institution and abhorred the idea that they should sacrifice themselves for husband, children, and the husband's parents. The paradox, however, is that the New Woman also *reinforced* the prevailing definition of womanhood as biological essence, rooted in the woman's body. To put it differently, New Woman is a sexual subject.

> (Kano, 2001, p.128)

In many ways this could relate back to the discussions of sex workers and *geisha* during the Tokugawa period, as in essence they rejected the "Three Obediences" with their work (see p.38), but again this is a paradox as many entered the profession to save the family. This meant the women adhered to the filial piety that was part of the doctrine. However, as with the 'New Woman's' rejection, the sexualisation of women was prevalent in these representations. In the case of the 'New Woman', as Kano emphasises, it was through their own rejections that sexualisation became part of the discussion, because the focus came to be on the body. However, this chapter discusses the 'active' as opposed to 'passive' representations of the female body as sexual subject, with both 'positive' and 'negative' connotations.

Earlier chapters[191] have focused on elements of female representation that represent women in a passive light, as not engaging with the viewer, or even with others in the scene with them, depending on the era and specifics being communicated. However, as *manga* became a key realm of artistic expression, the ways in which people were portrayed shifted. As the previous chapter discussed, innocence became a key element in *shōjo* categorisation. This could be read as a direct conflict with the ideologies of the 'New Woman' that Kano (2001) describes, and, therefore, that part of the 'New Woman' movement was a rejection of innocence as a requirement for their gender performance and representation. As the century progressed, and social and political factors continued to impact upon women, their representations in graphic arts continued to develop from daydreaming passive portrayals, to cute idealised visions. However, as the young girls to whom these representations were targeted matured, they began to engage with new visual narratives Jones, 2002; Shamoon, 2004).

Ladies' Comics'

Much like the emergence of the 'pure and innocent' *shōjo* needing illustrations to reflect their existence, so too did the now adult women that had grown up with *manga*; therefore, new ideals that reflected the late 20th century woman began to emerge: "Readers and manga creators both wanted content that matched their new, adult concerns: marriage, family, and sex." (Jones, 2005, p.98). This led to the appearance of a new 'genre' of *manga* in the 1980s called *Redizu komikkusu* or *Redi Komi* meaning Ladies' Comics', which Shamoon refers to as an "explicit sub-genre

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[191] See Chapter Four in relation to *ukiyo-e* specifically.

of shōjo manga." (Shamoon, 2004, p.82). This is an interesting and important

concept to communicate when discussing Ladies' Comics as the, often, explicit

nature can lead to assumptions that it is a "female-orientated subgenre of porn for

men." (Shamoon, 2004, p.82). The female-orientated in this respect is that the lead

characters of the stories are women, with the story following their lives and sexual

exploits, 'wants', desires and fantasies, many of which involve subjugation – hence

the assumption that it is aimed at men. The assumption also stems from how some

illustrations can be perceived:

> The drawings in ladies' comics give one the impression that they must be
> created by, and for, men, based on their depiction of female characters that
> appears to differ little, on the surface, from male orientated pornography such
> as Japanese *ero-manga* or even some images in *Penthouse* or *Hustler*.

> (Jones, 2005, p.98)

However, the aesthetics of Ladies' Comics show a clear influence and continuation

of *shōjo manga* conventions, which, "makes ladies' comics aesthetically pleasing

and easily available to women" (Shamoon, 2004 p.82). The continuation of

recognisable artistic conventions ensures that Ladies' Comics enables the readers to

connect with new maturing storylines. These can reflect new ideas and desires that

shōjo manga do not explore: "While shōjo manga may hint at sexual activity, ladies'

comics, like other hard-core comics and films, purport to reveal that action in every

detail." (Shamoon, 2004, p.87). Of course, due to the nature of the subject matter in

Ladies' Comics, the illustrations are more explicit, and as such utilise new

conventions in order to remain on the correct side of censorship laws. However, as

Shamoon discusses, these laws became increasing lax throughout the 1990s and thus

these conventions began to shift, so that now smaller or different shaped 'blocks'

were placed over genitalia to the point that: "they now emphasize rather than conceal

the anatomy, and pubic hair, which was once forbidden, now sprouts lushly" (2004, p.87).

Some illustrations also utilise 'transparency' as a way of allowing, "penises, fingers, and sex toys [to] become visible even inside the body." (Shamoon, 2004, p.88). Therefore, despite the censorship regulations, there are still innovative ways that artists find to circumvent these restrictions in order to communicate the fantasies of the readers. In some ways the graphics found in Ladies' Comics, whilst evolving from the conventions of *shōjo manga,* also have links to *shunga* in their explicit nature. This transparency technique has some interesting potential links with some *shunga* known as 'pop-up' prints (Screech, 2009, loc.376) which would appear to be like any other print; however, a section would lift up to reveal the truth of the matter beneath, such as a sexual liaison. However, *manga* are not able to have this interactive element in their works and so different techniques in the page layout are used to indicate that this is happening. In the example Shamoon uses, the main image on the page is of a woman in a sexual position, in this case not implicit or particularly vague, but still adhering to censorship. Above the main image is a highlighted section that utilises the transparency technique to show what is happening inside the body and making the sexual element of the actions more explicit (Shamoon, 2004, p.88). In the case of the *shunga* 'pop-ups', on the other hand, the initial image is not explicit or sexual, thus adding to the excitement of revealing the hidden image. Ladies' Comics and *shunga* also depict sex in a variety of implicit and explicit detail, but Ladies' Comics can be more 'realistic', graphic and extreme in the portrayal of sex compared to *shunga* due to the continuous narrative nature of *manga*.

The target audiences for these works also influence the way they are created; *shunga* was consumed by men and women alike with no specifically gendered target audience, whereas Ladies' Comics are primarily aimed at women meaning the depictions focus on 'what women want'. Much like *shōjo manga,* Ladies' Comics are largely created by and for women (Jones, 2005, p.97). However, Shamoon does state that this can be misleading as: "although most of the writers are women, and the comics are marketed specifically to women, ladies' comics do not present a vision of a sexually free, feminist utopia, nor are they radically subversive." (2004, pp.79-80). Which implies that to be truly for women pornographic works should be subversive. This has led to Ladies' Comics being heavily criticised or even ignored by critics completely as they are considered, "too lowbrow or trashy", whilst those that do engage with the topic "…tend to search out and condemn all aspects of them that are not pro-feminist." (Shamoon, 2004, p.79). In this authors opinion, this is a continuation of *shōjo manga* perceptions, as in the early developmental years of *shōjo manga* they too were criticised for their content in terms of both the narratives and visuals. However, the representations within Ladies Comics' are actually multifaceted: "Ladies' comics do, however, represent real (or at least realistic) women actively pursuing their own pleasure, taking the initiative in sexual experimentation and otherwise negotiating heterosexual relationships in a world of gender inequalities." (2004, pp.79-80). Due to the misunderstandings of Ladies' Comics as a form of graphic arts pornography for men, Shamoon emphasises that a full understanding of Ladies' Comics and the culture in which they are situated is needed.

For instance, not all Ladies' Comics are explicit, which creates links to *shōjo manga*, whereas the use of '*josei manga,*' for mature *manga* aimed at women would and does include non-sexually explicit as well as sexually explicit *manga,* meaning that all forms of mature 'female targeted' works have a basis in *shōjo manga* conventions. However, due to the reputation of the explicit form of Ladies' Comics, Jones stated that despite the large publications and sales of Ladies' Comics they have "never had a woman admit to me that she reads ladies' comics." (Jones, 2005, p.102). This is potentially because of the frequent subjugation of women within these illustrations:

> Far from publishing stories that express women's independence and autonomy, Sakamoto argues that ladies' comics contain stories in which responsibility for sexuality still rests solely with the man, and she is critical of conservative "Cinderella" stories in which the heroine is saved by a "prince" who marries her in the end. Sakamoto thus faults ladies' comics authors and the women who purchase them for not taking their own sexual desire into their own hands.
>
> (Jones, 2005, p.105)

However, Jones asserts that, "…although a ladies' comic story may show a male taking the initiative in sexual acts (as Sakamoto claims) or images of passive women, the *act* of consuming these images itself is by no means passive." (2005, p.106). Similarly, passive and active in theatre terminology has two modes:

> One is the linguistic mode in which the speaker/sender of the message is active and the listener/receiver of the message is passive; the other is the voyeuristic mode, according to which the viewer/receiver of the message is active and the viewed/sender of the message is passive.
>
> (Kano, 2001, p.227)

Again, this connects to art historical theories and discourse surrounding the gaze as outlined by Berger (1972) where the viewer becomes active in the consumption of the work, subjecting the 'subject' to a passive role. Although Jones was specifically discussing sexually explicit imagery, these arguments of passivity of women in arts

are also extremely relevant to all discussions of female representation throughout this thesis. The evolution and progression of female representation, as outlined in this thesis so far, demonstrates that despite advances in women's rights, passivity remains a key feature of these depictions and artistic practices, regardless of the artist's intent. Here the reception theory as discussed in Chapter Two (p.72) is vital, as the illustrators of Ladies' Comics intend the images to show sexually and actively engaged women positively,[192] but the critical audience perceive these illustrations as perpetuating passivity, and by extension, submissiveness as negative. This critical stance therefore, does not take into account sexual desires around submissiveness, which then implies non-normative desires as negative, thereby perpetuating the very ideology that these critics of Ladies' Comics are campaigning against.

Other arguments relating to this, and explored in Part Three, include the creation of works that had a focus on beautiful boys with homoerotic elements, as a way of expressing sexuality that remained distant from realities. These *manga* became an outlet in order to express sexuality and gender, as it did not relate to women or girls specifically being involved in the sexual activities, and therefore, having to acknowledge the realities of sex, i.e. pregnancy (Hori, 2012, p.92). However, where Ladies' Comics are concerned, the sexuality expressed has been negatively received by scholars and critics due to the 'passive' nature of the women and the inclusion of extreme fantasies frequently involving subjection of women. This advancement of female sexual representation is interesting as it still places negative connotations on

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[192] Positively in this sense meaning in the expressions of sexuality and desires, as opposed to positive representation.

representing women involved in or enjoying sex in ways that are not considered 'normal' or non-passive.

So far, discussions of female representation in Japanese arts has focused on passivity, but there are examples of 'active' female illustrative representation through the visual narratives of *manga*. Some of these examples are discussed in Part Two due to the use of cross-dressing and gender performance as a means of expression. However, there are examples and areas where women are represented within graphic arts with no emphasis on innocence or purity, nor with the sustained use of cross-gender performance. One such example that is now examined is not classed as *shōjo* or *josei manga*, despite the lead character being a woman; it is in fact an example of a *seinen manga*.

Femme Fatale? 'Active' Versus 'Passive' Portrayals

As debated throughout this thesis, ideas of 'active' and 'passive' permeate the visual and graphic arts realms from the point of view of the 'gaze', through to the actual depiction of the subjects. Thus far, the 'active' representations within more mature visuals have been explored from the perspective of the female readers engaging in the visuals of a passive, or subjugated, woman; although as argued, because some of the women in the stories were 'actively' enjoying the acts, this again changes the dynamic of passive and active representations. However, these works were created as a means of appealing to women with these desires and fantasies specifically; but one element of female representation not yet discussed is that of a *femme fatale*.

Simultaneously with the developments of *shōjo manga* in the 1970s, other forms of *manga* continued to be created and consumed that adhered to pre-determined rules and conventions that were harder to experiment with or break away from, such as *shōnen*. However, at the same time *manga* that were primarily targeted at an adult audience started to be created known as *gekiga*, meaning 'dramatic pictures', due to the more cinematic and graphic nature of the illustrations and themes in comparison to the more expected *manga* styles of *shōnen* and *shōjo*. Contemporarily these types of *manga* can be labelled as *seinen*, due to the male adult target audience, and one example of this is *Lady Snowblood*[193] (1972-3) by Kazuo Koike and Kazuo Kamimura. This series is explicit in its illustrations and theme, and reflects some of the discussions around the conflicts of modernisation and tradition in Japanese culture due to the Meiji Period setting. The illustrations are dynamic, they reflect the speed of the action, as *shōnen* do, but also have many panels that feel as though they are moving like a film – hence the links with *gekiga*. The opening pages of Episode One (Fig.22) reflects this through the use of wide shots to close ups to show the movement of the character through the street. In Episode Two (2005, Vol.1 pp.47-50), similarly, the cinematic effect is achieved by the focusing of the telescope on the destination, with the revelation of our lead character behind the scope once the target is found. The movement that these illustrations create feels different from *shōnen*; there is already an inherently adult feel to the drawings with the emphasis on darkness. Despite *manga* predominantly being created in monochrome, with only occasional instances of colour, *Lady Snowblood* utilises this in order to reflect the themes of revenge and violence symbolically, as well as graphically, throughout.

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[193] 修羅雪姫 *Shurayuki-hime* – Originally published across 1972-1973. An English translation was released in 2005/6. *Lady Snowblood* was also released as a live action film in 1973, and widely credited as inspiration for Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill* films.

Symbolism, as discussed throughout this thesis, is crucial in visual communication and this is utilised in a variety of ways in all *manga* from the lines that indicate speed, to flowers that represent inner emotions and the personality of a character. Violence, death, nudity and sex are frequent themes in *gekiga* and *seinen* and the illustration in *Lady Snowblood* communicates these themes with an elegance that is potentially unexpected of such extreme and explicit content. This elegance, perhaps, comes from the illustration of the lead character Oyuki, A.K.A Lady Snowblood, who maintains unrealistic levels of beauty in any situation in which she features.[194]

Her beauty is also an important driving force in the *manga*; other characters comment on her beauty and body frequently and Oyuki herself uses it in order to enter the places in which she needs to carry out her plots (2005, Vol.1 pp.61-65). Oyuki knows that her femininity is key and therefore, the illustrations emphasise this knowledge and manipulation in the way she is drawn. Because of this, Oyuki as Lady Snowblood is portrayed as a *femme fatale* kind of character, and thus becomes a different stereotypical representation of femininity and gender than that of the previous and often prevailing 'passive' woman. Ima-Izumi Yoko, in an examination of *femme fatale* in Japanese cinema, describes the characterisation of a *femme fatale* as using "her potent sexuality and destructive power, with which she triumphs over her male prey and works his doom." (1998, p.123). Ima-Izumi outlines the rise of the *femme fatale* in American film noir as being a reaction to the threat of power that women suddenly wielded in society following the Second World War (1998, p.124), but with the focus on eroticism and sexualisation as the means, as opposed to

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[194] This includes scenes where she is disguised as traditionally 'non-beautiful' characters, creating an emphasis on beauty over being hidden.

economic, as was the reality. Within Japanese culture of the time, Ima-Izumi continues, it was the *moga* that began to epitomise the eroticism and seductive nature of a *femme fatale*-like character: "modern girls were expected to be seductive and harmful to men." (Ima-Izumi, 1998, p.129). This relates back to the discussions of criticism in the face of feminist ideas and westernisation in the face of the 'New Woman,' and then *moga*, throughout the Meiji, Taishō and then Shōwa periods, and the 'fear' around sexual liberation and power. However, within Japanese cinema the role of *femme fatale* remained muted and conveyed by 'ghosts' due to a "deeply rooted fear… of intense eroticism sparked by women." (Ima-Izumi, 1998, p.134). Therefore, ghosts took the place of *femme fatale* in film so that the erotic connotations could be extended. There is a precedent within Japanese literature and performing arts of the vengeful female ghost, which then allowed these types of portrayals within cinema to become the vessel through which *femme fatale*-type characterisations could take place, because, "she would appear in front of her lover and snatch him away to the other world. But on the screen she never fully enjoys the role of a femme fatale. She is eliminated before she exerts any fatal influence upon her lover." (Ima-Izumi, 1998, p.134). That being said, the ideas that Ima-Izumi communicates about the femme fatale being erased, or converted into a benevolent protector (1998, p.136 & p.147) in film, does not equate with the literary origins of a *femme fatale*-type character in Japan, as Ima Izumi states (1998, p.136). It is the visual communication of a "real" woman holding erotic power that is erased in these circumstances; however, within *manga*, these two opposing principles come together to create a complex reading of gender and sexuality.

For example, *Lady Snowblood* depicts Oyuki as quintessentially sexual throughout, bringing about the demise of her victims, yet there are moments within the story and illustration where this façade of power and control is dropped to reveal a more emotional and perhaps expected behaviour of a woman (2005, Vol.2, p.122). The 'fear' of westernisation and the 'New Woman' is alluded to throughout the *manga* series, but this again emphasises the *femme fatale*-esque elements of the story by situating the story in this time of feminine changes; although earlier than in reality regarding the 'New Woman' and *moga*. This mirrors the later western fears of female empowerment that created the *femme fatale* more clearly in cinema. The addition of the motivation for the assassinations, also plays into this benevolent protector idea, though from a filial piety morality perspective more precisely. In other words, Oyuki is both the *femme fatale* and the doting daughter, using her body and sexuality as a means to an end to avenge the deaths of her family, before ultimately disappearing once her goal was achieved, with the final image being her iconic parasol left to float over the sea (Vol 4, p.292).

As explored, sex and female sexuality have not been treated particularly favourably in *manga,* especially in regard to 'female' created and targeted *manga* such as Ladies' Comics. However, this does not mean that sex and female sexuality was not explored earlier in works created for adults that were not necessarily aimed at a female readership. *Lady Snowblood* consistently depicts sex and sexuality, including extremes such as rape – albeit not from a point of view that is specifically for female pleasure or fantasies – that later Ladies' Comics would also depict. However, the main difference between these depictions is in censorship and focus. *Lady Snowblood* depicted sex as a means to drive the story forward, and as a comment on

the historical and cultural settings of the story during the Meiji Period. For instance, the opening scene is actually set in the Yoshiwara and comments on the decline of patrons due to new sexual entertainments elsewhere in the city. The story is much more critical and deals with the realities of sex work in a way that *ukiyo-e* did not, as it shows abduction, (Vol.1, pp.149 -150) and the manipulations of the men in charge of the brothels. Whereas *ukiyo-e* idealised and glamorised the Yoshiwara, *Lady Snowblood* cuts to the realities of sex work during this period. As Shamoon discussed, censorship of the illustrations in *manga* became more lax during the 1990s; this meant that Ladies' Comics were able to adapt some of the conventions of illustration in their works and show more of the bodies and 'action'.

In the 1970s however, there were still strict rules and regulations about what could be shown, and as such *Lady Snowblood* adopted illustrative conventions that became the norm in later Ladies' Comics but that had also been the convention in *shōjo manga* depicting *bishōnen*. The illustrations involving sex in *Lady Snowblood* ensure that genitals are not graphically shown, by utilising backgrounds or objects in the scenery to conceal but still imply what is happening. For instance, this bird's eye-view style illustration (2005, Vol.1 p.79, Fig.23) where the rafters of the building hides all but the women's faces, and these panels (2005, Vol.3 p.20; Fig.24) utilise the foreground which also creates a sense of depth in the illustration, again situating this style of *manga* in *gekiga* and cinematic visuals. The way in which the scenery has been used in these instances ensures that they are adhering to the strict rules and censorship. This shows the talent and creativeness of *mangaka*, in that the illustration and story are not compromised, but are in fact enhanced. There are also more symbolic and metaphorical illustrations to create the same level of censorship

but with a different atmosphere. For instance, this scene in Volume 2 (pp.58-59; Fig.25), uses flowers, specifically a lotus, to imply what is happening more metaphorically. In this instance, the lotus is used as Oyuki is impersonating a nun and in the scenes before has used sand drawing to show religious imagery to which the lotus is symbolically linked. The sex scenes here are actually between two women, and due to the Buddhist connections being displayed, the image also links to discussions of same-sex relations within Buddhism that Faure examines (1998), although as he states, there are few extant sources relating to female same-sex relations, as is explored below. The continuation of symbolic themes in this scene also creates links to the divine, a clever play on words and meaning in which Japanese artistic culture has always been expert. The use of flowers is also a convention of Ladies' Comics, *shonen'ai* and now Boys Love: "…the actual area of the vagina and genitals (even on men) is obscured, usually by a blurring or "white-out", or, on occasion, by flowers, a swirling pattern, or other object." (Jones, 2005, p.98-99). There is also a scene in Volume Two (pp.125-127) that combines these illustrative conventions of censorship with *ukiyo-e* – specifically *shunga*.

As *Lady Snowblood* (Vol 2, pp.125-127) depicts, *shunga,* were used as masturbatory aids for men and women alike (Screech, 2009) as part of what Bartal called the "nascent consumer society" meaning that, "*shunga* images can therefore be understood as commercial erotic images" (2009, p.89). Despite this *shunga* were frequently censored and banned throughout the era, with many prints being sold as innocuous bound copies to circumvent these restrictions. As the Tokugawa period ended, and the social and political climate changed in Japan, the way erotic imagery was treated also changed to adhere to these new ideologies, such as Pflugfelder

(1999) and Frühstück (2003) discuss relating to sexology texts. For instance, the eminent Japanese artist of western-style painting, Kuroda Seiki, was criticised in the 1890s for his works depicting female nudes, with many stating that it went against moral codes (Tseng, 2008, p.431) despite the works not depicting anything related to sex. A potential reason for this, based upon the observations and interpretations already discussed, could be that nudes, whilst not holding a place within the erotic canon of *shunga*, evoked elements of this genre such as a woman at her toilette (*Morning Toilette,* Seiki, 1895), which did hold erotic connotations, thereby invoking the issue of moral codes. There is also the fact that nudes had not been a typical convention in Japanese art history to this point (Ueno, 2015, p.92), and therefore, the reaction to 'something new' was to criticise. Finally, there has been documented discussions that in order to modernise[195] all links to previous erotic or the sex work-related history of Japan was repressed with any imagery depicting something that could be seen as erotic; even a nude with no links to sex, as Seiki was creating, were suppressed. As such, until very recently, works displaying genitalia were covered, or not displayed in public Japanese exhibitions.[196]

However, despite the public display censorships, *shunga* remained a part of Japanese art historical canon and has, therefore, been invoked and referenced in contemporary graphic arts. As *Lady Snowblood* is set during the Meiji Period, where a blending of traditions and modernisation was taking place, the illustrations throughout the *manga* reflect this with the inclusion of traditional Japanese culture. This is seen with

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[195] Or westernise in order to avoid colonisation.
[196] Mostow discusses this in the *Introduction to Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field* (2003, pp.5-7) in relation to the censorship in publications. He also discusses that publishers would push the boundaries until the law would eventually bring a halt to the works, thereby creating a pause before the process of boundary pushing would begin again.

images that hint at *ukiyo-e* style prints, combined with Western influences such as architecture and dress. The sexual scenes in *Lady Snowblood* often focus on women, as opposed to men, even when the scene or illustration is depicting heterosexual relations. The emphasis on the women is interesting, again where the target audience is assumed to be male, however, as there are more scenes of 'lesbian'[197] sexual affairs than heterosexual affairs, this could also be a comment on the desires of men. The female same-sex relations are more graphic and emphasised compared to the heterosexual scenes in some respects, perhaps because most of the scenes involving Oyuki as the lead character are homosexual and the heterosexual sex scenes mainly involve others as a background narrative to 'set the scene' of the story. Although Oyuki does have relations with men, and manipulates men through the use of her body, the graphic scenes remain largely with other women.

Female Same-Sex Themes

Male same-sex themes in Japanese arts and literature have a long-standing tradition, whereas female same-sex representation appear to have less historic examples:

> Female homosexuality, unfortunately, was never the object of a similar "way" [*shudō*] and is therefore much more difficut [sic] to assess. Although a number of Vinaya rules point to its widespread existence among nuns, there was no single rubric or convenient terminology to locate it, make it thinkable, and discuss it.
>
> (Faure, 1998, p.216)

This insinuates that there was a precedent within history for female same-sex[198] relations, but the historic and visual representation of this was not explored.

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[197] The use of inverted commas here is due to the nature of the relationships being sexual activity between women but not necessarily identifying as lesbian, firstly due to the era that the *manga* is set in, and secondly because these stories are not about reality of sexuality but sex as a means of distraction or furthering the assassination/revenge story.
[198] As Friedman notes, same-sex as a means of discussing these relations can be problematic, however at this time communicates the readings of the imagery in this thesis more accurately (2022, p.9).

However, one print by Chōkyōsai Eiri in a series depicting various erotic situations shows two women together, one wearing and preparing to penetrate the other with a dildo (Fig.26). The interpretation of this print (British Museum, n.d, A) indicates this is not a representation of a lesbian relationship, but a means of release for ladies-in-waiting as men were forbidden in these houses. The interpreter continues by saying: "But were dildos really in widespread use among ladies-in-waiting in the Edo period? Surely this is, rather, 'the world of the lady-in-waiting as imagined by common townspeople'" (British Museum, n.d, A).[199] Again, as this is part of a collection of erotic prints, the main purpose of them was to create fantasies and to potentially reflect desires. The comment about ladies-in-waiting, however, is interesting and important in terms of the impact that female homosocial spaces have had on the development of *shōjo manga*.

The emergence of same-sex schooling in Japan during the Meiji and Taishō periods led to the creation of government-sanctioned homosocial spaces for adolescents to develop social skills; one effect of this in girls' schools was what became known as the 'S' Relationship[200] (Shamoon, 2012). 'S relationships' reflected the accepted female relationships of the all-girls' schools of pre-war Japan. Much like certain residences of the Emperor, *shōgun* and *daimyō* of the pre-modern eras, these schools were women (or girl)–only zones, and as such, very specific relationships developed that were reflected in pre-war stories, magazines and illustrations. This was, according to Shamoon, accepted providing these relationships "did not go too far

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[199] This is essentially a Tokugawa period fantasy, of the 'real' *Ōoku.*
[200] With one meaning being the S taken from sister in English (Shamoon, 2012, loc.773).

(meaning sexual intimacy or refusal to give up the relationship after graduation.)"
(Shamoon, 2012, loc.788); that they only occurred in homosocial spaces (i.e. all
girls' schools); and that "both girls maintained feminine characteristics." (Shamoon,
2012, loc.816). These relationships were considered a safe and innocent way to
express desires, as they did not involve the realities of a heterosexual romance,
which were condemned for the *shōjo,* as it would cause a loss of innocence and
purity. Therefore, these relationships would maintain the sexual inexperience
expected of *shōjo* as these relationships would not veer into the realm of sexuality, or
that is, they were not supposed to. This is important since, in the eyes of society,
shōjo had to maintain this ideal to, in essence, exist; it was their (hetero-)sexual
inexperience that made *shōjo* a separate gender category to that of (adult) female or
male, especially during the Meiji and Taishō periods that Shamoon discusses. Anan
also stated, that at a time when sexology discourses were developing in Japan as a,
"pursuit of the "scientific" understanding of sexuality" (2016, p.67), the 'S'
relationship was "taken to be normal because they were understood to be a mere
copy of heterosexual relationships for those who had no contact with men and hence
were at a preparatory stage for adulthood-cum-heterosexuality/motherhood" (Anan,
2016, p.67). This was despite homosexuality being seen as "abnormal", as
Pflugfelder and Frühstück discussed (1999; 2003 & 2022).

However, Anan (2016) states that Shamoon's discussions of the 'S' relationship are
situated within the spiritual, and therefore, negates any queer or non-heteronormative
identities. This is despite wider discourse now taking into account the "desires" of
"girls" themselves, so that the romantic love versus platonic relationships need to be
examined more closely (2016, pp.86-88). Part of this could stem from terminology

that Anan discusses as being linked with the 'S' relationship, due to the assumptions of "affection rather than carnal desire" (2016, pp.8-9). The term in question is *dōsei-ai* – "same-sex love" – as Anan translates (2016, p.8) which had been used to communicate both male and female same-sex love, but due to an ""accident" in translation" came to be connected with women more broadly due to the affection connotation of *ai* (2016, p.8). Regardless, female same-sex relationships did exist beyond this culture of 'S', as highlighted by a "double-love-suicide" taking place in 1909 due to the fear of the two young women's parents censuring their relationship (Furukawa, 1994, pp.114-115; Anan, 2016, p.23). This then caused newspaper articles discussing the "fashion" for "same-sex love in school dormitories" (Furukawa, 1994, pp.114-115), bringing the female homosocial spaces to the fore and questioning where the line between friendship and homosexuality could be drawn in relation to women (Furukawa, 1994, pp.115-116).[201] This was because compassion, kindness and affection were attributes that were often ascribed to women, and therefore, "affection between female friends was deemed only natural," but it made distinguishing between the expected friendship level and that of the extreme or "abnormal friendship," i.e. female homosexuality, difficult (Furukawa, 1994, p.116). This again highlights a paradox: acceptance of 'S' relationships, i.e. female same-sex attachments, whilst denying the acceptance of female homosexuality.

This was also expressed through the all-female theatrical troupe, Takarazuka Revue, which is examined in Chapter Seven; however, the links with 'homosexual' or same-

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[201] This is very different from the discussions surrounding male homosexuality of the time, and of the male-male relations of the Edo period, as discussed in Part Three.

sex love elements is prominent in the scholarship of the Revue as Robertson (1998) explores. On the other hand, Strickland states that:

> … it is clear from the efforts of the publicity machine that surrounds and sustains Takarazuka, that girls and women are given both implicit permission and active encouragement to love other women – specifically, the male-role players – under the pretext that this affection is not (homo-)sexual in nature, because the object of the love is 'male', and therefore does not compromise the subjects 'normal' sexuality.
>
> (Strickland, 2008, p.7)

Again, this emphasises the 'acceptance' of female same-sex love, provided it is situated within strict boundaries that do not negate a heteronormative social reality. Strickland further emphasises this by stating that "overt same-sex relationships have long been the target of disapproval by both the Takarazuka Administration and modern Japanese society in general, and homophobia seems rife among fans, at least at the level of lip-service." (2008, p.159).

Regardless, these relationships, whilst potentially innocent of any sexual element, did emphasise the *shōjo*'s need for an outlet to experience love, sex and non-familial relationships in some form. Therefore, as explored in relation to *bishōnen* in Part Three, arts and illustration was the ideal means to explore these feelings in a way that would remove any and all physical elements that could impact on the *shōjo*'s social standing. The ideas of safety in expression through visual arts are pivotal to many *manga* representations of gender and sexuality as is explored throughout this thesis. The 'S' relationship, and as such relations between women in these early pre-war illustrations, emphasises sameness, (Shamoon, 2012) as a way of expressing these relationships so that sexualised or explicitly romantic storylines were not common. In post-war *manga*, as experimentations with graphic arts and storylines in *shōjo manga* were possible and the homosocial spaces of all girls' schools became

less common, surely this would widen the possibilities for illustrative expressions of female-only relationships; however this was not the case: "… a large shift took place in girls' aesthetics; same-sex "intimacy" is not expressed through girls' *S* relationships anymore. It is expressed through androgynous-looking boys' or gay adult males' romantic relationships." (Anan, 2016, p.78).

At the *What is Manga?* Symposium (British Library, 2019), Takemiya, when discussing *shōjo* and her works, mentioned that to draw two girls or women together in a romantic embrace or kissing was not something she felt able or comfortable to do. Instead, she chose to use *bishōnen* to express romance and sexual desires in her *manga,* as did many other female *mangaka* of the 1960s and 1970s, thereby creating a new genre or theme for *manga* that set the precedent for some of the most popular *shōjo manga* in the 21st century: Boys' Love. Fujimoto states that Hagio Moto had a similar experience: "she tried writing both a female and a male version, and she gave up the female version because it was too raw and fleshy" (Fujimoto, 2014, p.25). Contemporarily, the inclusion of overtly lesbian themes (not necessarily sexual or graphic) in *manga* means that that *manga* falls into the category of *yuri*[202] and have become more common in terms of the main storyline like Boys' Love *manga*. This is a currently expanding field of research as relations between girls or women in *manga* would often fall into the 'S relationship' in terms of interpretation, due to the traditions of culturally accepted and 'understood' female relations, meaning that deeper connections or implications of female-same sex love and desire were ignored.

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[202] 百合 *yuri* meaning lily has been adapted through *dōjinshi* circles to mean female homoeroticism/homosexuality within *manga*, and wider Japanese popular culture, but unlike Boys' Love, as explored in Chapter Three, does also incorporate accurate homosexual storylines including intimate and emotional narratives, not just erotica.

There are exceptions, as discussed by Fujimoto (2014), prior to these more recent

manga; however, these examples tend to end in tragedy and include rejection of

lesbian relationships from other characters, meaning that despite the, at times,

extravagant storylines, these *manga* are still firmly embedded in 'realities' of lesbian

identities and hardships. However, Mizoguchi states regarding 'lesbian' as a term:

> … there are many women today who are sexually involved with other women but identity themselves as straight, while among lesbian-identified women, there are asexual women and male-to-female transsexual women. Therefore, contrary to the popular understandings of lesbianism, "lesbian" is a socially constructed identity some people come to assume, rather than simply an anatomically woman-born-woman who has sex with another woman. In other words, a lesbian subject is born in the discursive battlefield where the constant negotiation of knowledge, power, practice, fantasy, and desire take place.
>
> (Mizoguchi, 2008, p.9)

This discourse battlefield potentially highlights why discussions of 'lesbian'

relationships within *manga* and other visual imagery can be downplayed as a form of

affection between friends as opposed to important sexuality representations. The

interpretation of the work remains in the realms discussed earlier by Shamoon, and

highlighted by Furukawa, as trying to keep these relations within accepted and

sanctioned boundaries.

The use of actively sexual 'lesbian' illustrations in *Lady Snowblood*, on the other

hand, also potentially perpetuates stereotypes around lesbian depictions as being a

way of titillating a largely male audience. This then removes important discourse

surrounding sexuality and also the agency of those within the LGBTQIA+

communities. However, the category of *yuri* has recently been gaining attention in

English language texts with the first comprehensive 'history' of *yuri* being published

by Erica Friedman in 2022. Through over twenty years of her own articles and blogs

dedicated to *yuri*, Friedman examines the evolution of female-same sex themes in

manga and *anime* from the 'S' relationship through to the likes of *Sailor Moon!*.[203]

These depictions and discussions emphasise the elements of agency that have been

removed by some *manga*, as discussed, but also the *manga* that have expressed

female same-sex relations in positive lights.

Nevertheless, *Lady Snowblood*'s depictions also sets *manga* as a medium for all ages

and interests, not just children. It shows that complex and serious adult topics could

be illustrated in serious artistic ways that could reflect cinematic arts as well as

illustrative traditions of Japan. Of course, *Lady Snowblood* was a collaborative

manga created by male artists, and despite the inclusion of sex quite consistently

throughout the series, it does paint women in an interesting and active light that

previously may not have been commonly portrayed in *manga*.[204] Scrutiny of these

illustrative representations show that she is not a passive woman, but is still often

presented as a subject to be looked at due to the frequent nudity. The use of

manipulation through sex is a very *femme fatale* reading of the character and gender

stereotypes that can be associated with women, whilst the turning of this onto other

women extends these representations into the areas of 'fear' that arose from the

homosocial spaces discussed by Anan (2016) Shamoon (2021) and Furukawa

(1994). The gendered representations throughout *Lady Snowblood* reflect the

conflicted attitudes of the Meiji Period in a metaphorical symbolism that shows how

advanced and important illustration, and *manga* more generally, can be in

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[203] Which features 'lesbian' relationships in the original Japanese materials but according to Fujimoto (2015 b) had been altered in a version translated for North America.
[204] Positive in the sense that she is not adhering to stereotypical heteropatriarchal expectations of women at the time, but 'positive' in the fact that her character is an assassin with dubious morals. However, the revenge plot also adds to 'positivity' as she is doing this in the name of her family which is a popular trope in theatre and popular culture making her in some ways a hero.

communicating ideologies. The following case study continues these complex relations and representations of women in *manga*, when a sudden a reversal of power dynamics is depicted in a 21ˢᵗ century *manga*.

Case Study: *Ōoku*

There is a melancholy feel emanating from this image (Fig.27; Vol 3. p.220), from the depth of black to the taut yet downcast look on the figure's face. The image as a whole does give the impression of an historical or formal setting and situation. The background is limited, but what is viewable appears to be traditional wooden panelling with a simplified design to draw attention to the lone figure at the centre.

The figure appears to be a woman, with long hair intricately styled upon her head and flowing down her back. The comb in her hair has a delicate design of vines and flowers winding around the body and edges. The clothing continues the grand tone of the setting, with detailed embroidery on the black overcoat depicting a dragon and clouds. The clothing beneath is plain in comparison, with no indication of colours or designs beyond some shading and dotting on the *obi*. Her face is angular and set in a determined yet sad expression. The lips are full and painted in a deep colour, perhaps to imitate the cloak; her eyes are part closed and staring ahead with long eyelashes evident to enhance the femininity. Her hands, just visible beneath the sleeves, seem to be reflecting a nervous energy with slightly curved fingers just grasping the tips of the left hand. This appears at odds with the expression that seems to hold a steady if sad gaze, perhaps she is walking towards a moment that she is dreading but cannot let her true feelings show openly.

Based upon the previous discussions (Chapter Three) we can begin to determine the identity of the figure. The clothing is traditional in terms of a cultural 'costume'; the *obi* is not tied at the front, so we know this is not a 'beautiful woman' as sex worker, and therefore the nervous and resolute atmosphere is not tied to a client or patron. The details in the embroidery include a dragon and clouds, which are a common companion in Japanese symbolism: the dragon is linked to water and the clouds bring rain. Dragons, along with the phoenix, can also be linked to important figures in the hierarchy such as the Emperor, perhaps indicating a position of power in this image. There is no indication of a name, or that the woman is accompanied by anyone, as she is clearly making her way towards something; a meeting, a performance, a ceremony? The use of a limited background is also reminiscent of Utamaro's work to draw attention and focus straight to the figure; perhaps the scene relates to history in this reflection of inspiration. This is a full-page image from a *manga*, and to learn more we must examine the imagery before and after this piece.

Immediately preceding this full-page portrait is a two-panel page devoid of any text (Fig.28; Vol.3 p.219). This hints that an important reveal must be happening that requires a visual presence only. The top panel shows the torso of our figure, as her clothing is the same, but her face is covered by a blind or screen that appears to be being pulled open. The second panel shows another unknown figure; only the face and part of a hat can be seen. The shape of the jaw and eyes indicate a male, whilst the hat also appears to be of a traditional or ceremonial style, asserting that this is a formal situation. However, something has surprised him; perhaps it is the appearance of our female character. The nervous energy feels heightened when we go back to the full portrait image now; she had been hidden behind a screen and revealed to a

shocked 'audience'; but for what purpose? The page after the full portrait is striking again, but this time there is no imagery, only a single white box of text on a deep black background (Vol.3 p.221): "It was the inauguration of the female shogun Iemitsu."

These images are from a *manga* called *Ōoku: The Inner Chambers* or just *Ōoku* in Japanese. It was created by Yoshinaga Fumi and ran from 2004 – 2020 in the bi-monthly magazine *Melody*. The *manga* is actually part of the *josei* categories of *manga* (Horbinski, 2015, p.66) although Hikari Hori continues to refer to it as a *shōjo manga* (Hori, 2015, p.77). Due to the subject matter and the intense discussions of life, death and sex throughout, parental advisory 'explicit content' adorns the front covers of the volumes, at least where the English language versions of the *manga* that have been compiled are concerned. This indicates that this is not a 'typical' *shōjo manga* aimed at young girls looking for romantic or psychologically stimulating works, but as Hori discusses, influences from the *shōjo manga* genre are found throughout the series; however, the more mature narrative and visual representations of the characters indicates that this is not created with young or teenaged girls in mind.

Yoshinaga's story is set in the gender-bent[205] or gender-reversed (Hori, 2012) world where the male population has been eradicated by about 75% due to a disease that only affects men, forcing women to step into previously male exclusive roles. The series retells real examples of Tokugawa history but as an opposite to reality, with

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[205] I use this term along the lines of fan-fiction lines where the characters become male or female versions of previously different gendered characters – i.e. an originally male character is now created as a female character.

women becoming the key governmental and labour workers, and some poetic license is involved where needed. Andrea Horbinski discusses the *manga* as an 'Alternative History' story that is a form of science fiction (Horbinski, 2015, p.63): "Alternate history demonstrates the ways in which nonscholars [sic] understand history and can transform familiar, "standard" narratives of Dead White Males Doing Things into tools of imagination, resistance, and critique" (Horbinski, 2015, p.65). The 'Dead White Males' comment is reminiscent of the feminist art historian discussions that Nochlin and Chino examined in the 1970's and 1990's which is an important connection as Yoshinaga is herself a vocal feminist *mangaka*: "…the artist explicitly proclaims that she is a feminist. It is very rare and unusual for a popular shōjo manga artist, or any popular female artist in Japan, to identify herself with feminism in public" (Hori, 2012, p.79). Therefore, the gender-bent or reversed world of *Ōoku* is a means of examining the past, whilst simultaneously examining gender roles and expectations:

> Yoshinaga brings her longstanding concerns as a feminist and as a female writer of women's manga to bear on what scholars once argued was the period of Japanese history in which women's social position was lowest. Rewriting the official history of the Tokugawa shogunate to feature women in positions of explicit social and political authority changes the meaning of the past in the manga, and has ramifications for the future as well as for the present.

> (Horbinski, 2015, p.65)

It is necessary to include a brief note on what the *Ōoku* was for the purpose of understanding further narrative points. The *Ōoku* was the women's quarter in Edo castle where the *shōgun*'s mother, wife, concubines, maids and servants resided. The women were kept separate from all men, only those physically with the *shōgun* were permitted to enter, and the women were not permitted to leave the 'sanctum' without permission. As such it was a woman's world, which became the source of rumour,

gossip and scandal for the outside world. It has been a popular source of narrative fictions with authors in the 1960s creating works revolving around this woman's world. Hori discusses the influences of these novels and the authors' on Yoshinaga's interpretation (2012) and the depth of historical knowledge that was utilised. However, as this *manga* is an 'alternative history', instead of the *Ōoku* being filled with women it is filled with men. This is because men in this world became 'studs' that were utilised for procreation to maintain the population, and hopefully to provide another male *shōgun.*

Returning to the imagery, we can now begin to unpack the situation a little more. Iemitsu was the third Tokugawa *shōgun*, and from the pages visually analysed so far, we can deduce that the lone female figure is Iemitsu and the shocked male in attendance must not have been aware that the *shōgun* was a woman. Further narrative examinations prove this, as it was during the reign of the 'original' male Iemitsu that the 'red-faced pox' emerged, and began to wipe out huge swathes of the male population, including Iemitsu. In order to preserve order and continue the line of the Tokugawa family, the death of the male Iemitsu was kept hidden, and his daughter[206] was then raised as Iemitsu. This may seem like a cross-dressed or gendered portrayal (as is examined at length in Part Two), however, those within the inner sanctum of the *Ōoku* were aware that their 'lord' was in fact a woman. It was only at this reveal that the course of history became completely altered, as this was the point at which the female Iemitsu no longer hid herself as a woman from the population at large[207] and from this point women began to 'lead' openly. This

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[206] Technically illegitimate through a concubine.
[207] Figuratively speaking, the *shōgun* remained protected and adhered to specific rules.

decision arose from the final sharp decline in the male population, and the need to preserve a sense of control. Therefore, the decision to change the gender dynamics of the country was decided (Vol.3 p.208-221).

Following the reveal of Iemitsu as a woman, the male-dominated world of government began to change to being female-dominated as illustrated in Volume Four (pp.7-13). The imagery is particularly striking, as within the crowd female *daimyō* can already be seen among the males. The decision, as outlined on page 13 of Volume Four, was supposed to be a temporary measure to help the country survive the disease. However, our initial introduction to the story begins during the reign of male *shōgun*, though never introduced, and skips to the sixth and seventh female *shōgun*'s: an elderly Ienobu and a sickly child Ietsugu. As such, the story quickly moves to the establishment of the eighth Tokugawa *shōgun*, Yoshimune; it is through her discoveries of the records and distaste for traditional rules in the *Ōoku* that we discover the alternative history of the Tokugawa period.[208]

The world Yoshinaga creates is interesting because the change in gender does not inherently change the history or society. Yoshinaga does not push an ideal that female leaders would create a better world; in fact the world remains the same (Horbinski, 2015, p.70), with the 'power' of one gender over another still being exerted: "The fictional world of Ooku is a realm contiguous with 'ours' in the sense that both physical and psychological violence are generated from power relations regardless of gender" (Hori, 2012, p.85). Hori continues that the feminism within

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[208] A key point here is that by this point in history there is an assumption that women always ruled, and Horbinski discusses this as a reflection of "historical forgetting" (2015, p.67).

Ōoku and Yoshinaga's work generally "shows intellectual curiosity concerning gendered power relations and sympathetically narrates individuals' experiences based on a keen awareness of gender equality as a societal goal" (Hori, 2012, p.79). As such Yoshinaga's imagery and narrative highlight the gender inequalities both historically and contemporarily by placing the subservient or oppressed role women experience onto men:

> Putting male characters in the dependent and subservient positions so often occupied by women, particularly in historical dramas, highlights the inequality and essentially arbitrary nature of putting anyone in such positions based on constructed categories such as gender.
>
> (Horbinski, 20215, p.68)

This is emphasised continuously and visually within the *manga* through different narrative foci that examine the lives of the men within the *Ōoku*, as well as the *shōgunal* line.

Another interesting gendered element in this *manga* is that, despite the acceptance within the alternative Tokugawa-period Japan of female leadership, the *shōgun* and other eminent women within the governmental structure change their names to masculine monikers[209] upon taking office. This could be a device adopted by Yoshinaga to keep the history intact by using names and people with which the audience will already be familiar. This is visually extended during a scene when Yoshimune has to meet with a foreign dignitary (Vol.1 pp.163-168). The initial image (Fig.29) shows a male figure, as the clothing is the traditional male ceremonial costume, and the facial aesthetics are also masculinised to emphasis a male gendering. However, the following page reveals that this is Yoshimune in

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[209] It is this that affects the "forgetting" of the population that men once held office, as the assumption is that all male names within historical records were actually female leaders (Horbinski, 2015, p.67).

'disguise' as a male version of the *shōgun*, despite remaining behind a screen for the meeting. The gender playing in the *manga* continues with the written report from the foreign ambassador accompanying imagery of him in the inner chamber; this narrative comments on the 'hard working women' of Japan as they are most prominent in the inns, shops and fields, as well as the assumption that the women are kept hidden in separate quarters at the castle, unlike in European courts (Vol.1 p.165). Of course, this has a humorous element for the audience that by now is aware that it is the men that are kept in these quarters, but the juxtaposition of a European expectation alongside these gender questions keeps the story compelling, as it continues to question why there should be such assumptions and expectations according to gender:

> Hellekson argues that alternate histories "make readers rethink their world and how it has become what it is"; sure enough, reading such scenes is extremely disorienting, as the reader's knowledge that historical reality wasn't that way comes forcibly up against the question of why it couldn't have been that way.
>
> (Horbinski, 2015, p.68)

In fact, it is this exchange, and the realisation of Yoshimune that there are no women in the envoy from Europe that there must be more to Japan's system of rule and she begins to question the history she knows, the rules of the *Ōoku* and the masculine names they adopt more closely (Vol.1, pp.168-170).[210]

As a researcher, *Ōoku* was first encountered as part of an 'LGBT+: Diversity in Manga'[211] library exhibition and display at Japan House, London, illustrating that it is considered an important *manga,* particularly in the representations of gender.

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[210] This use of masculine names becomes important in the final volume (Vol.19, 2022, pp.104-114) when the history is 'rewritten' to make all *shōgun* of the Tokugawa line as male.
[211] May 22 – October 31 2019.

Despite the rumours and assumptions that could be made in the realm of a 'woman's world', and the prominence of male same-sex themes historically and fictionally in *manga* (see Part Three), the story remains largely within the sphere of heterosexuality. This potentially relates to the target audience of *josei,* who are more mature women compared to the *shōjo* at which BL narratives are aimed, and therefore more 'realistic' representations of gender and sex are wanted; but Horbinski refers to it as "straight-washing" (2015, p.71):

> …its relentless focus on heterosexual relationships, even in a society that is at times nearly 75 percent women, further reinforces the marginalization of queer people and queer relationships not only in contemporary Japanese society and pop culture but also in the telling of Japanese history.

> (Horbinski, 2015, p.71)

Though Horbinski does state that the *manga* serialisation was not yet complete, and therefore LGBT themes could be addressed in later volumes. In some ways this is addressed with the marriage between the 14th *shōgun*, Iemochi, and 'Prince Kazu' (Vol.15, 2019, pp.233-248). However, it is revealed that the prince is actually Lady Chikako disguised as the Prince, a theme that is explored in Part Two of this thesis. There is no explicitly romantic or sexual relations expressed in the *manga* between these characters, despite remaining married, but there is clearly affection and attachment conveyed particularly at the death of Iemochi (2021, Vol. 18, pp.54-110). Regardless, as the focus of the *manga* is the *Ōoku,* which in Yoshinaga's history is populated by males, the potential for male homoeroticism abounds. Yoshinaga's earlier works fit within *yaoi* and BL categories, which illustrates influences brought from a *shōjo* target audience to more mature narratives within this *manga*.

Regardless, the core theme of reversed gender is important and is represented visually very clearly throughout the *manga*. The initial image (Fig.32) in this case

study epitomises the complex and contradictory representations of femininity in visual arts. Iemitsu is presented as a beautiful, but strong woman with a potentially nervous energy; she is placed as a lone subject to be observed on the page, however, quickly the power dynamic shifts as we understand she is the military leader exerting power and changing the course of history in this alternate world. From this point on, Yoshinaga's feminist point of view is exerted visually and narratively: that women, if given the chance, can be active, but by the same token men can quickly become the passive object if equalities are not observed and taken seriously.

Following the Second World War, innovations in *manga* not only led to women creating more works for other women, but also new representations that, whilst still showing highly idealised beauties, had more active and realistic stories that reflected different tastes. Adult women now also have representations that they can connect with, but again in an idealised way through Ladies' Comics that show fantasies, but also the wider '*josei*' works, that whilst dealing with reality in the themes continue to show idealisation in the illustration, which can also be seen in works primarily aimed at men.[212] These arguments often centre on the idea that the sexual freedoms and ability to discuss sex for women in this way is not in fact a positive representation, as the creators, readers and publishers profess. The stances of the critics are that Ladies' Comics are in fact perpetuating the passive woman, as all the women in these stories are subjected to and not active in the sexual relations. However, there is the argument that simply by engaging in the reading of this material, women are taking

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[212] Though it should be stated that fantasy does not always equate to the 'happy ever after' within *manga* aimed at a more adult audience. There is often tragedy within these fantasies both in terms of the abuse discussed, but also in the continuation of themes from early *shōjo manga* (as will be discussed in the following parts) where the tragedy ends in the lovers being kept apart.

an active role in expressing themselves through consumption and therefore, not subjected to a passive position (Jones, 2002, p.23).

However, women began to take control of these representations in an unexpected way and created illustrated characters that did not adhere to these kinds of idealised feminine depictions. They began to express gender through the use of cross-dressing and cross-gender performance as a means of overcoming the passive gender stereotypes and expectations. But, more surprisingly, in the 1970s they began to substitute idealised illustrations of girls for idealised illustrations of boys as a genre of illustration and *manga* aimed specifically at a female audience. The following chapters explore how cross-gendered performances have influenced the ideal representation of women in different ways, but also begin to show how these feminine representations began to impact on male illustrative representations as well.

Part Two:
Cross-Gender Acting in Japanese Visual Art

Developing the critical themes of the previous chapter, this section of the thesis

investigates and analyses cross-gender performance and gender acts in addition to

representations of cross-gender dressing. This is achieved through an investigation of

historical and cultural attitudes towards cross-gendering from the Tokugawa period

to today. The term cross-gender, or cross-gender acting/casting, is often used in

reference to Shakespearean theatre (Fujita & Shapiro, 2006), however, the

fundamentals of this term – playing the role of the 'opposite' gender – could be

applied to *onnagata* in *kabuki* and also the *otokoyaku* in the Takarazuka Revue.

Onnagata are, perhaps, one of the most famous aspects of *kabuki* theatre outside of

Japan, due to the fact that these female character roles are performed by men;[213]

whereas the *otokoyaku* are male character roles performed by women, although this

type of theatrical entertainment is perhaps not as prevalent in the west as *kabuki*.

Academic scholarship discussing *onnagata* use different terms to describe these

performances, for instance Mezur refers to the 'gender acts' (2005) that the *onnagata*

perform, whereas Isaka refers to *onnagata* as engaging in cross-gender performance.

She explains this term as, "doing gender across the boundary of previously defined

gender categories," which, "is capable of creating a new space, a new way, and a

new effect of gendering." (Isaka, 2016, p.14). In relation to this research the 'doing'

relates to the means by which gender performativity is achieved in graphic arts

practices through cross-dressing, as well as representing the theatrical

representations of cross-gender performance in print.

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[213] Or more precisely biologically or anatomically male actors.

However, the key aspects of these performers, as Kano highlights, is the idealisation of gender: "… all-male *kabuki* theater in which idealized femininity is portrayed by men, and the all-female Takarazuka theater in which idealized masculinity is portrayed by women…" (2001, p.10). The Takarazuka Revue is explored in this thesis as it inspired the development of *shōjo manga* narratives, with one of the most popular being cross-dressed or gendered 'girls'. Thus, explorations of cross-dressing representations within *manga* as well as gender performativity more generally are also examined in Part Three, as there are slight differences in how cross-gender performance and cross-dressing are presented across visual arts. Therefore, the visual analysis of gender representation must take into account different means of gender performativity. Due to this, different terms are applied and discussed specifically for each individual representation so that the correct type of representation can be examined and communicated accurately.

Japan has a history of cross-gender performance in plays, dances and folk traditions and this tradition has impacted on the way the culture has been viewed in terms of its relations and attitudes to gender; despite this outward acceptance of non-binary gender through performance Japan's relationship and attitudes to non-heteronormativity are extremely complex and contradictory. Part Two examines these contradictions and relationships whilst analysing the impacts of these on Japanese culture, both historically and contemporaneously. First, however, an exploration of the historical roots of cross-gender performance within Japanese culture is conducted in order to explain how these representations became a popular convention within Japanese graphic arts practices.

Chapter Six:
Gender, Performance and Ukiyo-e

This chapter examines representations of the most famous cross-gendered performance as depicted in *ukiyo-e*, that of the *onnagata* from *kabuki*.[214] *Ukiyo-e* and *kabuki* were closely linked during the Tokugawa period, with some of the most popular prints depicting the actors and plays as a form of advertisement and souvenir. The role of the *onnagata* in *kabuki* developed as the result of centuries of evolution and innovation; this chapter outlines the origins of the cross-gender performative roles development, and analyses the portrayals of these performances in print.

Irrespective of the role being performed, *kabuki* actors adhere to certain performing techniques that are unique and important to the continuation of the *kabuki* performance art.[215] Two key elements of the *kabuki* actors' performance are the *kata* and *mie*.[216] *Kata* refers to the stylised gestures that represent the role being played; the *kata* is perfected and passed down between generations or lines of actors. The *mie* is a stylised held pose at the height of an important scene to draw attention to the

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[214] The term *kabuki* began to be used to describe this entertainment, which was derived from the verb *kabuku,* which indicates "something literally off-kilter, meaning 'unconventional', 'subversive' or even 'deviant'," (Buckland, 2013, p.xi). Gabrovska furthers this definition and translation: "to speak or act in an ostentatious, antisocial, eccentric or erotic manner," (2015, p.389). It must be emphasised however, that deviant and erotic are not literal translations of the term *kabuku* or the later *kabuki* meaning, these are examples to express how the term may have been used as eccentric is the more common interpretation, with 'to lean' being more literal.

[215] Traditionally, *kabuki* actors are either born or adopted into a family that specialises in either role to continue the family legacy. However, that is not necessarily the case contemporarily with actors playing both *onnagata* and *tachiyaku* roles when required, and certain *kabuki* theatres hiring actors that are not from particularly eminent *kabuki* families. Elements of this is discussed in *Sing, Dance, Act: Kabuki featuring Toma Ikuta* (2022)

[216] 見得 *mie* an action performed at a pivotal moment of the play when the emotions of the character (and actor) are heightened. The actor creates a pose, which is then held for three beats of a wooden block, usually to rapturous applause. This is a key part of *aragoto* style and a fan favourite.

emotion and power of the character and performer. It is usually linked with the *aragoto*[217] style as it displays power and strength. Although the pose is technically held as if the actor is frozen in place to emphasise the moment, there is usually a slight tremor in the motions which is an acknowledgement to *bunraku* for the origins of many *kabuki* plays (Leiter, 1999, p.496). The *mie* pose of various actors were immortalised in *ukiyo-e* (Fig.30) as *ōkubi-e* were popular formats for *kabuki* actor prints, which allowed the artist to focus on the detail of the face where much of the emotion for a *mie* pose is held.

This image of Iwai Hanshiro IV (c.1791) shows one of the *mie* signifiers in a print of the crossed eyes, this on stage would usually signify anger in the character and portrayal – the use of the red makeup would also imply this. However, this print, like many others analysed within this thesis, is more than initially meets the eye. Whilst the make-up and pose indicate that this is the lead *tachiyaku* role and pivotal moment in a *shibarku* play, the attributed actor, Iwai Hanshiro IV, was in fact an *onnagata* performer. The dating of the print coincides with a production of the play where an *onnagata* actor takes the lead, as examined further in Chapter Eight (Kabuki21, n.d). This therefore encapsulates the complexities of gendered representation within Japanese artistic practices, and the need for careful visual methodological consideration in relation to performativity.

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[217] 荒事 *aragoto* 'rough style', a style of assertive acting within *kabuki* linked to the Danjūrō family for developing and popularising it as a performative style.

Origins and Development of Kabuki

The origins of *kabuki* are vastly different from the performances today. At the beginning of the 17th century, as the Tokugawa *shogunate* solidified 'peace' throughout Japan, a shrine maiden known as Izumo no Okuni[218] performed dances with a troupe of other female performers around the Kamo River. Her performances became legendary because they were different and new to the Japanese people of the time; it drew on influences from the more traditional courtly performances of *nō* but was accessible in terms of location and subject for the 'common' people or *shomin.*[219]

Okuni's frequent performances of male roles in male clothing, as well as the use of Christian artefacts or icons[220] which would have been shocking to audiences[221] (Foreman, 2005, p.41) caused the popularity of *kabuki*, as it was the subversion of gender roles that was appealing to audiences (Gabrvoska, 2015, p.389). One of these male roles that Okuni performed was the *kabukimono,*[222] which Galia Todorova Gabrovska states were young men who, "resorted to extraordinary acts or behavior and were characterized by showy, off beat styles of clothing" (2015, p.389). This meant that *kabukimono* were an ideal "object for imitation on the stage and contributed to the revolutionary vision of Okuni's performances…" especially as they were, "the symbol of extravagant masculinity, who literally performed their

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[218] Named for the Shintō shrine Izumo at which she was reportedly an attendant.

[219] 庶民 *shomin* meaning common people or masses specifically, i.e. not 町人 *chōnin* (merchant).

[220] Such as rosaries and crucifixes.

[221] Following initial welcomes to Christian missionaries from Europe, Christianity was viewed with suspicion and eventually banned in Japan (Leuchtenberger, 2022, p.1021); with those following the religion persecuted at various points throughout the period.

[222] 歌舞伎者 *Kabukimono* dandy; peacock. Type of person (male) of the Tokugawa period that wore outlandish clothing and behaved in eccentric manners, likened to modern day *yakuza* (Japanese equivalent to mafia).

eccentric maleness on the streets of Kyoto" (Gabrovska, 2015, pp.389-90). *Kabukimono,* according to Gabrovska, were largely feared by the general public, similar to *yakuza* today, due to their styles, rebellious way of life, and their congregation as 'gangs' for defensive purposes; but Okuni's imitation and incorporation of these characters in her repertoire led to a "softening" of their image: "It could be claimed that her dance transformed them in to a safe symbol of male eroticism," (2015, p.390). Gabrovska's theory surrounding this safe symbol of eroticism is noteworthy and has some parallels to *bishōnen* in *manga* as a safe way to express sexuality, which is examined in more detail in Part Three, but also to 'safety' in cross-gender acting in the Takarazuka Revue and *manga*.

Okuni did not just imitate or play the role of contemporary male characters during her dances. According to Mezur, one of Okuni's famed male performances was that of Ariwara no Narihira, a legendary figure from the Heian court who was "frequently referred to for his mixture of feminine and masculine attributes," (Mezur, 2005, p.54). This reference to feminine and masculine 'attributes' is an important indicator of Japanese attitudes towards gender at this time, as examined throughout Parts Two and Three. Okuni's performance has been described as being, "somewhere between male and female, even confounding her audience as to whether she was a man or a woman." (Mezur, 2005, p.54). This tradition of cross-gender performance continues in contemporary Japanese popular culture through popular tropes such as 'gender-bending' and androgynous characters, who often embody both feminine and masculine attributes, the 'opposite' gendered attributes to their characters 'sex', or no gender specific attributes at all. The visual analysis of this is presented throughout

this and the following chapters as a means of furthering academic discourse surrounding the theories of performativity and graphic arts.

Nevertheless, it was not only women who engaged in cross-gender performance within Okuni's *kabuki*: men would often act in the female roles opposite the women in male roles. As Buruma states, "sexual confusion was an integral part of the earliest kabuki theatre" (2012, p.115). When confronted with the idea of men playing female roles in *kabuki* today the imagery that would be conjured is that of the contemporary elegant acting of the *onnagata* in Japan, as encompassed by the famous *onnagata* actor, Bandō Tamasaburō V. It has not always been the case that 'men' performing female-likeness in Japanese theatre has been about elegance and beauty. A six-fold screen known as the *Okuni Kabuki Screen*[223] is reported to portray a performance of *Chaya Asobi,*[224] "the representative play of the Okuni *kabuki* troupe." (Kyoto National Museum, n.d). Gabrovska states that this scene encapsulates the "rising influence of brothel culture on the emerging urban society," which in turn, "would affect tremendously the development of kabuki and Japanese performing arts in general," (2015, p.392).[225] The central figure on the stage is the type of male role that Okuni would play, therefore, showing a female-to-male type of cross-gender performance, whilst the kneeling figure is a comedic portrayal of a teahouse woman or sex worker, who is played by a man. This also highlights the dynamics of Okuni's *kabuki*: "The ['female' role] is played by a male actor and is

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[223] The screen is designated as an Important Cultural Property, and is housed in the collection of the Kyoto National Museum.
[224] *Chaya Asobi* has been translated as *Visiting the Teahouse*, *Spree at the Teahouse* or *Teahouse Entertainments* (Edelson, 2006; Kyoto National Museum, n.d; Mezur, 2005). 茶屋 *chaya* meaning teahouse and 遊び *asobi* meaning to play.
[225] Scholars have debated whether the screen actually depicts Okuni (Edelson, 2006; Mezur, 2005) however, the screen does show examples of the cross-gender acts that gave *kabuki* its name in the early 17th century.

always depicted as kneeling on the stage, since the main attraction is Okuni and her portrayal of the erotic male character, always represented as standing and attracting all the attention." (Gabrovska, 2015, p.391). This shows that despite the attractiveness of cross-gender acting to audiences, the female actor was vital to these early performances.[226] However, cross-gender performance in *kabuki* was soon to change drastically.

Okuni or *onna kabuki*,[227] as this form of entertainment became known, was also a way for sex-workers[228] to present themselves to audiences. This caused a reputation that the *bakufu* disliked, as they felt it threatened the morality of the audience (Dunn, 1972, p.124). This conflict between *kabuki* and the *bakufu* would continue throughout the Tokugawa era. Sex-work was already an established part of Japanese urban culture at this time, however, the concern of the *bakufu* was in fact the behaviour of the audiences themselves: "… immorality here meant the indiscriminate mixing of people from differing social classes, social disorder, the raucous brawls and vandalism by audience members, and the distraction from the orderly productive activity," (Foreman, 2005, p.41). This was due to ideologies that governed feudal Japan: "men were expected to serve and work for the state while women were exhorted to serve the family out of the public eye." (Foreman, 2005, p.41). "Good" behaviour was key to the social model, and any deviation from this

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[226] Unlike the later developments of *onnagata,* this kind of female gender performance was supposed to be comical: "Although women's parts had been played by men in women's kabuki, it was for comic effect" (Ozaki, 2006, p.8). Mezur emphasised this further: "he was supposed to be seen as a man wearing odd female clothes, going through exaggerated female-like motions," (Mezur, 2005, p.55) Referencing Watanabe Tamotsu's (1993, *Kabuki Handobukku*, Shinshokan, Tokyo) suggesting that these male actors were to "make Okuni look good" (Mezur, 2005, p.55). and, therefore, could be reminiscent of a pantomime dame-style performance by western standards. This type of character and the comic effect of a man dressing and performing as a woman has continued within certain elements of Japanese popular culture, which is explored in Chapter Eight.
[227] 女歌舞伎 *onna kabuki* Women's *kabuki.*
[228] Outside of the sanctioned pleasure quarters.

resulted in government sanctions: "… the authorities viewed these tremendously popular performances [of *onna kabuk*i] to be so dangerous that they issued a nationwide ban only twenty-six years later prohibiting not only women's Kabuki but *all* public performances by women…" (Foreman, 2005, p.38). In this case 'public' meant outside of licensed pleasure quarters, where the female performers were moved after the ban so that the *bakufu* could better control their performances and the size of audiences (Foreman, 2005, p.38).[229]

On the other hand, Lesley Downer states that concerns for morality were not so much the cause, but in fact the undermining of law and order was the focus, with reference to brawling *samurai* leading to the banning of women from the stage (Downer, 2006, p.228). In reality the concern for morality would in fact be tied very closely to these instances of 'undermining law and order' as the *samurai* were supposed to uphold these rules meaning their participation as audience members for these performances had indeed impacted on the morality that governed Japan's beliefs at the time. This ban on women[230] ultimately changed the course of *kabuki* performance, as well as attitudes towards women and their representation in Japanese art and culture, as *onnagata* in their roles would "come to be seen as superior to anything an actual woman could portray," (Foreman, 2005, p.38). With the development of the *onnagata* came the new idea that 'men' were in a better position to represent women on stage than a woman ever could. Some scholars view this as vital to an *onnagata's* performance as well as *kabuki* itself, and this is examined throughout the following sections.

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[229] Despite the illegality and punishments they faced if and when caught, there are examples of female performers continuing to give theatrical performances and dances in public throughout this period.
[230] Though Kano (2001, pp.30-31) does note that women still performed during this period in strictly controlled situations.

Onnagata: An Idealised Vision of Femininity?

By 1629 *kabuki* had evolved from the smaller sketches and dances that were originally performed by Okuni and her troupe in 1603 into more elaborate plays. Although the targeted audience was still the *chōnin* and *shomin* meaning female roles were crucial to the success of the art. However, as women were now banned from performing a solution to the continuation of *kabuki*-styled entertainment was found in the guise of *wakashu kabuki.* Interestingly, this change as an attempt to reinstate morality meant that *kabuki* could now be considered a form of queer theatre, as Kano discusses: "… not only in its association with norm-breaking behavior and anti-establishment attitudes; it was also queer in its association with homosexual practices." (2001, p.59). These practices developed from the involvement of *wakashu* in the productions as a form of male sex-work.

Wakashu were an anomalous part of the 'male' roles in Japanese society until the 'modernisation' took place in the late 19th century. Using current terminology they could be considered androgynous, gender fluid or perhaps even agender with some clear parallels to contemporary *bishōnen* representations. However, what is clear is that *wakashu* fit an entirely different type of societal gender expectation to that of their female and adult male counterparts, which enabled them to hold a different space within the gender spectrum of the Tokugawa period. This ambiguity meant they were the perfect candidates to perform the female roles, and *wakashu kabuki* gained popularity.[231] Despite the ban on women and introduction of *wakashu kabuki*,

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[231] However, it must be noted that this type of *kabuki,* "did not come into being" (Isaka, 2016, p.24) because of the ban and a form of it had in fact been practiced alongside *onna kabuki*.

"… the problem remained the same, with beautiful young actors offering sexual favors to their largely male audience" (Downer, 2006, p.228).[232] *Kabuki* performances remained a means for these *wakashu* performers to appeal and solicit the audience for these purposes: "young men played women to enhance their sex appeal… the onnagata in young men's kabuki could easily be substitutes for women, and relied more on their sex appeal … than on their acting ability." (Ozaki, 2006, pp.8-9). Crucially, *wakashu* were not limited in their sexual appeal. They were frequently depicted with both male and female lovers within prints and literature, although the *nenja-wakashu* (p.273) relationship was romanticised in the latter more often due to the Buddhist insinuations of women as inferior beings (Faure, 1998). Concurrently the historical precedents of male-male relations with the likes of *chigo* (Faure, 1998; Schmidt-Hori, 2021), also created a demand for male-male depictions in *ukiyo-e* and literature.

However, in 1652, further restrictions were introduced that caused difficulties for *wakashu* and meant that in order for them to continue performing they had to undergo the final stage of *genpuku*;[233] this meant they fit the cultural and societal role of adult males. Despite all the performers of *kabuki* now being adult males officially, female roles still needed to be performed, and *onnagata* gained prominence. As established, there was an already rich history of gender ambiguity and play between gender acts and bodies (Mezur, 2005, p.51). However, the term

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[232] Due to the *wakashu* aesthetic of androgyny and the frequent acts of cross dressing and cross-gender performance established much more firmly by Okuni's *kabuki*, it was not uncommon for women after the 1629 ban to have "surreptitiously joined young men's kabuki and performed with them dressed in female attire" (Ozaki, 2006, p.8). This led to the *bakufu* demanding lists of actors that specified exactly who was performing and in which roles (Ozaki, 2006, p.8) to ensure that the restrictions continued.

[233] 元服 *genpuku*: male coming-of-age ceremony. The final stage being to fully shave the *megami* (forelocks) as discussed Chapter Nine.

onnagata did not exist prior to the banning of women in 1629, which suggests that: "with bakufu ideology, women were inferior and subordinate to men and were best controlled by men to the extent that even female gender representation was better created and performed by boys and men." (Mezur, 2005, p.63). The ideology of inferiority discussed by Mezur here, shows the beginnings of *onnagata* as superior performers of femininity on stage, that Foreman discussed in relation to the difficulties women faced when their public stage performance ban was lifted. The banning of *wakashu* representation on the stage meant that there was no longer a definitive point at which a female role actor had to retire, as previously when a *wakashu* underwent *genpuku* and became adults, they would no longer (in theory) play female roles. However, this also meant that:

> The ephemeral *futanarihira* aesthetic of *wakashu* could no longer be the principle of *onnagata.* Something had to change so that a temporary bloom could transform himself into the flower, a male actor who represented ideal femininity through his art. It was the early eighteenth century virtuosos… who, by meticulous gender training, made the shift final, bringing the art of onnagata to perfection.

> (Isaka, 2016, p.34) [234]

Isaka here is stating that the key aesthetic aspects of *onnagata* throughout *wakashu kabuki* relied heavily upon the androgynous or mix of feminine and masculine attributes that *wakashu* embodied. Now with the ban, this distinct presence could no longer exist and actors had to adapt a new performing style that would be able to capture the essence of a female character. This evolution of the *onnagata* art form is key to the progression and continued success of *kabuki* today, and it is also an important aspect of illustrative *onnagata* representations.

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[234] 双業平 *Futanarihira* 'androgynous beauties' (*Kanji* from Moro, 2013, p.30).

The terminology to discuss the role of an *onnagata* has evolved in recent decades to reflect the different ways in which *onnagata* have performed gender and cross-gender acts. For instance, Leiter stated: "we should recall that the original intention of Ayame and his peers was not to *act* as women but to be women, at whatever the cost, in the interests of art" (Leiter, 2006, p.76; Chapter Eight, p.240). The role of *onnagata* after Ayame I's time (1673-1729), however, had to adapt to fit with changing societal views, whilst simultaneously adhering to the 'male in female role' tradition that began in the mid-17th century. Many scholars of *kabuki* assert that *onnagata* do not imitate women, but present an idealised version: "the onnagata did not aim at "representing" women; they performed their own many layered "vision" of a constructed female likeness" (Mezur, 2005, p.2). Buruma likens this type of performance to the *bijin-ga* imagery of the Tokugawa Period: "The *onnagata* in the kabuki theatre does not attempt to impersonate a specific woman so much as an idealized version of woman, such as one sees in woodblock prints." (2012, p.116). Idealised depictions of women in *ukiyo-e* also evolved alongside *onnagata* with 'courtesans' being a key role for many *onnagata* to play. This changed the way ideal femininity and womanhood was seen during the period as Kano stated:

> In the Edo period, the ideal of womanhood was represented by performance: the *onnagata* in *kabuki* theatre who specialised in women's roles… The feminine beauty of the *onnagata* had little to do with anatomical body of the actor; it had everything to do with the way he dressed, moved, gestured, and danced – in short, the way he performed. And women, especially those in the pleasure quarters, imitated the *onnagata*'s performance as the ideal of feminine beauty, copying his kimono patterns, his hairstyle, his carefully contrived gestures.
>
> (Kano, 2001, p.31)

This continued cycle of influence became essential to the portrayals and representations of ideal gender in visual imagery throughout the period, as Kano also noted. She stated that "various scholars" emphasised that visual imagery rarely

distinguished the beauty of women and youths (2001, p.31). The visual analysis of this is expanded further in Part Three.

However, in Mezur and Buruma's opinions *onnagata* are not playing at being women, they are creating their own unique identity and performing a new interpretation of gender, or idealised vision of gender, similarly to those idealised sex-workers that the likes of Utamaro created in *ukiyo-e*. In order to do this, as Isaka states, an *onnagata* had to undergo several gender transformations: "*Onnagata* transformed their gender from military masculinity to the androgynous gender and then to ideal femininity," (Isaka, 2016, p.23). This was achieved, Isaka stated, by "shifting the nature of *onnagata* performance from the embodiment of the *futanarihira* aesthetic to the presentation of femininity," (Isaka 2009, p.28). Transforming their gender in this instance links back to the earlier point by Isaka about the "ephemeral *futanarihira* aesthetic of *wakashu*" (Isaka, 2016, p.34) but also the original role of *wakashu* within Japanese society, as discussed in Chapter Nine, as the apprentice to adult male *samurai*. *Onnagata* being 'male' actors were a product of the evolution of *wakashu* from *samurai* apprentice, to androgynous-type beauties, before finding themselves as performers of 'ideal' womanhood in *kabuki*.

As mentioned, however, a new version of an idealised femininity was not always the main goal of *onnagata*, as stated in reference to Yoshizawa Ayame I, who has been widely regarded "as the one who brought about the completion of the onnagata art." (Mezur, 2005, p.88). Ayame's influence on the continuation of the *onnagata* art form was crucial, as well as in scholarly discourse surrounding the practices of *kabuki*.

Isaka states of a treatise on the art of *onnagata* entitled *Ayamegusa* (*The Words of Ayame*),[235] that:

> "The Words of Ayame" prescribes a method of femininity construction for *onnagata* similar to the ways in which the treatise's contemporary *Greater Learning for Women* (Onna daigaku), a popular primer on woman-hood, prescribes an approach to ideal femininity for women beyond the stage.
>
> (Isaka, 2016, pp.20-1)

The treatise has been continuously quoted by scholars and academics of *kabuki,* particularly those focusing on the art of *onnagata,* with the following quotation,[236] being one of the most predominant:

> If an actress were to appear on stage she could not express ideal feminine beauty, for she could only rely on the exploitation of her physical characteristics, and therefore not express the synthetic ideal. The ideal woman can only be expressed by a male actor.
>
> (Isaka, 2016. p.7, quoting Ernst, 1974)

Since the original publication of Ernst's book in the 1950s, this 'understanding' that an *onnagata* can better portray femininity and women on stage then women themselves has remained and, as Isaka states, "is nearly ubiquitous in works of *onnagata* today." (2016, p.7). Kano even quoted some of the sentiments regarding this during the Meiji period, once women were no longer banned from the stage, and arguments relating to whether this was good or bad started to circulate concluding that: "… In other words, a woman can look like a woman, but it takes a man to really *act* like a woman!" (2001, p.22). This ideology has pervaded *onnagata* discourse, as referenced previously by Foreman: "a tradition of female impersonation that would

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[235] As complied by Fukuoka Yagoshirō.
[236] Which was first linked to the *Ayamegusa* due to the publication of *The Kabuki Theater* in 1956.

come to be seen as superior to anything an actual woman could portray." (Foreman, 2005, p.38). [237] However, according to Isaka:

> … the purported remark of Yoshizawa Ayame in *The Kabuki Theater* cannot be located in '*The Words of Ayame' (Ayamegusa),* an eighteenth century *onnagata* treatise. In fact the text in its entirety strongly suggests the opposite. The *onnagata*'s performance of femininity was not the exclusive property of male actors; rather, *onnagata* constructed it by approximating women through observation and training and by circulating it with women... For master practitioners, it is not so much the biological sex of a body as talent, training, and dedication to the art that matter for the performance of gender.
>
> (2016, pp.7-8)

Here, Isaka is stating the importance of women on the role of *onnagata* and implying that an element of respect must have been present in order to develop the art of *onnagata* performance; a respect that would not be present by insinuating that *onnagata* 'make better women' on stage.[238] This would support Leiter's assertions that *onnagata* of the Tokugawa period were not creating their own versions of femininity or womanhood, but were becoming women: "the true onnagata, the player of female roles who take so seriously his psychological transformation from man to woman that he is, to all intents and purposes, just that, a woman." (Leiter, 2006,

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[237] Nonetheless, there have been attempts to reintroduce female performers to mainstream *kabuki,* yet, according to Buruma, "it simply did not work; they looked too natural; they lacked the beauty of artifice; the only way they could achieve the desired effect was to imitate men impersonating women." (2012, p.116-7). Despite this assessment there have been all-female *kabuki* troupes since the 1890s with the support and sponsorship of leading *kabuki* families, with some of the most famous being the Ichikawa Girls Kabuki (est.1945) and the Nagoya Musume Kabuki troupe (est.1983) (Iezzi, 2011; Edelson, 2006). During the Tokugawa period, there were female performances of *kabuki* dances and scenes in the inner palace of the *shōgun* where men could not enter (Gabrovska, 2015, p.395). However, despite these successes for female inclusion, *kabuki* has largely remained as it was by the end of the 18th century as an 'all-male theatre'. Although there are new adaptions and plays being creating including interpretations of *manga* as kabuki. Regardless, because of these male-orientated focus, women began to fill other roles within different theatre styles; the most famous example is the Takarazuka Revue as examined in Chapter Seven.
[238] Intriguingly, Butler discusses a similar feeling in relation to time spent in a gay-cum-drag bar, "it quickly dawned on me that some of these so-called men could do femininity much better than I ever could, ever wanted to, ever would. And so I was confronted by what can only be called the transferability of the attribute" (2004, p.213). However, this was from a view point of acceptance as, "I was happier to be the audience to it [femininity], have always been very happier to be its audience than I ever was or would be being the embodiment of it" (Butler, 2004, p.213). In reference to *onnagata*, the agency of this choice was removed with the banning of women, and the attitude of superiority came from men not women – or those with a connection to femininity in daily life.

p.74). Isaka continued this in relation to the interconnection between *onnagata* and women of the time in terms of imitation:

> While women copied *onnagata*'s fashion (e.g., clothing and ornament)… *onnagata* aimed at gender performance by which they could pass as women. Between women and *onnagata* was a well-established, yet porous, circuit via which *onnagata* imitated women and the later emulated the former.

(2009, p.30)

However, Mezur argues that *onnagata* created their performances not by imitating women but by building upon *wakashu* type aesthetics: "… *bishōnen no bi* (beauty of male youth) – the aesthetic of the beautiful boy – shaped onnagata gender acts and role types. In the early stages, onnagata elevated the adolescent boy body into a stylized paradigm of female likeness," (Mezur, 2005, pp.2-3). Leiter disagrees with this area of Mezur's research: "I disagree with Katherine Mezur's interesting but, to me, unconvincing "boy body" theory; I prefer to accept the comments of the many actors who claim observation of life and people as their starting point" (Leiter, 2012, p.117). Whilst this "observation of life" was and is vital to the formation of female character roles,[239] particularly as female *kabuki* audiences began to imitate them as they had once been imitated, it cannot be ignored that the evolution of *onnagata* performance can be traced back to *wakashu kabuki* as well. As Isaka stated: "it [*onnagata* performance] began as androgynous aesthetics nurtured in *wakashu* kabuki then transformed itself into the imitation of women, and finally overcame imitation and achieved artistic femininity," (Isaka, 2016, p.17). Therefore, it is important to consider imitation and idealisation of femininity alongside the key aspects of *wakashu* and beautiful boy aesthetics. It is clear from these scholars research that idealised femininity as well as masculinity and androgyny impacted on

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[239] And also for the formation of male character roles by *otokoyaku* as discussed by Strickland (2008).

the way in which *wakashu* and subsequently *onnagata* formulated their gender performances.

This combination of androgyny or feminised masculinity has become an important aesthetic within Japanese artistic practices. This is evident in prints portraying *onnagata* after the 1750's, which began to imitate the idealisation of *bijin-ga* that had developed. In other words, the standardised ideals that were developed for portraying women by the likes of Kiyonaga, were utilised in creating prints that essentially represented feminine beauty without women being present; much like *wakashu* imitated femininity, before achieving the artistic representation of femininity.

Onnagata in Ukiyo-e

Despite the *bakufu* attempts to restrict *kabuki*, and to force strict codes and moral ideologies onto the performers, *kabuki* remained a popular form of entertainment and became one of the most popular subject matters for *ukiyo-e*. Prints depicting *kabuki* were, "produced in close collaboration between theaters, publishers, and artists," and, "were issued in the tens of thousands, inflaming and satisfying fans' obsessive interest in theater," (Kominz, 2011, p.68). The role of the actors, much like today, was to entertain, captivate and create avid fans for themselves and *kabuki* theatre more generally. In order to achieve this aim, the actors, "strove to be as physically attractive as possible. Idealized, sexualized bodies have always been essential to kabuki's appeal," (Kominz, 2011, p.68). *Kata* was an important part of this and was an element of *kabuki* physicality that was transferred onto prints that were created to promote the plays.

These prints were popular souvenirs and collectibles for *kabuki* fans and novices a-like, and proved to be an essential part of the publicity before a new performance was debuted (Buckland, 2013; Turk, 1966); with an estimated 100,000 *kabuki* prints being published in the 18th and 19th centuries, with each issue having hundreds of copies (Buckland, 2013, p. xviii). These print styles also perfectly reflected the (at the time) ever changing and evolving art of *kabuki* as "woodblock prints were products intended to be topical and ephemeral. They had to reflect the rapidly shifting fashions and fads of the contemporary culture" (Buckland, 2013, p.xix). *Onnagata* representations within *ukiyo-e* are just as complex as an *onnagata*'s personal representations on and off stage. Depictions of *onnagata* in *ukiyo-e* include the characters that the *onnagata* is portraying, on and away from the stage actor prints,[240] as well as *mitate-e*[241] prints that would use an actor to parallel important and legendary figures from Japanese myths and history:

> The images on *Ukiyo-e* woodblock prints can therefore serve as a starting point for approaching the matter of whether an actor was principally portrayed as a performer (a man); or as the character performed by him (which could also be a woman, as in the case of the *onnagata* actor.)
>
> (Romanowicz, 2015, p.128)

Romanowicz's point here shows that some *kabuki* actors were able to break free of the characters they portrayed enough to warrant off stage portrayals within *ukiyo-e* prints. For instance, a print depicting Bando Shuka I (Fig.31) by Kuniyoshi (1853) shows the actor in the style of *ōkubi-e,* but the role, theatre and time of the performance[242] is also known, whereas other prints shows the role of the *onnagata* as

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[240] Which included *onnagata* actors in feminine clothing away from the *kabuki* stage.
[241] 見立絵 *Mitate-e* parody pictures.
[242] Princess Wakana in the play *'Shiranui monogatari'* (*The Tale of Shiranui*) at the Kawarasaki theatre in the second month of Kaei 6 (1853).

opposed to just the actor. The latter print also epitomises the complex relationship that *kabuki* created with gender and that Japan has continued in certain aspects of their cultural arts, as it is a print of a 'man' playing a woman who is acting the part of a man.

Mitate-e prints were a also a popular form of *ukiyo-e* generally, but this print by Kunisada (1852; Fig.32) is a good example of the form used in conjunction with *kabuki.* The print depicts *onnagata* actor Segawa Rokō III as Sumizome, the spirit of the cherry tree accompanied by a poem that links to the parody element of this print. The print is a combination of *kabuki* actor and actual spirit, as it shows the *bōshi* of the actor to show this is a play, but Kunisada has also employed the talents of the printer to create a faded effect at the bottom of the image to represent that this is a ghostly apparition (Buckland, 2013, p.51). *Kabuki* plays themselves adopt a number of techniques in order to communicate roles such as this, including engineering marvels and make up tricks. The use of techniques in *ukiyo-e* to match these representations show the skill and ingenuity of the printers and artists, as well as the commitment to accurately reflect these characters and actors in graphic arts.

In the early stages of *kabuki* prints it can be difficult to identify individual performers in both *tachiyaku* and *onnagata* roles. Often the only identifying marks can be the *mon* located somewhere within the print which signifies the 'family' of the actor specifically and/or the inclusion of the actor's name on the print by the artist. However, by the 1760s when woodblock printing techniques had evolved to make the creation of *nishiki-e* possible, the artists Katsukawa Shunshō and Ippitsusai Bunchō established the *nigao-e,* or likeness pictures, which "purported to convey an

individualized portrayal of the actors face" (Buckland, 2013, p.xx). However, 'reality' was not always appreciated or wanted in actor prints, as Tsuji explains when discussing the work of Sharaku, who depicted:

> … the individual characteristics of actors with a keen insight. For example, he revealed actors performing female roles (*onnagata*) to be middle-aged men in disguise. As a result, his actor prints were criticized for being "too honest and faithfully realistic, so much so that they did not last long and disappeared after a year or two."
>
> (Tsuji, 2019, p.354)

However, this contrast with the ideal, as expressed by Clare Pollard, meant that Sharaku created an intensity in his works. This intensity displayed the masculinity of the actor as well as the femininity that was required for the role (2021, p.62). There has been much mystery around the identity of Sharaku, due to the fleeting time they were actively creating *yakusha-e* or actor prints, however, Tsuji's discussion not only accounts for the potential reasoning for this short-lived career (2019, p.489).[243] Regardless of the true identity, Tsuji's discussion around criticism is compelling. Since Sharaku's introduction to western audiences, their works have been considered to rate amongst icons such as Hokusai, Hiroshige and Utamaro. For instance: "Sharaku's greatest skill was in catching the personality of the actor under the part, especially in the female roles played by men" (British Museum, n.d, C). Therefore, to discover that these works were criticised at their time of creation for realism also highlights the importance of idealisation to Tokugawa-period audiences. However, when comparing Sharaku's depictions of *onnagata* specifically with other *yakusha-e* it is easy to see that the ideal representations of beauty which *onnagata* were tasked with embodying are not transferred to paper in the same way.

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[243] Tsuji also references Saitō Jurōbei as the artist's true identity (2019, p.489) While some agree with this identification, others claim Sharaku to be another artist's pseudonym, a visiting actor or poet, a group of artists brought together by the publisher Tsutaya Jūzaburō or even the publisher himself (Liddel, 2011, para.2; Pollard; 2021, p.62).

When comparing this *ōkubi-e* (Fig.33) of Ichimatsu III with this print of Iwai

Hanshiro IV by Toyokuni I (Fig.34) which were both created around 1794, for

instance, it is clear that Sharaku did not adhere to the idealised conventions that were

common. He does not show the rounded face and chin expected of *onnagata*, and to

some extent *tachiyaku*, prints; the nose is slightly larger, and the additional lines

surrounding the eye on the right do not reflect the usual ageless beauty that was

expected. Sharaku's work implies imperfections in the skin with the lines close to

the eyes and mouth that are not present in Toyokuni's work, which emphasises

youthfulness and beauty as well as a striking resemblance to *bijin-ga* imagery.

Sharaku also created a print of the *onnagata* actor, Iwai Hanshiro IV (Fig.35), which

is again a very different depiction to that of Toyokuni's work. Here Sharaku has

included the typical rounded face, but it is larger than the conventions generally

dictated, more akin to *tachiyaku* prints than of beautiful women. The nose although

smaller than other prints, is also flatter to the face than Toyokuni's depiction.

Personality can be seen in these images more so than the conventional *bijin-ga*

imagery, however, this personality does not reflect the idealised beauty that

onnagata represented so much as the male-body beneath the illusion. As prints were

supposed to promote the plays and beauty of the actors performing, Sharaku's works

did not assist in suspending the belief that these were beautiful women, but were in

fact male-bodied cross-gender actors, which broke the spell and illusion that the

audiences wanted to maintain. As such, it is this researcher's opinion that Sharaku's

onnagata works did not represent the true gender that *onnagata* were conveying, and

the idealised beauty that they strove for was missing.

As discussed by Mezur, the aesthetic tradition that was epitomised by *wakashu* in the Tokugawa period provided a starting point for the formation and evolution of the *onnagata* style. However, in 1652 *wakashu* were also banned from the stage,[244] meaning that they had to adapt in order to continue to perform these roles, and therefore, *wakashu* underwent the final rights of *genpuku.* This meant that unlike other *wakashu* they did not necessarily have to change their attitudes or gender to reflect their transition into adult male-hood, as would usually be the custom, because they had to perform a stylised type of *female* gender on stage: "Early *onnagata* were, in fact, ex-*wakashu* who were already playing female roles in *wakashu* kabuki. They shaved off their forelocks, put purple kerchiefs on their foreheads and returned to the stage." (Isaka, 2016, p.25). Isaka emphasised this further by stating that the *wakashu* were lucky in the sense that they could extend their career by becoming *onnagata*, as they were no longer restricted by time as they had been by remaining in the *wakashu* "category" (2009, pp.27-28). The purple kerchief described here is the *murasaki bōshi,*[245] or just *bōshi,* and is one of the main visual signifiers of *onnagata* in *ukiyo-e* prints. This can be seen in *Bandō Shūka I* as *Princess Wakana*[246] (1853; Fig.31) as the *murasaki bōshi* covers the *onnagata's* forehead in order to continue the illusion that this is not an adult male. Although it was common to use a *murasaki bōshi,* some of the head coverings were not necessarily purple or depicted as purple, as can be seen in *The Actor Yoshizawa Ayame IV as Yadorigi* (Fig.36). This print is a *tan*-e, meaning it was hand coloured in orange/red tones (Tsuji, 2019, p.348) after the initial black ink printing, unlike the full colour *nishiki-e* (Appx. One). The

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[244] For similar reasons as the women – sex-work and the effect on the morality of the people.
[245] 紫 *murasaki* purple 帽子 *bōshi* hat/cap.
[246] The play is *Shiranui monogatari* (*The Tale of Shiranui*). It is a revenge play in which Princess Wakana summons a giant spider to seek revenge on those who killed her family. This is represented by the spider web background of the image – again illustrating the symbolic *in ukiyo-e.*

limitations of the ink colours available for this style of printing would explain the lack of purple for the *bōshi,* however, there is a *bōshi* obviously present, whereas some *onnagata ukiyo-e* depictions did portray different styles of head coverings. The Toyokuni depiction of Segawa Rokō IV (Fig.37) shows an elaborate head dress that is different from the standard *bōshi* discussed thus far, however, when compared to a print depicting a predecessor in a similar role (Fig.38), we can see a smaller version of this head-dress that includes a more conventional *bōshi.* Although this is usually a reliable indicator of an *onnagata* print, the Toyokuni print shows the difficulties that slight differentiations in style can have on identifying the actor or acting style being depicted, and in some cases prints do not show a traditional *bōshi* at all, thus we must rely on other visual indicators to reveal that this is an *onnagata.* One other key identifying signifier is that of a *mon*.

All *kabuki* actors had *mon* or crests to identify them immediately to the audience. For *kabuki* performances, a *mon* may be depicted on the costume of the actor or on lanterns in the theatre, whilst in *ukiyo-e* the *mon* could appear anywhere within the print. This signifier is perhaps the most important in *kabuki ukiyo-e*, especially as *kabuki* actors and scenes were used in these prints to various ends, including as substitutes for historical or legendary stories. In some instances, the placement of the *mon* can also indicate the role being played. These two prints depicting the Segawa line of *onnagata* (Figs.37 & 38) have the *mon* enlarged on the sleeves of the costume, which indicates that this is the female lead role version of the famous *Shibaraku* play,[247] similarly to the Iwai Hanshiro IV print discussed (p.179). These prints demonstrate the complexity and intricacy of *ukiyo-e* and Japanese illustrative

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[247] *Just a Minute!*; this is not a full play in itself so much as an extended scene.

practices more broadly. Without the semiotic and iconographical analysis in combination with iconological readings, a western, or even perhaps contemporary audience more generally, would potentially misunderstand or misinterpret these images. However, it should be noted that global demand for Japanese popular culture, and therefore, the proliferation of *manga* illustrative practices across the world, has encouraged new forms of visual literacy (Ishida, 2019) which can be retrospectively applied to *ukiyo-e* prints such as these depicting *onnagata*. This, therefore, reveals another layer of originality within this research, as it is not just developing and analysing how *ukiyo-e* has impacted on the conventions of *manga* illustration, but also how *manga* illustrative conventions can inform and guide readings of *ukiyo-e*. These signifiers also have to be taken into consideration when examining 'off-stage' prints, as the gender performance does not end when the characters are 'removed', as the following case study explores.

Case Study: *Segawa Kikunojō III*

Beginning with the image as a whole (Fig.39), we can see two figures looking in opposite directions, with different facial expressions and wearing distinctively different clothing. They are placed in a way that indicates walking, and the limited background of tree leaves in the top right-hand corner insinuates that the pair are outside. The colour palette is relatively muted, with orange, yellow, beige, green and black being the main tones, perhaps an indication of time eroding the work.

Turning the focus to the figures: the face of the figure on the right is turning away from the other figure, and gazing to something, or someone, out of our sight; the mouth is slightly open and appears to be smiling, which is also indicated by the

placement of the eyebrows and tilt of the head towards the unseen element. Perhaps the figure is speaking with another person just out of our reach, and by the expression on the face, it is someone welcome. The head of the figure is shaved on top, with visible hair around the sides and back with what appears to be a small knot just visible at the back. The body remains in the same direction as the other figure, indicating that they are following their lead, with the one visible hand clenched slightly. The clothing appears simple, with a single overall colour, a slight cross-hatch pattern at the collar, and a small bow at the front which appears to separate the top and bottom of the clothing at the waist. The cross-hatch is also visible at the 'hem' of the 'coat' that hangs as if pulled and fastened deliberately to show the lining over what appears to be matching trousers and sandalled feet. Barely visible beneath the left arm, closest to us as a viewer, is the hilt of a sword; this can be deduced by following the line of the hilt 'through' his arm to see the rest of the sword, and that the figure to the left has the same designed piece tied to their waist.

Moving to the figure on the left, their body appears much more straight and rigid compared to their companion, less of the body can be seen and they remain focused on what is ahead of them. The facial shape is rounded like the other figure, however the expression and sizing feels very different to look at. The eyebrows are pulled together above eyes that appear smaller than the companion – perhaps they are gazing intently into the distance. The mouth, though slightly open like the companion, does not give the same impression of talking or smiling and again seems smaller in comparison to the figure on the right. The hair is the most striking and immediate difference that can be seen when considering the heads of the figures; the figure on the left has a stylised and angular hairstyle with adornments that appear to

be combs and a triangular-shaped piece of cloth – not quite a hat, but not a full scarf. As our eyes travel down the body, we continue to see differences between the characters in the clothing they are wearing. This figure (on the left) wears a much more elaborate piece, that covers more of the body yet provides more shape. The over clothing is an orange shade with slight stripes that creates a broad and powerful shoulder shape, matching the hint of green colour also seen at the colour of the under-robe. Continuing down, the green becomes more prominent and a flower design can be seen on the robe falling either side of the figures legs. Unlike the figure on the right, this figures legs are completely hidden beneath the clothes, and the just visible footwear seem to be platformed sandals. Going back to the waist of the figure, we can see the arms and hands remain hidden by the robe, though the shape created by holding the arm at an angle appears deliberate around the sword. This also accentuates the shape of the body, creating a slight curve in an otherwise quite angular and rigid form. At the elbow a small pattern is also on display, again accentuating a deliberate arm placement. In the other hand, furthest from us as the viewer, the figure is holding something that appears rectangular, but with a folded section, indicated by the slight bulge and lines further up the shaft.

Despite the different portrayals, the indications of this print upon initial viewing, and with no other context, leads to assumptions of male representation. The presence of swords, the angular shapes that are created in the clothing, and the shaved head give presumptions of maleness; the regal-like quality of the figure to the left assumes status along with the more elaborate clothing and placement ahead of the other figure, which presumes a lower status since they follow. The additional fact that the figure to the left is staring straight ahead and is focused, gives the illusion of power

and duty, whereas the figure to the right has become distracted which also emphasises a 'master-servant' quality. However, the representation of these figures also has an interesting age element that must be examined. The shaved head of the figure on the right gives the illusion of a more mature man, perhaps due to western connotations of this hairstyle being seen in those whose age has led to balding. Yet the longer, more stylised hair, of the figure on the right appears more youthful, and symbolic of attending an important event, where formal or perhaps even traditional practices should be observed. However, upon first engaging with the image, the hairstyle itself does also have a feminised touch. This provides the feeling that there is more to this work than two men of, potentially, differing status walking outside.

This image is an *ukiyo-e* print, created c.1783 by one of the leading artists of the time – Torii Kiyonaga. Kiyonaga has already been discussed in Chapter Three regarding his influence on *bijin-ga* prints and the standardisation of elongated statuesque figures (p.96). These aesthetics are evident in this print also, although now that the artist is revealed, more questions and connections can be made. For instance, the style of Kiyonaga's *bijin-ga* prints is reflected in the figure on the left, however, the clothing is still less elaborate than in prints such as *Courtesans Viewing Cherry Blossoms* (1785; Fig.6). Moreover, the inclusion of swords, and no sign of a tied in the front large *obi,* suggests that the character is not a female sex worker. However, it also does not appear to follow the convention of an assumed male, judging by the character on the right. So what is Kiyonaga communicating in this print? Of whom is it representative?

This print portrays Segawa Kikunojō III, the star *onnagata* of the time, away from the stage at New Year accompanied by a male attendant. It is an interesting print and portrayal, because although there are clear feminine aspects, there are also clear signs of masculine influences which creates an androgynous image: "The print presents the perfectly packaged onnagata, a gorgeous fusion of romantic masculinity and elegant femininity, epitomizing ideals of both genders," (Kominz, 2011, p.85). This interpretation of *onnagata* suggests that they were a blend of male and female genders, androgynous or androgyne as opposed to embodying or becoming 'a woman', at least away from the stage, as it has been asserted was Ayame's goal:

> An *onnagata* … according to Ayame, was not an androgyne but an embodiment of patriarchally inscribed, state-regulated "female" gender… However, because an *onnagata* was a male-sexed body enacting a type of femininity and thus disturbing the conventional alignment of sex, gender and sexuality, Watanabe regards the Kabuki actor as an androgyne.
>
> (Robertson 1992, p.424)

The 'male-sexed' body described here has become an important aspect of the *onnagata* art when discussing the continued tradition of 'all male' *kabuki* theatre. It is also key to the gendered discussions and terminology used in relation to *onnagata*: as, in the quotation from Robertson, there is an assertion that the male-sexed body beneath the costumes and performance means that *onnagata* were androgyne, whereas others consider *how* they lived to be more culturally important. This also raises the issue of terminology. Today androgyne refers to a gender, whereas androgynous refers to the expression or presentation of gender. The print, as Komiz stated, perfectly blends these dualities of an *onnagata* as illustrated in the hair, clothing and physicality of Segawa, which is an androgynous portrayal of an *onnagata* actor, since the focus is on the physical appearance and not the gender of Segawa as a person. This could also explain the assertions that Robertson raises from

Ayame that *onnagata* were not androgyne. This terminology, or even meaning, would not have existed in the same way as today, and Ayame could be referring to the term *futanari*[248] that Isaka refers to as meaning intersex or androgyne in a biological sense (2016, p.27).

However, Robertson states that Ayame, "eschewed what he called the prevailing "androgynous" figure of the onnagata, describing it as futanarihira" (1992, p.424) which Robertson states means double-bodied. Yet, from Isaka's research and translations, this could be read and linked to *futanari*, whilst the androgynous comment implies *futanarihira,* meaning androgynous beauties. Therefore, from these different perspectives and English language translations, Ayame may have been trying to differentiate *onnagata* from *wakashu*, as explored in Part Three. If so, this would have ensured that the art of *onnagata* was communicated 'correctly' – as the embodiment of the female character. In other words, whilst *onnagata* appear to represent androgynous aesthetics and/or androgyny as a gender to viewers today (as *Actor Segawa Kikunojō III and Attendant Making Visits at New Year* demonstrates), at that time they were not both male and female nor genderless in their 'identities', but 'men' engaging in cross-gender acts and performance in multiple aspects of their lives on and off the stage. This is crucial, as Robertson continues, because Ayame emphasised that the *onnagata* did not blend the dualities of binary gender, but that transformation 'into a woman' was key: "For Ayame "female" gender superseded and even negated a male body, and thus the *onnagata,* having become Woman, could bathe with females at public bathhouses." (Robertson, 1992, p.424). It is important to note, however, that Ayame was practising as an *onnagata* roughly 100 years before

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[248] 二形 *futanari* intersex.

this print was created, and that the performative nature of the *onnagata* shifted from the complete embodiment of femininity to that of a more recognisably androgynous, but still highly feminised, beauty.

Segawa Kikunojō III is portrayed with the *onnagata*-identifying *bōshi* and feminine hairstyle seen in many onstage *kabuki* prints and *bijin-ga* works, whereas the attendant is visually identifiable as an adult male due to the shaven head, which is examined further as a signifier in relation to *wakashu* in Chapter Nine. The clothing of Kikunojō is also feminised. It is a *furisode,*[249] which is most often associated with young unmarried women[250] and includes the design of chrysanthemum, known as *kiku* in Japanese, an homage to his name Kikunojō (Kominz, 2011, p.85). This would be a signifier to many of the day as an additional indication as to whom the print is portraying. The small pattern on the elbow of his *furisode,* however, is the more crucial indicator as it is the *mon* of the Segawa lineage. The physicality of Kikunojō is also revealing due to the concealment of the hands in the sleeves of the *furisode,* which was a, "very ladylike thing to do." (Kominz, 2011, p.85); the object in his right hand furthest from us appears to be a folded fan. The presence of a sword however, calls into question the overall feminine or 'womanly' portrayal, as a woman would not be permitted to carry a sword such as this at this time, especially in public. However, it may not have been normative to see an *onnagata*, even in the masculinised portrayal, carrying a sword in public. The clothing also includes platformed sandals which are more reminiscent of the sex-worker procession portrayals discussed in Part One, particularly as these works would emphasise the

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[249] 振袖 *furisode* "swinging sleeves" long sleeved *kimono.*
[250] *Wakashu* also wore and were associated with *furisode.*

footwear. As this print is showing Kikunojō walking, it is suggestive of these prints, and also adds to the height of Kikunojō, again indicating an ideal of the statuesque as a form of beauty. The rest of the clothing is the *kamishimo,* which includes the *hakama*, *kimono* (in this case *furisode*) and *kataginu,*[251] a complete outfit usually worn by *samurai* or courtiers involved in a formal situation. This perhaps indicates that this is still an idealised representation of Kikunojō 'in public', although New Year is an important holiday in Japan and would, therefore, warrant a formal presentation of oneself.

Consequently, in many ways, this print supports the theory of *onnagata* as androgyne, as opposed to Ayame's ideal of *onnagata* as woman. However, it also reiterates the feminine aspects of an *onnagata*'s everyday life during the Tokugawa period as it would not be common practice for other adult 'males' to wear their hair in such a way or to wear feminised versions of clothing.[252] This is emphasised by the presence of the male attendant whose clothing is plain, and more masculinised in terms of the styles at the time,[253] as well as the shaven head signifying adult male-hood. However, as Isaka stated, Ayame did not "renounce masculinity, which he thinks is useful for the art of *onnagata,*" (2016, p.56) but that the *onnagata* should not embody both male and female in a single body:

> An androgynous *onnagata* blurred the boundaries between sex and gender, male and female, femininity and masculinity… Ayame's apparent objective in formulating a theory and method for the *onnagata* was to make distinct both those boundaries and the bounded, all the while recognizing that sex and gender were not "naturally" aligned in any one body.
>
> (Robertson, 1992, p.424)

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[251] *Hakama* are a trouser-like garment worn over a specially designed *kimono*. The *kataginu* is a sleeveless jacket worn over the top with exaggerated shoulders (V&A, 2004).
[252] Although *wakashu* may wear clothing like this, they would not wear the distinctive *bōshi,* as they would still have their forelocks.
[253] i.e. not a *furisode* or the platformed sandals.

Again, it should be noted that this print was created roughly one hundred years after Ayame was working as an *onnagata*, and over fifty since his death. Therefore, the visual portrayal seen in this print would adhere to different ideals and expectations within the popular cultural sphere than in Ayame's time. However, the precedent of *onnagata* practice that Ayame was crucial in informing, is still critical in the understanding and examining of gender representations relating to *onnagata* portrayals. This is especially so when we consider Kiyonaga's portrayal of Segawa Kikunojō III on stage.

Here (1785; Fig.40), Kiyonaga is portraying the same person, but in their full *onnagata* regalia on stage. We can see from the inclusion of the *mon* that the *onnagata* is from the Segawa line and based on the year that it is Kikunojō III. The countenance is similar to that of the 'New Year' print, however it is more expressive; from the tilt of the face upwards, the slight frown and angle of the eyebrows, coupled with the folded arms, we can immediately interpret annoyance and anger in this visage. The 'New Year' print appears more passive in comparison, as if Kikunojō is the subject of a different gaze, a gaze more closely related to that turned on the sex-workers of the time. This is very possible, as the 'New Year' print emulates key aesthetics of *bijin-ga* prints, particularly with the newly established innovations of Utamaro: near absent backgrounds to draw attention to the subjects, standardised beauty with a hint of physiognomy, and as Komiz stated, presents Kikunojō as "a beguiling androgynous youth… the perfectly packaged onnagata, a gorgeous fusion of romantic masculinity and elegant femininity" (2011, p.85). Since the audience for *kabuki* was primarily female, it stands to reason that the audience for prints depicting the actors might also be appealing to women. Therefore, the gaze being turned here

could be the female gaze as outline by Mulvey (1989) and Gamman (1988) but could, conversely, be a reversal of the male gaze (Berger, 1972) as the subject is being looked at in a potentially voyeuristic way. Instead in the representation depicting Kikunojō on stage and in character as a woman, the romantic masculinity and androgynous youth is gone, and we are presented with a cross-dressed ideal feminine example that Ayame and *onnagata* since have striven to represent. This is a representation that artists have emulated in ensuring the feminine elements of their performance and appearance become elevated and idealised, so that they could be idolised as the true performers of femininity on stage.

The 'New Year' print appears to be a rare portrayal of an *onnagata* actor as androgynous, as it was important to maintain the illusion of femininity to allow for believable performances, despite the audiences knowledge that the actor was 'male'. The juxtaposition of *Kikunojō* next to an "unremarkable male servant" (Kominz, 2011, p.85) emphasises the beauty and duality that was at play within the performativity of gender during this period. The covering of the head maintained the illusion of femininity, the sword symbolises the 'actual' male-sexed body, but the clothing illustrated a fashionable mix of feminine and masculine attire. The duality then, was key to the appeal of the *onnagata* in this print specifically but was also fundamental to the portrayal of others in society at this time, as Part Three of this thesis illustrates.

Whilst the focus of this chapter has been on the formation and idealisation of the *onnagata* arts, the argument of constructed female likeness and idealisation could be more relevant to today's performing *onnagata*. The form evolved greatly during the

Tokugawa period to become what it is today, and the current *onnagata* performers are inheriting and utilising centuries of experience and tradition in the art form on which to base their own personal *onnagata* acting styles. Gabrovska links the gender regulations regarding the way in which ideal *kabuki* gender is presented, by stating:

> A new gender order was being constructed in Japan, and it greatly influenced the notions and ideals of gender in kabuki, turning it into a main stage for "preserving" the notions of traditional Japanese "ideal" femininity and masculinity.

> (2015, p.404)

This also supports Leiter's point about idealisation meaning that the femininity portrayed by *onnagata* are fictions and consequently to live as a woman would not provide an advantage to the art. Kano also notes: "So highly valued was their [onnagata] portrayal of femininity that women from the pleasure quarters began to imitate them. Femininity was a set of signs that circulated from the pleasure quarters to the theater and back." (2001, p.5) Therefore, despite the means by which the formation was attained, it did create an impact on the ways in which femininity was performed and constructed outside of the theatrical world. This continues to enhance ideals as represented within prints, as it is a combination of the ideal femininity and ideal masculinity in one representation.

One of the pervading ideas as to why *onnagata* continued to perform female-likeness roles beyond the lifting of the women performing on stage ban is that a woman would be incapable of expressing the ideals of a woman onstage. This ideology does correlate to the restrictions of the *bakufu* and belief systems that women were inferior, and therefore, the idea that men could more effectively portray an ideal woman is easier to understand from this societal mind set. Nevertheless, there was still stereotyping apparent in 20th century *kabuki* scholarship because *onnagata* are

frequently referred to in ways that make themselves, women and femininity seem subservient and as lesser than the stereotypes referred to as masculine: "According to Watanabe, the androgyny of the *onnagata* was achieved by style (coiffure and clothing) in addition to (homo)sexual practices, specifically the taking of a "passive" feminine role." (Robertson, 1992, p.424). The use of the term 'passive' in connection with a feminine role – in this case in relation to sexual practices – creates negative stereotypical and gendered readings of *onnagata* and cis-women.[254] Although not necessarily the intention, the usage of the term here likens the penetrated in a homosexual relationship to women in a negative context (passive) regardless of their gender identity, and by referring to *onnagata* in such a way also perpetuates a negative female gender even in idealised portrayals. Gabrovska took this discussion further by stating: "it has generally been assumed that, like women of the Tokugawa society, in the kabuki world onnagata were always forced to exist under the shadow of tachiyaku, both onstage and in the dressing room." (2015, p.405). Although *onnagata* are perhaps the most famous or well-known aspect of *kabuki* outside of Japan today, Gabrovska asserts that within *kabuki* scholarship and Edo society *tachiyaku* were dominant, much like men in the wider society (2015, p.400). Antononoka echoes this when discussing *onnagata* as *manga* characters: "…the onnagata is frequently involved in power play; his status as a man in a patriarchal society is conflicted with the gender he performs on stage." (2019, p.87). These perceptions show that despite the popularity of these actors with male and female

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[254] Despite this, as already stated, it was common practice for *onnagata* to have wives and children, with the sons continuing in the *kabuki* traditions of the family. Of course, having a family does not necessarily equate to a masculine or male gender, nor does it equate to a heterosexual lifestyle. These complex sexual relationships and Japan's attitudes around homosexuality are explored in depth in the Chapter Eleven, however, in terms of the *onnagata*'s perceived gender it was important to include a comment about sexuality and the use of the term 'passive' in relation to their place in *kabuki* and women's place in wider society.

audiences, heteropatriarchal notions of gender were still prominent within the *kabuki* realm of the Tokugawa period and its scholarship today.

Ukiyo-e should also be considered from these perspectives, as despite the popularity of *onnagata*, the representations in prints appear more 'passive' – very similar to *bijin-ga*. This creates a focus on the subject of the female character as an object to be looked at. Of course, there are many prints of *onnagata* on stage specifically that are by definition active, however, in comparison to their male character counterparts, these depictions are often much less active as they are not generally engaged in the scene in the same ways. Nevertheless, as explored in the analysis of Kikunojō on and off-stage, the arguments of passivity and gaze can be contradictory; the print (Fig.46) encompasses the 'looked-at-ness' (Mulvey, 1989) of women in *bijin-ga* but emphasises the male attributes of the actors. Which enforces the notion of the male gaze and female gaze in one: as an ideal and idol.

Chapter Seven:
"Femininity" and Androgyny

Despite the modernisation that took place at the dawning of the Meiji period, *onnagata* continued to remain on *kabuki* stages, even when the acting ban for women was lifted in 1891 (Kano, 2001, p.31). As already alluded to in the previous chapter, one reason for this was the questioning of a woman's ability to play a woman on stage; this argument continued in all forms of Japanese theatre during the period, particularly as female actors began to gain prominence:

> The debate over the "actress question" [in Meiji era] usually took the form of asking whether or not Japanese women were physically suited to be actresses and whether or not the newly trained actresses would be superior to the male impersonators of female roles, the *onnagata*. The debate focused on whether or not these "men acting as women" could, and should, be surpassed by "women acting as women".
>
> (Kano, 2001, p.16)

Kano continued that referring to *onnagata* as men acting as women could be problematic due to gender constructions in the pre-modern era, and referred to *wakashu* and *onnagata* as a potentially separate gender; this is a theory that is analysed more directly in Part Three Chapter Nine. However, this debate created waves within the political and social discourse of the time relating to gender and proprietary.

Similarly to the Tokugawa period, performances by women remained, "synonymous with sexual entertainment" (Kano, 2001, p.7) and so this permeated the discourse surrounding female actors as a means of attempting to keep them from the stage. However, the women who were to pioneer female theatrical performance in the modern era persevered and: "Challenging the prerogative of the *onnagata* to represent feminine beauty, these women sought to prove that women could act, that

they could act like women, and that they could do so better than men," (Kano, 2001, p.7). Throughout the period ideals of femininity changed, as discussed in Chapter Four, and the 'New Woman' alongside female actors assisted in the change of feminine performativity. Kano notes that this led to a change in significance of the *onnagata* as unlike in the Tokugawa period they were, "no longer regarded as the embodiment of ideal femininity" (2001, p.8) leading to debates about their relevance in a changing society. Technological innovations also impacted on this debate, due to the sudden role of the body becoming key to the performance of ideal gender (Kano, 2001, p.31). From here women continued to gain prominence on stage: "The display of the body became the testing and training ground for actresses in the years following 1914. It was by showing their bodies that women proved they were better than *onnagata* in performing the role of women." (Kano, 2001, p.225).[255] Yet, the innovations and dedication of those early performers paved the way for other female led-theatrical endeavours, but one of the most famous seems to subvert binary gender expectations through continued cross-gendered acts.

Takarazuka: Rise of the Otokoyaku

In 1914 an all-female entertainment troupe was formed by Kobayashi Ichizo that evolved into a large scale theatre experience known as the Takarazuka Revue. These performers play both female and male roles in plays as if they were the reverse or opposite of *kabuki* and *onnagata,* although the style portrayed here was more musical theatre than the now traditional *kabuki* style or other forms of western

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[255] Ultimately a shift in performance and recreating *kabuki* as a traditional art led to the continuation of *onnagata*. However, this is not to say that those initial years of female acting were without complaint, scandal or derision, as explored through the emergence of *moga* and 'New Women' in Chapters Four and Five. See Kano Ayako, 2001, *Acting Like a Woman in Modern Japan* for a detailed examination of women and theatre from the Meiji period, including analysis of performances and the political changes that impacted on the 'rise' of actress.

theatrical arts.[256] The performers are referred to as students (Nakamura & Matsuo, 2003; Buruma, 2012; Strickland, 2008) as a means to deny them maturity according to Robertson (1998, p.14). This maintained the innocence connotations that were associated with the *shōjo* during the formation of the Revue, as well as placing the performers in the role of amateur, thereby keeping wages lower (Robertson, 1998, p.14). The status of 'amateur' also emphasises Kobayashi's attempts to differentiate the Revue from 'actresses' in the professional sense that held connotations of the 'New Woman'. This also encouraged parents to allow their daughters to become part of the Revue and later school by signalling this was not a "front for unlicensed prostitution" (Strickland, 2008, pp.22-23). Kobayashi further enhanced this encouragement by situating the Revue school[257] as a place that would assist by 'training' daughters as part of the 'Good Wife, Wise Mother' tract, as Kobayashi believed that the 'students' should only perform for a short time as a means of "'filling in time' until marriage, not starting a life-long career" (Strickland, 2008, p.75).[258]

Similarly to *onnagata*, the performance of male roles in the Takarazuka Revue is based on *kata*: "A series of masculine postures is rehearsed over and over again… many of these postures were originally developed in the 1950s when senior members of the troupe diligently copied poses from Marlon Brando movies." (Buruma, 2012, p.114). Though as Strickland notes, the performers would be young girls when joining the school, and would, therefore, not have the personal or lived experience of

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[256] It is important to note that some of the original pieces performed as *kabuki*, and some pieces performed today, are dance pieces.
[257] Which was established in 1919.
[258] Though as Strickland examines, in later decades some Takarazuka stars left to pursue other acting careers in film and television, or remained in the world of Takarazuka but not necessarily on stage (2008, pp.176-204).

gendered markers in wider society for both feminine or masculine portrayals, due to the homosocial basis of their training (Strickland, 2008, p.113). These markers, or codes again link to the discussions of performativity outlined by Butler (2006), but also Rippon (2019). As such, *kata* was required for ensuring that the audience could understand the, "readily identifiable gender markers" they used to convey the gender of their role, but to compensate for their, "scant worldly experience" (Strickland, 2008, p.113). Comparably to *onnagata*, *otokoyaku* would observe male characteristics in order to successfully create a male character on stage, again as an idealised version of masculinity (Robertson, 1992, p.423; Strickland, 2008, pp.124-126).

However, the founder of the Takarazuka Revue did not want his *otokoyaku* actors to emulate traditional *onnagata* practices of living as a different gender away from the stage as he, "believed that a masculine female outside the context of the Revue was something abnormal and perverted," due to the impact of 20th century sexologists (Robertson, 1992, p.424). Robertson discussed this further by stating that the terminology of *otokoyaku* and *musemeyaku*[259] were essential to the formulations of the gender performance, as *yaku*, "connoted serviceability and dutifulness. An otokoyaku thus is an actor whose theatrical duty is to showcase masculinity; she is not, however, promoted as a model for males offstage to imitate" (Robertson, 1998, p.14). Strickland also stated that the 'students' were "subjected simultaneously to two types of gender-based training," (2008, p.85). The first was for the stage: "which exaggerates or challenges stereotypes in Japanese society" (2008, p.85), and

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[259] The female role player in the Revue. Robertson states that this has connotations itself linked to the Good Wife, Wise Mother mantra that was promoted during this time as Kobayashi styled the Revue as a rejection of the "New Woman" or "Woman Problem" and thus created a father daughter appearance (1998, pp.14-16).

secondly the: "expression of obedient, demure, and virtuous femininity which each Takarasienne is expected to sustain throughout her off-stage life." (Strickland, 2008, p.85). Strickland also notes that the motto of the revue itself expresses an "ideal femininity" (2008, p.92) which itself is interesting, as the focus for many is the ideal masculinity that the performers communicate, but:

> The *otokoyaku,* in particular, represents not only the 'ideal man', as Kobayashi and the Revue Company insist, but also a type of 'ideal woman,' a positive model of female agency, whom they [female fans] admire and often wish to emulate.
>
> (Strickland, 2008, p.7)

This again creates links to the discussions of idealisation and ideal types in the Introduction, by emphasising an ideal of which to strive to in relation to *musumeyaku*, and the adaption of idealisation as a 'perfect' representation, in relation to *otokoyaku*.

However, this ideology of the emulation of femininity soon became challenged by the fans of the theatre as the 20th century progressed:

> Whereas Kobayashi sought to use the actor as a vehicle for introducing the artistry of the theater into the home… some Takarasiennes and their fans used the theater as a starting point for an opposing strategy, rejecting gender roles associated with the patriarchal household and constructing alternative styles or modes of sexuality.
>
> (Robertson, 2001, p.14)

This has links to the discussions of *bishōnen* gender within *shōjo manga,* which has been described as a, "mechanism offering an escape from the social realities of gender suppression and the avoidance of sex(uality)…" (Fujimoto, 2015a, p.78). This has direct links to Anan's discussions of the Takarazuka and the Company's *manga* adaptions, as she stated: "what they actually find [female audience] is their ideal girls" (2015, p.141). This is because *bishōnen* could in fact be surrogates for

female readers, therefore, the 'ideal man' could in fact be an 'ideal girl'. This is examined further in Part Three Chapter Ten, but as the links with cross-gendered performance are irrefutable a brief explanation was also required here.

The Revue allowed female fans to view and experience in a theatrical and public setting what *manga* from the 1960s onwards allowed in private. The origins of these ideals can also be seen in Okuni's imitation of the *kabukimono* which, as Gabrovska stated, effectively softened the reality of these men and turned, "them into a safe symbol of eroticism" (2015, p.390). Safety in representation appears to be an essential aspect of gender and sexuality exploration in Japanese arts, as well as on stage, as Strickland also comments on "safety" in affection for *otokoyaku* from discussions with her informants, which largely relate to "mistakes" being avoidable compared to heterosexual relations, e.g. pregnancy (2008, p.159). A producer of the Revue in the 1980s said to Buruma: "…it was surely healthier for young girls to idolize Takarazuka stars than these long-haired pop groups" (2012, pp.114-5). It was a safe way for young girls and women to explore gender and sexuality that did not rely on the presence of a male-sexed body, despite the Revue's management attempts to "limit the female fans' infatuation to the ideal man performed by otokoyaku" (Robertson, 1992, p.433). However, through her research Robertson asserted that fans did not see a "man" in the performance but that: "The otokoyaku, in short, is appreciated as an exemplary female who can successfully negotiate both genders, and their attendant roles, without being constrained by either." (Robertson, 1992 p.433). Here Robertson's discussion of audience reactions to *otokoyaku* is in many ways the same as the Tokugawa-period audiences to *onnagata*. They knew that a male-sexed-body lay beneath the costume, but they were confronted with a

performance that captured ideal femininity and acknowledged the actors as experts of their craft.

Robertson refers to the gender acts of the Takarazuka Revue as "female-embodied androgyny," (1992, p.419). This feels like a juxtaposition, as androgyny refers to being both, neither one or in between genders, and to include 'female embodied' seems to contradict this. However, Robertson expands on this by referring to the "surface politics of the body" as outlined by Butler (2006, p.184; Robertson, 1998, pp.47-8) which relates to androgynous expression which is different to the gender of androgyne (Robertson, 1992, p.419). Essentially this refers back to the learned codes discussed in Chapter One relating to gender performativity, and that all forms of gender portrayal is a performance (Robertson, 1998, p.39). Therefore, the female-embodied androgyny intent is the same as a way of explaining how the *otokoyaku* and *onnagata* utilise their 'hidden' bodies to portray their character's gender through the use of cosmetics, clothing and gesture. However, in relation to the artistic representations of *onnagata,* this 'hidden body' remains hidden so that the illusion of *onnagata* as truly embodying the female character they are portraying can continue.

The founder of the Takarazuka Revue created a similar position for the *otokoyaku* as was created around *onnagata* as being superior actors of femininity: "Kobayashi proclaimed that "the [Takarazuka] *otokoyaku* is not male but is more suave, more affectionate, more courageous, more charming, more handsome, and more fascinating than a real male"" (Robertson, 1992, p.424). This idea of 'more… than a real male' is significant as reflective of early discussions of *onnagata* and their relation to women. Regardless of appearing very similar in terms of cross-gender

performance, *otokoyaku* were not to become 'men' as *onnagata* became 'woman', nor were the performances to create an emulation for men in reality (Robertson, 1992, p.424). In fact, "Revue directors refer to the actor's achievement of "male" gender not in terms of transformation or metamorphosis *(henshin)* but in terms of "putting something on the body" *(mi ni tsukeru)* - in this case, markers of masculinity."(Robertson, 1992, p.424-5). 'Markers of masculinity' is thought-provoking, as the masculinity that the Takarazuka Revue often emulates is very different to the heteropatriarchal masculinity that many would expect. A producer of the Takarazuka Revue stated: "…before the war it was hard to find boys beautiful enough to suit the ideals of our audience," (Buruma, 2012, p.115). While speaking with Buruma in the 1980s he conceded that this was not necessarily the case anymore, nor is it today with the resurgence of an androgynous ideal: "Not beautiful enough; in other words, no real man can ever be as beautiful as a woman playing a man, just as no woman is quite as stunning as a skilful female impersonator" (Buruma, 2012, p.115).[260]

Female Cross Dressing and links to Manga

The idea of 'putting something on the body' (Robertson, 1998, p.59) is also thought-provoking in terms of *manga*, as Antononoka discusses LaMarre's "concept of the "soulful body"" (2018, pp.46-50 & Antononoka, 2019, p.89; LaMarre, 2009). This concept has similarities to Robertson's discussion of the Takarazuka identity as it relates to utilising costume, as well as character design, as means of conveying

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[260] Beauty is also specifically linked to youth and death within Japanese culture: "youth is beautiful precisely because it *is* so short lived... death is the only pure and thus fitting end to the perfection of youth. Bishōnen heroes in history, legends and modern pop culture almost always die" (Buruma, 2012, p.131) and this is also true for *kabuki* characters, and extends to some other forms of popular culture such as *manga*.

personality for the characters and recognition to the readers. It also relates to Butler's performativity discourse and the surface politics that Robertson raises (1998, pp.47-8). For *shōjo manga*: "… the costume does not just reveal interiority beyond the character's body; it becomes a part of the body, or may substitute the "soul", visually representing a character's emotions and representing her or his relationship with other characters in the environment." (Antononoka, 2019, pp.89-90). In the Revue this would relate to the type[261] of masculinity being performed, and in *kabuki* the type of femininity, although for both these art forms *kata* play significant roles in the markers of gender. The influence of *shōjo manga* visuals specifically *bishōnen*, can be seen very clearly in the gender acts of the Takarazuka Revue as well as other cultural cross-gender acts such as those of the *dansō,* female-to-male cross-dressers. The term *dansō*[262] has been used in part to describe *otokoyaku* in the past as Robertson states: "From the mid-1930s onward the expression *dansō no reijin*, meaning literally "a beautiful person [that is, a female] in masculine attire," was used sympathetically in reference to both Takarazuka *otokoyaku* and masculinized females." (1992, p.429). Again, this link to masculinity without being 'male' is important to the cross-gender acts and performances of *otokoyaku,* as they are not necessarily trying to become men but to embody a type of male-hood or masculinity that is unique to their stage performances, much like femininity is to *onnagata*.

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[261] Type here refers to the role and character motivations – for instance hypermasculine or "soft". This is also explored in Chapter Eleven in relation to sexuality more directly.

[262] 男装 *dansō:* to disguise oneself as a man i.e. female-to-male crossdressing. Although there are parallels that can be drawn between these and the Takarazuka Revue, there is a fundamental difference in that many contemporary *dansō* cross-dress as part of their private lives as well as for their careers. As Fanasca stated (2017; 2019), there are three main categories in which *dansō* fit within the entertainment and business industries. The first Fanasca explained is within café settings, much like maid cafés, in which the *dansō* are more akin to cosplayers. The second is in a subsection of the Japanese music industry that is *dansō idols.* Finally and possibly the most important in terms of gender performativity there are *dansō* escorts. These *dansō* according to Fanasca also cross-dress in their private lives.

The links between the Takarazuka and *shōjo manga* actually began from the outset

of *shōjo manga* creation due to the interest of Tezuka in the Revue since

childhood.[263] The influence of Takarazuka can be seen in the development of 1970s

shōjo manga, specifically the "cross-dressing female manga characters who evolved

into "beautiful boys,"" (Welker, 2008, p.48). According to Fujimoto,[264] female-to-

male cross-dressing within *shōjo manga*, particularly of the 1970s and 1980s, is also

a comment on gender inequality as they are trying to achieve a social status that

generally would be denied to them due to their being female (2015). This is the case

in the famous *Rose of Versailles manga* set at the time of Marie Antoinette, but due

to fan influences, the story shifted to focus on the cross-gendered lead. *The Rose of*

Versailles is also "the most popular girl's comic ever staged by the Takarazuka"

(Buruma, 2012, p.118) and has been performed repeatedly since the 1970's

(Strickland, 2008, p.46). Due to the importance and lasting impact that *The Rose of*

Versailles has had on cross-gendered performative representations in popular culture,

an image from this *manga* has been chosen as the case study for this chapter.

Roles of Cross-gender Acting in Manga

Despite cross-gendered performance in *manga* aiming to "play" with gender and

disrupt binaries, visually there are also important markers of gender such as long hair

and eyelashes versus shorter hair and narrower eyes (Antononoka, 2019, p.90) as

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[263] In fact, Tezuka stated that when he was approached in 1952 to create a story *manga* for girls, he immediately thought of the transforming the Takarazuka Revue into *manga* form, due to the Revue's popularity with girls (Nakamura & Matsuo, 2003, p.72). This comment from Tezuka shows the influence that the Takarazuka Revue has had on the conventions and storylines of *shōjo manga* since its inception. It should also be noted that there was a personal influence on Tezuka regarding the Revue as his mother was a fan and often took him to performances with her as they lived in Takarazuka City, home of the Revue (Nakamura & Matsuo, 2005, p.72).
[264] Originally written in 1998, the 2004 translation of Fujimoto's essay states "What these works share is the motif of "dressing as a man as the expression of a desire to avoid growing up."(p.79) These ideas were developed in her 2015 chapter in McLelland et.al.

markers of femininity and masculinity. These changes in the character illustration are fascinating, as despite this character being a cross-dressing or cross-gender portrayal from their introduction in the *manga*, the way their gender is presented still alters to reflect masculine and feminine traits. This forms the basis of the case study in this chapter, to reveal how cross-gendered representation can be interpreted across multiple images.

Returning to the *dansō no reijin* discussion for a moment, Robertson stated in reference to Takarazuka performances of the *Rose of Versaille* that: "Clothing is the means to, and even the substance of, the character's commutable gender, as the expression *dansō no reijin* suggests" (Robertson, 1992, pp.430-1). This again reflects LaMarre and Antononoka's discussions of the "soulful body" in *manga*, as when costume changes occur, so too do changes in the personality and social standing of the character, as is recognised by the readers (LaMarre, 2009; Antononoka, 2019, p.89). This can be seen quite evidently, although also by means of 'magical' influence, in the *manga Princess Knight* (*Ribon no kishi*),[265] which is often credited as the first *shōjo manga* (Takahashi, 2008, p.127), although this is in reference to story *manga* specifically, which Tezuka developed and popularised. However, whilst being extremely influential in the development and popularisation of *manga*,[266] some critics emphasise that Tezuka "contributed almost nothing to the distinctive visual style that was to define shojo manga as a genre" (Takahashi, 2008, p.128). By this, Takahashi is referring to the visual signifiers discussed in Chapter

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[265] Originally serialised between 1953 -56 for *Shōjo Kurabu*, the story was then reworked and reserialized in *Nakayoshi* 1963-66. The version and imagery used in this thesis is from the 2011 *Princess Knight* Part.1 and Part.2 collection which is based on the 1977 *Tezuka Osamu Manga Zenshu* edition.
[266] Or more specifically story *manga* which is now the main convention for *manga* creation and publication due to Tezuka's "incorporation of cinematic conventions" (Takahashi, 2008, p.127)

Four: "spatial ambiguities" (Takahashi, 2008, p.128) such as the panel layouts with full portraits overlaid, and the emphasis on the inner emotions as a visual representation: "A key sign that Tezuka is an exceptional rather than a key figure in the world of shōjo manga is his disinterest in the expression of the inner feelings of his heroines." (Takahashi, 2008, p.128). This is because Tezuka continued the tradition of using thought bubbles to express the "interior monologues" of his *shōjo manga* characters, which Takahashi states equates to the action of *shōnen* as it links to the passage of time. The developing *shōjo manga* aesthetics had begun to champion the use of free-floating text to indicate the interior of the characters as it was more akin to a first person narration (Takahashi, 2008, p.128). Essentially, whilst Tezuka popularised and innovated *manga*, and influenced *mangaka* to follow suit, it was the female *mangaka* whom he mentored that created the visual turning point for *shōjo manga*.

Needless to say, *shōjo manga* here means 'full story *manga*' as opposed to the shorter *manga* of pre-war Japan that had previously appeared in newspapers and magazines as short strips or supplements. It is important to note that despite *Princess Knight* being referenced as "the original gender-bending warrior girl," (Nakamura & Matsuo, 2003, p.72) gender-bending-type storylines had existed prior to creation of this *manga,* but Tezuka's work did bring larger storyline driven *manga* to *shōjo,* which was crucial to the development of the genre by the later innovative female *mangaka*. For example *The Mysterious Clover*, from 1934 by Matsumoto Katsuji was a 16-page *manga* created as a pull out for the *Girls Friend* (*Shōjo no tomo*) magazine (Holmberg, 2014, p.1, para 2) that utilised a gender performativity styled storyline of a young girl in a hero role. In *The Mysterious Clover* however, the lead

character is not necessarily living their life as the opposite binary gender, nor as an androgynous non-binary representation. The character is physically and visibly female whilst taking on a recognisably male role reminiscent of Robin Hood. However, Matsumoto does make a comment on gender during the works according to Holmberg:

> One boy gets socked by his sister. "Hey, you stay home," he had said. "Girls are useless. There's no point in you going." To which she responds with clenched fist, "How dare you! Boy, girl, it doesn't matter. In our hearts, we both believe in justice. Say what you said again and I'll be leaving *you* behind.
>
> (2014, p.1. para.9).

Despite perhaps not being the intention of this *manga* specifically, the use of male stereotypical traits and characters for a female character, and comments translated by Holmberg shows a positive representation towards female gender, and that there should not be stereotypes of masculinity and femininity. This could be classed as a cross-dressing *manga*, because at the beginning Clover is seen in a dress similar to those of other young girls in the *manga*, however, when presenting as the mysterious hero Clover dresses more like the young boys of the village (Holmberg, 2014). However, as *shōjo manga* developed as its own narrative driven genre, cross-gendered acts and dressing became a different form of escapism; that of transcending a woman's position in reality:

> In almost all cases, the "girls dressed as boys" in *shōjo* manga do so in order to achieve a social status or take on a social role that would be denied to them as women. In other words, it can be said that the basis for taking on male appearance stems from gender inequality, and that such characters are rather strongly inscribed with an opposition to conventional gender roles. In most cases, however, the heroine abandons her male disguise when she falls in love.
>
> (Fujimoto, 2015a, p.81)

The idea that in order to find love these cross-dressing characters must abandon their androgyny or non-binary identities is striking, and can be seen in Tezuka's *Princess Knight,* when Sapphire falls in love with Prince Franz (Vol, 2, p.346). However, in the case of *The Mysterious Clover,* the story has no romantic climax as it is a shorter *manga* focused solely on the rescue of Clover's town and king from a gang. Nevertheless, the cross-dressing elements could still apply especially due to the comments of the young boy about girls being no use. However, as all the children assist in the rescue of the King at the end of the story the importance of Clover as a cross-dressing character trying to push against the social role of a woman becomes slightly irrelevant. It must be reiterated that this *manga* was a supplement for a magazine aimed solely at young girls before the post-war *manga* boom. Therefore, the gender of Clover as a young woman is important, but not necessarily as a cross-dressing or non-binary means of expression for women to push back against societal expectations. This is due to expectations at the time of *The Mysterious Clover*'s publication being different to those of post-war Japan when women became more active in visual representations than before. This type of activity is explored in the following case study which examines different elements of cross-gendered performance in imagery.

Case Study: *The Rose of Versailles*

There is striking use of perspective and layers in this illustration (Fig.41;Vol.2 p.32). The figure that dominates much of the page is placed in front of a series of panels, which perhaps symbolises or indicates that the figures in the panels are distant to this figure. The figure appears to be of import; they are wearing a military uniform and have a serious expression on their face. The uniform is decorative, suggesting that

this is a special event that requires a certain level of dress; the hat under their arm suggests that any formal introduction has already taken place. However, at odds with this serious militaristic impression, is the long flowing hair, bright expressive eyes, long eyelashes and rounded face. The eyes are not overly large, but are full of expression and shining in a way that indicates intensity, but the eyelashes that frame this serious expression are elongated. This illustrative detail appears to suggest femininity, as does the long hair that frames a slightly rounded face falling in soft curls around the shoulders of the figure.

The background shows sketches of women in period dress as they converse with each other and are just visible behind a shaded cover. The styles of dress and hair suggest this is a western setting, as the hair is curled atop the heads of the women, while the dresses appear corseted and full; therefore, it is clear that this is an historically set illustration – possibly the 18th or 19th century. If this is the case, then the figure in the front must be taken for a man, as a woman during this period would not be in a military uniform at an event such as this must be. Given that the women appear to be dressed and styled in a specific way, it could be insinuated that the setting is also at a noble residence; therefore, this person must be important or have links with nobility in order to attend. They do not appear to be interacting with anyone in the scene, nor are there any indicators in this image alone as to whom they are.

The layering of the image, with this figure alone in front and the background panels shaded, evokes a sense of secrecy or segregation; perhaps this character is not welcome amongst the crowd of women. There are speech bubbles within this

illustration, which provide some contextual clues to support parts of this secrecy hypothesis. The women are conversing, therefore the shaded overlay is a symbolic gesture to show that discussions are taking place that are not to be overheard by the wrong people; perhaps they are 'gossiping' about this character. However, the intense gaze, slightly turned head and the hand starting to clench, indicates that this character *is* in fact privy to the discussions taking place, symbolically, behind their back. The intensity indicates they do not like what they are hearing: perhaps about themselves and their presence at this event? Further investigation shows that this is not the case. The women are discussing royalty, a Queen, and an affair she is rumoured to be having with a Lord. Is this character the man in question? Are they angered that the secret has been discovered? Given the name, Lord von Fersen, that is discussed it can be deduced that this is set during the 18th century in an European country and that the character could be him, due to historical military connections.

The combination of a masculinised uniform with a 'feminised face' is perhaps an indicator of the beauty aesthetics that were popular during the time when the illustration was published. This illustration originates from 1972 when, as discussed throughout the thesis, *shōjo manga* began to use innovative illustrative techniques to convey storylines centred on emotions and character development. The use of the not quite full-length portrait overlaying panels with additional 'action' taking place was one such innovation, which allows the reader to witness multiple events taking place simultaneously, whilst remaining focused on the main character. Here it indicates that the character is listening to the 'gossip' going around the court at which they appear to be, but at this stage, we do not know from this single image what relation they have to the rumours nor what they are going to do regarding it. What we can

infer from the illustration is that they will be doing something following this discovery of a scandal, due to the intensity of the eyes. Further contextual information is provided in the following panels (1972, Vol.2, p.33). We discover that this character is not Lord von Fersen but Oscar François de Jarjayes, someone who is clearly loyal to the Queen, but who is not usually as formal as they are being in this instance, as is indicated by the surprise from both the Queen and the third character present, André. This formality is due to Oscar wanting to protect the Queen's reputation upon hearing this gossip. This hints that Oscar may have regular interaction with the Royal family and the Queen; therefore, they are either nobility themselves, or tied with the Royal Guard. However, the following pages that detail the anguish and loneliness of the Queen, whom we now know is Marie Antoinette, reveals there is much more than meets the eye regarding Oscar.

This *manga* is entitled *The Rose of Versailles*, and was serialised between 1972 and 1973 in the *shōjo*-targeted magazine, *Margaret.* It was during this time that beauty aesthetics of male characters began to evolve, to reflect a new ideal of male beauty. This resulted in ambiguously-gendered lead characters who were anatomically male, and as the decade progressed, became the subjects of homoerotic works (see Chapter Ten). Here, Oscar is adhering to this new ideal of feminised masculinity with the long hair, large expressive eyes and rounded face. However, this is a much more complex *manga* that plays with gender in a very different way, as Oscar may reflect the ideals of a *bishōnen* and may live as a man within the court of Marie Antoinette, but Oscar is in fact a 'woman'.

The feminised features here are not just reflecting a new desirable ideal; they are reflecting the truth of Oscar beneath the masculinised clothing and role that 'she' plays. Unlike other *manga*, the characters are aware that Oscar is a woman but has been raised as a man in order to lead the Royal Guard, as her father dictated. As such, this *manga* explores cross-gender performance in a very different way to others, as Oscar does not have to hide their female identity in the same way that Sapphire in *Princess Knight* does (p.247), but this does not mean that there are no complications or changes to Oscar's appearance to reflect their gender role for certain parts of the *manga*:

> Oscar is a cross-dressing warrior girl. When she participates in combat, her face is depicted with a stronger jawline, shorter eyelashes, and narrow eyes, which is contrasted to her round eyes, elongated eyelashes, and softer face shape in scenes with her male lovers.

> (Antononoka, 2019, p.90)

For example, the main case study image scene depicts Oscar as the androgynous, ambiguously-gendered ideal popular at this time, as they are not engaging in any specifically gendered action. An illustration from later in the story however, (Fig.42; Vol.3 p.425) reflects a much more masculine portrayal of Oscar. The face is much more pointed and angular; the eyes, whilst still expressive, are smaller; and the chest and shoulders appear broader and more muscular. In effect this illustration adheres much more closely to the mature representation of a beautiful male, reminiscent of the rock stars of the late 1960s and early 1970s before the *bishōnen* aesthetic became the 'norm'.[267] This is because the scene is depicting Oscar in their role as Captain, reuniting with the squadron. The symbolism of the clouds and rays of sun behind Oscar also emphasise the importance that Oscar has to these men as a leader, through

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[267] Part Three, Chapter Ten for further discussion of *bishōnen* aesthetics and development in *manga.*

symbolisms of the divine and the sun with French history. This does also rely on visual literacy and understanding the semiotic codes of *manga,* as Oscar does not literally have a background light and fan in front to create the movement of the clothing and hair; it is the metaphoric visual of this rock-star like aesthetic to communicate the meaning and importance of Oscar to the soldiers, but also the audience.

On the other hand, there is a scene when Oscar, for the only time, dresses as a woman (Fig.43; Vol 2, p.273). Here Oscar's hair has been gathered atop her head in an original style compared to some of the other women in the *manga*, along with a dress that is not strictly historically accurate and differs from those of the women around her (Antononoka, 2018, p.53). This is perhaps a choice by Riyoko Ikeda to set Oscar apart regardless of the gender being portrayed. The face is more heart-shaped whilst dressed as a woman, and it is clear that she is a beautiful and elegant woman. However, the representation is still different from all the other women in the *manga*, as Oscar remains taller and more slender; the eyes are slightly smaller and fingers longer. In short, Oscar continuously represents a duality of gender within the illustrative portrayals; remaining feminised or masculinised in some way (Anan, 2016, p.117).[268]

The main difference between Oscar and other women who cross-dress or perform gender, besides not having to hide, is that Oscar does not give up their identity as a 'man' in order to achieve happiness and love as a 'woman'. Of course, like most

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[268] Antononoka also discusses the relevance of "linework" in relation to these subtle depictions of gender (2018, pp.86-88) from perspectives gained through Oshiyama Michiko's 2007 publication *Shōjo Manga Jendā Hyōshōron* [*Shōjo Manga Gender Representation Theory*].

manga of this time, the story ends tragically for Oscar, and indeed most of the characters, as this is set during the French Revolution. However, when Oscar does eventually find love with André,[269] Oscar does not have to leave behind a cross-gender performance. In fact, following the love scene, Oscar goes into battle with André and they meet their untimely ends. This directly contradicts Fujimoto's discussion (2015a, p.80) that the cross-gendered or dressed character must cast off this part of 'her' life and become wholly woman when she finds love. The scene in particular was also innovative in that it adhered to censorship, but the hiding of the bodies continued the illusion of androgyny and cross-gender play: "They look like an androgynous couple… Eroticism in the scene rejects the conventionally gendered and sexualised gaze" (Anan, 2016, p.120). This has also been referenced as a turning point for some on a personal level, as Anan states, regarding Akiko Mizoguchi's comment that Oscar and André, "helped her form [her] lesbian identity," (2016, p.121) which continues to emphasise the non-hetero/sexual/normative stance regarding these characters depictions.[270]

Oscar is the perfect example of graphic art conventions and aesthetics at play; a masculine-assumed character portrayed with feminine features, who is considered a great beauty and adored by all at the court. However, this adoration takes a new meaning and shows a different understanding and acceptance of gender than can potentially be found in reality. Since the character is not 'just' an attractive male, but, is an androgynous beautiful 'woman', Oscar is able to occupy spaces for both

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[269] Who also holds an androgynous appeal but is 'feminised' in terms of a lower status to Oscar (Anan, 2015, p.120).
[270] Mizoguchi also mentions that BL helped her 'become' lesbian throughout her lecture and discussions as part of the Japan Foundation New York group lecture about BL in Asia, though does not mention Oscar and Andre specifically (2022b).

men and women: "what is more significant is that it provided readers with an imaginary stage to experience the life of a revolutionary androgyne who fights to overthrow the ancient, powerful regime of gender and sexuality" (Anan, 2016, p.114). This is particularly significant as Oscar is a solider within the story, and eventually turns to fight for the people in the revolution as opposed to protecting the royal family. Anan also discusses the political motivations during 1970's Japan, and the impacts of the Women's Liberation Movement:

> Ikeda went against the social structure that did not allow women's autonomy. She writes that she wanted the French Revolution in this manga to be "the inner revolution of Japanese women" in an age when they could not choose their own lives.

> (Anan, 2016, p.121 quoting Ikeda, 2003, p.146)

Thus, the use of a cross-gendered performance in the *manga* was about empowerment of and for women, as Fujimoto (2015a) discussed: "The ancient regime of France here stands for the sexist, heteronormative, and, to some extent, class system of Japan" (Anan, 2016, p.124). *The Rose of Versailles* maintained this performative nature through to tragic death, despite a "hetero" love interest. Again, the aesthetics and visuals of the characters emphasised that, whilst Oscar was biologically female, they were together androgynous or non-heteronormative and therefore, the love and sex scene did not adhere to the usual conventions. However, despite the aesthetics and presentation of Oscar as cross-gender acting, the 'sex' of the characters meant this coupling was heterosexual which is significant in terms of *manga* content at this time. Due to the portrayal of heterosexual sex *The Rose of Versailles* received criticism. Antononoka stated that despite the "tame and demure" scene concentrating on "the character's emotional bond, rather than on the physical mechanics of the act," the inclusion of sex in the *manga*, "caused uproar, when it

first appeared, and only popularity of the title appears to have saved it from more severe repercussions" (2018, p.67).

Cross-gender performance in *manga* was a way in which the *shōjo* target audience could transcend the heteropatriarchal expectations of gender, but the negative connotations of this in terms of a reflection of reality were highlighted by Fujimoto as a means of "putting off" growing up as well as sexual maturity: "*being a woman is the most insurmountable symbol of reality*" (2014, p.34, emphasis in original). As time went on, the means of exploring this shifted from the cross-dressing and gender performance of characters such as Oscar to *bishōnen*; these literal male bodies became the surrogates that *shōjo* used in order to explore and play with gender and sex. Oscar is depicted as a *bishōnen* in many respects; she is taller than the other women are, has the brave and determined characteristics associated with *bishōnen*, and is stylistically androgynous (Schodt, 1983). These are elements that can also be applied to the *otokoyaku* (Strickland, 2008, p.106) because, according to McLelland, *otokoyaku* are, "an analogous figure to the *bishōnen*, not man, not woman." (2005, p.68). It should be noted, however, that neither Oscar nor *otokoyaku* are *bishōnen* in the literal or drawn sense, but using the immaterial body argument of Anan (2016), the connections are clear. The revue when staging *The Rose of Versailles* continues gender play as it is not the *musumeyaku* who cross-dress to perform Oscar, but the *otokoyaku*. Therefore, the role becomes a woman, who is a male role specialist, playing a woman who lives as a 'man'; these complex interactions of gender in a single character is explored in the following chapter.

However, the *Rose of Versailles*, and Oscar especially, still hold very important

places in the history of *manga*, as well as in the development of gendered

representations in graphic and visual arts. Oscar set the tone for androgynous

characters and the ability for graphic arts to play with gender in ways that could feel

more real and genuine, where women were not forced to give up their identities and

adhere to female expectations in order to find love.[271] *The Rose of Versailles* shows

that we are not restricted by biology or heteronormative views of gender – despite

the fiction-ality of the story. Antononoka summarised: "as she herself [Oscar]

decides, and as the manga depicts her Oscar's gender is indeed the amalgam of

agency, vulnerability and sensuality that is beyond binary, that changed according to

the context she was in," (2018, p.53) which illustrates a positive representation and

continues the argument for a safe space in which to explore ideas relating to gender.

To conclude this chapter, it is clear that the history of theatrical practices has played

an important role in the portrayal of cross-gendered acts and dressing within

Japanese graphic arts. These interconnections have created complex and interesting

aesthetic representations of gender performativity in the pages of *manga*. Despite

onnagata being the product of various gendered evolutions (female, androgynous,

and cross-gender acts), they became role models of idealised feminine characters,

who have then impacted the way all genders could be portrayed on Japanese stages

and in print. Kobayashi then took these ideas and created the all 'female' Takarazuka

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[271]However, despite this positive portrayal of a non-binary or non-gender-conforming character, ultimately the story ends in tragedy. Could this perhaps be an extension of the theory that in order to find 'happily ever after,' one must conform as Fujimoto asserts? This would support part of Anan's theory regarding *shōjo* and "freezing time" or death Which links to discussions of suicide in Anan's work. in order to maintain certain elements of this 'girl world' and youthful pure *shōjo* image (2016, pp.22-26). Despite this potential reading, Oscar's portrayal reflect the complex nature of gender representation in Japanese artistic practices, and the continued popularity of non-conforming characters as a convention in the medium.

Revue, but applied restrictions on the female performers in order to stop the blending or cross-gendered performances of *onnagata* from impacting their femininity and inherent female gender. Despite this 'gender-bending' or playing with gender, they were expected to remain as women in their day-to-day lives, but the impact of 'women' successfully portraying masculinity on stage was vast. Consequently, *manga* were able to take these ideas and push the boundaries of cross-gendered acts further, and create new forms of gender representation in graphic arts.

The female-to-male cross-dressing and gendered acts from early *shōjo manga* publications, encapsulate the complexity and contradictory nature of gender. Despite appearing to be non-heteronormative, these visual representations in fact perpetuated heteronormativity, due to the lead characters often surrendered the gender freedom they achieved through cross-dressing in order to fall in love. This implies that the only way to find love is to adhere to binary expectations of gender. However, *The Rose of Versailles* maintains a different gendered outlook, but perpetuates visual gendered representations, with softer versus sharper illustrations to reflect feminine and masculine situations. This is extended with other visual signifiers by different artists, an area that is examined in Chapter Eight, as a means of visually communicating gender, even when text does not accompany the imagery.

Chapter Eight:
'Hidden' Gender: Acting in Print

Returning to the performances of femininity by men, this chapter continues the complex contradictions of performing and communicating these gender performances through graphic arts. Throughout this chapter, the layers of performance in presenting masculine and feminine portrayals is examined from a singular character emphasis, as well as a male-coded focus.

As discussed in the previous chapter, graphic arts that depict cross-gendered portrayals still include visual signifiers that indicate a 'coding' of gender. In the *Rose of Versailles* case study (p.226), the subtle changes in character depiction hinted at the way in which Oscar was seen by others, but also how 'she' viewed 'herself' in specific situations. Nevertheless, these were subtle changes that still emphasised the beauty and androgyny within the works, by presenting Oscar as more akin to a 'beautiful boy' then a cross-dressed woman. Throughout the different forms of cross-gendered performance examined in this thesis, actors and characters have had to perform multiple genders in a one setting. This includes embodying femininity and masculinity in one person, like Sapphire in *The Princess Knight*, but also a literal change from one gender to another for *onnagata* and *otokoyaku*, as a play dictated.

'Men' Acting as 'Women' Acting as 'Men'

Following the establishment of *onnagata* as the ultimate portrayal of idealised femininity through *kata*, versatility became key to the art form. Part of this change and popularisation was the chance for *onnagata* to lead plays in their own right. These plays became known as *onna mono* – and featured rewritten characters from a

male-to-female perspective for the purpose of allowing *onnagata* arts to be showcased in new avenues. However Gabrovska also stated that *onna mono* have:

> … been dismissed precisely because gender is still not considered important as an approach to the analysis of kabuki. The existence of these plays is explained merely as a whim on the part of famous onnagata in their desire to play the main role and to overcome their lower social status within the hierarchy of kabuki actors…

> (2015, p.400)

Gabrovska makes this point in relation to other claims that *onnagata* were not classed as stars in the same way as *tachiyaku* were because of the gender role that they filled as 'woman' both on and off the stage. However, both *onnagata* and *tachiyaku* were applauded and recognised for their talents throughout the history of *kabuki*. We can see this both from the number of prints created about both categories of actor (Buckland, 2013), but also from the recording and distribution of *onnagata* treatises (Dunn & Torigoe, 1969; Isaka, 2016; Mezur, 2005).

One of the most famous, and still performed today *onna mono*, is *Onna Shibaraku.* Written by Danjūrō I, *Shibaraku* became an important performance for the Danjūrō line of *tachiyaku* performers who specialised in *aragoto* roles (Fig.44). Consequently, *Onna Shibaraku* in itself is an interesting cross-gender performance, as it is a 'man', performing as an *onnagata*, who is acting the role of a 'traditionally' male character, who has been transformed into a 'female version':

> Perhaps the most distinctive sign that *kabuki* is a theater of men playing women is the phenomenon of plays originally written for male-role actors being revised to accommodate the *onnagata*'s talents. This is not the same as an actress playing Hamlet as a man; it is Hamlet conceived of as a woman, with all the attendant transformations this requires in other characters.

> (Leiter, 1999, p.509)

Leiter refers to the part of Gongorō as the "most exaggeratedly masculine hero" of *Shibaraku* as being "transmogrified into a strange hybrid" (Leiter, 1999, p.509) in *Onna Shibaraku*.[272] To further emphasise the differences in character roles and also the styles of *kabuki* acting, Leiter states: "When the character makes her exit on the *hana-michi*[273] runway, she begins to do so in the bounding male style but then, realizing that she is, after all, a woman, becomes embarrassed and runs off in typical female fashion." (1999, p.509).[274] Gabrovska discusses these 'female'-led performances as falling into two groups: completely rewritten to accommodate a female lead character, or the female character as being related in some way to the original male hero (2015). The appeal of these plays was and is similar to that of Okuni's original productions, in that it is something different yet recognisable in its performance. In this case, the story is familiar, but the players are just different enough to be exciting and new. When taking the original acting style of these plays into account, *onna mono* can be seen as a comedic version of the art form. Leiter describes the point at which an *onnagata* slips into "qualities associated with masculinity" as catching, "herself up short" before reverting to feminine behaviour (1999, p.509). It is the "expression of embarrassment" at this that causes comedy: "The audience's knowledge that it is actually a man playing the role only intensifies the humor. When these moments occur, the entire fabric of constructed gender behavior is illuminated and the artificiality of the *onnagata's* art shines forth" (Leiter, 1999, p.509). This humour is different to the humour elicited from the male

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[272] *'Female' Just a Minute!*.

[273] 花道 *hanamichi* – an extended walkway that cuts through the audience to the stage of *kabuki* performances.

[274] Some recent performances have the character stop and begin to thank the audience before a male actor appears stating that 'she' needs to complete the final stages of the performance, which is the *roppō* 六方 meaning six directions. The *roppō* is a stylised exit for leading male characters linked to the a*ragoto* style and is a highlight of a performance. The *onnagata* then asks the actor to 'show her how it is done' before leaving along the *hanamichi* together (Kabuki21, n.d).

actors during the years of Okuni's *kabuki* in which the performance was comedic because it was a man. In *onna mono* the humour is much more complex, and relates specifically to the skill of the *onnagata* actor to embody the femininity that is expected of *kabuki* female characters, whilst acting in a recognisably male style. Elements of this multi-layered gender performance can also be seen in some *ukiyo-e,* when a male character is acting as a female character that is disguised as a man; this is examined in relation to *manga* later in this chapter.

Although there are different interpretations and analyses of what it means to be an *onnagata,* as was relayed in Chapter Six, Ayame I championed the act of performing female gender beyond the stage. It was his belief that in order to truly embody the spirit of a woman on stage, one must live as one off the stage, "*Onnagata* should always remain conscious of a womanly appearance, physically as well as mentally… it is hardly possible for an *onnagata* to be considered proficient unless he spends his everyday life as a woman." (Isaka, 2016, p.41-42). Ayame I adhered to this rule and, "invented his own "true-to-life" training, living as an onnagata both on and off the stage. He was also turning his daily life into a gender performance." (Mezur, 2005, p.90).[275] Robertson states that, as part of this true-to-life approach, *onnagata* were able to bathe in the public bathhouses with women (1992, p.424), which Screech emphasised further: "Culturally, if not anatomically, they were women." (2009, loc.1417). This suggests that their dedication to the art and portrayal of women on the stage, and in their lives as women away from the stage, allowed them to transcend the heteropatriarchal expectations of contemporaneous society. Prints

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[275] Parallels could be drawn here with method acting in contemporary western society. Although not necessarily in relation to gendered performance, because today the hope is that non-binary and transgender actors would fill roles requiring 'living' as 'other' genders.

extended this ideal and ideology of *onnagata* as woman with *onnagata* in *shunga* being portrayed with female genitalia despite the known and accepted presence of the male-sexed body beneath the portrayal (Matsuba, 2016, p.50). The implication here is that despite the reality and understanding on the audience's part that all these actors were 'male', *onnagata* transported the audience beyond this reality and *became* women in their eyes. Again it must be emphasised that this was within the bounds of the entertainment districts and not the normative culture of the audiences. Nevertheless, living as women away from the stage, as Ayame advocated, does not mean the same as it would today. Ayame may have lived as a woman away from the stage, but he also ensured that his "male sexed body" (Mezur, 2005; Robertson, 1992) and "natural masculinity" (Isaka, 2016, p.42) was utilized in order to inform the performance of femininity:

> Ayame seeks femininity without erasing what he says is his natural masculinity. Even on paper, he does not renounce masculinity, which he thinks is useful for the art of *onnagata*, and in their everyday lives, *onnagata* have no problem fathering children.
>
> (Isaka, 2016, p.56)

In fact, it is this very aspect of *onnagata* that is often referenced as the reason that women cannot take on these roles: "Women cannot enact the onnagata fiction of female-likeness because they do not have a male sexed body beneath." (Mezur, 2005, p.259). Mezur also asserts that imitation of women was never the goal of an *onnagata*, but that creating a new idealised form was; in this sense the male-sexed body beneath the cross-gender performance brings an element to the production that cis-gendered women could not. However, this would mean there is and was no element of imitation involved in the evolution and development of the *onnagata* art form, which has already been demonstrated as inaccurate.

Despite the embracing of masculinity and the "male sexed body" in some instances, Ayame stressed that this 'male life' must be kept hidden from the public in order to continue the illusion and to enhance the gender performance, whilst ensuring that *onnagata* would acquire male and female admirers (Isaka, 2016, p.39-40).[276]

This focus on admirers' views of the *onnagata*, and of *kabuki* actors in general, caused them to become famous in their own right, much like actors today, and thus depictions of the actors extending to beyond the stage. For *onnagata*, this meant they were depicted in feminine guises reminiscent of the female characters they portrayed, and those depicting women, such as *bijin-ga*.[277] For instance, the exhibition, *Kabuki: Japanese Theatre Prints*,[278] and the subsequent catalogue, include a section about 'off stage' prints that also incorporate *mitate-e* and 'dream-casts,'[279] alongside more expected scenes of relaxation and visiting shrines. The fantasy element of the dream-cast also connects with the discussions of female sex-worker prints that brought together popular 'courtesans' in an imagined scene (such as Fig.6). Regardless of the scene, all of these prints depict easily identifiable *onnagata,* due to the *bōshi,* head dresses and more elaborate clothing than their male counterparts, but not as elaborate as those of sex workers in *bijin-ga,* or other women, as *Crowds Visiting the Special Display at Naritasan Temple* (1856) portrays.[280] Prints that combined the characters and the actors were also popular, for

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[276] Referencing *The Secret Transmissions of an Onnagata Onnagata Hiden* by Segawa Kikunojō I; can be also translation as *Secrets of the Onnagata* (Mezur, 2005, p.13).

[277] This theme of portraying *onnagata* in their feminine guises within *ukiyo-e* also extended to memorial prints, with Bandō Shūka (1855, artist unknown, National Museum Scotland) being depicted in full *onnagata* regalia on a hanging scroll, before which Bandō Mitsugoro IV is kneeling.

[278] National Museums Scotland (NMS), Edinburgh, 2013-14.

[279] "Imagined depictions of actors in particular roles" (Buckland, 2013, p.XXI). In contemporary terms this could be referred to as a 'fan cast'.

[280] The scene is also significant in that the temple is the family shrine of the Ichikawa kabuki family. Utagawa Kunisada, *Crowds Visiting the Special Display at Naritasan Temple*, 1856, Nishiki-e, National Museums Scotland, Edinburgh in Buckland, 2005, p.74/75.

example, Kuniyoshi created a print of Bandō Shūka I in the role of Agemaki (1848) that features a target and arrow behind the *onnagata* which is symbolic of Bandō Shūka I's performance being "a hit" (NMS, n.d).

However, as *kabuki* theatre evolved, actors also began to experiment with their crafts. Traditionally, actors specialised in either *onnagata* or *tachiyaku* roles which would be passed on by father to son (including adopted), and the family lines would continue.[281] By the end of the Tokugawa period, and throughout the Meiji period, it became common for certain actors to play both *onnagata* and *tachiyaku* roles:

> … saw the limits of a man trying to 'live naturally (and act naturally) as a woman'; the art of onnagata then became a system of techniques to be learned deliberately and handed down… onnagata became a matter of discipline and acting technique, which, once mastered, allowed the male impersonator to play women's parts as well.
>
> (Ozaki, 2006, pp.11-12)

Here, Ozaki is stating that as time went on, the expectations of audiences for an *onnagata* performance became more about *kata*, as opposed to the illusion that these actors were women. This has direct correlations to Kano's research (2001) regarding the emergence of 'actress' and the emphasis on the body as depicting ideal femininity versus the performance through *kata*.

Some actors performed these multiple roles within the same play, which has now become a main-stay for particular *kabuki* plays. For instance, certain plays include popular tropes, such as having to disguise oneself as the 'opposite gender'. This could lead to an *onnagata* actor acting as a woman dressed as, and pretending to be,

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[281] Some examples of this include the famous Danjūrō and Bandō family lines. In fact, the current head of the Danjūrō line, Ichikawa Ebizō XI, will take the name Ichikawa Danjūrō XIII in November 2022, following postponement from May 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. His son will then take the name Ichikawa Shinnosuke VIII (NHK World, 2022).

a man; or a *tachiyaku* actor in a male role disguised as a woman, and therefore, having to act as both a man and woman at once. There are subtle differences in these portrayals however, with the *tachiyaku* maintaining masculine codes in the acting, and the *onnagata* feminine codes. There are also actors who play multiple roles in a single play, [282] and who utilise quick change techniques in order to play male and female roles, as well as actors who play an *onnagata* role for one play, and a *tachiyaku* role for another.[283]

Nevertheless, this change in performance and in the expectations for the actors irrespective of their specialism did begin to affect the way that *onnagata* gender was performed: "The blending of gender role types also destroyed the more subtle gender ambiguity of the onnagata" (Mezur, 2005, p.22). This change to actors' roles within *kabuki* coincided with the end of the Tokugawa regime and with a 'modernising' of Japan as western influences began to pervade. This in turn, led to changes of certain long held traditions surrounding gender and sexuality. Following the introduction of sexologist texts, which caused a change in the social expectations regarding gender and sexuality, it became unacceptable for *onnagata* to continue emulating Ayame's example of living as *onnagata* or women in their daily lives (Robertson, 1992, p.424). Many *kabuki* and *onnagata* scholars today agree that this change has negatively affected the way this cross-gender act is performed and portrayed.

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[282] A recent new *kabuki* example would be *Akadou Suzunosuke* (Netflix, 2022) where lead actor Onoe Matsuya plays multiple separate roles including a father and son. This is also common in western plays, with *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* utilising the same actor for an uncle and nephew role – though this was not replicated in the film adaption.
[283] This again causes some difficulties with *onnagata* prints, as now there are actors who are portrayed in both guises within prints; however, there are some print series that show these quick-change roles such as the *Memories of Bando Mitsugoro III in the Snow, Moon and Flower Plays: Seven Quick Role-Changes* (1820; National Museums Scotland) where the actor likeness is clear between the prints due to the popularisation of *nigao-e* for actor prints (p.195).

However, Leiter offers the opposite view point of some critics: "a kabuki woman is a theoretical construction, an idealization, a stylization, and not a reality, and that it is a mistake to think you must live like a woman to effectively inhabit this construction." (Leiter, 2006, p.74). As Mezur and Leiter have discussed, *onnagata* perform a constructed version of female likeness, and do not seek to recreate reality, although a certain amount of imitation was present at the beginning of the *onnagata* art form, alongside the adaptions and evolutions of other gendered traditions (Isaka, 2016). Regardless, these changes allowed the actors to perform in such a way that added interest and new layers for the audiences to enjoy – such as the disguises across gender. This idea of cross-gender play to 'hide,' is popular across the globe within cinema and other types of media and popular culture. Within Japan, this idea of cross-gendered play became a conventional trope in *manga* of mistaken identity, which is now explored.

Mistaken Identity as a Visual Trope

There is a common trope within *manga* to mistake certain female characters for male characters; these characters are also depicted as androgynous with both feminine and male characteristics. One example of this is in *Ouran High School Host Club* (2002–2010) by Bisco Hatori.[284] This type of depiction of gender is different to *The Rose of Versailles,* as within this *manga* the character of Oscar has been raised to fulfil the role of a man, whereas the main character, Haruhi, is mistaken for a male student due to their appearance reflecting looks typically associated with *bishōnen*. It is not until another character sees the student identity card that they realise that the character is actually a woman (Vol.1, p.31 & p.51). At this point of the *manga,* Haruhi is not

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[284] A pseudonym.

pretending to be a male, or engaging in deliberate cross-gendering acting/dressing, and is unaware that others think she is male. This is a thought-provoking comment on gender representation, as it is not an obvious non-binary comment at this point, but is a continuation of tropes that are popular.

As this *manga* continues however, the character acts as a *bishōnen,* again not through personal choice, but in order to repay a debt. Throughout the *manga* from this point other gendered comments are made with multiple types of cross-dressing and cross-gendered performance – including the *bishōnen* host club members as Takarazuka performers (Woods, 2015). Once again, the links across popular cultures are emphasised with such storylines. By drawing upon other culturally recognisable subversions of gender, the *manga* can explore the constructions of gender representations in recognisable but different ways, similarly to *onna mono* in *kabuki* (pp.237-238). As a more contemporary *manga*, compared to earlier examples, the evolution of cross-dressing and gendered acts in *shōjo manga* can clearly be seen in *Ouran High School Host Club*. However, so too can the same themes and points of safety that Fujimoto discussed (2015a). The other (male) characters within the host club, all know of her biological gender; but due to Haruhi's rapport with the (unknowing at this stage) young female clientele, they vow to protect her identity so that she may continue working with them. It is also important to note, that this *manga* does not situate Haruhi as a cross-gendered character from the outset as a gendered choice, but a character performing cross-gendered acts as a means to an end due to mistaken identity. However, the preferred appearance of Haruhi as herself embodies androgynous or masculine coded ideals related to short hair, thus forcing audiences to acknowledge the learned codes relating to gender performativity.

At the climax of the story, the hosts have organised a leaving party for Haruhi as she is moving to another country for college. The chapter begins with Haruhi appearing in a dress and long-haired wig, before culminating in a love confession between Haruhi and Tamaki, one of her fellow hosts (Vol.18, p.30 & p.43). It should be noted, however, that Haruhi does dress in stereotypically feminine clothing at times throughout the series, but this is often part of cross-dressing storylines separate to the main story of Haruhi as a host. Therefore, Haruhi is portrayed as a male character cross-dressing as a female character in the minds of those unaware of her true identity. This is very reminiscent of the multi-role actors of the *kabuki* stage who play an *onnagata* as a *tachiyaku* disguising themselves as an *onnagata,* again emphasising the complex explorations of gender performance and representation that take place within graphic arts, but also the surface politics explored by Robertson (1998) as developed by Butler (2006). This ending, albeit from a different view than typically referenced, does also relate to Fujimoto's point that in order to find love the character will give up their cross-dressing/ cross-gendered act and become a woman (2015a, p.80). However, in the following scenes, where Haruhi and Tamaki are settling into their new apartments for college, Haruhi is in fairly gender-neutral clothing and is sporting short hair once again. The different ways in which gender are explored throughout this *manga*, and that Haruhi is not necessarily cross-dressing as a means to overcome gendered expectations, shows how *shōjo manga* has expanded since the 1970's towards an encompassing of wider varieties of tastes.

Away from entertainment professions, cross-dressing as described in these *manga* examples is not necessarily commonplace or public.[285] Nevertheless, within *manga* and other forms of Japanese popular culture cross-dressing and performativity are common and perpetuated tropes; and depending upon the type or demographic of that *manga* series the way in which the trope is portrayed differs. For instance, *shōnen manga* often use these tropes, particularly in male-to-female cross-dressing or gender acts, as comedic and humorous plot points. *Assassination Classroom* (2012 -2016; by Yusei Matsui), for example, portrays one of the lead characters, student Nagisa, into a 'forced' cross-dressing situation in order to avoid detection whilst undergoing a spy-like mission. This storyline unfolds with Nagisa being 'mistaken' for a girl by another school aged character throughout the chapter.[286] Even so, this is not to say that these are the only ways in which cross-dressing and cross-gender acting can be portrayed within *shōnen manga*. The performative nature of gender expression outside of *shōjo manga* specifically is examined in more visual analytical detail during this chapters case study (p.256), which examines a male-coded representation of cross-gendering that utilises aesthetics from *shōjo* and *shōnen manga*, that also has elements of disguise as a major plot point. The trope of mistaken identity can also be traced back to the origins of *shōjo* manga, with Tezuka hinting at these kind of visual expressions in *Princess Knight*.

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[285] Aspects of this entertainment sphere discourse are examined by Mark McLelland (2005) in relation to male homosexuality and explored in Part Three Chapter Eleven of this thesis.

[286] Another *manga* that includes mistaken identity within comedic storylines is *Kunisaki Izumo no jijō* (*The Circumstances of Kunisaki Izumo;* 2009-2014). This is also a *shōnen manga*, however the premise is entirely built upon cross-gender acting and dressing, as the lead character is an *onnagata*. The mistaken identity occurs to the lead character, Izumo, but also towards Kagato, and older *onnagata* whom enjoys cross-dressing in feminine clothing off-stage. Izumo does also do this, but generally as a means to an end, as part of a secondary job at a maid café. As such, it is a parody piece of media, due to the continued emphasis on humour and the exploitation of popular culture tropes throughout. Antononoka analyses *Kunisaki Izumo no jijō* from these parodic perspectives, but also how cross-dressing can assert masculine agency (2018, pp.177-226).

Visual Signifiers and Codes in a Singular Character

Concerning the role of female-to-male cross-dressed and cross-gender portrayals in *manga*, Fujimoto stated: "the basis for taking on male appearance stems from gender inequality, and that such characters are rather strongly inscribed with an opposition to conventional gender roles." (2015a, p.80). This was a vital part of the *Rose of Versailles* and *Princess Knight*, as both characters were born into a life where everyone around them wanted a son, but as Oscar was born a girl, and Sapphire a blend of 'boy and girl heart,' both parents chose to raise these children 'as a boy' to survive in a world built with heteropatriarchal conventions. However, the similarities end here, both characteristically and visually. Whereas Oscar's gender is constructed through subtle facial and body changes, Sapphire's gender coding relies on outward gestures and signs playing to a stereotyped ideal of gender. Narratively too, Sapphire completes Fujimoto's discussions of "girls dressed as boys" by abandoning "her male disguise when she falls in love." (2015a, p.80). Even though Oscar never truly denies the feminine in 'herself', 'she' maintains the outward appearance of a man after finding true love until 'her' death, which occurs, albeit, shortly after the love scenes. However, it is the visual differences in gender coding that is most intriguing where *Princess Knight* is concerned, as multi-genders are portrayed within a single character in a more overt ways.

At various stages throughout the narrative Tink, the angel, tries to remove the boy heart from Sapphire as they are directed to make her a 'full' girl as was intended.[287]

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[287] The story begins with Tink interfering in the system of assigning hearts to determine the life the children about to born with live – in other words, as a man or woman. This interference leads to Sapphire having both a boy and girl heart.

Whenever this goal appears to have been achieved, before the finale, the implication of weakness as a gendered character trait becomes overstated. The signifiers of this in the visual is exaggerated in the movement and gesture, but subtle in terms of the bodily differences than in comparison with *The Rose of Versailles*. Sapphire's face remains rounded regardless of the position 'she' is in, but the presence exuded from the drawing is crucial. For instance, in Part 1[288] (2011, pp.274-280) Sapphire shifts from having both the girl and boy heart, to just a girl heart, then back to both over the course of a sword fight.

If one examines page 274 (Fig.45), Sapphire is the epitome of the cross-dressed and cross-gendered character: 'she' is both feminine and masculine in 'her' presentation according to the style in which Tezuka was drawing at this time, but the characterisation, movement and gestures blends the ideals of both together. This can be seen in the bottom right panel, where the viewer is situated as if above the fight in an overhead view as Sapphire has her opponent pinned to a tree. The stance is wide, with an air of relaxed control communicated from the right hand being palm up behind 'her'; the feeling is of a relaxed winner, confident but not aggressive. The panel above this displays more action in the throes of the fast-paced fight. This is signified by the overlapping sketches of the sword and 'speed' lines, with a more constrained and assertive portrayal of Sapphire, illustrating the changes in presentation through gesture. This is continued onto the next page, (2011, Part 1, p.275) where we, as the viewer, are brought alongside the action, with Sapphire's stance appearing now more intent and ready to spring back into action if needed;

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[288] Again, the imagery used for analysis within this thesis is from the 2011 Vertical translation, that is based on the 1970's edition of *Princess Knight*. Therefore, these visuals have been updated slightly from the original 1950s run of the *manga*.

however, the design of Sapphire has not altered, the body beneath is still femininized with curves, long legs, rounded face and large eyes. The hair, whilst short, is also stylised to evoke curls; this again insinuates a female-coded presentation, which is emphasised further on page 276 (Fig.46) as Tink quickly and sneakily removes the boy heart from Sapphire.

As a close-up (Fig.46), this illustrates the moment when Sapphire becomes a girl 'fully,' and again it is the gesture that reveals the change, alongside the figurative 'background' imagery of a heart ascending which signifies the 'literal' removal from Sapphire without her knowledge. Again, Sapphire's design is not altered beyond the surprise and shock featured in the expression, but this is accentuated by the gestural change; her arm holding the sword has started to lower, whereas her other arm, balancing her attack stance, has moved completely to the front, with the curling fingers accentuating the questioning nature of her shock. The changing gendered positions in the story are illustrated more directly on page 278 (Fig.47), when the curling fingers have been raised to Sapphire's face, and the *manga* signifier of 'sweat drops' begin to develop and show increasing alarm and strain. This is pushed yet further in the following panel with shake lines drawn around Sapphire's sword, increasing the panicked feeling that is clearly arising in the imagery, before she is completely caught off guard by her opponent and pushed back in the fight. Suddenly, all she appears to be capable of doing is blocking the thrusts of the sword. When the text is taken into account, it is clear that the visual is stressing a point of weakness in comparison to 'boys' where 'girls' are concerned. The text states that Sapphire feels weak on removal of the boy heart, and that upon realising this she is now sacred and does not want to fight. The text here complements the visual by giving a voice to the

actions, but the visuals alone do convey this loss of strength and fear very clearly and succinctly without physically changing Sapphire's design.

Later in Part Two (2011, p.70), a similar gestural occurrence of exaggerated 'weak' femininity takes place upon the removal of the boy heart. Once again, the rounded face and curled short hair remains, but the gesture which Sapphire makes is that of the quintessential 'damsel in distress,' with the arm curved around to place the wrist against the forehead and head turned away in an 'oh who will rescue me' or perhaps even a 'woe is me' connotative sign. Once more, this is combined with the text referencing 'weak girl,' insinuating that strength is only possible with the boy heart, and that the condition of a girl is to be weak. If the text is removed from these analysed sections of imagery, the intent of weakness and fear is communicated clearly, however, what is equally clear is that this is being communicated through the portrayal of a 'female' perspective. Thus, the subject, Sapphire, is being coded in these situations as specifically female and not cross-gendered, as she was initially in the fight in Volume One, through the change in gestural imagery.

Equally, when Sapphire's girl heart is removed, the visuals indicate a 'masculinised' portrayal that removes all connotations of femininity. In Part Two, (2011, pp.34-40) when Sapphire's 'girl heart' is stolen by the witch,[289] her overall design remains feminised, but the gestures become more pompous, rigid, and, when combined with the text, aggressive when their gender is questioned. For instance, the lower right panel (2011, Part.2, p.33) is fairly inconspicuous in regard to the coded gender being

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[289] An antagonist throughout the story who is trying to give the girl heart to her daughter Hecate to become "the most beautiful, gentle and wondrous girl in the world" (2011, p.41). Later it is revealed that Hecate does not want this, and assists in returning the girl heart to Sapphire.

communicated, Sapphire appears as Sapphire always is; large eyes, rounded face and slight curves beneath the male clothing, however, the following page (p.34; Fig.48) begins to emphasise the removal of the girl heart in the 'physical' presence and gestures of Sapphire. The middle right-hand panel has a close up of Sapphire's face: the form of the eyes and hair have not changed however, the eyebrows and small straight mouth start to indicate a subtle change to Tink. This is revealed to us as a viewer more clearly in the panel below when the full physicality of Sapphire can be seen. It is a small panel, in comparison with later full-length depictions, however it is clear from the rigid way in which Sapphire is holding 'his' arms, and almost squaring the shoulders, that different visual coding is starting to come into play regarding the gender being represented.

From this point, Sapphire as a boy is presented in an aggressive, confrontational way, with clenched fists, drawn in eyebrows (p.35; Fig.49) and the stereotypical 'power stance,' (Fig.50; p.40) as to convey that they are in fact a man. In some respects, this is in reaction to being misgendered, in their mind, by Tink and Prince Franz. The text supports this by insisting that they are in fact a man and a prince, which at this point in time is more accurate. However, as the narrative progresses and Sapphire returns to claim the throne, they state: "I was kicked out as a girl, but now I'm a man!" (2011, p.53). This insinuates that Sapphire remembers and understands their own personal history, which again emphasises a stereotypical aggressive male identity; as surely if Sapphire remembers the 'female' of themselves, they would not have been so direct and confrontational with Tink. However, Sapphire becomes overwhelmed in a fight, and is saved by Hecate and Tink who return the girl heart, but remove the boy heart, again.

From these visual analyses we can deduce that stereotypes were thought to be important when visually portraying gender. Tezuka continued this in the sequel *Twin Knights* (*Futago no Kishi* 1958),[290] which was created as a sequel to the original 1953-1956 run of *Princess Knight*, as opposed to the re-created 1970s version that this thesis has utilised. As such, the imagery is more restricted and in keeping with 1950s *manga* aesthetics, as opposed to the *shōjo manga* aesthetics that developed. However, gender is still represented quite stereotypically by Prince Daisy and Princess Violetta who are the children of Sapphire. Nevertheless, in keeping with the theme of cross-gendered portrayals Princess Violetta dresses and performs as Prince Daisy after his kidnapping as a child. Throughout the series, both characters are depicted identically in terms of their bodies, but the clothing differentiates them slightly with Violetta's male clothing being slightly more embellished. Regardless, the story culminates with the reuniting of the family and Prince Daisy's inheritance of the throne, whilst Princess Violetta finds love as a woman. However, the final comment does bring the shedding of the cross-gendered performance theory into question slightly: "Well, Violetta being Violetta, she might have worn men's clothing to trick people every now and then, hm?" (2013, p.241). Although the implication is comedic, as opposed to a specific empowering cross-gendered identity.

Regardless of these 'stereotypes,' Tezuka continued to play with expectation and gender within this *manga*. The loss of the boy heart was not the end of the story for

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[290] In the original magazine serialisation the title remained as *Princess Knight*, but was altered for a collected volume release. The version referenced in this thesis is from the 2013 translation.

Sapphire (2011), in fact Tezuka then had all the women of the castle rise up and help Sapphire fight, who despite being a girl, is able to wield a sword once again.[291] Later, another fierce woman warrior, Friebe, appears wearing feminised armour and falls in love with Sapphire, who eventually confesses she is a woman – this directly links to mistaken identity tropes of later *manga* as previously described. These exchanges conclude that women within this story can embody both masculine and feminine ideals whether cross-dressing or not, despite earlier visuals indicated stereotypes were being emphasised as a means of conveying gender. Eventually, after all these trials and 'playing' with gender through a variety of characters, Sapphire embraces her femininity to marry Prince Franz: "I'll wear a gown and say my vows to you as a woman!" (2011, p.346).

Throughout these visual analyses Sapphire's body remains stylistically the same. A reason for this could be that when Tezuka created the character of Sapphire, *bishōnen* did not yet exist within *manga* as they are now, therefore, Sapphire could not embody this cross-gendered ideal as Oscar did. Despite being referred to as a boy and, dressing in such a way as to convince others that she is a 'he,' Sapphire is depicted in the illustrations consistently as more feminine than their 'dashing' male equivalents, as well as the older 'villainous' males. When dressed as a woman more overtly, Sapphire prefers exaggeratedly feminine dresses (Fig.51). However, when dressed in the day to day 'Prince' attire, there are still signifiers that hint at femininity: the cut of the clothing compared to Prince Franz's for instance is slightly more figure hugging without completely revealing the body beneath. The rounded

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[291] The portrayal of the women remains feminised without the use of dresses, and here has more direct correlations to Tezuka's Takarazuka Revue influence (p.118). This is due to the emulation of a chorus line, with outfits reminiscent of the wartime costumes of the Takarazuka which could have been a direct link to Tezuka's inspiration from the performances he saw as a child.

face, however, remains relatively consistent throughout, unlike Oscar's, with large shining eyes and lashes visible in most frames – regardless of presenting as Prince or Princess. In many ways this visual presentation could hint at complete androgyny as they are, by the story line, neither truly male nor female due to having both a boy and girl heart, however, as these analyses have illustrated, visual coding can be much more than the physical appearance of a character, as is explored in the following case study.

Case Study: *Grelle Sutcliffe*

This striking layered image (Vol Two, p.164; Fig.52) is ominous and charged with an intensity and menace that sets a viewer on edge. Whilst the eye scans the page taking in the cloaked skeletal figure, it quickly fixates on the walking figure in the centre being framed by the cloak, as if emerging from the depths of death. The figure strikes a powerful image and directly engages with us as a viewer by walking straight ahead; the gaze is intent and not wavering from us. All of these initial perceptions heighten a sense of danger in this character.

The longer we observe, the more detail is revealed: the figure is wearing a fitted suit, with a long coat draped over one arm. There are marks on the coat, slightly different to the shading, that suggests wear and tear. The collar is very high on the neck and instead of a contemporary tie, what appears to be a ribbon is fastened into a bow and is being pulled by an invisible wind. The slim-line fitted trousers give way to stylish heeled boots, which creates a juxtaposition between the masculine perceptions of the suit on top, to a more feminised fitting shape from the waist down. This is also replicated in the long flowing hair that appears to wrap around the character as if to

frame them. The face is particularly captivating; the smile is full of teeth, insinuating a predatory perception when coupled with the intent stare and walk. Their glasses have been pulled down to the end of the nose so the eyes can be on full view over the rim, which then directs our attention to the left eye: a full round black hole with glowing white centre. Suddenly our eyes dart back to the skeletal presence above and a connection is made: our figure is a literal manifestation of the metaphorical skeleton. The background begins to come into focus as we take in the potential symbolic signs that equate this person to death. There are skeletal fingers reaching out to the top right and bottom left of the page, with more bone-like imagery cutting across the page like a weapon. As our eyes circle back, we can see splatters scattered along the bottom of the page that seem to drip from the coat, indicating to us that the marks originally thought to just be wear and tear must be blood. Finally, the text states what the image infers: this is a grim reaper, a harbinger of death.

This realisation starts to increase the connections we can make in the visual, before investigating who this character is more directly. The invisible wind creating the movement in the image, along with motion of the character, emphasises the occult or supernatural factor. The flowing hair now appears as tendrils creating a connotation of reaching out in every direction; this suggests there is no escape from death. The coat over one arm combined with the stance being weighted onto one leg now appears to be a 'reveal' of some kind; have they begun to take off the coat to show who they are? Were they hidden to us before beneath its bloodied folds?

This image is a page from Volume Two (loc.166) of the English translation of Yana Toboso's critically acclaimed *manga, Black Butler (Kuroshitsuji).* From the initial

scenes and volume covers of this story *manga* one would assume that this is a *shōjo manga* focused on the work of an efficient and beautiful butler. However, it soon becomes evident that whilst there are many *shōjo* elements, this story is much darker than the stereotypically expected works. However, this character is not our lead title butler. This is Grelle Sutcliffe.

Grelle is a particularly complex character regarding gender within the *Black Butler* series, and this image is the full reveal that they are more than first perceived. Following *shōjo manga* aesthetics that have developed from the 1970s, we now have full page pieces that bring together the literal and figurative in a single visual snap-shot to emphasise heightened emotions and important story revelations in all forms of *manga*. Here the reveal is much darker than earlier uses of the technique, which would invoke the inner feelings of the characters. However, the use of it here is very striking and effective, particularly when we consider the impression that Grelle has given to us about their character up to this point.

Grelle Sutcliff originally appears as a butler, with a figurative background used, but in a more calming way with the roses and teacup reminiscent of our lead butler, Sebastian (Vol.2, loc.129). The image shows Grelle explaining the tea 'he' has prepared by request; the hair is pulled back and tamed with a bow, which only allows a few 'tendrils' to fall and frame the face. The glasses appear much more 'proper' by being pushed up the bridge of the nose, with a chain visible at the side of the frames giving an illusion of propriety. The clothing does not appear as form-fitting, and the ribbon tie is holding in place. The face is more open and expressive perhaps of nerves given the eyebrow placement as the type of tea is explained. This could be an

illusion to an earlier comment in the *manga* (Vol Two, loc.42) when Grelle is first introduced about following Sebastian's example as a better butler. So far, these are the only interactions with Grelle that are depicted in the *manga*: as a less efficient butler, who is trying to emulate Sebastian. Perhaps this is reminiscent of the homogenderity that Isaka discusses in relation to the *wakashu-nenja* relations but without the sexual element (Part Three, Chapter Nine). However, this changes quite drastically over the course of seven pages (loc.160-167) when Grelle's true nature as a Grim Reaper[292] is exposed.

Once the revelation takes place, this character becomes more outspoken and is clearly not strictly male, but is not necessarily female either. This is communicated by a combination of the visual and text. For instance, (loc.163; Fig.53), Sebastian has disclosed that he knows 'what' Grelle is, prompting Grelle to physically transform themselves into their true appearance. This is not the skeletal figure, but a more androgynous figure that uses feminine language in a male-coded way. In the initial panel, the sharp shark-like teeth and the intense stare are exposed first, before moving onto close-up shots of various body parts as Grelle methodically 'fixes' them to reveal their true personality. First, the bow holding the hair back is removed, then the glasses. The hair is then combed, and on the following page fake eyelashes, black gloves and a new pair of glasses added, before they introduce themselves as Grelle (Fig.54; Vol.2, loc.164). In comparison to the Grim Reaper reveal on the next page, here Grelle is more animated in their actions. The hand is lifted and turned at the wrist as a form of introduction, the mouth is open in a wide smile to exaggerate

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[292] 死神 *Shinigami:* 'god of death' translated as Grim Reaper in *Black Butler* and Soul Reaper in *Bleach*. Another category of character within the *manga* along with the demons; Grelle is different from other *shinigami* (in this series) in that they 'abused' their position by working with a human to bring about the deaths of others, in this case creating Jack the Ripper.

the sharp teeth, the blood on the ribbon tie is more pronounced and they are framed by roses; reminiscent of the early portrayal but with more symbolic connotations for those with the visual literacy. Roses are often equated with gay men due to the use of the term *bara* which means rose in reference to gay media of the late 20th century. However, these connotations can in fact be negative as examined in Part Three, Chapter Eleven (p.329). The combination of this transformation, and the language used: "I am an actress" (Vol.2, loc.163), indicate that this character is not the 'male' as initially perceived.

However, the following pages indicate that Grelle is not a cross-dressed woman either; they are in fact very much a cross-gendered expression of both male and female characteristics, using exaggerated feminine speech. Unlike *wakashu* and *bishōnen*, this character acts in an eccentric way and is explicit in their physical attraction to Sebastian in a way that is not usually reflective of *bishōnen* depictions, as examined throughout Part Three. However, what makes Grelle an interesting gender representation is that they are coded male, with feminine characteristics at different points of the story. This image shows the masculinised aspects of Grelle in a clear close-up drawing (loc.178, Fig.55) to emphasise that they do not belong in binary representations.

However, Grelle's sexuality is often portrayed with a sense of comedy mixed with harassment - a theme often depicted within *manga* stories with a comedic edge for people of all ages. Loh describes them as a: "male transvestite who wants to become a heterosexual woman" (2019, p.44). The insinuation of *wanting* to be a heterosexual

woman is perhaps based on this attraction to Sebastian,[293] combined with Grelle's

exaggerated feminine mannerisms and the taking of female clothing from the

victims. However, it must be stated that the equation of feminine clothing and non-

heteronormative presentation and personality with "wanting to become a

heterosexual woman" feels simplistic and a misunderstanding of wider gender

identities to a British perspective. Grelle could be representing nonbinary or

androgyne genders as a reflection of being both or neither gender as opposed to a

'woman'. Also, the cross-dressing can be an expression in and of itself, and not just

as a means to 'be' another gender. On the other hand, this is a piece created by and

for a Japanese audience initially, and so the expressions and assumptions of the

drawing and narrative may be communicating something very different to that which

someone from a western perspective would initially see.

For instance, as a British woman, the initial perception of this image is that of an

empowering rejection of heteronormative expectations. Whereas a Japanese

audience would see direct correlations with *okama*.[294] Baudinette states:

> Japanese popular culture has a long history of depicting gay men through an
> almost transgendered paradigm, with one particular image, the *okama*
> holding a central position within Japanese conceptualizations of male-male
> homosexuality. The conventional image of an okama is a cross-dressing male
> who employ a stereotypically feminine linguistic style known as onekotoba
> (variously translated as "queen's language" or "camp language"), who enacts
> a highly parodic performance of so-called feminine body language and who
> is understood as possessing same-sex desire.

> (2021, pp.9-10)

Suddenly, our readings of Grelle shift drastically to a form of ridicule that extends

the popular cultural representation of gendered and sexuality stereotypes, making

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[293] As well as other more clear-cut male coded characters

[294] Technically a negative term for gay man, that Baudinette likens to "faggot" (2021, p.219) but it is
a pervasive term used to describe certain 'characteristics' stereotypically ascribed to gay men.

Loh's "male transvestite who wants to become a heterosexual woman" (2019, p.44) more clearly linked to a cultural reading. This is key, because the perception within popular culture for this type of representation holds very different meanings across cultures, as demonstrated here. Grelle is suddenly not just a cross-gendered character. They are now a stereotypical portrayal of male 'homosexual' representations that equate gender and sexuality together:

> … whether terms such as okama are discriminatory, the heteronormative positioning of gay men as somehow transgendered that underlies such terminology effectively silences gay men's desires, illegitimating their same-sex attraction and constructing gay desire as unnatural and abnormal.
>
> (Baudinette, 2021, p.10)

This is examined further in Part Three, Chapter Eleven, however in terms of this image of Grelle, these investigations are essential to understanding different cultural representations of cross-gendered performance. This continues the tropes that popular culture in Japan perpetuates as comedic but can in fact be harmful to gender and sexual minorities, as is explored more in Chapter Eleven (p.329).

Grelle epitomises the complexity of gender and sexuality representations in graphic arts. As a character they combine dualities like the female-coded characters of Oscar and Sapphire, but subverts this as they are not merely a male-coded equivalent. Grelle is the combination of tropes and stereotypes culturally relevant to Japanese popular culture as visually represented in *manga*. As a character, Grelle exploits the hidden identity, explored throughout this chapter, by hiding in plain sight; both as a means of furthering the 'Jack the Ripper' plot, but also in reference to gender and sexuality – this has some parallels with mistaken identity but the mistake is not the 'comedy'. The 'comedy' is the exaggerated true identity of Grelle, that perpetuates harmful sexuality stereotypes; but if viewed from an outsider perspective, insinuates

acceptance and idealisation of nonbinary characters. Therefore, it is important to highlight these representations and to explore them from various perspectives, for the purpose of illustrating the different interpretations that can be reached when 'looking' at graphic arts.

To conclude this chapter, and explorations of cross-gendered portrayals in graphic arts, it is clear that semiotic codes and signs relating to our understandings of gender are key to the communication of cross-gendered portrayals. Whilst the images discussed throughout have 'played' with our perceptions, certain stereotypes have remained in *manga* depictions.

The cross-gendering in graphic arts has been a reflection of cross-gendering within the performing arts in Japan through *kabuki* and the Takarazuka Revue, by utilising the popularity of *onnagata* and *otokoyaku* as a means of either advertising the art, or by creating an immediate connection with the *shōjo* consumer. Whilst the *onnagata* created an ideal performance of femininity the *ukiyo-e* artists extended this reach to reflect the cultural attitudes of *onnagata as* women. This was achieved by emulating *bijin-ga* ideals, albeit with physiological emphasis as found in *nigao-e*, but also, as Matusba's research shows, with *onnagata* in *shunga* being portrayed with female genitalia (2016, p.50). However, despite these 'acceptances,' Gerstle and Clark state in the introduction of the *Shunga: Sex and Pleasure in Japanese Art* exhibition catalogue: "only a small number" of *shunga* were created with, "direct links with real-life actors." (2013, p.27). Matsuba states that despite the abundance of male same-sex imagery, as now explored in Part Three, rarely were *nigao-e* used in these

themes. Therefore, the inclusion of identifiable *onnagata* as a gendered representation in *shunga* was not common.

In the realm of *manga,* distance from the material body of the *shōjo* to create a world where 'girls' were free from the heteropatriarchal reality was key. This was established by empowering the girls to fight the gendered expectations along with Oscar, and to reject the idea that one must cast off their identity and conform to reality of female adulthood. However, as Strickland noted, the 'passive' and weak women as a "mirror" of the male, as the *musumeyaku* are to *otokoyaku* (Strickland, 2008, p.115) did have some relevance in *manga* depictions, as analysed in the depictions of Sapphire. The final case study analysis of Grelle, on the other hand, brings the contemporary cross-gendered portrayals into a new light: the cross of a *bishōnen* body with an 'empowered' and flamboyant feminised portrayal versus the stereotypical and 'negative' representation of 'gay' men. This calls into question elements of sexuality representation as it equates the 'cross-gendering' of Grelle's personality to that of an effeminised 'same-sex desiring male'. This is an important visual example that leads through to the final part of this thesis, which examines 'male' and masculine beauty ideals through a lens of male and female consumption, but also male sexualities.

Part Three:
Masculine Beauty in Japanese Graphic Art

Having analysed the complexities of cross-gendered performance as represented in graphic arts, it is apparent that the binary assumptions and understandings of masculinity must also be questioned. Part Three of this thesis scrutinises male binary representations through the analysis of 'androgyny' and hypermasculinity as masculine ideals of beauty in graphic arts. This is achieved by utilising imagery from *shōnen manga* and gay erotic *manga* to provide a comparison of masculinity, male beauty, and 'male' gender and sexuality ideals, across different contemporary target audiences. The focus of these representations include depictions of *bishōnen, wakashu*, 'Boys Love',[295] 'muscle men', and gay erotic *manga.*

Since the 17ᵗʰ century ideals of masculinity have evolved as the political and social climates have advanced. During the feudal times of the Tokugawa period the *samurai* held the position of ideal 'manhood', but as the modern era dawned and the feudal systems were left behind, the solider took this mantel. Following the Second World War there was another shift in expectations relating to masculinity, and suddenly the ultimate form of manhood was encapsulated by the salaryman: "who for decades was hailed not as the successor of the Imperial Army soldier but as the "modern samurai." (Frühstück, 2022, p.14). Yet the "heyday" of the salaryman as the epitome of masculinity came to end in the early 1990's as the economic bubble burst, and a diversification of masculinities developed more openly (Frühstück, 2022, p.14). However, as is illustrated in the final chapter of this thesis (Eleven), the

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[295] Often abbreviated to BL, this is the contemporary term for a 'subgenre' of *shōjo manga*; other terms for this genre are explored throughout this chapter. BL can also refer to novels and anime; like other forms of Japanese popular culture media-mix is a key aspect.

salaryman has become an unlikely ideal for hypermasculine devotees: "…the salaryman was desirably "hard" since it embodied a gendered identity that was the supposed opposite of womanhood" (Baudinette, 2021, p.96). In the realm of popular culture and graphic arts on the other hand, a different form of masculinity held more power: beautiful and androgynous 'men'.[296]

The translations of *bishōnen* and *wakashu* suggest an inherently male gendering, as they are anatomically male, but in many ways, they do not adhere to 'traditional' or heteronormative ideas of masculinity as defined by modern western heteropatriarchal norms. As a specific illustrative trope *bishōnen* originated from *shōjo manga* in the 1970's. Within Japanese arts and popular culture *bishōnen* have become much loved characters today, and have been elevated to a state of idolatry by many within Japan but also elsewhere in the world. Usually drawn to be elegant figures they could be described as effeminate in a negative context by western standards, however, according to Henshall, *bishōnen* are higher 'male' ideals than that of the strong, hyper-masculine or *kōha* (1999, pp.4-5).[297] It must be stated that this definition is not in relation to the illustrative *bishōnen* that is now synonymous with the term, but relates to the characteristics of a physical person who, "should still display perceived manly and relatively mundane attributes" that are related to the hyper-masculine (Henshall, 1999, p.4). Such as "decisiveness and, fortitude and a selfless devotion for

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[296] Though *samurai*, soldiers and salarymen have held the positions of manhood for youths to strive towards in reality, they were not the idolised versions of 'man' that popular arts generally represented. Therefore, explorations of the realities of manhood and masculinities is not within the scope of this particular research.

[297] 硬派 *kōha* hardliner, straight-laced or rough/tough person (Appx. Four, Davies, 2020c) "The idealised *kōha*/samurai male should show selfless *gaman* (endurance), *makoto* (sincerity), and *isshin* (single-minded commitment) in the carrying out of his duties…. A *kōha* male – at least in the old days – ought never to give any importance to romance or other similar matters seen as soft and unmasculine…" (Henshall, 1999, p.2).

whatever cause he is fighting for," whilst simultaneously maintaining an "elusiveness" and "distance from typical reality" to enhance the "qualities of purity and beauty and transient youth and almost supernatural presence that make him an even higher ideal than the more realistically attainable and sustainable ideal of the *kōha* type samurai" (Henshall, 1999, pp.4-5). The ideals here relate to the notion of perfect, as Henshall states, the *bishōnen* is not as attainable in reality to the hypermasculine. This then reflects the use of *bishōnen* in graphic arts as a means to strive for perfection.

The emphasis of youth and beauty by Henshall here are also essential aspects of the illustrative *bishōnen* and *wakashu*. The transient nature of life and, therefore the need to live and take pleasure in the moment, was an essential symbolic aspect of arts during the Tokugawa period, as was most prominently represented by *ukiyo-e*. However, the idolisation of beauty in Japanese art and culture did not just belong to the Tokugawa period, McLelland and Welker discuss the "celebration of youthful male beauty" (2015, p.5) as being traceable as far back as the Heian period.[298] In the 20th and 21st centuries, this appreciation of beautiful youths within *manga* has been connected mostly with adolescent girls and women however, *bishōnen* have "long been a romantic and sexualised trope for both sexes" (McLelland & Welker, 2015, p.5). This is demonstrated throughout the final part of this thesis by discussing the traditions from which the *bishōnen* have developed, and how, as characters in *manga*, they have evolved and influenced the way in which 'male' gender and

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[298] For Instance, it was during this era that Murasaki Shikibu created her iconic and culturally important novel, *The Tale of Genji*, which follows the life of the fictional beautiful youth and illegitimate son of the Emperor, Hikaru Genji. Genji was considered to be the most beautiful man within this novel and is still a popular subject in arts and illustration, with world-renowned illustrators, such as Yoshitaka Amano, creating books dedicated to their own Genji illustrations (2006).

sexuality is visually depicted. During the Tokugawa regime, these youths featured

heavily in the literary canon, most commonly with other males in what is known as

nanshōku or *shudō,* and in *ukiyo-e* they were depicted with both male and female

partners. *Bishōnen*, have become idealised further in artistic practices within the

pages of *manga*, meaning that the term *bishōnen* can now immediately conjure up

the image of a tall, ethereal-looking illustrated youth as opposed to a flesh-and-blood

beautiful male, for those familiar with Japanese and artistic conventions.

However, *bishōnen* as a single cultural 'masculine' ideal is too simplistic a statement

in contemporary society where different identities, personalities, desires, wants and

needs are catered to and 'accepted' (to varying degrees) in all walks of life. *Bishōnen*

could be considered an important and highly sought-after ideal for men, which is not

to say that this was or is the only expression of masculinity within Japanese or visual

cultures. Whilst the androgyny of *wakashu* and *bishōnen* are important to discuss

and analyse in terms of non-heteronormative representations, it is also important to

acknowledge that androgyny is not the only form of non-heteronormative beauty,

sexuality and expression in art and illustration:

> Art history contains hidden erotic dimensions. It's not enough to read only
> the androgynous male beauties of the past as expressions of queerness – we
> must expand our notions of how different bodies can and have been
> eroticized for centuries. To limit our interpretations of historical
> homoeroticism to the type of feminine beauty familiar to a heterosexual
> audience, Tagame asserts, is to deny the full diversity of male-male sexuality.
>
> (Ishii et al., 2014, p.43)

As this quotation states, it is important to art historical studies, but also visual and

pop cultural studies, to explore all kinds of representation in order to accurately

reflect gender and sexuality and not 'pigeon-hole' specific aesthetics, tropes or

conventions as being the sole expression of sexuality or gender in arts of a specific culture or country.

As noted, what constitutes maleness, masculinity or manhood, much like beauty, evolves and changes between centuries as well as across cultures. In the 1990s, Henshall stated of Japanese society's views of masculinity in a previous era:

> To actually be in love with one's wife was considered demeaning, for manhood was sullied by any admission of affection…They [women] were not even favoured as partners for sexual pleasure. For homosexuality among samurai was … 'not merely common but *normative*'
>
> (Henshall, 1999, pp.2-3)

Therefore, it is important to recognise that although these *samurai* embody, in Western minds, the ultimate warriors, partly due to their representation in media such as videogames and films, they also adhered to a very different code of gender and sexual norms at different stages of their lives, and eras of Japan's history. This does not change the hyper-masculine assumptions, but it does raise questions about heteronormativity and graphic arts. It should also be noted that the statement of normative homosexuality is also an oversimplification of the relationships and cultural traditions of *samurai* and Japanese society. Whilst it is true that western ideas of romance and love were not part of Japanese society prior to the 'opening' of the country to the rest of the world in the 1860s (Frühstück, 2022, p.4), this was not just relevant in *samurai* families but across Japan more generally. In fact, this was key to the success of pleasure quarters such as the Yoshiwara as the higher ranking women offered a type of romance and love that was not common or expected in a marriage. *Samurai,* as well as the *chōnin,* frequently visited the Yoshiwara so it is clear that women were in fact popular sexual partners.

There were contradictions throughout Japanese history in relation to sexual practices, and this also applies to Buddhist doctrine. For instance Bernard Faure uses a specific tract[299] that outlines the pros and cons of heterosexual relations and male love (1998, p.236).[300] There are discussions of the importance of filial piety,[301] procreation and that: "fearing female temptation is not quite the same thing as despising women" (Faure, 1998, p.236), as the despising of women has been asserted in relation to Buddhist sects which banned women from holy places.[302] However, Buddha and Confucius both had male 'romantic' relations, as well as marriages and children (Faure, 1998, p.236), therefore the mix of sexual relations means a normalisation of homosexuality is not strictly accurate.

This also highlights the issue of using contemporary language and terminology to explain aspects of historical 'sexuality'. The term homosexuality as it is known today would not be applicable at the time. The 'men' with whom *samurai* and other adult males of the time had sexual relations were *wakashu*,[303] and were not in fact other adult men, meaning they could perhaps not be considered 'men' at all but as a separate 'Third Gender' as Mostow posits (2016). Also, as Faure's example mentions, and as discussed in previous chapters relating to *onnagata*, men involved in same-sex relations could and would also be married with children. This could potentially be explained as an emphasis on procreation, as opposed to

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[299] Entitled *Denbu*, or *The Boor* in English, the tract pits "the refined one" (arguing for male love) against the boor (in favour of heterosexual relations) (Faure, 1998, pp.234-236).
[300] Though Faure points out that the merits and demerits of women appears to be the main focus throughout the passage (1998, p.236).
[301] With an emphasis that "homosexuality is seen as lacking in filial piety and undermining social order" (Faure, 1998, p.236).
[302] This is also linked to menstruation, as whilst in Buddhism menstruation is supposedly seen as a natural physical excretion, in practice according to Aru Bhartiya (2013, p.524) it has affected the treatment and access to temples for women.
[303] Or *chigo* in relation to monks, as explained further in Chapter Nine.

heteronormative 'love' however, because of this, the notion of the 'normativity' of 'homosexuality', as mentioned by Henshall, at this time needs to be treated with caution and sensitively.

Chapter Nine:
"Masculinity" in Androgyny

Some of the most historically famous *bishōnen* from pre-modern times in Japan (pre-1868) have been *samurai*, and all *samurai* would have been *wakashu* at one point in their lives. However, the *type* of *wakashu* that these famous men would have been were very different from the *wakashu* of the Tokugawa period and from those who were portrayed in the *ukiyo-e* discussed within this thesis. Previously *wakashu* adhered to what Isaka calls "homogenderity," a term she explains to mean that *wakashu*: "shared, or aimed at, a gender similar to that of their senior partners." (2016, p.23). By senior partners, Isaka is referring to those of *samurai* lineage who have already undergone the *genpuku* traditions, making them adult males officially. However: "The emergent popularity of androgynous aesthetics dramatically changed the *wakashu* gender itself... from military masculinity to something floating between feminine and masculine." (Isaka, 2016, p.23). It is this definition of *wakashu* gender that has clear links with the contemporary *bishōnen,* in one's opinion*,* and that is referred to throughout this chapter. Discussing this in-between of *wakashu* directly, Isaka references the term *futanarihira*[304] as a "new way of playing with gender" that floats between male and female and embodying a "neutral" sexuality that appeals to the desires of both men and women (2016, p.27). This is important for the understanding of differing attitudes towards gender during the Tokugawa period, and also has parallels with the formation and success of *onnagata* as discussed in Chapter Six. However, preceding the popularisation of *wakashu* within literature and arts was the *chigo*.

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[304] "*futanari* (intersex; androgyny) and Narihira, the aristocratic male poet of the ninth century, who has been treated in the literary tradition as the quintessential beauty. *"Futanarihira"* means therefore, "androgynous beauties"" (Isaka, 2016, p.27)

Chigo were 'male' temple attendants to Buddhist monks who were involved in "the way of male love" which first developed in the monasteries, went through the *samurai* class then reached the merchant class in the Tokugawa period (Faure, 1998, p.213). Faure's (1998) examinations of sexuality and Buddhism discussed the contradictions and complexities within *chigo* discourse, particularly relating to the literature that idolised and idealised them.[305] These tales included the "Divine Child" (Faure, 1998, p.249) and the role of suffering leading to salvation as an ideal *chigo* representation. These were vital elements of the literature created around the relations that Buddhist monks had with 'their' *chigo.* There was also the element of "homogenderity" that Isaka (2016) discusses in relation to the *samurai nenja-wakashu* relations, where the elder of the 'couple' would be mentoring and instructing the younger in how to behave as an adult.

However, as the Tokugawa period created peace, and social and political life changed, the role of *chigo* also altered in the cultural mindset as 'sanctioned' forms of sex-work within pleasure quarters gained prominence: "… decline of the "way" of male love, its increasing commercialization. Monks no longer entertain chigo, they go to brothels to buy themselves prostitutes, male or female." (Faure, 1998, pp.212-213). This decline, as Faure stated, related to the development and popularisation of *kagema*,[306] and that the way was no longer about "an idealized relationship between an adult and an adolescent, an elder and a younger brother," (Faure, 1998, p.223) as it had been in the Buddhist monasteries or *samurai* relations:

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[305] *Chigo Monogatari – Tales of Chigo.*
[306] Male sex workers.

In contrast to the samurai model, in which the homosexual relationship involved a difference in age, the kagema model can be said to have been based on gender differentiation: the beauty of the kagema, specifically, was compared to that of a courtesan: it trespassed on heterosexual ground."

(Furukawa, 1994, p.100)

Consequently, this shift in focus from age specifically, to a form of beauty as a means of 'gendering' the people involved in the acts, is a thought-provoking point. The basis of this chapter, therefore, concentrates on the formulation of masculinised gender embodied within *wakashu* representations in *ukiyo-e*.

Role of Wakashu in the Tokugawa Period

Wakashu have recently been the subject of an exhibition first held at the Royal Ontario Museum in Canada: *A Third Gender: Beautiful Youths in Japanese Prints*.[307] As these youths were neither considered child nor adult, boy nor man, Mostow posits that *wakashu* should be considered an entirely new 'third gender' (2016). The point at which a *wakashu* underwent *genpuku* was heavily dependent on individual circumstances, social class and the local customs of the villages and towns within Japan.[308] According to Ikeda (2016), it was common to transition from childhood to *wakashu* around the age of 12, but there are some accounts in Japanese literature of *wakashu* at the age of 25, 30 and even 80 years old (Ikeda, 2016, p.12).[309] This, "illuminate[s] the degree to which 1) the upper age limit of wakashu was relatively flexible, and 2) it was their qualities… not necessarily their calendar age, that

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[307] At the Royal Ontario Museum May 7 - November 27 2016; Japan Society New York March 10 - June 11 2017.

[308] Despite the fact that Paul Schalow states in his translation of Ihara Saikaku's 1687 collection of short stories, *The Great Mirror of Male Love,* that *wakashu* would transition into adulthood at the age of nineteen, (Saikaku, 1996, p.1) the age range of *wakashu* has been difficult for scholars to determine conclusively.

[309] These elder examples of *wakashu*, however, appear to only be found in fiction as opposed to historical records.

mattered" (Ikeda, 2016, p.12). In many ways, this explanation of *wakashu* as a gender role is similar to that of *onnagata* in terms of their external markers in order to communicate gender, "such as their passive nature and external marks of youthfulness coded by hairstyle and clothing" (Ikeda, 2016, p.12). The inclusion of codes of performance again relates to the theories of performativity outlined in the Introduction, and Chapter One (Butler, 2006), as it is the markers of clothing and hair that create the outward expressions that signify the gender performed by *wakashu*: "Above all, wakashu was a gender role – not a fixed biological category – that was performed" (Ikeda, 2016, p.12).

Onnagata and *wakashu* are intrinsically linked with important overlaps in gender representations: "… even in their radical departure from *wakashu*, *onnagata* share an intriguing feature with them. They both retain "masculinity" in one way or another" (Isaka, 2016, p.42). As discussed in Chapters Six and Eight, despite creating idealised versions of women for the *kabuki* stage, *onnagata* still relied on aspects of their masculinity away from the stage in order to create their onstage performances. For *wakashu*, their identity evolved during the 'peace time' of the Tokugawa period, meaning they were able to become androgynous-like beauties that could easily blend feminine and masculine expected characteristics, but maintain a 'masculine' ideal.

Isaka asserts that the *wakashu* who began to embody *futanarihira* aesthetics more exclusively were in a state between femininity and masculinity in terms of their gender, but male as far as sex is concerned: "Simply put, they were "androgynous" but not androgyny. With the reification of the popular criteria for *wakashu,* their sex was (considered) male and their gender floated between femininity and masculinity"

(2016, p.28). This differs slightly from Mostow's view of *wakashu*, as he posits that

wakashu were a third gender completely separate from the male and female: "the

wakashu represents a third gender due to the fact "he" can do something that no

other gender can: he is sexually ambidextrous…" (Mostow, 2016, p.23). Isaka on the

other hand, implies that *wakashu* are bound by the androgynous aesthetic that

created the ideal, or perfect, representation in prints.[310]

Wakashu in Ukiyo-e

Wakashu represented youthful beauty and were considered to be fashionable: "these

beautiful boys, with their graceful gestures and elegant robes… they were always

handsome; they were always sexual objects" (Keyes, 1989, p.35). [311] Therefore, it is

understandable that *wakashu* can often be mistakenly identified as women in *ukiyo-e*,

similarly to *onnagata*: "Indeed, Westerners routinely mistook the attractive boys

(*wakushū*) for girls, as do many modern viewers," (Screech, 2009, loc.1643) as they

were depicted in a way that was reminiscent of the *bijin-ga* prints of beautiful

women which were discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis. This is evidenced in

Harunobu's print (Fig.56) which depicts two almost identical figures: one is a young

woman and one is a *wakashu* (c.1768). For viewers of *ukiyo-e*, there are three key

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[310] Mostow acknowledges Isaka's explanations of *futanarihira* from the Isaka's 2002 article 'The Gender of Onnagata as the Imitating Imitated: It's Historicity, Performativity and Involvement in the Circulation of Femininity' in *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique*, Vol.10 No.2 pp. 245-284 article and concludes: "… while the non-professional wakashu was clearly its own and distinct gender, "professional" or performing wakashu, due to the need of also performing as women on stage, created a more ambiguous category that was sexed as male but androgynous (between male and female) in terms of gender – not in fact a third gender but one in between" (Mostow, 2016, p.26).
[311] In this way *wakashu* and the contemporary *bishōnen* depictions are the same: they are sexual 'objects' who create and fulfil various fantasies and desires. This also applies to the "perfect object" analysis that Antononoka explores in her PhD thesis relating to *bishōnen* (2018). Then again, *bishōnen* in contemporary illustration are depicted differently; although they can be and are androgynous they are often visibly 'male-bodied' or just extremely beautiful characters that reflect elements of a masculine and feminine duality. In some instances, they are mistaken for women due to their beauty within the visual narratives themselves, but it is the understanding of the researcher that this is very different from the mistaken identification of *wakashu* in *ukiyo-e* by viewers of the works which was caused by specific styles, and preferred beauty aesthetics.

features that can immediately distinguish *wakashu* from women: a shaved spot on the crown of the head; the presence of a sword in the image; and finally, in *shunga* prints, a visible penis.

The first identifying marker of a *wakashu* in *ukiyo-e* is that of a shaven spot on the top of the head and *maegami* or forelocks, which would be completely shaven as part of *genpuku* to signify the transition from *wakashu* to adult. In Eisui's print, *Wakashu with a Shoulder Drum* (n.d; Fig.57), the spot is quite visible as it is in the *ōkubi-e* style that shows just the head and upper torso of the portrait subject. There are three different stages of this hairstyle as part of the *genpuku* process. Kiyonaga's print of a very young *wakashu* (Fig.58) illustrates the first stage where a small shaved spot can be seen whilst the rest of the forelocks remain in tact; the second is known as 'putting the corners in' as subtly illustrated by Hosoda and Utamaro's prints (Figs.57 & 59) with, potentially, older *wakashu* due to more prominent curves in the hairline.[312] The final stage, which signified the completion of *genpuku* and the end of their time as a *wakashu,* was the complete shaving of the *maegami*. This signifier of *wakashu* can be difficult to find in some *ukiyo-e* due to the composition of the print; or because it has been deliberately hidden by headwear similar to depictions of *onnagata* actors. For instance a print by Haruonbu entitled *Geese Descending on the Koto Bridges* from *Eight Fashionable Parlour Views* (c.1768; Fig.63), shows a young couple, but due to the beauty aesthetics of the time there are no differentiations between them to indicate if this is a same-sex or a 'heterosexual' couple. Therefore, this print forms the detailed case study for this chapter to

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[312] Although, the young woman in Utamaro's piece also has as similar hairline, which again emphasises the difficulties in identifying *wakashu* in prints.

investigate if there are any specific gender or sexuality signifiers that can be revealed and interpreted.

Moving to other prints, the presence of *daishō*[313] indicates a man of *samurai* status, as only they were permitted to carry these two swords.[314] Some women of the *samurai* class would be trained to use weapons, such as the *naginata,* and would often have a knife hidden within the sleeves of their *kimono* or in the *obi.* During the Tokugawa period, the status of women in the *samurai* class was greatly diminished in comparison to the eras before (Weidner, 1990, p.16); due to this, only famous women from historical *samurai* families and battles are depicted with weapons. Therefore, when a sword is present in an image, such as in *Young Samurai Viewing Cherry Blossoms as a Mitate-e of Prince Kaoru* by Harunobu (c.1767; Fig.60), it leads us to deduce it is a *wakashu* from the *samurai* class.

This print is also important in regard to the visual literacy of the time, as the print is a *mitate-e,* a parody print, with a more readily recognisable theme and message to those of the time. This is actually a print relating to the *Tale of Genji* that has been adapted to illustrate the culture of the Tokugawa period, as opposed to the Heian period, as would have been more realistic to the story. The scene being depicted is chapter 48, where Prince Kaoru regrets arranging a marriage between his one true love, Lady Nakanokimi, and his friend, Prince Niou. (Minneapolis Institute of Art, n.d). This creates an immediate connection with those of the time, and emphasises the beauty that was communicated and held as essential throughout the original

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[313] 大小 pair of swords, i.e. long and short sword.
[314] Occasionally those from the merchant class could also be rewarded with the honour of carrying a sword, for services performed, but farmers and peasants had been forced to give up their weapons years before the Tokugawa regime and before the development of *ukiyo-e*.

material, by likening the depictions in the print to the 'perfect' representation of beauties of the Tokugawa period. Harunobu has also made it very obvious that the subject here (Prince Karou) is a *wakashu* because the *maegami* and shaven spot are very visible, especially when compared with the shaven pate of the second figure.[315]

Wakashu and Erotica

The final immediate identifier of *wakashu* is found in *shunga*. In the case of these prints, *wakashu* are identified by the presence of a penis, as in this example attributed to Isoda Koryūsai (c.1770; Fig.61). The hairpieces depicted here are almost identical, including the presence of a hair clip, which are more common in depictions of sex workers and other women; there are no swords visible to indicate status, therefore, the only indication that this is not two women together is the presence of a penis. However, there are two flaws with this particular identifying feature.

The first is that not all *shunga* are completely explicit, and of those that are, some compositions hide all anatomically-identifying features. As already established by Ueno (2015), nudes were not common in the Japanese art historical canon prior to the modern era, however *shunga* were not nudes, as the explicit nature of them indicates an attitude of nakedness. Regardless, clothing and fine fabrics indicated a level of status and wealth, and could add to the erotic implications of a print by covering all but specific parts of the body, such as the feet or neck. Explicit *shunga*

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[315] However, regarding the presence of swords, there is also the exception of *onnagata* prints, such as the *Onna Shibaraku* imagery discussed in Chapter Eight, where a typically male role is played as a female role by an *onnagata* actor. In the case of *Onna Shibaraku*, the lead role is also reframed so that the actor is portraying the historical female warrior, Tomoe Gozen, as opposed to a female version of a historically male person or character. Contemporary examples of alternative histories can be found in the *manga Ōoku: The Inner Chambers* (discussed on p.165).

would not need to include clothing to heighten this kind of implication, but could be

used to emphasise status, wealth and the exaggerated anatomy, or simply to obscure

anatomically impossible compositions.

The second 'difficulty' is that *wakashu* were 'sexually flexible', or what Mostow

calls "phallocratic pansexuality" in which, "bisexuality was common, socially

accepted, and at times even considered a luxury" for those who could afford to visit

the pleasure quarters (Ikeda, 2016, p.12). Another Harunobu print from a much

larger series illustrates the "phallocratic pansexuality" that Mostow posits (Fig.62):

> A man, a native of Edo who has enjoyed sex all his life, vows to study the
> 'way of love' more deeply, and so he makes a pilgrimage to a shrine and
> prays to the god of love. The 'love protection' deity appears and the man
> receives a strange potion which he is told will fulfil all his desires.
>
> (Hayakawa, 2013, p.173)

The potion shrinks the man down and taking the name Mane'emon (Hayakawa,

2013, p.173),[316] he then travels around Edo and comments on the different sexual

customs he encounters along the way on his quest to learn about lovemaking. It is an

unusual series of *shunga* in that there is a continuous narrative (Hayakawa, 2013,

p.163; Kobayashi, 2013, p.154) as opposed to just individual erotic scenes. This

story is also interesting in itself, as it explores the different attitudes towards sex in

the period from sex-work to young lovers. This particular print, sheet five,[317] shows

Mane'emon commenting on a tryst between a *wakashu* and adult male: "Good

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[316] Mane'emon, meaning 'bean man' (Hayakawa, 2013, p.163). However, *mame* means bean in Japanese and in the parody prints *Ise monogatari haikai mame-otoko* (*Ise Stories Humorous Verse Bean Man: The Dream Cap*), *mame-otoko* is used to mean 'bean man' as a parody (*mame-otoko* was used to mean 'sincere man' in relation to Narihira in the *Tales of Ise* (*Ise Monogatari*) (Mostow 2013, p.335 [in Clark]).
[317] See Calza (2010, pp.152-171) for further examples from *The Fashionable Romantic Adventures of Maneemon* (*Fūryū enshoku Maneemon*) c.1768.

heavens, the method of having male sex involves some elaborate armwork." (British Museum, n.d, B).

Upon first viewing this print, it would appear to be a tryst between a man and woman, perhaps a sex-worker and her client due to the presence of a hairpiece and the brightly coloured and embroidered robes. However, once the entire image has been observed it becomes obvious that this is in fact a scene depicting two 'male-bodied' people: a *wakashu* and an adult male, because there are two penises visible in the print. The presence of a penis does not immediately indicate a *wakashu* as it could be an 'adult male'; it is for this reason that a combination of visual signifiers are needed to 'read' imagery. In this instance, there is a combination of non-shaved pate and the penis. This print also emphasises the femininity of *wakashu* much more than the previously discussed imagery. There was an "exaggeration" of femininity in the depiction of *wakashu* in *shunga* that was heightened by "the boy's genitals [being] covered or shown so small as to be unobtrusive" (Screech, 2009, loc.1266-1277). Ultimately, "*What was wanted* was boys who looked like girls. Portraits of boys attribute to them so much of the feminine, there can be genuine confusion," (Screech, 2009, loc.1266-1277; emphasis in original), which relates back to the subversion of gender in relation to *kabuki* as a reason for its popularity (Gabrvoska, 2015, p.389).

This stresses some of the issues that arise when first viewing *shunga* due to the aesthetics and desires of the time, epitomised by the 'perfect' representations of these genders in graphic arts. *Wakashu* in reality 'floated' between the feminine and masculine by carrying attributes of each in their expression and performance of

gender, but in *shunga* the artists enhanced the feminine aspects of them in order to appeal to the desires of the audience. This, in this author's opinion, is similar to the *onnagata* analyses particularly in regards to Sharaku's works which showed reality, as opposed to the idealised fantasy.

Male sex work was also a part of Tokugawa society, and *wakashu* were often involved, hence their ban from *kabuki* stages and the introduction of adult male actors which led to the evolution of the *onnagata* art form. Therefore, this print could be depicting a male sex worker with an adult male client. The British Museum's online collection version of this print states: "Young female role actor (onnagata) and his client making love at a tea-house near the kabuki theatre, as Mane'emon holding a kite watches them" (British Museum, n.d, B). It was an expectation at certain points that *kabuki* actors, especially trainee *onnagata*, would: "provide male prostitution to patrons – mainly men, but to some women too – in theatre teahouses (*shibai-jaya*) or 'teahouses in the shadows' (*kagema-jaya*)" (Clark & Gerstle, 2013, pp.25-27). However, by the time of the publication of this print series *wakashu* were banned from the stage. This does not mean that *onnagata* no longer engaged in these relations with patrons of *kabuki*, but this researcher proposes that the absence of a *bōshi* suggests that this is not an *onnagata*, as described in the previous chapters, but was an earlier incarnation of female role specialist that *wakashu* portrayed. This could also enhance the fantasy elements of *shunga*, and *ukiyo-e* more generally. Clark & Gerstle discuss the "reality-versus-fiction" within *shunga* from the perspective of the sexual encounters uncovered in *shunga* imagery, with possible questions of the reality of sexual attitudes (2013, pp.27-28). Therefore, this particular Harunobu print combines: fiction (a man shrunk down to the size of bean by a

potion); 'reality' (sex in different settings, couplings etc.); and (quasi-fantasy;

wakashu as *kabuki* actor); in a single scene.

Even though Mostow uses terms such as 'bisexuality' and 'pansexuality' when

discussing the male-male relationships of the Tokugawa period, this can be

problematic, as these very contemporary terms do not necessarily reflect the

ideology of that time or people; but his use could purely be to provide a context that

contemporary readers will understand. The societal structure of this time adhered to

religious and philosophical ideologies, which meant that women were inferior to

men, but also that youths were inferior to adults (Ikeda, 2016, p.12). This meant that

wakashu were the passive partners in relationships with males, and the active partner

with females, unless the female partner was older, in which case she would be

classed as "the initiator" (Mostow & Ikeda, 2016 p.144). Again, we are drawn back

to discussions of active and passive; this time in the relations between a *wakashu* and

their lover(s):

> In Japanese sexuality, distinctions between male and female, or between
> homosexual and heterosexual, are perhaps less relevant than that between
> active and passive. The "passive" category refers not only to women; it also
> includes young boys, chigo. In the Buddhist context in particular, male love –
> more precisely, "love of youth" (amour des garçons) – designated a
> pederastic-pedagogical relationship. In a strictly hierarchical society in which
> women occupied the lowest level, homosexuality encouraged misogyny, and
> conversely.
>
> (Faure, 1998, p.217)

Therefore, in the Buddhist contexts relating to *chigo* they always remained in the

'passive' position in the interactions, whereas *wakashu*, in their flexibility of

relations, could change from passive to active depending on a situation. By

extension, no two males on the same level would enter into a *nanshōku* relationship,

due to the Buddhist contexts outlined by Faure, but also the models discussed by

Ikeda and Mostow: "…it was largely the patriarchal social structure, not individual preference or orientation, that determined people's gender role and sexual relations." (2016, p.12).[318] This societal model and the *nenja-wakashu* affairs shows the complex relationships that feudal Japan had with sexuality and gender, and why it is problematic to blanket-label *wakashu* as bisexual. However, Screech retells of Iemitsu (the third Tokugawa *shōgun*) provoking "hostility" from his own *nanshōku* relations, "not because he engaged in them… but because he liked to be penetrated. As shogun, Iemitsu ought not to have referred his prerogative to a subordinate; he upset the hierarchy as would a master who brought his servant food." (2009, loc.1408). This desire and hostility, shows that despite the assumed acceptance of 'homosexual' relations, the acceptance only existed provided that the relations took place in a specific and controlled manner. This is similar to the S relationship acceptance discussed in Chapter Five (see p.158).

The subordination is also an interesting and important factor here, as the penetrated *wakashu* was subordinate to the penetrating senior *nenja,* or adult participant outside of *samurai* convention. However, this was not so much to do with gendering as it was to do with age and ideologies (Ikeda & Mostow, 2016). Screech offers a comparison with European relations in that a homosexual relationship could only be formed with the "meeting of opposite genders… defined via an analogy of heterosexual intercourse as the one who was penetrated was usually followed by the willing or involuntary adoption of other characteristics deemed female" (Screech, 2009, loc.1377). This adoption of feminine characteristics is worthy of note and also

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[318] However, Screech (2009, loc.4403) describes a discussion with Ellis Tinios (Japanese illustrated book specialist) about his discovery of imagery depicting adult males engaged in sexual activity. This appears to have been extremely rare and newly developing research as there is no further information about these images or Tinios' research regarding them.

creates a connection to *bishōnen* in *manga* as the feminisation of these characters is what allowed them to interact in a homoerotic way: "Tales of homosexual relationships between young boys, when depicted "aesthetically", are very popular among the female readers and are an extension of the underlying bisexual theme traditionally present in many girls' comic stories" (Schodt, 1983, p.100-101). However, Faure does discuss feminisation in relation to the *kagema* (1998, p.225) the male sex workers who were likened to "courtesans" by Furukawa (1994, p.100) due to their performative presence, though this is different to the contemporary discussions by Schodt here and in the following chapters.

Because of these complex sexual relationships shown in *shunga,* a combination of different signifiers are required to interpret and understand the relationship and gender of the two figures in Harunobu's *Geese Descending on the Koto Bridges* from *Eight Fashionable Parlour Views* (c.1768; Fig.63).

Case Study: *Geese Descending on the Koto Bridges*
Instantly our eyes are drawn to the figures entwined in the centre of this image. (Fig.63). They are interlocked in an embrace on the floor, though perhaps the figure who is behind has surprised the figure in front, whilst they practice music. This can be inferred from the hands that are still poised on the strings of the instrument in front, whilst the left foot of the figure behind is just visible – showing that they have perhaps just squatted down behind. The room itself appears to be upstairs, as the window to the left is level with a tree branch. However, behind them and moving out of our view is a landscape scene; the thick black border perhaps indicates this is a screen as opposed to another window. To the right, a black dog with a bow turns its

head away from the couple; has it been distracted by another to entice it to leave the couple alone? Above them a cloud-like pattern frames the piece; is this indicative of a dream?

The figures at first appear to be identical in their portrayal; both have long slicked-back and tied-up hair and are wearing traditional dress in hues of yellow and orange. The faces appear the same too: rounded, with small mouths and eyes – potentially indicating a stylised presentation. However, if we explore the image more closely we see that the figure in front has a comb or ornament in their hair whilst the figure who is behind does not; the clothing of the front figure is also more detailed, with the leaves imitating those of the tree visible through the window to the left. The clothing of the figure behind mimics these colours, but the design is more subdued with stripes and an additional layer that appears to be a long coat. The outward adornments are the only indicators of difference between these two people; therefore, we can speculate that they are perhaps of the same gender, in which case this would make this an intriguing image regarding sexuality.

This print is by artist Suzuki Harunobu, and is entitled *Geese Descending on the Koto Bridges* from the series *Eight Fashionable Parlour Views* created circa 1768-1770.[319] As we begin to apply the iconographical and iconological readings to this print, it is clear that the 'reading' of lovers having a tryst is perhaps not quite as clear-cut as first thought. However, beginning with the figures, an analysis of the

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[319] Harunobu has been credited with being the innovator behind the full colour print, or *nishiki-e*, with Nelson Davies stating: "within two years of producing nishiki-e, his name became aligned with the medium, turning him into one of ukiyo-e's brand names thereafter." (2021, p.69).

clothing reveals we are not looking at a same-sex coupling, but in fact two beautiful youths from differing gender categories.

In the analysis of the Segawa Kikunojō III print (p.200; Fig.39), the clothing of the *onnagata*, was discussed as a mix of feminine and masculine styles. The *furisode* and comportment of Kikunojō emphasised femininity, yet the sword and *kamishimo* indicated a 'man'. This type of analysis can be applied to the Harunobu piece in slightly different ways. The front figure, who is playing the instrument known as *koto*, wears a heavily embroidered *furisode*, as evidenced by the long sleeves hanging down; and they are also wearing an *obi* that is tied in an intricate knot behind them. This is a clear indicator that this is not a sex worker, as discussed in Chapter Three. The embroidery shows a design of maple leaves, mimicking the tree outside and indicating the time of year as autumn. The second figure also appears to be wearing long-sleeved clothing similar to a *furisode*, but the design is not as intricate. The comb in the hair is also an indication of fashions of the time, and is reminiscent of the beauty prints discussed in Chapter Three; from this it can be inferred that the figure playing the *koto* is a young woman, whereas her 'lover' is a *wakashu*. The standardised style of the figures in the face and hands indicates beauty ideals of the time as well, as the preferred aesthetic style of Harunobu. As other indicators associated with *wakashu*, such as shaved forelocks, swords or in the more explicit imagery a penis, are absent clothing is the main indicator of *wakashu* status. However, as the figures can be initially read as feminine, it could also be deduced more swiftly with the knowledge discussed in Chapter Five, regarding the scarcity of female-female sexual depictions during the Tokugawa period, that this is a woman and a *wakashu*.

The *wakashu* in this print is instigating the kiss and is beginning to undo the *obi* knot, thereby insinuating that a more passionate embrace is about to unfold. However, as Coaldrake notes, there are additional symbolic aspects of this print that indicate a less than enthusiastic participation from the young woman, including the dog turning away from the couple and the imminent falling of the maple leaves (2012, p.118) which indicates a move to colder climates. Coaldrake also notes that the obvious compositional choice of the *wakashu* having to pull the young woman's attention away from the *koto* is an indication that: "her ardour has cooled". (2012, p.118). This aspect of the print shows in practice the gendered active and passive roles that Mostow discussed in relation to the societal models during pre-modern Japanese eras. These two figures appear to be of a similar age and so the *wakashu* is the active initiator of the (implied) sexual relations.

Nevertheless, there is still more than meets the eye in relation to this print that asserts the visual literacy of *ukiyo-e* even further, although not in relation to the gender or sexuality. The title of the piece alludes to a theme deriving from the "Chinese standard set of eight poetic phrases on the Xiao and Xiang Rivers" (Nelson Davies, 2021, p.63). Nelson Davies continues that this theme was adapted in Japan to scenes depicting views of Ōmi, with sites based around Lake Biwa in Kyoto (2021, p.63). The importance of this to the visual literacy discussion relies on the symbolism of geese coming in-to land. This immediately connoted to viewers of the time what the piece was insinuating; and Harunobu was commissioned to create a series that hid this theme in plain sight (Nelson Davies, 2021, p.63). However, the particular print analysed here is not from that initial series, but is a later erotic version; this is

potentially why the title includes *Geese Descending* to ensure that viewers could make the connection (Nelson Davies, 2021, p.66). Like in the earlier commissioned series' of *Eight Views of the Parlor* (1766), the imagery of the geese is hidden in the bridges of the *koto* (Nelson Davies, 2021, p.63), although the additional imagery on the screen of the temple and lake also connects to the original theme and versions in ink paintings (Nelson Davies, 2021, p.66). Finally, this version is again a later printing of the erotic version that has had the poem, originally located in the cloud-like pattern, removed.[320] Nelson Davies also adds that the combination of the print and poem "slyly puns that this might be the first sexual experience for both figures" (2021, p.68). This is a factor that would be apparent to those of the time, and who understood the poetic connections. This would potentially explain the 'cooling ardour' interpretation by Coaldrake (2012) as well, as if this is the first experience then inexperience and uncertainty could be assumed.

This analysis once again illustrates the complexity of *ukiyo-e* prints themselves regarding printing processes, and the reissues of popular series. In this case the reissue was a recreation of recreations, showing that themes could transcend culture and be adapted into the visual literacy of those associated with it. The inclusion of the title for the erotic version, as outlined by Nelson Davies, insinuates that this piece was intended for a potentially wider audience then the original 1766 series, because the wider public may not have been as familiar with the Chinese poetic links. This is reminiscent of the earlier *wakashu* print that emulated themes from the *Tale of Genji,* and which could be enjoyed as it first appeared, but the hidden messages which are

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[320] Perhaps attracted / by the sound of the *koto, /* this years first flock of geese / descends together / from the sky. (Nelson Davies, 2021, pp.67-68)

conveyed through the symbolic elements adds more meaning and life for some of its viewers. Ultimately, the print personifies the ideal as perfect representation, as both the figures adhere to the beauty aesthetics of the time to appeal to men and women within the erotic print culture of the Tokugawa period.

As demonstrated throughout this chapter's print analyses, all images of *wakashu* represent youthful beauty as an important aesthetic; however, youth is also key due to the status of *wakashu* in Japanese cultural history. The *nenja-wakashu*[321] relationship would end once the *wakashu* underwent *genpuku*. They would then, in theory, become a *nenja* themselves, thus continuing the *samurai* traditions (Isaka, 2016). [322] *Wakashu*, as represented in *ukiyo-e*, and of the Tokugawa period in general, adhered to a different code of aesthetics and ideologies than had come before. This was analysed in relation to the development of *onnagata*, and as a separate gender earlier in this chapter.[323] Therefore, the *samurai* lineage expectations discussed by Schalow here had begun to shift and, as Isaka states, "homogenderity" (2016, p.23) was no longer an important aspect of *wakashu* life.

During the 'peace' time of the Tokugawa period, the *samurai* class were left with no enemies to face or true military purpose as they had had previously (Appx. One). It was during this period of change that the role, and to some extent the expectations,

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[321] In contemporary *manga* and fan circles these subjects can be differentiated by the terms 攻め *seme* and うけ *uke* (i.e. top & bottom) meaning attack and receive respectively which Saitō links to different forms of identification on behalf of readers (2009, p.162) as *seme* can be referred to as passive while *uke* active.

[322] This is also outlined by Paul Schalow in his translation of Saikaku's *The Great Mirror of Male Love*: "…the adult male lover… was supposed to provide social backing, emotional support, and a model of manliness for the boy. In exchange, the boy was expected to be worthy of his lover by being a good student of samurai manhood. Together they vowed to uphold the manly virtues of the samurai class: to be loyal, steadfast, and honourable in their actions." (1996, pp.27-28).

[323] However, they were also different to the *kagema* and *chigo* also mentioned.

of a *wakashu* shifted. The "homogenderity" of a *wakashu* was originally

exceptionally important: "this type of *wakashu*, though younger and "inferior" to his

nenja, should not be weak or feminized. One who was so beautiful in a womanly

manner that "nobody thinks of him as a male" could not even expect to have a

nenja," (Isaka, 2016, pp.26-28) which would have been considered a failure. Now,

wakashu began to embody a different aesthetic phenomenon, *futanarihira*, which:

"maintained the sex identity of male and the gender of androgynous, implying that

the two types of identity were not necessarily in a binding relationship" (Isaka, 2016,

p.30). This new aesthetic brought about a change to gender representations within

Japanese arts and culture, as it also had a profound impact on *onnagata,* as discussed

in Chapter Six.

As summarised by Isaka and Mostow, there were potential differences in the 'type'

or evolution of *wakashu* in the realities of the Tokugawa period. Regardless of these

differentiations, it is the understanding of this researcher that *wakashu* occupy a

space that is neither exclusively male nor female, and that is neither 'straight' or

'homosexual' as observed in the analysis of the prints in this chapter. Similar

ideologies can be found in *manga* narratives of *bishōnen*:

> Ueno contends that ultimately the beautiful boy is "neither male nor female"
> but a "third sex/gender". She asserts that "it is only a person's mind, which is
> bound by the gender dichotomy that mistakes that which is not a girl for a
> boy"

> (Welker, 2006, p.852, quoting Ueno, 1998)[324]

This indicates that the long-held traditions of *wakashu* still exist (to some extent) in

narrative and artistic formats, although not in everyday life or cultural practices. In

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[324] The 2015 revised edition of Ueno's work is referenced in this thesis.

turn, this illustrates that traditional forms or ideologies re-enter arts practices –

although with different aims, aesthetics and meanings. It is important however, to

examine these opposing versions of masculine ideals in a single thesis, as the

cultural context or recognisability may be missed; however, as the following chapter

explores, the visual connections may be the only link between these masculine

beauty ideals.

Chapter Ten:
"Beautiful Boys"/ "Beautiful Men"

As outlined in the Introduction to Part Three (p.265), ideals of masculinity shifted

drastically from the decline of the feudal system through to the 1990's, with a

change from solider to salaryman as the ideal type of masculinity (Frühstück, 2022,

p.14). This analysis as a reality is beyond the scope of this current research, but the

acknowledgement of changing and different ideals between generations is needed.

However, in relation to beauty ideals as outlined in the art historical field (see

Introduction p.9), masculinity holds an interesting visual place in Japanese culture.

This chapter analyses *bishōnen* from gendered perspectives, before discussing other

forms of masculine representation beyond the 'mainstream'[325] of graphic arts.

The previous chapter concentrated on pre-modern depictions of masculine ideals in

graphic arts. This analysis examined these ideals from a perspective of sexuality as

well as gender. As noted, it would be incorrect to say that pre-modern Japan had a

normative homosexual culture, because homosexuality was not a factor *per se*; the

influence of western ideologies in the Meiji era brought an end to the 'acceptance' of

male-male sexual relations more generally:

> In order for Japan to join the community of "civilised nations", it seemed
> necessary for Japanese to adapt western practices. Accordingly, a new focus
> on sexual behaviour and physical acts developed in Japan at this time in an
> effort to shape the sexual lives of the nation's subjects.
>
> (Winston, 2009 p.72)

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[325] As noted by Baudinette (Japan Foundation New York, 2022b), due to the frameworks of the publishing industries in Japan, classing BL or other forms of media as mainstream is a little simplistic.

The permeation of European sexology texts in the Meiji period, led to political shifts indicating biological sex in the formation of hetero as the norm (Winston, 2009, pp.73-74). This extended beyond biological sex, "but also to behaviour and personality, or what would be called gender today. Authorities at the time determined that such attributes as "modesty" in women and "courage" in men were linked to the body" (Winston, 2009 pp.73-74). This reflects Kano's discussion of the body as the site for ideal feminine performance (2001). However, 'homosexual' desires and relations continued in different areas of Japanese society as Furukawa (1994) examined, including the 'sudden' revealing of female same-sex desire. Despite this, the norm of hetero- became a part of Japanese society at large through the 20th century, but visually a shift happened in *manga* and illustrations which targeted young girls from the 1960s onwards.

Anan discusses these changes as a part of the "girlie" aesthetics and sphere as a means of maintaining homosocial spaces once mixed-schooling became a norm (2016, pp.72-73). This was achieved through the inclusion of androgynous 'boys' into these worlds as part of a homosocial sphere (Anan, 2016, p.73) and that these feminised boys: "may anticipate the emergence of androgynous boys as girls' alter egos in girls' manga of the 1970's and afterwards" (Anan, 2016, p.73). These androgynous boys were the new visually aesthetic representation of *bishōnen*.

Beginnings of Bishōnen in Manga

Since the 1970s, *shōjo manga* have depicted *bishōnen* characters as romantically involved, both implicitly and explicitly, but not necessarily graphically, with other

bishōnen.[326] *Bishōnen* in these *manga* go against heteronormative ideas and allow the readers to explore their own sexuality and gender through the characters on the page: "These androgynes incite girls' identification with them, thereby allowing girls to imaginatively and queerly experience various forms of sexuality" (Anan, 2016, p.80). Anan also states the identification is due to the: "two-dimensional nature of manga, where the characters are drawn without materiality" (2016, p.66), meaning they can associate with the characters without confronting their own material bodies. The emphasis on girls in Anan's discussion here is due to the emergence of the *bishōnen* character in *shōjo manga* specifically, and the co-opted use of male-centred 'homosexuality'[327] in these works. However, as is unveiled throughout this chapter, there are different ways in which *bishōnen* gender and sexuality are represented.

Although *bishōnen* in many respects go against accepted western ideas of 'maleness' or manliness and often embody androgynous aesthetics, it is important to understand that there are many different depictions, styles and representations of *bishōnen* in visual and graphic arts. In more contemporary *manga,* there has been a shift in the way *bishōnen* are illustrated but also understood, as not all of these *bishōnen* are completely androgynous, nor is every *bishōnen* just linked with other *bishōnen* or 'male' characters. *Bishōnen* can be and are just incredibly attractive and beautiful characters that adhere to, as Schodt describes, *shōjo manga*'s: "unstated rule that all characters (except in gag strips) must be physically beautiful, and that all subjects,

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[326] As discussed in Chapter Five regarding Ladies' Comics there are certain censorship rules around the depictions of sex in commercially produced *manga* and the inclusion of heterosexual sex-scenes in the *Rose of Versailles*, despite the androgynous aesthetic, caused uproar (Chapter Seven, pp.233-234). This distinction is important, as the most graphic *manga* depicting romance or sex between *bishōnen* is often found in the self-published *dōjinshi* that are usually fan or non-commercially created. Though as discussed sexually explicit commercial *manga* do exist for adult consumption such as the pornographic *seijin*, or Ladies' Comics (Chapter Five).
[327] Part of this argument can relate to censorship, as explored shortly, as censorship of male anatomy has been policed differently to female anatomy in Japan.

no matter how decadent, must be depicted with delicacy" (Schodt, 1983, p.101).[328]

Bishōnen are no longer just characters within *shōjo manga*; they also appear in

shōnen manga and other forms of popular culture, including video games, *anime* and

CD drama covers.[329]

Bishōnen in contemporary *manga* are linked very closely with the development of

shōjo manga, which was often dismissed and ignored in academic circles due to its:

"decorative and expressive artwork," and the emphasis on the, "inner feelings of the

characters," (Takahashi, 2008, p.114). However, in recent years more attention has

been paid to this genre of *manga* by both critics and scholars alike. Born from the

girls' magazines of the 1920s and 1930s, as discussed in Chapter Four, *shōjo manga*

were originally created by men, but by the 1960s the balance shifted and women

began to innovate in the genre of *shōjo manga* because they, "were tired of having

their voices marginalized within *shojo* (girls) manga." (Ishii et al., 2014, p.32). These

women *mangaka* were heavily inspired, not just by their own culture and history, but

by the influx of European history and entertainment that was becoming available in

Japan. Towards the end of the 1960s, rock icons, such as David Bowie, started to

emerge with entirely new styles and attitudes. They did not conform to the expected

conventions for gender or sexuality, within the heteropatriarchal west and this

inspired and influenced thousands of young people around the globe. It is not

surprising then that this new type of icon would also serve as inspiration, even

subconsciously, to female *mangaka* of the time, who then created a new type of

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[328] Although as has been and will be discussed, there are many examples of characters that do not fit the description of beauty that Schodt gives here.

[329] This should also be emphasised in relation to *manga* more generally which are a transmedia form of popular culture that have had recreations and adaptions as live action TV, plays, musicals, anime, videogames, novels and more.

manga character that emulated the 'rock god' dreams. [330] This further emphasises that *manga* whilst often claimed to be the exclusive property of Japanese comic creators, is in fact the amalgamation and culmination of the cultural outputs of countless countries (Ito, 2008, p.26).

These *manga* set the stage for the most innovative and iconic conventions of *shōjo manga* to take form in the 1970s, both as a development of these male characters aesthetics and the role of women as *mangaka*. As already explored, the conventions of *shōjo manga*, perhaps stereotypically, focused on the emotions and romantic lives of the characters. This is portrayed through specific illustrative techniques and conventions that were popularised by a 'group' of female *mangaka* in the 1970s. This 'group' pushed the boundaries of *shōjo manga* style and subject matter; they introduced themes and genres such as science fiction into the, "formulaic and unremarkable" (Thorn, 2017) *shōjo manga* of the time. These women became known as the *Hana no Nijūyo-nen Gumi*: the Fabulous Year 24 Group, or the Magnificent Forty-niners,[331] by fans and critics alike. The most commonly referenced Magnificent Forty-niners are Hagio Moto, Takemiya Keiko and Oshima Yumiko. These *mangaka* deny that any such group exists however, because their work is individual and not created together[332] (Thorn, 2017). Regardless of this, these female

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[330] Examples include Hideko Mizuno's *Fire!* (*Faiyaa!* 1969-1871) and Minegishi Hiromi's *Crossroads* (*Jūjika*, 1969) (Welker, 2015, pp.44-45). These *manga* were also revolutionary in other ways, such as for the introduction of male protagonists, since it introduced serious messages and subject matter into *manga* formats for an older target audience, with *Crossroads* taking the narrative a step further with a more explicit and racially diverse homosexual relationship (Welker, 2015, p.45).
[331] 花の 24 年組 *Hana no Nijūyo-nen* the literal translation is Flowers of the 24 Year Group/ Year 24 Group of Flowers, but they are known as the Magnificent Forty-niners/ Fabulous Year 24 Group, The reference is to the 24th Year of Shōwa (1949) as this was the year the most common members of this 'group' were said to have been born. In reality very few of those linked with this group were actually born in 1949.
[332] Though the *mangaka* did work together in terms of living arrangements and discussing ideas for their stories together, they never officially collaborated as a group.

mangaka have had a lasting impact on the content and direction of *shōjo manga* with the themes and artistic styles that they created prevailing today.[333]

These artists took the newly emerging trope of lead male characters in female-targeted *manga* and developed a new portrayal in distinct settings from those that had come before by complicating gender roles, "And as we know, after that, countless works took up the same theme, and shōjo manga began to exhibit a common pattern of gender anarchy" (Fujimoto, 2004, p.81). By this Fujimoto infers that previous *manga* which included male characters who emulated the ambiguous genders and sexualities of the 'rock gods' still emphasised a 'maleness' that these new *mangaka* did not, and they provided a sense of 'reality' where homosexual themes were raised. The *bishōnen* that arose from the 1970s *shōjo manga* were feminised in a way that is reminiscent of the *wakashu shunga* depictions in that their feminine beauty is emphasised:

> The beautiful boy himself is a composite in both appearance and temperament of elements of nineteenth-century European aesthetics and decadents, the Vienna Boys' choir and androgynous celebrities such as David Bowie, all of which seem to be layered on top of a beautiful girl.
>
> (Welker, 2006, p.842)

These types of *manga* placed *bishōnen* together in tragic romance storylines, but that did not necessarily mean that these characters were homosexual:

> This beautiful boy is visually and physically neither male nor female; his romantic and erotic interests are directed at other beautiful boys, but his tastes are not exclusively homosexual; he lives and loves outside the heteropatriarchal world inhabited by his readers.
>
> (Welker, 2006, p.842)

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[333] Takemiya Keiko has also extended her influence and impact by teaching others about *manga* at Kyoto Seika University and establishing the 'Genga Dash' project with the Manga Museum Kyoto, which collects and preserves the original *manga* drawings before the mass production and printing of *manga* in magazines and *tankōbon* (Takemiya, 2011).

This shows a direct link with *wakashu* in that they were also neither male nor female and their sexual relations were not affixed to a single gender. This is also an important factor in the early *bishōnen manga* depictions in the 1970s. As the *manga* created by the Magnificent Forty-niners gained critical acclaim, and the "revolution" of *shōjo manga* continued through the 1980s (Thorn, 2005; Welker, 2015) the term *shōnen-ai* was used,[334] but today, 'Boys' Love' or BL is the most commonly used moniker to describe *manga* works that focus on 'boys in love'.

'Boys' Love'

Today 'Boys' Love' is most often used to categorise *manga* that depict love and sex between *bishōnen;* although other terms are still used, such as *JUNE*[335] and *yaoi* for specific types of '*bishōnen* x *bishōnen*' content. However, Patrick Galbraith stated that in the west, *shonen'ai* remains a more popular term, as the now common Boys' Love is more associated with paedophilia in that region (2013, p.38), however, the abbreviated BL appears to be becoming a more common usage globally.[336]

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[334] 少年愛 *shōnen-ai* meaning boy and love respectively. However, today the term has fallen out of favour outside of historical *manga* discourse as: "the term, [is] now more closely associated in popular discourse with pedophilia." (Welker, 2015, p.5). This is because of the connotations of the works created by the Magnificent Forty-niners most often including references to sex between the boys, who were of teenage age, and the inclusion of abuse storylines from older often parental figures. Tragedy was rife in many of the early *shōjo manga* regardless of the gender or sexuality of the characters, with many *manga* ending in the death of a lead character. Explicit *wakashu* depictions have also been the subject of scrutiny due to the ages of the subjects remaining unknown: "Edo period gender relations involving wakashu, furthermore, challenge the generally held beliefs and morality of people in contemporary North America; that is, that youth should not be sexualised." (Ikeda, 2016, p.12). It is not possible to accurately or correctly date the ages of the *wakashu* in prints given the regional differences in the coming-of-age ceremonies. Whilst the idealised fantasy nature of the works does provide some distance from this issue, it cannot be ignored that *wakashu* were youths, akin to teenagers by contemporary society.

[335] *JUNE* (pronounced ju-nay) has also been a term associated with the subgenre as it was the title of a popular *manga* magazine (1979-2012) dedicated to *bishōnen* and BL themes.

[336] However, *yaoi* is used in relation to the more explicit depictions by some due to the terms main meaning of "no climax, no point, no meaning". In other words, the focus is purely on the sexual relations between the *bishōnen* and not on an overarching storyline, hence the more common usage for the self-published category of *dōjinshi.* Though again this is simplistic as the novels that Sakakibara (1998) and Nagaike (2012) explore from the 1960s are referenced as *yaoi,* and *yaoi* is also used in other countries to avoid the use of Boys' Love for similar reasons as outlined by Galbraith (2013; Japan Foundation New York 2022b).

In the edited collection of essays, *Boys Love Manga and Beyond: History, Culture and Community in Japan*, Fujimoto discusses the evolution of BL since her 1998 essay, 'Transgender: Female Hermaphrodites and Male Androgynes' (translated 2004) and some of the misunderstandings that arose from this essay, she stated:

> …*Shōnen-ai* first emerged as a mechanism offering an escape from the social realities of gender suppression and the avoidance of sex(uality); … Once it had emerged, however, the same mechanism made it possible for girls to "play with sex(uality)" (*sei o asobu*) and opened up possibilities for them to shift their view from passive to active engagement.

> (2015a, p.78)

This has some very clear links with the ways in which adult women engage with Ladies' Comics, but as a more graphic and explicit means of encountering their fantasies. BL depictions were a way in which women and *shōjo* could encounter 'love' and sex in popular culture without having to acknowledge their own bodies or the realities that they, as women/girls, would encounter i.e. pregnancy (Anan, 2016, p.4; Hori, 2012, p.92). The passivity is also an important point, because again, there is a level of passive expectation with regard to women, as explored throughout Part One, but as Shamoon states: "The nature of fantasy also permits a reader to "safely" manipulate and experiment with other dichotomies, such as those of active and passive, subordinate and dominant." (Shamoon, 2004, p.107). In BL they are able to identify with either character, as neither are female, in order to experiment and 'play with sex,' with Shamoon theorising that: "[the] transference of the girl reader's identity onto the boy character can provide a powerful means for girls to access their sexual desires." (Shamoon, 2004, p.86). An element of this play was the inherent 'levelling' that took place by introducing same-sexed characters as the impetus of the romantic or sexual storyline: "male homosexuality between young men is presented

as an ideal partnership, that is, as the encounter of two equal individuals" (Hori, 2012, p.92). Within heterosexual relations there is also an uneven gender power at play, but within BL this is eradicated, in theory.

The idea of 'playing with sexuality,' and transcending the restrictions of gender, has remained an important theory and line of inquiry for scholars within *manga* studies: "As Takemiya explains, the purpose of this graphic and narrative gender-bending is "to mentally liberate girls from sexual restrictions imposed on us [as women]" (Welker, 2006, p.855, quoting Satō, 1996). In many ways, this is an extension and evolution of the cross-gender, cross-dressing and gender-bending explored in Part Two, as McLelland argues: "These youths are biologically male but the gender they 'perform' is not characteristically masculine." (2005, p.7). However, Saitō disagrees with the "liberation of girls" theory, and considers the identification of and with the characters to be more compelling (2009, p.167). Mizoguchi takes this further still when discussing one of the most important works of early *shōnen'ai, Kaze to Ki no Uta* by Keiko Takemiya (1976-1980),[337] by referring to the positioning of the characters during a sex scene:

> Although their sex ends in the obligatory prone position suggesting anal intercourse with Gilbert as the bottom and Serge as the top, it is significant that Gilbert deviates momentarily from what seemed to be his perpetual passive role in sex. Thus, the story can be read as conveying the message to girl readers that girls should behave actively in sex with the "right" partner.
>
> (2008, p.20)

This takes the discussions of active and passive in reference to the gaze and female representations into new realms. As Antononoka states: "These boys could perform

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[337] *The Poem of the Wind and the Trees*; original magazine serialisation, though it did have another run in a different magazine between 1981 and 1984.

simultaneously as objects of the female gaze and as vessels for identification because of their visual (feminine objectified) representation" (2018, p.65). In this respect, they are not "looked at" (Mulvey, 1989) in the sense of the male gaze (Berger, 1972) because identification is clearly a key point in the interpretation of *shōnen'ai* or BL in relation the female consumption which connects to Gamman's analyses of the female gaze (1988). Consequently, for girls to identify with an active and/or sexual role, they need to do so through a differently gendered character – according to these theories.

Returning to McLelland's point of "not characteristically masculine" (2005, p.7), neither are *bishōnen* characteristically feminine; it is an in-between much like the *wakashu* discussed earlier in this thesis, but also as *shōjo* themselves have been defined, which further enhances connections (Prough, 2011, pp.7-8). The identification and sexual liberation discussed is different from the gendered identification explored in cross-dressing *manga*, as these characters were overcoming a different type of repression, and often gave this up for love. Whereas *bishōnen*, being on an equal level, did not have to sacrifice a part of themselves in the same way, meaning that a reconciliation of female gender expectations did not need to take place. Mizoguchi emphasised this in relation to the notion and assumption of women as caregivers in a patriarchal world, suggesting that 'male' characters were needed to "enjoy a fantasy unrestricted by the female gender role. After all, no one ever tells male protagonists to come back home and cook for dad" (Mizoguchi, 2008, p.143). This is different from the safety discussions so far examined, and is more in line with liberation ideas expressed in cross-gendered performance; nevertheless, in the narratives of BL or *bishōnen*-led works the fantasy

of being free from such expectations can continue. Regardless, the safety of expression through visual imagery is still prevalent within *bishōnen* and BL narratives, much like those discussed in reference to cross-dressing:

> In Japanese society, where gender roles are rigidly fixed, popular culture aimed at women provides a safe space in which the normally non-negotiable regimen of gender can be subverted and overturned. It is no surprise, then, that women, whose sexuality is seriously restrained by its association in the popular imagination with either the sex trade or motherhood, should find these fantasies so attractive and be so involved in both their construction and consumption.

> (McLelland, 2005, pp.68-69)

It must also be emphasised, however, that the choice to explore sexuality through homoeroticism was not just one of liberating *shōjo* from their gendered confines, as has been mentioned by the likes of Nagaike (2012) and Saitō (2009), but also one of censorship. As has been observed throughout the thesis, censorship has played a role in both *ukiyo-e* and *manga* productions. In relation to *shōnen'ai* this was factored into the use of male bodies to express the stories: "Takemiya stated that she wanted to depict love and sex properly and chose male homosexuality to avoid police censorship, as heterosexual bed scenes with entangled male and female legs wouldn't be tolerated in a girls' comic magazine" (Watanabe, 2018, pp.9-10). Watanabe reveals that it was and is still prevalent across all forms of Japanese arts that may depict nudity of male and female bodies, and that it is often the public presentation of works, as opposed to the creation of it, that triggers the application of censorship rules (2018, p.11). This was witnessed in relation to the *Rose of Versailles* with Antononoka commenting on the uproar of a heterosexual sex scene (2018, p.67) though as she states the popularity of the *manga* meant restrictions were not imposed.

Since *manga* is created for public consumption, innovative artistic techniques were utilised to circumnavigate the laws and avoid police intervention. Therefore, Takemiya, and other *mangaka*, introduced male homoeroticism that was not censored in the same way as heterosexual representations. This was achieved by ensuring that genitalia or any hints at explicit erotica, became blended with the illustrative conventions now associated with *shōjo manga*, such as flower motifs to hide bodies or dream-like sequences to imply the activities taking place, but also: "she was advised by her editor that in a bed scene if you have three legs visible, you will be censored but if there are only two legs, it would be OK!" (Watanabe, 2018, pp.9-10).[338] However, at times, Takemiya depicted the lead *bishōnen* together in other non explicit ways (Fig.64) that still conveyed the raw emotion and romantic nature of the narratives. Within these initial *shōnen'ai manga*, it was often communicated that the characters were not homosexual (Japan Foundation New York, 2022b),[339] but only in love with that one other male character as a form of ultimate true love:

> … in most BL texts… the characters… identify not as homosexual but rather as heterosexual men who are somehow attracted to other men. That is, characters' identities are not presented as linked to an inherent and unchanging same-sex desire but rather represent a contextualized attraction to a specific individual who just happens to have the same-sex.
>
> (Baudinette, 2021, p.111)

Nonetheless, the popularity of the genre grew due to the inclusion of these new and interesting characters that could represent a *shōjo* without the reality of female

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[338] This understanding and navigation of censorship can be related back to the discussions of Ladies' Comics, where censorship has impacted on the illustrative practices and conventions of the genre. In order to present the erotic imagery and storylines *mangaka* utilise a variety of techniques and perspectives that allow the erotic imagery and storylines to be portrayed without censorship impacting the flow or desire that the illustrations represent.

[339] Though again *The Poem of the Wind and Trees* innovated in that lead Gilbert is initially introduced through sexual relations with older male students in a way reminiscent of *wakashu*, but again not strictly promoting a homosexual reality.

gendering impacting on the story. In 1983 when *shōnen-ai* had developed and

become a mainstay in the medium of *manga*, Frederick Schodt released one of the

first English-language books on *manga*. [340] Within its revolutionary pages, Schodt

included interviews with leading figures in the publishing houses, including about

the popularity of *shōnen-ai*:

> As an editor at San Shuppan says, "At that age in Japan, most girls, in fact
> most boys, have very little to do with the opposite sex, but they have a great
> deal of curiosity. Love between boys in another country is so completely
> distant from their own reality that it's not threatening, yet it still gives them a
> vicarious experience. They also think it is pretty.

> (Schodt, 1983, p.137)

The aesthetic qualities of *shōjo manga* that Takahashi described and the, "flowery,

impassioned and often tragically romantic," (Ishii et al., 2014, p.32) storylines were

now the reason for its popularity and critical acclaim. Nevertheless, *shōjo* was not

universally praised, and can still be regarded with derision by some critics and

manga readers. However, some of the most iconic imagery within *shōjo manga*

started to be adopted in other *manga* outside of the realms of *shōjo*: "… as women

artists like to point out, the traditionally huge, dreamy eyes of girls' comics are

beginning to shrink, while the eyes in boys' comics are slowly growing bigger and

bigger." (Schodt, 1983, p.105). The lines between contemporary *shōjo* and *shōnen*

manga, although still technically split into demographics as genres, are not

necessarily clearly defined and separate; however, it is clear to see how this

evolution within *manga* occurred from descriptions such as this. The changing

illustrative styles within *shōnen manga* in the 1980s onwards, shows the influence

that *shōjo manga* was having on the creation of *manga* across the board, as well as

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[340] Helen McCarthy was also a pioneer for English Language texts relating to *manga* and *anime* from the 1990's onwards.

the impact that female *mangaka* had on this iconic popular culture format. Toku's research of children's drawing styles and themes expands this idea by showing how *shōjo* aesthetics started to permeate the drawings of young boys without specific exposure or interest in *shōjo manga* (2015, pp.14-21). The *bishōnen* of 1970s *manga* have some distinct differences to the *bishōnen* of today's society, however, one thing remains the same: they are sexual or "perfect objects" (Antononoka, 2018) created by and for a primarily female audience.[341] It must be emphasised, however, that this is a generalisation and that some creators of BL or *bishōnen*-focused *manga* can be and are men using female pen names (Aoki, 2015).

'Bishōnen' Beyond the Shōjo Sphere

Bishōnen depictions within all *manga* have changed significantly in the decades since their debut to reflect the changing aesthetic conventions and what is considered beautiful. *Bishōnen* as a term means 'beautiful boy' and was used to refer to the young feminised beautiful characters that Takemiya Keiko and the like created. However, as time has gone on and *manga* has evolved, different types of beautiful male characters have arrived, and yet, the term *bishōnen* has become an all-encompassing term for many in the West to classify these characters. Perhaps this is because this term was introduced first, or perhaps because of a difference in cultural understanding. Because of this the term *bishōnen* has been used throughout this thesis to refer to beautiful male characters, but there are other terms such as *bidanshi*

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[341] Current popular culture does include more 'realistic' representations of homosexual male lives with more positive attempts at representation such as the anime *Yuri on Ice* (2016) though as it is an anime it is beyond the remit of this particular thesis. BL have also extended to important live action representations in other Asian countries as explored by Baudinette in an upcoming publication about Thai BL (Japan Foundation New York, 2022b).

and *binan,*[342] that have been used by researchers and fans alike, in reference to

handsome slightly older male characters in *manga* by other researchers. The

following examples and analysis include a combination of contemporary *bishōnen*

depictions alongside these more 'adult' beautiful male characters across *shōjo* and

shōnen manga. This illustrates the 'blurring lines' of *manga*, and the progression of

male beauty ideals in graphic arts.

Henshall's description indicates that a *bishōnen* should still possess traditional or

heteropatriarchal notions of masculinity, and perfectively describes the type of

bishōnen character that can be found in *shōnen manga*: "decisiveness and fortitude

and a selfless devotion for whatever cause he is fighting for" (1999, pp.4-5). As

previously mentioned, *shōnen manga* is stereotypically defined by the focus on

action, with many storylines following the formula of an incident triggering a series

of events leading to various quests and adventures. Once the initial goal is

completed, another event triggers the next phase of the adventure and so forth until a

mangaka, editor or publisher decides the serialisation must end. As this genre is

typically aimed at a demographic of boys, although not exclusively read by them,

many of the protagonists within this genre of *manga* are themselves 'male', creating

a homosocial space. This leads to a range of masculine identities and ways of

expressing maleness within *manga* aimed at a predominately male youth audience.

This does not mean that characters are specifically modelled after *bishōnen* of 1970's

shōjo or BL *manga,* but that the traditional historic example of *bishōnen* is evident

within these action-heavy *manga*. There is also the impact and influence of aesthetic

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[342] 美男子 *bidanshi* and 美男 *binan* both have the same meaning of handsome man (Appx. Four, Davies, 2020b).

choices on *shōnen manga*, which is fundamental to the permeation of *bishōnen* in other popular culture media. Therefore, like the examples from Isaka (2016), of the evolution of *wakashu* to an androgynous or in-between male and female aesthetic, one posits that *bishōnen* have also evolved into a specific 'male' aesthetic within Japanese illustrative and graphic art terms.

Yana Toboso, like many other *mangaka*, creates individual stand-alone illustrations to accompany the main *manga* narratives, usually as special pieces or covers for the magazines in which the stories are serialised. These illustrations allow the *mangaka* to experiment with their own characters, either in costuming or setting, in ways that are reminiscent of fan art. One example of this from Toboso can be seen in lead colour title pages from 2007, (Fig.65) where more heavily suggestive depictions are able to be included that reflect the BL and *shōjo* influences more explicitly. Toboso stated of this piece:

> I used red as the main colour since this was the beginning of the Red Butler arc. However, this illustration was used more often than I expected it to be, so I eventually found it difficult to say "Ciel doesn't usually wear red." Ciel's trousers were shorter in the rough sketch, but it was rejected for being too sensual. After this, his trousers became knee-length as a rule. –Smiles–
>
> (2015, p.123)

The innuendo of this quotation, and also the imagery, is reflected throughout *Black Butler,* as well as in the stand-alone art works. This encourages the fan interactions and attachments to the characters as they are able to see them outside of the storyline, much like popstars in photoshoots.[343]

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[343] The encouragement also extends to imagined scenarios and fan creations that fall into explicit slash or *yaoi* realms. Yana takes this further in the official serialised *manga* as well by alluding to or 'tricking' readers into thinking a sexual encounter is taking place, but in 'reality' the images are part of a dream during a cross-dressing narrative where Sebastian is helping the young Ciel into a corset (Vol.2, loc.114-115). This raises issues around sexualisation of youths in graphic arts, however this is beyond the scope of the current research to examine or analyse in detail.

Fan art is one of the most common forms of appreciation for *bishōnen*, with many amateur and professional artists creating art works that display these characters in new and interesting settings, which adds to the interpretation of male and gender ambiguous characters as *bishōnen*. When non-professional or non-commercial *manga* artists create fan works of popular characters, they often emulate the ideals of the 1970s *shōjo manga* and continue the traditions of *nenja-wakashu* literature by placing favourite *bishōnen* characters together in explicit and implicit illustrations. These works can also pair *bishōnen* with a more masculine *kōha*-type character that is more reminiscent of the *nenja-wakashu* relations of pre-modern Japan. Others create *dōjinshi* which include original or copyrighted characters in fan-created storylines that are often explicitly sexual.

Due to the nature of these *manga*, there appears a male equivalent homosocial space and therefore, the readers 'pair up' these existing characters to create the romantic storylines they want (Fujimoto, 2015a, pp.86-86).[344] This is also a common trope within all types of fan-created works globally, with fan-fiction being one of the most prominent forms, known as 'slash fiction' (Nagaike, 2012, p.6; Anan, 2016, p.81):

> *Yaoi*, moreover, finds correspondence in the Western *slash fiction* genre, featuring depictions of homosexual love relations between *Star Trek*'s Captain Kirk and Mr Spock. While yaoi tastes take a somewhat more complicated form than their male counterparts, the fact is that these women do not desire homosexual men in real life, again performing a sense of detached sexuality.
>
> (Saitō, 2009, pp.160-161)

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[344] Khursten Santos also mentions this in the context of Philippines BL *manga* fans and creations as reimagining's and transformative practices of BL and non-BL titles such as the Japanese *shōnen manga Haikyū!!* (2012-2020) which assists in diversifying BL and creating identities of queer expression in the literature of the Philippines (Japan Foundation New York, 2022b, 2:01:20-2:03:30).

However, fan creations do not have to sit within the *yaoi* or BL realms as being romantically motivated or sexually explicit. One such illustrator who creates their own original works, 'fan' pieces and illustrations for commercial endeavours is Asajima Yoshiyuki; who created a 'fan' piece of Munakata Reisi, a character from the *anime K* or *K Project* (2012-2013). Like many *bishōnen* works there is an obvious element of sex appeal, which is a typical part of Asajima Yoshiyuki's works: "When I draw, I try to ensure that my characters are fascinating by giving them personality, idiosyncrasies, and the like. I enjoy drawing male characters who are shady and transparent, and who have sex appeal." (Cook & Kinoshita, 2015, p.36). The typical trope of putting well-known characters into different settings within fan art or *dōjinshi* is adhered to here, as Munakata is usually attired in a dark blue trench coat, a white shirt with upturned collar and blue cravat or a black turtleneck. The portrayal of a beloved *bishōnen* character in a westernised three-piece suit is popular among many fans, and even the original creators of many *shōnen manga* have created stand-alone illustrations of their characters in such attire to appeal to this market as a form of reverse male gaze. A different type of *bishōnen* image in an original work by Asajima Yoshiyuki, depicts a *High School Boy* (n.d). The *bishōnen* influences are clear from the school uniform, the tall and slender build but with a hint of muscle in the way the clothes have been drawn around him. This is reminiscent of the teenage boys of *shōnen manga*, such as *Bleach*, who combine the desires of male and female audiences into one character.[345]

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[345] Asajima is also a professional illustrator who has created many commercial works that focus on the aesthetics of *bishōnen* or *binan*, that is epitomised by Henshall's description: strong and beautiful.

These ideals of strong but 'beautiful' began to take over the traditional 'effeminate' versions of *bishōnen* in Japanese popular and visual cultures, and in fact have begun to impact on the realities of male beauty aesthetics. Laura Miller explored this when recalling an incident that took place when she was a student between an American male student and Japanese female student. Miller insisted to the male student that Japanese find body hair on men "unattractive," the student refused to believe Miller: "I suggested that different aesthetic sensibilities were in operation, but he continued to protest such an idea." (2006, p.138). Following this the student put this theory to the test by showing his chest to a Japanese female student: "Naoko screamed "How hateful! (*Iyā da!*) in a shrill voice and ran to hide behind a door, periodically peeking out to whimper at the unspeakable sight." (2006, p.138). This discussion is part of Miller's theory around a "soft masculinity" and is explored in relation to hypermasculinity in Chapter Eleven. The reaction of the female student is replicated, to an extent, in *manga*, with men and *bishōnen* rarely depicted with body hair. Though when they are it is to assert an 'ugly' commentary, for instance, in *Ōoku the Inner Chamber* when the child *shōgun* sees the hair on a male characters arms she bursts into tears (Shamoon, 2018, loc.6401) showing that this aversion to body hair on the male form is still prominent. Of course, these discussions of male ideals are again centred on the female idea of perfect male beauty and what women want, but in a different way to the original surrogate for female identity. Now, there is a heterosexual appeal that combines the aesthetics of *bishōnen*, with 'sex appeal' in the realm of heteronormativity. It is this shift in the aesthetics of being for 'women to identify with' in the realms of their own sexuality, to women and men to admire, that has begun to permeate *manga* and other visual arts discourse. This is examined in the

following case study, but also in the next chapter, alongside other ideals attributed to masculinity.

Case Study: *Yoshida Shōin*

An immediate sense of sensuality and the erotic is invoked upon seeing this illustration (Fig.66). The half-lidded eyes in combination with a small smile indicate a sense of attraction on behalf of the character, with the outstretched hand beckoning the viewer to take it and join them. The clothing, whilst traditional, is opened to show a muscular chest whilst the character lies in a flowing stream of water, again enhancing the erotic tones of the imagery. This character is immediately identifiable as male from the muscular definition to the face shape; however, the long free-flowing hair indicates that the beauty ideals and aesthetics here are different from the heteronormative expectations. In fact, there is a reminiscence to erotic novel cover illustrations of the west in this representation of maleness, which indicates that this illustration of sensuality could be directed at women. The traditional clothing and presence of a sword, though sheathed, implies that this is a character in an historical or fantasy setting. The fact that he is lying in a stream of water with flowers floating around could further indicate that this is a fantasy image, because everything about the image leans to the reading that this is created to appeal to an audience.

This image adheres to the conventions of male beauty aesthetics in contemporary Japanese graphic arts, as discussed throughout the chapter. The character is visually attractive, with a chiselled jaw, striking eyes and muscular body, but also adheres to the androgynous or ambiguous aesthetics linked with Japanese arts in that they are inferred to be tall, have long hair and also an ethereal, even other-worldly air around

312

them in their appeal. The attempt to arouse desire in the viewers of this illustration is obvious.

This is a character created as an object to be looked at and lusted over, however, they are active in this representation, which turns the arguments around gaze on its head. As the "looked-at-ness" (Mulvey, 1989) implies passive, but this is an empowered subversion of this. He is aware he is being watched, the perspective literally having the viewer hovering above them, as he has slightly tilted his head and narrowed his eyes to gaze back and entice the viewer to come closer. The outstretched hand shows a willingness on behalf of the character to be watched, and encourages or tempts the viewer to become more than an observer. This is a very deliberate and enticing illustration that, unlike the *bijin-ga* imagery of the Tokugawa period where the female subject is often unaware they are being watched, ensures that the male erotic subject is not just a passive object. This image is therefore combining elements of the male and female gaze to create a paradox of active/passive representation, which enforces a level of agency for the character.

This character epitomises the contemporary male beauty ideals and conventions that have become expected in Japanese culture and illustration; the image adheres to the extremely beautiful ideal of *bishōnen* but without the emphasis on feminisation that the *bishōnen* of the 1970s relied upon. He is a more mature rendering of male beauty, which unlike the 1970s *bishōnen*, or potentially *bishōnen* of BL, appears to be aimed at a female or even homosexual male audience as a figure of appeal; not identification. This can be read in the way the character is overtly and explicitly sexualised in the revealing nature of the clothing and engagement with the

outstretched hand. *Bishōnen*, although shown engaged in explicit scenes with other *bishōnen*, are not usually illustrated this blatantly for or to the reader in commercial works. This is because *bishōnen* are usually a surrogate for women to experience or play with gender and sexuality in a safe manner, as opposed to enticing them to engage in sexual endeavours themselves, which this image implies. Because of this, and the fact there is no indication as to *whom* the character is reaching out towards, the viewer could also potentially be a gay/ non-heterosexual male, or non-binary themselves.

In order to understand these intricacies, and why this illustration is overtly sexual, the use of the image needs to be discussed. This image is a cover illustration for a CD drama called *Yoizuki no shizuku - bakumatsu koi tsuzuri*[346] and is the fourth contained story in the series. CD dramas are an extension of popular culture media in Japan in that they are related to *manga* but rely solely on audio storytelling beyond the cover illustrations. CD dramas are often told from a first-person perspective, involving the reader in the story and can include erotic and sexualised storylines depending upon the themes. This series is historically set in the Tokugawa period with *samurai* characters, as evidenced here with the sword, and follows some romanticised storylines with some historical accuracy as all the lead characters featured on the CD jacket illustrations are named for real people of *samurai* lineage. This particular image shows Yoshida Shōin,[347] with a story set towards the end of

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[346] *Moon drops ~ Binding Love in Late Tokugawa* (Davies, 2022c, Appx. Four)
[347] A man of *samurai* status and lineage who in reality lived between 1830-1859, and, following imprisonments for attempting to stow away on Commodore C. Perry's boats back to the U.S, Yoshida led attempted revolts and assassinations that led to his death. He was a teacher and therefore was 'influential' in the decline of the *shogunate* and the Meiji Restoration as many of the men he taught become officers in the Restoration, two of which are also part of the series Takasugi Shinsaku and Katsura Kogorō.

the period as western forces begin to engage with Japan. The other three CD dramas

in the series, and the images that accompany them, featuring Takasugi Shinsaku

(CD1, Fig.67) Kusaka Genzui (CD2, Fig.68) Katsura Kogorō (CD3, Fig.69), are also

highly sexualised, therefore it can be deduced that these CD dramas are romanticised

and directed, initially or primarily, at heterosexual women.

Like Yoshida Shōin, the other three subjects are laid in a river or stream, with water

flowing over them and flowers floating around. However, each image has slightly

different perspectives and body language, perhaps to display different personalities.

Yoshida is on their back, hand outstretched towards us as we loom over them. This

perspective puts us in a very sexualised position of potential power, and leaves

Yoshida open but not portrayed as vulnerable. Takasugi (Fig.67), on the other hand,

is laid on his front, hand stretched slightly in front of him and again towards us, but

we, as the viewer, are on almost the same level as him, looking directly at him as

opposed to down. From this perspective we can see the riverbank in the background

behind Takasugi, on which lamps appear to sit. This lighting creates an almost

boudoir-like atmosphere of a private and intimate setting. Takasugi's face also

appears more intense and focused in comparison to Yoshida who was more open and

inviting, yet both still have a sense of attraction to and enticement of the viewer.

Katsura Kogorō (Fig.69), is laid on his back, however we are viewing him from the

side like Takasugi. Unlike either of the previous illustrations however, Katsura does

not reach out to the viewer, instead he runs his hand through his hair. This action

opens his clothing further and displays more of his body for the viewer, creating a

different sense of attraction and temptation that does not physically draw the viewer

in, as with the outstretched hands of the previous examples, but is still a deliberate

and active movement and choice that creates a feeling of enticement. The focus of the chest also brings back the anecdote from Miller (2006) regarding body hair – the images all maintain a sleek and perfect aesthetic representation of this ideal. Finally Kusaka Genzui (Fig.68) is depicted differently from the other characters. Kusaka is much more reserved and potentially passive in his appeal: laid on his side, drawn into himself more and loosely holding his sword, Kusaka does nothing overtly active to attract or draw the viewer to him. This indicates a quieter character, potentially of a 'softer' nature as they are not attempting to entice the viewer beyond the use of their gaze, which, similarly to the others, is half-lidded and intense indicating awareness and sexuality alongside the positioning of their body.

Together these illustrations show a variety of characteristics that would appeal to different audiences – thereby continuing ideas of catering to a wide range of tastes. They all adhere to the ultra-beautiful, slender and ethereal ideal, but each has a different persona as indicated by body positioning and colouring. This mimics *manga* presentations of male beauties who range from quiet, loud, aloof, serious and 'jokey' personalities that have short, long and medium-length hair in different colours, usually indicated in descriptions or by cover illustrations because *manga* are mostly monochrome. The initiated can usually tell from specific illustrative signifiers which character is supposed to represent which personality. For instance glasses and short hair often represent an aloof or superior-thinking-type character, at least initially.

In her chapter, "Sounds and Sighs: Voice Porn for Women" in the book *Shōjo Across Media* (Berndt, 2019) Ishida discusses different types of CD dramas

including BLCD and Situation CD's (also known as CD drama) that are aimed at women, and *shōjo*, and are a form of pornography. Ishida focuses much of the discussion on the voices specifically, but does comment on the visual covers of these media as a form of "camouflage" (2019, p.290). She uses this term because, like Ladies' Comics, BL and other forms of *manga,* CD dramas are presented in store in gendered zones:

> In addition, since anime/manga-style men's bodies are drawn on the packages, voice porn becomes located next to other CDs and various character goods. Therefore, for those who do not have enough literacy to decipher the code of drawn bodies, in contrast to adult video packages which clearly depict sexual acts and nude female bodies photographically, it is not evident whether voice porn products include sexual content or not.

> (Ishida, 2019, p.290)

These illustrations adhere to the conventions that *shōjo manga* popularised for male beauty ideals, therefore, their target audience as Ishida states is women. That is not to say that these CD dramas are pornography or marketed as such, however, the imagery definitely appeals to this side of the media because all the characters are sensualised on the covers.

The illustrator of these pieces is Asajima Yoshiyuki, who: "enjoy[s] drawing male characters… who have sex appeal" (Cook & Kinoshita, 2015, p.36). Cupilabo a company specialising in CD dramas for women commissioned Yoshiyuki to create these illustrations. The specialisation of Cupilabo in conjugation with Yoshiyuki's illustrative style also implies that these CD's were intended to have a sensual and erotic element to them in a heterosexual sense.

These illustrations perpetuate the idealised male beauty that *manga* has developed in the last twenty years. These men are sensual, muscular but not overly masculine.

They embody the perfect *bishōnen* representation, with the added maturity and implied heterosexual appeal that *bishōnen* of BL and the 1970s do not strictly have. However, the distinction between the intention behind *bishōnen* illustrations, and illustrations such as these, is interesting and important to understanding the implications and readings of these images. These illustrations by Asajima Yoshiyuki were intended to appeal to and attract a female audience to buy the CD and become the heroine of the unfolding story. They were not created to appeal as a way for women to experience sex and gender through 'male' surrogates for which BL originally formed, they were created to arouse a desire for heterosexual romance, although still in a 'safe' fantasy environment. As Ishida stated, those without the knowledge of these visual meanings and implications may not understand that these male characters are actually portraying a sensual appearance to appeal to women specifically, or that they are the product of decades of illustrative conventions surrounding male beauty ideals. However, these works are blatantly sexualised, so in comparison to the works to which Ishida is referring these may very well be read and understood as sensual erotic-like imagery designed to invoke a sense of desire, and entice interaction regardless of one's previous engagement with Japanese popular graphic arts.

In conclusion, this chapter has examined the idealisation of specific male beauty conventions especially those represented through *bishōnen*-like aesthetics, and the specific view of male beauty that these representations provide. The analysis of these representations has revealed a continuation of androgynous ideals, but with a shift in aesthetic styles and also the consumption of these illustrations. The theories of 'playing with gender,' as outlined by the likes of Fujimoto (2015a), have also been

developed throughout this chapter to reveal that these portrayals have evolved beyond the *shōjo manga* page to permeate all forms of Japanese popular culture, and now represent heterosexual desires overtly, as the case study revealed. The idealisation of androgynous, slender and 'sleek' beauty for men is shown throughout Japanese artistic culture and practices, but with emphasis on not-quite-masculine but not-overtly-feminine 'man'.

As 'boys', *bishōnen* characters were not restricted by their gender, but they could not be overly masculine like the earlier princes of *manga*, otherwise they would not appeal to the *shōjo* as identifiable characters. Thus, a reversion to androgynous ideals of the previous eras took place and *bishōnen* became beautiful ambiguous characters with feminised characteristics from an underlying male body (Anan, 2016; Mezur, 2005). The equality of love was also addressed by homoeroticism; instead of *bishōnen* falling in love with women, with whom the *shōjo* would then surely feel pressured to identify, and which would reintroduce the reality of heterosexual relations, *bishōnen* fell in love with other *bishōnen* which emphasised the idea that "love is only possible among those of the same sex" (Saitō, 2009, p.164). These representations, and the precedent set by the traditional *futanarihira* aesthetics, have meant that any male not adhering to these ideals in reality, as well as in the illustrative worlds, raise suspicion and revulsion in post-War society.

The discourse of this chapter has expanded into the realm of non-androgynous male representation, as it was key to understanding the representations of sexuality in imagery. Due to the inclusion of male homoeroticism within *shōjo manga* as a means of exploring gender and sex/uality for young women, these practices have,

therefore, created an intrinsic link between representations of gender and sexuality. To understand male representations in illustration, one must explore *bishōnen*, which means an analysis of sexuality is essential, as they were and are portrayed through their sexual and/or romantic relations with other *bishōnen*. As revealed by the likes of Fujimoto, Shamoon and Anan, these representations whilst physically male are spiritually female, thus *bishōnen* are not truly homosexual. However, *bishōnen,* and by extension *bidanshi,* have begun to go beyond the *shōjo* sphere, and no longer just represent surrogates for identification but offer ideals to lust after in heteronormative *and* homosexual practices. Thus, further analyses of different male representations for both gender and sexuality are required to unveil the influence of women on these representations. This then means that 'true' homosexual representations and desires can be analysed in conjunction with male body and beauty ideals, as the final chapter illustrates.

Chapter Eleven:
Hypermasculinity in Manga

Androgyny has been an iconic example of Japanese 'masculine' ideals since the 17th century, as outlined in the previous two chapters. The importance of the 'masculine' ideal in androgyny stems from the youths of the Japan's past, beginning with *chigo* and ending with *wakashu,* before the distinct political shifts occurred where gender and sexuality were concerned in Meiji period. However, to say that androgyny has been the only ideal coded into masculine representations in arts would be false. This chapter analyses some of these different portrayals, from male perspectives more generally, including hypermasculinity, *shōnen manga* and 'realistic' sexuality explorations.

The previous chapter began to explore some of these visuals in relation to women, and how *bishōnen* aesthetics have evolved in recent *manga* and graphic art depictions, though the beauty still remained in a form presented for women, as the Asajima Yoshiyuki case study examined. This chapter continues this by analysing the 'blurring' of characters for men and women, before illustrating different perspectives in the representation of masculine ideals and beauty as presented in works that are initially targeted at boys and men. As stated at the beginning of Part Three, and at various points throughout the thesis, the current research is not and cannot be a comprehensive history of gender since the 17th century, but it does examine specific and important points in art historical and visual cultural representations. As such the masculine representations examined thus far have focused specifically on *wakashu* in *ukiyo-e* and *bishōnen* in *manga* to make connections between these ideals in arts. The author acknowledges that this leaves a

large period of time unaccounted for in relation to male gendered or presenting representations. However, given the representations thus far discussed, this gap has been left to communicate the transcendental nature of these beauty ideals within the visual graphic cultures that are examined.

Blurring the Lines: 'Male' Characters for Men & Women

Following the analyses in Chapter Ten, it is clear that *manga,* despite being targeted at specific demographics, include aesthetics and characters that appeal beyond these categories. One such popular *manga* that has been examined in relation to cross-gender interpretations (Chapter Eight) is *Black Butler*. The opening chapters of *Black Butler* incorporates themes and styles that would lead an unfamiliar audience to believe this to be a *shōjo manga* or *anime*. However, there are certain visual signifiers throughout the first two *manga* chapters that reveal a *shōnen* influence for those that are reading in the *tankōbon* format (Appx. One), as well as the fact that the original serialisation of this *manga* is held in *Monthly G-Fantasy*, a magazine run by Square Enix that has a male and female target audience (Loh, 2019, p.46).

This panel illustration (Fig.70) hints at the darker theme within this *manga* (Vol 1, C.1, loc.28)*.* There is some menace in the way Ciel has been drawn with the hair covering his eyes and the heavy shadows on his face, and in the background, the curve of his mouth and the slight gleam highlight in his eye continue the implication of menace and darkness. This, coupled with the text in bold lettering, is very different from the typical aesthetics of a *shōjo manga* and is signifying that this is not adhering to the usual conventions and therefore, may not be exclusively targeting *shōjo*. Further examples of this include a scene (Vol 1, C.2, loc.48; Fig.71),

depicting a cane held close to a man's face, which has a much more aggressive and confrontational tone than one would expect in a purely *shōjo*-styled *manga*. The previous panel utilises lines and a 'sound effect'[348] which indicates speed or a sudden movement, highlighting the strength, training and restraint Sebastian must have to stop the walking stick so close to the artisan's eye; a regular butler would not be able to complete such a feat is the implication. These panels indicate that all is not as it seems with this *manga*. It is taking elements that are significant to *shōjo manga* and blending them seamlessly with *shōnen* narratives within the first two chapters.

These styles are also significant when the creator of *Black Butler* is taken into account. Yana Tosobo,[349] is a female *mangaka* who has published BL and *yaoi* under other pen names such as Yanao Rock. Chapter three of *Black Butler* reveals the darker horror and mystical themes and as the series progresses it is revealed that Sebastian, the highly skilled and attractive butler, is in fact a demon with whom Ciel has made a deal to avenge the deaths of his immediate family. Themes of war, death and abuse, mixed with the occult, abound throughout the series with explicit action scenes consistently used to propel the story, as is typical of *shōnen manga*, but with illustrative conventions and emotional considerations more in tune with *shōjo manga.* Thus, one suggests that *Black Butler* is truly a contemporary example of the blurring that has occurred over recent decades of *manga* genres and themes.[350]

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[348] "ビュッ" *byu*: to indicate a quick motion.

[349] A pseudonym.

[350] It should be noted that whilst it was considered revolutionary for women to create *manga* for girls and women in the 1960s and 1970s, today women are creating some of the most globally popular male audience works, as well as female-targeted *manga*.

Despite this fascinating and well-formulated amalgamation of *manga* themes and tropes, *Black Butler* has also become popular because of the overabundance of idealised beautiful 'boys'. Yana Toboso has clearly drawn much influence from previous female *mangaka* creating *shōjo* and *bishōnen manga,* as the series is set in Victorian England which mimics the settings of those popular and revolutionary *shōjo manga* of the 1970s which reinvented the *bishōnen* character. As Loh (2019) discusses, the setting of Victorian England and the use of fashions related to dandies of the time has had a monumental impact on the way that male beauty ideals have been expressed in Japan. Loh utilises *Black Butler* as a case study for this, and interestingly concludes that the inclusion of multiple beautiful male characters, usually thought to be for the benefit of female readers, also appeals to male readers. The individualism expressed in the male fashions of *Black Butler* that show new beauty ideals and an aesthetic that is appealing to young women, is also appealing to young men in that it is a form of beauty to which they can aspire and achieve whilst rejecting nationalistic and heteropatriarchal norms themselves: "These characters encourage Japanese male readers to see themselves as consumers, who … now have the power and freedom, formerly limited to young Japanese women, to construct new forms of selfhood through the creative consumption of fashion" (Loh, 2019, p.46). These ideals and forms of masculinity, as expressed by a personal preference and enhancement of selfhood, are classed as part of the 'herbivorous boy' concept:

> … the herbivorous boy (*sōshoku-kei danshi*) lifestyle of pursing individual pleasure through consumption of branded fashion and a lack of interest in the opposite sex…. In pursuit of this lifestyle, [informant] explicitly rejected heteronormative understandings of masculinity.
>
> (Baudinette, 2021, p.71)

These heteronormative understandings relate to the lack of interest in fashion and personal grooming as is stereotypically considered in reference to masculinity. This

is perpetuated in Japanese society through salaryman ideals of masculinity, but in recent years, Miller (2006) discusses the move toward a 'soft' masculinity that involves changing beauty standards and regimes in the male populace.

Loh references the different types of male beauty expressed in *Black Butler*, including Sebastian's ability to utilise his fashion in clever ways during battle to overcome his opponents:

> [The] ability to consume fashion in unusual ways for one's own purposes is a kind of power, albeit one confined within the logic of consumer capitalism. The text also implies that this power, formerly open only to Japanese women, is now available to Japanese men.
>
> (Loh, 2019, p.45)

Although focused on fashion as a means of expressing masculinity, Loh's article supports the discussions of this thesis about the development of male beauty ideals, and that a new type of *bishōnen* has emerged in recent years that is idolised very differently to those of the 1970s 'feminised' *shōjo manga bishōnen*.

Sebastian Michaelis, the demon butler for the Phantomhive family, has become one of the most popular beautiful male examples within *manga* and *anime*. He perfectly embodies the new contemporary type of *bishōnen* which is the combination of the *futanarihira* that *wakashu* represented, and the slender, elegant 19th century European aesthetics that the Magnificent Forty-niners created. This new type of *bishōnen*, as mentioned previously, may more accurately be described as *bidanshi* or *binan*, as they are older than the traditional *bishōnen* or the *bishōnen* found in high school-themed BL. This is perhaps a reflection of the mixed target audience as well as evolving tastes in terms of beauty and aesthetics in illustration. As Loh explores, these characters reflect a new type of masculinity that has a universal appeal, and as

such, one posits that these new male beauty ideals no longer represent an identification of female readers with the character. Instead, the representation inspires a desire on the part of the reader for that ideal, much like the *bijin-ga* were, but also as a form of emulation for men to strive for a new representation of their own masculinity.

Ideals in Shōnen Manga

Earlier in this thesis, Henshall was referenced as emphasising the *bishōnen* as an ideal that "…"effeminate", flower-like, graceful beauty has rarely been considered the antithesis of manliness in Japan, either by women or men themselves…" (1999, p.4). However, in many ways this is oversimplifying a very complex issue and cultural attitude. Yes, *bishōnen* are very popular characters within the realms of popular culture, but in reality, there are aspects of *bishōnen,* particularly within the realms of BL and *shōnen'ai*, that do not translate as favourably or positively in reality, i.e. outside the world of entertainment (McLelland, 2005).[351]

Regarding the visual development of *manga*, Schodt stated that artists adapted and "adopted" imagery from "fashion models of Paris and New York," for male and female characters: "The males are often so thin and wispy in appearance that they can be distinguished from the females only by their clothes and their somewhat larger feet." (1983, p.92). This relates to Anan's discussions of the emergence of

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[351] For instance many *manga* refer to *bishōnen* as being as beautiful as a woman or girl by fellow characters, this is not always in a flattering way, and in some cases *bishōnen*, or particularly feminine characters, are mistaken for women in 'humiliating' circumstances. This is unlike the mistaking of *wakashu* within *ukiyo-e* as that is a cultural and generational difference. This mistaken identity, as briefly discussed in reference to cross-gender performance regarding 'humour' (Chapter Eight, p.245), is sometimes at the expense of the character in question, but at other times at the expense of the instigating character. These types of mistaken identity as humour also take place more prominently in *shōnen manga,* where emotions are not the core means of visual exploration.

androgynous aesthetics in *manga* (2016, pp.72-72), but this has now been adapted to then reflect the ideals and expectations within *shōnen manga*.[352]

However, not all *shōnen mangaka* deliberately include *bishōnen*. In many cases, the 'male' characters within *shōnen manga* are teens and young adults (i.e. 15 to 20), or at least have the appearance of this age range,[353] and because of this they are often 'adopted' by readers and become treated as *bishōnen.* This engagement with the characters then leads to appearances in fan-created works of *dōjinshi* within realms of BL or *yaoi.* This has been referenced by Fujimoto as an: "escape from the gaze that sees them [women/girls] only as sex objects, and the gaze they return imbues homosocial male bonding with sexual implications" (2015a, pp.85-86). The homosocial here is key to the relations that are formed within action packed *shōnen manga*, but sexuality is not always an initial interpretation beyond the realm of *shōjo* thematic adaptations.

However, *mangaka*, Tite Kubo, included within his *Bleach manga* characters that idolised beauty, *Shinigami* Ayasegawa Yumichika (Fig.72) and *vasto lorde Charlotte* Chuhlhourne (Fig.73). Yumichika fulfils the typical *bishōnen*-style

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[352] An example of this in contemporary *shōnen manga* can be found in *Assassination Classroom* (2012–2016). This *manga* follows a class of junior high school children in Japan for a year as they attempt to 'assassinate' their monster or alien-like teacher. This is a typical action narrative style *shōnen manga*, however, like *Black Butler* has elements that hint at influences from *shōjo*: specifically, the elements that focus on the emotional development of the characters. One particular character, Nagisa Shiota, has a childlike androgynous appearance but he is not drawn as a typical contemporary *bishōnen*. He is not tall or elegant; in fact he is one of the smallest students in the class. He is not particularly charismatic as many *bishōnen* are; he is shy and reserved, and is often overlooked instead of idolised. However, his hairstyles are one of the main signifiers to this androgynous appearance, and as one of the protagonists, he is frequently portrayed in full body shots, which is a style appropriated from *shōjo manga* aesthetics. Some of these aesthetics are exploited and parodied further, when the students all jump into a pool to cool down in the hot Japanese summer sun, two of the female students are startled to discover that Nagisa is not in fact a girl (Vol.5 C.43).
[353] Supernatural elements are popular within *manga,* and as such the characters maybe hundreds of years old, but still maintain aesthetic ideals of the *bishōnen, bidanshi* and youth generally.

aesthetic. He is tall, androgynous and quite 'aloof' during many of his entrances, with some only showing his back or side profile. However, like every other character in the *manga,* as his involvement in the story progresses so too does the evolution of his personality with more layers and expression revealed. What differentiates Yumichika from other male characters in *Bleach,* is his preoccupation with beauty. He is a *shinigami* who belongs to the 'toughest' faction,[354] therefore he is an accomplished warrior. This is reminiscent of the *samurai bishōnen* discussions in Chapter Nine in some ways, as it shows that hyper-masculinity is not the only form of representation for warrior or fighter-type characters. However, when confronted with Charlotte as an opponent, the differences in beauty and the way in which it is expressed is presented in such a way that it not only adds a humorous element to the story, but perpetuates some negative connotations around gender and sexuality expression in Japanese popular culture.

Charlotte, much like Yumichika, is preoccupied with beauty, but this character does not adhere to the stereotypical *bishōnen* or male beauty ideals that have been expressed thus far. He is much more muscular, and masculinised compared to the sleek and androgynous Yumichika, but unlike the way Yumichika is introduced, Charlotte is presented in a more camp and exaggerated way, reminiscent of a drag queen persona, but in a much more masculinised fashion (Fig.73). Yumichika's reaction to Charlotte is negative, not considering him to be beautiful despite his protestations. As such, the illustrations are played out during this exchange for humour in exaggerated ways across both the *manga* and *anime*, with screwed up

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[354] Each faction of the story have a number and particular characteristic linked to it, for instance the science branch or medical corp.

faces and refusal on the part of Yumichika to acknowledge Charlotte. However, the two find some mutual respect through the ensuing fights, as is typical of most fight scenes in *Bleach*, and Charlotte refuses to be cowed by Yumichika's responses and continues to 'be his self' and reflect his confidence in his beauty.

As a young British woman when first encountering these characters and narrative, a feeling of empowerment and expression through performance was felt when observing the imagery. This come from the personal positionality expressed in the introduction, and the idea within this culture of 'drag' being an empowering way to express oneself. However, upon further investigations, the persona of Charlotte could in fact be viewed as negative in terms of gendered and sexualised portrayals, as Baudinette examines in relation to the gay cultures of Japan.

Charlotte is actually reminiscent of *onē,* who are "cross-dressing comedians… implicitly understood as homosexual who regularly appear as objects of humour on Japanese variety shows." (Baudinette, 2021, p.2). These *onē kyara*[355] have negative connotations for some gay men, as they, "represent a humorous parody" and stereotypes that "serve a largely comedic function… their inability to pass as women (their "unnaturalness") consistently portrayed as a source of humour." (Baudinette, 2021, p.10). This also has connections to the *okama,* as discussed in relation to Grelle (Chapter Eight, p.261), as *onē kyara* are deemed to be a parody of *okama*: "The main difference between *onē kyara* and *okama*, however, is that *onē kyara* are understood to be preforming a role, whereas an *okama* is instead simply a woman trapped in a man's body" (Baudinette, 2021, p.10). These implications rapidly

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[355] キャラ *Kyara* meaning character.

change the perceptions of Kubo's drawings and relations to beauty aesthetics. Suddenly, Charlotte is no longer a muscular man, embodying new and interesting beauty ideals: he is a stereotyped representation of a character parodying stereotyped homosexual male Japanese presumptions.

Kenji-Thomas Nishino (2018) examined areas of 'genderbending' in other *shōnen manga* and *anime* including *One Piece* (1997-present)*,* which includes self-proclaimed transvestite characters that similarly to Charlotte are visually extreme. Nishino notes the visual portrayal of the leader, Ivankov, has influences from Dr. Frank-n-Furter from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* which further emphasises cross-gendered performativity references, despite the fact that the representations in *One Piece* are more "unnatural" and parodic thereby exposing prejudices (2018).[356] Unlike Charlotte, these characters are able to change their gender explicitly through the use of 'hormone powers'. These powers can also be used as weapons through a syringe-like attack and alter the gender or other body compositions of the enemy. This weaponization of gender essentially creates a, potentially, negative representation of cross-gendered performance in graphic arts. This brings into question different masculine ideals and beauty within *shōnen manga*, as the imagery no longer appears progressive or empowering for different body types. Instead, it now continues tropes and 'humour' at the expense of those who are different from the heteronormative expectations.

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[356] Whilst *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* has gone on to achieve cult status and interpreted as a means of empowering people, its creation is overtly camp and parodic. This highlights the interpretative nature of visuals, and the ways it can be re-interpreted within different cultures, as reception theory outlines.

However, *Ōoku: The Inner Chambers* (2011-2020) also makes a much more explicit

distinction and criticism of these ideals. The majority of characters in *Ōoku* are male

and are modelled on the contemporary *bishōnen/ bidanshi* aesthetics. However, as

Shamoon states: "Even while celebrating the appeal of *bishōnen*, Yoshinaga

[*mangaka*] offers some sly criticism of the ideals of male beauty in *shōjo* manga."

(2018, loc.6386). However, the incident that Shamoon refers to as a 'sly criticism' of

the *bishōnen* aesthetic, involves the character of Ejima,[357] a very masculine character

who is the direct opposite of the typical idealised male beauty:

> He is tall, hairy, and has large features… he is considered freakishly ugly…
> he attempts to conform by shaving his beard and body hair but is still mocked
> and reviled by the other characters… Yoshinaga draws Ejima with a hooked
> nose, protruding lips, and tiny eyes, encouraging the reader to also find him
> unattractive.
>
> (Shamoon, 2018, loc. 6386-6401)

This description, although extremely negative, shows the differing attitudes towards

male appearances in *manga*. It may be hard to understand where the criticism of

bishōnen aesthetics is within this description, but this is revealed when Ejima

encounters a *kabuki* actor (female in this world) who states, "They'd ne'er seen a

real man's body before they saw yours, I reckon. I daresay they had the mistaken

belief that all men resemble the pale, smooth-skinned fops you see in ukiyo-e"

(Vol.7 p.99; Shamoon, 2018, loc. 6401).[358] This single comment shows that there is

a desire for diverse male beauty representation, and as Shamoon continues:

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[357] Again Yoshinaga is referencing historical fact here, as the Ejima-Ikushima in which the lady-in-waiting Ejima missed the curfew after attending a kabuki performance, and was thus thrust into the centre of power struggles between different fractions of the chambers. This is played out in the manga, but with more violent depictions of interrogation for Ejima and Ikushima despite Ejima returning before curfew (Vol.7 pp.115-162).

[358] The character continues that conclusions about all womankind cannot be obtained from the reactions of a select few, and that if Ejima lived in Edo and not the inner chambers he would be seen as attractive by all. The chapter concludes with an emotional element of Ejima in tears "This was the happiest night of Ejima's life" (Vol.7 pp.99-107).

> While the creation of female-directed sexual fantasies have been empowering inasmuch as it provides women and girls with the opportunity to control the desiring gaze and not just be objects of a male gaze, the images of men that they produce are just as unrealistic and restrictive as are the images men create of women.

(2018, loc.6401)

This is an extremely important point that Shamoon has raised. As *shōjo* began to take charge of their own media, they in turn began to objectify 'male' bodies for their own pleasure, reversing what had been done to them for centuries and creating unrealistic male beauty ideals and expectations from the illustrations they consumed. This is not a female gaze however, but a male gaze through the lens of female 'looking'; the female gaze is not the inverse of the male gaze but 'different modes of looking' that do not place the participants as passive subject and active voyeur.

These highly idealised *bishōnen* aesthetics of male beauty have had negative impacts on other forms of masculinity and male beauty in illustration, particularly those that appeal to non-heterosexual women. As discussed, some scholars of popular culture, specifically *shōjo manga*, regard the use of homosexual or non-heteronormative relations between *bishōnen* as a means for female readership to safely explore and "play" with sex/uality, as reiterated and contextualised by Anne Ishii, Chip Kidd and Graham Kolbeins in terms of the impacts of using homosexual themes in *manga*:

> *Bishonen* can provide female artists and readers with a discursive space to explore feminine sexuality, removed from the patriarchal conventions of heterosexual pornography. In this way, BL can be seen as more of a feminist phenomenon than expression of real-world gay male identity – but that's not to discount the genre's importance to gay men.

(2014, p.32)

Due to the evolution from the early *shōnen-ai* creations by female artists, and the industry line that *shōjo* is now primarily created by female *mangaka,* BL is often

categorised as 'by women for women' with Adrienne Johnson[359] stating: "The

bishōnen of shōjo manga are created and consumed by women, with their images

entirely dependent upon women's desires." (2019, pp.317-318). In reality, there is no

restriction on any gender creating BL or *shōjo manga*, but it is understood that male

mangaka creating BL often take on female pen names (Aoki, 2015). Thus, BL is not

necessarily about representing "real-world" (male) gay identities, despite the focus

of the illustrations and storylines, and that the purpose of works such as this within

magazines such as *JUNE* is: "gay sex for the titillation of female readers," (Ishii et

al., 2016, p.26). This directly relates to the discussions of the *yaoi ronsō* that

Nagaike examines (2015), and the criticism that was levelled at the largely female

readers and creators at the time.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that gay men do not read BL or the other variations

of this *manga* style, but that it is not representative of their sexuality or gender in

reality. Gay *manga* creator, Kazuhide Ichikawa stated in an interview:

> … while coming to terms with his sexuality as an adolescent, he felt
> "incredibly left out… excluded. There weren't any gay characters in most of
> the manga I read… I loved Boy's Love comics. Still love them." But… he
> continued to feel excluded because, "all of the characters in BL manga are
> *bishonen* and I am not *bishonen*. Never can be."

> (Ishii et al., 2014, p.242)

Therefore, a different type of representation was and is needed that portrays a

different type of masculinity within a non-heterosexual sphere. That representation

exists in the realm of gay or *gei manga*.

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[359] Johnson's focus is on Visual *Kei* which is another important and interesting area of Japanese
popular culture within the music industry. Gender and sexuality are also key in the presentation of
these 'male' stars, but as the focus of this thesis is graphic art representations further, examination is
not possible at this stage.

Erotic Manga for Gay Men

Despite the seeming acceptance and prominence of male 'homosexual' relations in Japanese popular culture, McLelland states: "The notion that two gender-normative men might find each other attractive and come together in a relationship much as men and women do is seldom entertained in mainstream media." (McLelland, 2005, p.54.). This quotation from McLelland draws distinct parallels to the *nanshōku* relations of *wakashu* and *nenja* in the Tokugawa period, where no two 'men' on the same level would interact sexually. Due to this, for a long time, the only representations in a semi-'positive' light of homosexual relations within popular culture was that found in *shōnen'ai* and BL. But, as already explored, these representations were not strictly of or about gay men but were surrogates for young women to examine and experience sex and gender without discrimination.

The emphasis on the use of gay males as surrogates for women's consumption and "playing with sex", has been deemed an appropriation (Baudinette, 2021, p.112) or "plundering," as Nagaike (2012) termed it. This appropriation, Baudinette argues, is what the young gay men that frequented Ni-chōme found, "particularly problematic, and they further saw the conflation of gay men and soft *bishōnen* in these women's texts as contributing to the weakening of Japan's culture of masculinity" (2021, p.112). This 'weakening' is in reference to the ideas that Miller (2006) examines in relation to the change in economic status within Japan that has created new beauty ideals to which men adhere; a kind of "soft" masculinity (Baudinette, 2021, p.104). However, Baudinette's research shows that among the gay communities in Ni-chōme, hypermasculinity is the prominent 'mainstream ideal' as "hardness was what separated desirable masculinity from undesirable effeminacy" (Baudinette, 2012,

p.97). However, it should also be stated that this negative atmosphere relating to BL is not the only reaction by gay men. An anecdote relating to *mangaka* Yoshinaga Fumi reveals that her past as a BL writer left a, "sense of guilt… over possibly exploiting gay men and stereotypes in her manga before," and so she, "[went] out to dinner with a gay male friend and drunkenly tries to apologize to him for her career. Somewhat bemusedly, he tells her that she has nothing to apologize for because her manga have nothing to do with his life." (Horbinski, 2015, pp.70-71). This sense of guilt relates back to the discussions by Sakakibara (1998, p.163) surrounding the guilt of BL or *yaoi* readers, and the change in attitudes that occurred in the 1990s towards the realties of homosexuality representations in graphic arts.

The 'effeminacy' in BL was seen by some within the Japanese gay community as "harmful mainstream ideas about gay life in Japan" as it equated "male homosexuality as transgendered" (Baudinette, 2021, pp.111-112), which is then echoed by non-BL *manga* as evident with the discussions of *okama* and *onē kyara* regarding Grelle (p.261; Fig.52) and Charlotte (p.329; Fig.73) within this thesis. Baudinette's informants and others with whom he engaged as part of his research held a "normative equation of heteronormative masculinity and gay desire" which prided a hypermasculine ideal within the gay community (2021, p.112). Whilst gay *manga* represent a variety of male bodies and beauty ideals, the graphic works also reflect more 'realistic' ideas regarding the gay identity in that the focus is on hypermasculinity (Baudinette, 2021, p112).

Again, it should be emphasised that *manga* as a form of popular graphic arts deals with drawings, and as such the representations therein deal with "immaterial bodies"

(Anan, 2016). Therefore, the representations of gay lives and identity cannot be communicated as 'real', especially within the extremes of gay erotic *manga*, but the 'real' is in terms of the specific desires and wants of the community at large. This, according to Baudinette's research, equates to a heteronormative standard of the hypermasculine male-gendered identity within homosexuality, although as he concludes, this is only one strand of a complex web of 'types' and desires (2021, pp.200-201). He emphasises this further in a group lecture and seminar where he discusses that authenticity needs to be explored in relation to audience consumption, not just as a means of stating that gay *manga* created by gay artists is more authentic than BL, because of the female creation focus (Japan Foundation New York, 2022b, 1:34:50 – 1:39:07).

These representations in gay erotic *manga* emphasises extremes in the portrayal of sex and masculinity:

> …depictions of masculinity in *geikomi* were "extreme" (*kageki*) and further understood this extremeness as highly desirable. This was a position shared by other gay men I met during fieldwork: they viewed *geikomi* positively (even if they did not necessarily consume it) because it conformed to their preconceived notion that desirable gay masculinity is both "hard" and "violent."

> (Baudinette, 2021, p.110)

This also extends to the pornographic within these *manga,* which have clear parallels to *shunga* of the Tokugawa period: "All these men are muscular, animalistic and super-endowed, like the wood cut Japanese pornography of the 19th century" (White in Ishii et al, 2016, p.9). Fantasy and idealisation are still prominent, but the bodies are very different from those found in mainstream *shōjo* and *shōnen*: "Big, burly, lascivious, and soft around the edges: welcome to the hyper-masculine world of Japanese gay manga!" (Ishii et al, 2014, p.3).

However, it is not just the pornographic gay *manga* that use these hypermasculine representations. In 2019, the British Museum *Manga* exhibition featured some art from Gengoroh Tagame, a leading gay *manga* artist and historian of gay art, alongside the quotation: "what I want to see in the world isn't out there, so I create it. I really wanted to write a gay themed story for straight readers… and voila!" (*Manga* Exhibition interpretation panel). This is a sentiment that seems to be prevalent for most gay erotic *manga* artists, with many referencing that they could not identify with *bishōnen*, as discussed by Kazuhide Ichikawa above. The inclusion of Tagame in the exhibition focused on his award-winning, non-erotic *manga*, *Otōto no Otto* (*My Brother's Husband*, 2014-2017) which takes a real and critical look at homophobia in Japan through the eyes of a Japanese man whose gay twin's husband (Canadian) comes to stay. Despite not being an erotic *manga*, the body types within this *manga* remain the same as Tagame's other works: that of round 'bear' like men, with muscles and more realistically diverse body shapes. This again emphasises the hypermasculine ideal within the community that Baudinette examines, and how this is being projected outside of these communities to challenge the mainstream idea of efficiency and "gay as transgendered" (Baudinette, 2021, pp.111-112).[360] However, again Baudinette mentions that this does not mean that 'gay *manga*' is more authentic than BL, as he states Tagame also created BL for the popular BL magazine *JUNE* (Japan Foundation New York, 2022b, 1:34:50 – 1:39:07).

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[360] Baudinette (2021) examines 'Typing' throughout his publication. This is applied based on body type as well as personality, although ultimately it is the way one looks that seems to impact the categories. 'Typing' is very complex, because what one person views as the type to which they belong, another may disagree with. There is also typing in terms of personal desires. Baudinette examines the semiotics of 'Typing,' as well as the views of his informants regarding 'Typing' throughout the book, but pages 47-63 & 220 explore the terms more specifically.

Despite these different arguments, four of Baudinette's informants would not

separate BL and gay *manga* into different categories:

> They all variously argued that both BL and *geikomi* represent equally valid
> yet fantastic depictions of "gay identity" (*gei aidentitī*). For this reason, the
> four men saw no need to sharply disassociate BL from *geikomi* when
> discussing their consumption of gay media.
>
> (Baudinette, 2021, p.109)

Thereby illustrating that there is no 'one way' to be gay or to consume media that

relates to sexuality. Therefore, despite the mainstream ideas about gay desire within

one of the most prominent gay communities in Japan, some gay men do enjoy BL.

Baudinette states that BL can be seen as a transformative and exploratory genre by

gay fans and female fans alike (Japan Foundation New York, 2022b, 1:34:50-

1:39:07). One of Baudinette's informants said that "He reads a lot of BL manga,

which validates his desire for "romantic" as opposed to "sexual" relationships,"

(2021, p.73). This is an interesting view of BL, as many of the arguments about

female consumption is equated to "playing with sex," as opposed to romance,

however, as BL is still primarily created following *shōjo* conventions, the romantic

and emotional elements of a story are still profound. Therefore, in comparison with

gay *manga* which concentrates on "extreme" representations that promote

hypermasculinity as the 'correct' way to represent gay lives, BL promote a more

romantic atmosphere that appeals to those looking for more than sexual connections.

Baudinette also states that for some in the gay communities 'gay manga'

representations can be more problematic than BL due to some of these extremes

(Japan Foundation New York, 2022b, 1:34:50 – 1:39:07).

As with gender and sexuality more broadly, terminology is extremely important

when discussing gay *manga*. Certain phrases have been appropriated within western

fan-culture to describe this type of *manga* that actually have harmful and negative connotations within Japanese lexicon, this is specifically true with the use of the term *bara*.[361] *Bara* is and has been used as an all-encompassing term for gay, usually erotic *manga*, particularly within western fan and internet circles. In recent years however, it has become a label for a wider range of masculine-focused illustration: "The term *bara* has, in English, morphed beyond a straightforward label for Japanese gay art to encompass a broad range of images depicting "manly stuff"" (Ishii et al., 2014, p.34). In Japan and Japanese language, the term means 'rose' and was used as a homophobic slur, similar to 'pansy' in Western cultures, "that likened gay men to pretty, thorny flowers." (Ishii et al., 2014, p.33). However, in the 1960s magazines appeared in Japan that re-appropriated the term *bara,* such as *Barazoku (Rose Tribe)* which was, according to an interview with Tagame: "very shocking and sensational to publish something in the jargon of the hetero nomenclature for gays… to reappropriate it was a big deal" (Ishii et al., 2014, p.41). The term fell out of use as Tagame create *manga* due to these magazines ceasing publication. However, with use of the internet gaining momentum, "foreigners discovered our [gay *mangaka*] work. They saw this whole section was called '*bara*', and so that's how I believe foreigners started to use and appropriate that word" (Ishii et al., 2014, p.41). Tagame personally discussed being "sort of against" *bara* and not liking his work, or himself, to be classed as such due to the negative connotations (Ishii et al., 2014, p.41).

Tagame is often credited with the success and development of gay *manga*: "Tagame is one of the most influential creators in the field of manga for gay male readers." (Manga exhibition interpretation panel). As he himself is an openly gay man, he has

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[361] 薔薇 *bara*: rose.

been vocal about the use of the term *bara* to describe this type of illustration and *manga* as seen above. The openness of his sexuality could also be seen as activism for gay communities, as from Ishii (2014; 2016)[362] and Baundiette's (2016) research, many gay men in Japan hide their sexuality in certain parts of their lives. For instance, some of the gay *mangaka* with whom Ishii, Kolbeins and Chip worked, hid their sexual identity from family and non-gay friends, as well as their work as *mangaka* to protect other 'mainstream' work.[363] These comments illustrate that despite the abundance of homoeroticism in mainstream *manga*, homosexuality and non-heteronormativity in Japan are not necessarily approved of in non-popular cultural and entertainment business spheres (Baudinette, 2021; McLelland 2005). There is still much discrimination against anyone who does not fit into the binary or heteronormative model, despite histories of non-normative representation by western ideologies.[364]

The ideal of hypermasculinity within gay *manga* does create specific ideals that ostracise other body types, similar to the issues raised regarding 'effeminacy' and BL. This is also an issue within the reality of Ni-chōme which is: "… a site where particular desires are legitimated and others are marginalized" (Baundinette, 2021, p.203). These criticisms of ostracising and popularising certain 'types' has also

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[362] The 2016 *Passionate Art of Gengoroh Tagame* was re-released in paperback with new cover art in 2022, with a second volume of new works and essays due for publication in August 2022.

[363] Of course, not all gay *manga* creators make just erotic or explicit *manga*, and like the 'mainstream' *manga* artists, they create standalone illustrations that reflect their own male beauty ideals that are more realistic and representative of diverse body shapes that *bishōnen* do not represent. It would also be incorrect to say that only men, or even gay men, create gay *manga*, as Tagame stated in a panel discussion (Aoki, 2015). In the same way as men who create *shōjo manga* take on feminine pen names, female creators of gay erotic *manga* take on masculine pen names.

[364] Baudinette's informants discussed coming out to some close girl-friends in their teens or at university, but not to family; whereas even discussed possibilities of a later heterosexual marriage with gay love affairs "on the side" to keep their sexuality private and hidden from family (2021, p.68).Ultimately the informant that mentioned this idea chose to eventually reveal his true self to his family (2021, p.68).

appeared in *manga* overtly, with Yoshinaga using characters in *Ōoku: The Inner Chambers* to comment about the standardised or accepted beauty aesthetics of *bishōnen*, whilst the majority of the characters continue to abide by these conventions. In terms of the visuals within gay erotic *manga*, like Ladies' Comics, these *manga* include some very explicit and extreme 'stories' that involve humiliation, subservience, and rape. Nevertheless, the illustrations do not have the same level of censorship since they do not feature female anatomy and are mostly created for a *dōjinshi* market, or magazines aimed at gay men specifically. Many of these illustrations are very reminiscent of *shunga* because the genitalia are exaggerated, and there are some interesting compositional choices that in reality would not be possible, or would be very difficult to get into.

However, unlike *shunga,* this *manga* can be extreme in the tastes and 'stories' portrayed, with rape, BDSM,[365] and submission all being key features of the works. This is in many ways similar to Ladies' Comics, as they too include fantasies of BDSM, non-consent (rape) and submission.[366] The extreme nature of the illustrations, in both gay erotic *manga* and Ladies' Comics, has led to negativity, although more so perhaps in the case of Ladies' Comics where *manga* critics and feminists are more vocal with regard to condemnation. However, the difference here could be gender and not sexuality that influences the critics. This is because Ladies' Comics are heterosexual works, therefore, someone of a different gender subjects lead female characters to the sexual practices, i.e. a gender that has in reality more

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[365] Abbreviation for a combination of terms including Bondage/Discipline, Domination/Submission, Sadism/Masochism, and is now used as an umbrella term to incorporate a range of sexual proclivities in this area.
[366] It is communicated as fantasies, because many of the stories are created from suggested themes submitted by readers of these magazines, or perhaps fantasies of the creators, all of whom use female pen names in Ladies' Comics.

power. In gay *manga,* the partners are on the 'same playing field' in terms of gender power. Although the illustrations may be near identical in terms of the situation being encountered, but because the genders, and sexualities, are different the symbolism in the illustrations and representations can be interpreted differently. The following case study examines one such erotic *manga* that was translated as part of an anthology to expand the reach of gay *manga* beyond Japan (Ishii, et.al, 2014).

Case Study: *Kandagawa-Kun*

An immediate sense of movement and a range of emotions from the two visible characters is conveyed in this illustration (Fig.74). The character in the background appears larger-than-life and is dominating the scene and dwarfing the character in the foreground. Is this a perspective choice, or is the character truly a giant? There is an emphasis on body shape for both characters, as there is a lack of clothing, and what is there accentuates the lines of the body. The background character is 'wearing' what appears to be an apron or overall and nothing else. There is a single strap clasped over one shoulder causing the rest of the fabric to fall diagonally across the body covering the stomach and groin area. The character in the foreground wears only a tight-fitting t-shirt and underwear. The background character is tensed showing his muscles that the apron accentuates, with lines emanating from his upper body. Reflective-looking glasses cover his eyes, so we cannot see where he is looking or what emotions he may be presenting there. A scarf that appears to have a small pin or clip attached at the side is covering his head. This combined with the apron, signify work, such as decorating or cleaning, but the lack of clothing beneath hints at more erotic meanings. The character in the foreground, however, appears to be hunched in on himself, slouched and not particularly impressed. This can be seen

in his facial expression that conveys confusion, turning into irritation with the right eye starting to close in a slight twitch. His mouth is set in a frown, with teeth clenched, and the hands are also starting to clench into fists.

The perspective of this illustration is intriguing. As discussed in previous case study analyses, those without prior knowledge of *manga* illustration literacy may not understand the dynamic that is being conveyed here through spatial manipulation. Both characters appear to be looking out towards the viewer, one performing in a way to display his muscles, the other showing exasperation. However, the sizing of the characters signify that the 'smaller' foreground character is actually looking at the 'larger' character, and the emotions being portrayed are directed at him. This use of perspective is to show the viewer what is happening simultaneously for each character. The background character is literally portrayed as larger than life as a comedic revelation whilst they introduce themselves. The lines around the edge of the illustration that frame the upper body of this character are speed lines and indicate that the character has just struck this pose as they speak. The small sparkle star-like symbol beside the left of his head, indicates a gleam or shine.[367] The lines across the face of the character in the foreground, on the other hand, indicate exasperation and irritation. The lines and shadow created across the nose and beneath the eyes, whilst being monochrome, almost immediately feel as though they should be red to indicate a temper. The sweat beads across the brow could indicate worry or nerves, but from body language of the figure, we can deduce that this, in

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[367] This sparkle in fact is a convention that has been adapted from the use of eyes in *shōjo manga,* and began to be used to frame *bishōnen* in all *manga*, which earned it the title, in western fan circles, 'bishie sparkle'. This small illustrative convention has now been adapted across all *manga* for various meanings, but is now often used in conjunction with a character who is holding poses that accentuate muscles.

combination with the vertical lines on the left of the face, actually indicate annoyance.

This illustration has a written narrative alongside the visuals that is not in the background, which indicates this is a first meeting between these characters. The speech bubbles indicate the words actually being spoken, whereas the smaller writing next to the head of the character introducing himself as Kandagawa-kun, are more like asides or attention points indicating where to look and what he is. There are also SFX marks, or onomatopoeic phrases common in this type of illustration, to indicate noises. These reflect the 'sagging' of the character in the foreground upon seeing Kandagawa-kun, the 'rip' of the muscles as he poses, and potentially the bounce of the buttocks as he flexes, because there are also lines that indicate movement. These markers provide more immediate context for the image. From this, we know that Kandagawa-kun is a 'human robot' that is muscular, but fragile emotionally. The use of the 'handling me' in combination with the very little clothing indicates that there is an assumption of erotica. However, the other character does not appear to be impressed by this introduction, which implies there will be no 'handling'.

To better understand the full meaning and implications of the illustration, the creator and target audience must be explored. As these characters do not adhere to the mainstream conventions of *bishōnen*-style aesthetics, we can determine that it is not aimed at a young or female readership. The muscular physique of Kandagawa-kun does remind one of certain *shōnen manga* characters, usually used for comedic relief at certain points. However, the lack of clothing, combined with the innuendo-filled

introduction, indicates this is not necessarily aimed at a mainstream, i.e. *shōnen*

manga, male audience either.[368] The fact that this muscular character is directing

their erotic introduction to an adult male that is of a more diverse body shape than

can be seen in mainstream *manga*, also indicates that this *manga* is created for a

specific market of gay men.

The creator of this piece is Inu Yoshi[369] a gay *manga* creator that works as an

illustrator and in-house graphic designer for 'Big Gym,' a retailer of gay *manga* and

other adult goods in Japan. This image is in fact from a *dōjinshi* that Inu Yoshi

created and was featured in the book *MASSIVE: Gay Erotic Manga and the Men

Who Make It* (Ishii et al., 2014), which features discussions and biographies of nine

gay erotic *manga* creators. In the opening section of the book, Chip Kidd introduces

the different *manga* excerpts published in this anthology and describes this particular

manga as follows: "Inu Yoshi's chronicle of recently-dumped Masami and his

"unwanted" humanoid helper Kandagawa, which pokes fun at the idea of techno-

sex." (Ishii et al., 2014, p.28). This poking fun idea is based on the mainstream pop

culture theme, usually in hereto-esque relations, of androids as erotic or sexual

objects/ partners, again both implicit and explicitly. One particularly popular *manga*

that had such a theme was *Chobits* (2000-2002), which was a *seinen manga*. Unlike

other *manga*, such as *Chobits*, that had a more serious storyline running through

them, *Kandagawa-kun,* is entirely comedic as is conveyed by this illustration.

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[368] This is not to say that *shōnen* do not have characters that make suggestive or innuendo filled
remarks, but that the combination of character portrayal and these comments hints at something more.
[369] A pseudonym.

The illustrations throughout the story rely on comedic visuals as well as narrative to convey the messages. For instance, what initially appears to be annoyance and a temper rising on the face of Masami,[370] due to the dark shading around the nose, is in fact indicating pain. In the previous panels the box in which Kandagawa arrived[371] pops open and hits him in the face (Ishii et al, 2014, loc.77-78). The following panel continues this line of slapstick humour by placing a large plaster on Masami's nose as he attempts to return the prize to the bookstore as Kandagawa asks "Won't you even give me a try?" Again this emphasises the eroticism of the situation (Ishii et al, 2014, loc.80). From this point on, the erotica becomes very explicit, although at first this appears as a solo masturbatory scene where the 'punch-line' is that Kandagawa 'assisted', because that is his motivation. This dubious consent is a common theme throughout many *manga*, but especially where erotic scenes are concerned within gay *manga*, much like in Ladies' Comics.

As briefly mentioned, there are other male body shapes shown in the likes of *shōnen manga*, such as in *Bleach*, but these are not created to be desirable. Gay *manga* characters reflect a more diverse range of body shapes, although usually large and muscular, as Inu Yoshi has depicted here,[372] which shows that different beauty ideals do in fact exist within Japanese illustrative cultures. Part of this is about identification; women are said to identify with the *bishōnen* of BL as they are androgynous in their beauty: feminised but still masculine enough to not lead to a recognition of reality. As such, some gay men found that they could not identify with

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[370] The second 'background' character in the image.
[371] He was the first place prize from a raffle at a local gay bookstore, unbeknownst to Masami when entering the competition.
[372] One is extremely muscular, and the other "has a thick physical frame" (Ishii et al., 2014, p.73), which shows that the *bishōnen*-like beauty aesthetics are not the only ideals portrayed.

the *bishōnen* of mainstream *manga,* as the bodies and 'lives' they live within the pages do not reflect the reality of their desires. Therefore, gay erotic *manga* portray different male beauty ideals that appeal to these men looking for different and potentially more realistic bodies. However, these bodies and the scenarios portrayed are still highly fictionalised and idealised, just like in Ladies' Comics. They allow for a range of desires to be safely explored and experienced through graphic arts, but that still have an added element of reality that is not possible in the realms of BL. It must be stated however, that some gay men do find enjoyment and identification in BL, as well as gay erotic *manga*, but that the majority of creators took the decision to enter this world because their interests were not being catered to.

Whilst a 'niche' community, gay *manga* or gay erotic *manga* is a growing part of the industry, and an important one. All the gay *manga* artists featured in *MASSIVE* (2014) discuss their youth with some commenting on the loneliness they felt before discovering gay *manga*, as not only did it show interests for which they previously had no outlet, but they also pointed to LGBT+ spaces they could visit. However, despite these advancements and spaces, some of the *mangaka* featured in *MASSIVE,* including Inu Yoshi kept their faces hidden in the photographs taken. This is to protect their identities, as some *mangaka* are not openly gay and do not create these works as their main source of income, nor want to be 'outed' to family, friends or employers due to their sexuality still being regarded as taboo. In 2013, Chip Kidd released how "subversive and taboo" it was to create gay *manga* and the creation of the MASSIVE publication was an attempt to change these conceptions (Ishii et al., 2014, p.29). Nearly 10 years on and there is still a taboo surrounding homosexuality

in mainstream Japanese society as conservative attitudes remain.[373] Therefore, the

imagery discussed here are vital to the empowerment and inclusion of different male

identities and ideals in arts.

This chapter has examined the 'blurring lines' of masculine representation in works

created primarily for a male audience. The representations explored here have vastly

different ideals and meanings locked within. For example, some imagery can be

interpreted by one person as empowering, with a sense of difference being

celebrated, but for others, this is a negative stereotype that is perpetuating outdated

ideas of what it is to be gay. The fact that these 'comedic,' but potentially offensive,

'masculine' representations are featured in some of the most globally popular

manga, illustrates the depth to which these stereotypes have permeated Japanese

popular cultures, because these *manga* were initially created with a young male

demographic in mind.

However, there are still elements of female influence within these *manga*, due to the

popularity of *shōjo manga* aesthetics 'leaking' into other *manga* styles. This is seen

in the analysis of *Black Butler* that continues to idealise male beauty in line with

androgynous ideals, but with an emphasis now on heterosexual desire, as well as

ideals to which men and young boys aspire. This is in line with the research of Miller

(2006), which examines these new beauty ideals from a perspective of reality, and

economic influences on literal beauty regimes. Her analysis is that a 'soft'

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[373] For instance, despite the Sapporo District court finding the ban on same-sex marriage "unconstitutional" in 2021 (BBC, 2021), in June 2022 the Osaka District Court "ruled that freedom of marriage in the constitution referred only to male-female unions, and that the country's ban on same-sex marriage was therefore constitutional" (Gunia, 2022, para.1). However, in 2022 Nintendo Co Ltd. updated the 'Corporate Social Responsibility Information' on their website to recognise same-sex marriage despite the banning in Japanese law (Nightingale, 2022).

masculinity has started to take over as the ideal within Japan. This is something that Loh (2012, 2019) examines from a fashion angle, as represented in *manga*, whilst Monden's research comes to the conclusion that a combination of slender youthfulness and mature beauty is in fact the ideal that is desired by men, as opposed to an either-or idea about male beauty (2020, p.275). This is because it continues the assertion of masculinity, despite an interest in the stereotypically implied feminine world of cosmetics (Monden, 2020, p.275). However, within illustrative practices this combination still leans towards the gaze of slender beauty (Monden, 2020, p.272) and as such, creates an ideal that cannot truly be obtained. In many ways this is the other side of the coin to feminine ideals that are presented by western media that perpetuate specific, usually unachievable, ideals for women.

Due to the abundance of BL illustrations and stories in mainstream media, a normalisation of homoeroticism has arisen, provided that the characters remain within the realms of *bishōnen*, including specific beauty aesthetics and a physical resemblance between the characters. In many ways this is reminiscent of the S relationship of early *shōjo manga* and *shōjo* life in all girl-schools, as discussed by Shamoon (2012). In this sense then, *bishōnen* are not threatening the morality of the *shōjo*, nor the moral expectations of the society, as they are not homosexual. However, this then causes issue in terms of representation for gay men in illustration as these illustrations do not, generally, represent them or their own desires. In fact, this is one of the prevailing issues that some gay men have with the media, as is outlined by Nagaike when discussing the *yaoi ronsō* (2015, pp.65-69). Nevertheless, this chapter has illustrated that these ideals are not the only representations within popular graphic arts, as hypermasculinity is still prevalent in Japanese arts. However,

the interesting development of this is actually within a homosexual sphere that idolises a "hard" type over "effeminacy," bringing the ideal beauty type back to a heteronormative expression of gender in a non-normative sexuality representation.

Conclusion

This thesis has illustrated the performative nature of the ideal, or perfect, gender and sexuality representations in graphic arts. Through the analyses of the aesthetics within the arts, links have been uncovered between *ukiyo-e* and *manga* as graphic arts media, both in terms of influence and themes. However, the interpretations of gender and sexuality as expressed through imagery have been revealed to be complex and contradictory. The crossdisciplinarity of the literature has underscored that a range of factors, such as theatrical performance, can and has impacted on the development of gender and sexuality within graphic arts, particularly in *ukiyo-e* and *manga*.

Arts are a vital source of information for analysing cultures; they can be mirrors depicting a realty, or they can reflect the ideals and dreams presented to the masses. In the case of this thesis, ideals have been the core of the analysis, with representations glamorising, sanitising and even exaggerating the role of gender and sexuality. In some cases, these representations were even rejections of expected gender norms; but that even these attempts to break free in the graphic arts world can perpetuate misogynistic and oppressive ideas (Fujimoto, 2014; Sakakibara, 1998).

A core element of the originality in this research is the methodological approaches of visual representations as a means of portraying different gender portrayals. The interpretations took into account the personal positionality of the author as a British woman in the initial readings beyond compositional interpretation. This is a 'hazard' that D'Alleva (2005), Pooke & Newall (2008) and Rose (2001; 2012) recognise in

the call for an 'innocent eye', as no researcher will truly have an innocent eye; we are all impacted upon by our own experiences in interpreting imagery. This is revealed especially in the discussions of Grelle (p.261; Fig.52) and Charlotte (p.329; Fig.73) who are based on stereotyped representations of 'gay' men within Japan, although one embodies a performative version of the other, thereby increasing the parodic element of performativity further.

The use of the visual analyses within this thesis relied on the combination of art historical methods to 'read' the imagery in terms of content, before applying the historical, cultural and societal information obtained through the likes of iconography, iconology and semiotics. For instance, without the understanding of the origins of *kabuki*, and subsequent development from the views of historical, Japanese and theatre studies scholars, the whole picture of *onnagata* and their role in society would not have been 'read' accurately through the visual analysis of the graphic arts (Chapter Six). In a similar vein, the understanding of the illustrative origins of *bishōnen* as surrogates for *shōjo* gender and sexuality as opposed to portrayals of homosexual experiences would not be achieved without *shōjo*/girlhood and *manga* studies research (Chapter Ten).

It is also ironic, that despite non-binary representations being rife throughout Japanese graphic arts and illustration, due to the historical precedent of cross-gender performance in theatrical arts, these non-binary expressions of gender are not 'acceptable' outside the realm of entertainment, arts or theatrical practices (McLelland, 2005). This again enforces the complexity and contradictory nature of societal attitudes towards gender, which was revealed through the rigorous analysis

encompassed in this research. As cross-gender performance and dressing must be, at least in mainstream society, kept to the stage, idealised notions of this as a form of gender portrayal can be interpreted in graphic arts as a means of allowing readers to explore their own ideas and feelings in relation to gender, and by extension sexuality. Here idealisation becomes twofold: that of an ideal world to which a reader can escape, and the perfect representation of gender itself. Beauty remains a key factor in these portrayals irrespective of the cross-gender acts being portrayed as evidenced in the *Rose of Versailles* (Chapter Seven). Of course this analysis is in relation to contemporary practices of *manga* specifically, however, *manga* both harnesses and develops the traditions of gender representation expressed through the formulation of *onnagata* illustrative representation, whilst at the same time enabling new forms of artistic practices to evolve. This is achieved specifically through the continuation of androgynous or blended masculine/feminine ideals, as conveyed through cross-gender performances of *onnagata*, through to cross-dressing heroines in *manga,* before finally achieving a new representation of gender entirely in the formation of *bishōnen*. However, what is most significant about these representations is the influence of women.

A surprising result of this research has been the extent to which women have influenced and impacted on the content and creation of popular graphic arts. Whilst the analyses within the thesis have concentrated on the ways in which gender and sexuality have been represented in the images, so as to achieve the established methodological processes, the societal and cultural contexts of Japan have also been vital. It was through this depth of the cross-disciplinary investigations that the role of women within different facets of graphic arts has been exposed. Women were

subjected to the male gaze through the glamorisation of sex-work in *ukiyo-e*, forcing them into a position of passive object (Chapter Three). As the 'birth of *shōjo*' dawned, they were again subjected to ideals, but this time of innocence and purity (Chapter Four). However, alongside this, female power as a consumer was increasing, meaning the ways in which women were portrayed started to shift to reflect their own wants and desires (Chapter Five). Finally, as creators women forever altered the landscape of graphic arts created for a female audience by adopting male-coded characters as their surrogates (Chapter Ten). The utilisation of cross-gendered acting in graphic arts has also been argued to be a way in which it is possible for girls and women to transcend the realities of heteropatriarchal societies (Chapter Seven & Chapter Eight). Women were also vital touchstones in the development of the *onnagata* art form, as a means of 'male-sexed bodies' (Isaka, 2016; Mezur, 2005) adapting to represent an ideal of femininity on stage (Chapter Six).

In an attempt to answer *why shōjo* were engaging with *shonen'ai* and BL as a means of expressing and exploring gender and sexuality, Fujimoto asserted that a fear of maturity was prevalent (2014, p.34). However, there are differing opinions about this idea of 'putting off' maturation, and that it is more akin to identification. Regardless of these contrary viewpoints, following the analyses within this research, it is clear that these initial representations of male homosexuality in *manga* were created by and for women, as opposed to being representative of or for gay men. Despite androgynous-like aesthetics being a key ideal within 'masculine' graphic arts representations of the past (Chapter Nine), rejections of the *bishōnen* as a representation of masculinity was implicitly impacted upon by women because of

their involvement in the formation of these ideals in *manga*. With the continuance of *bishōnen* as a male beauty ideal as formulated and perpetuated by women, the representations of male beauty in gay erotic *manga* could be seen as a rejection of these feminine ideals and as a way of reclaiming the homosexual identity from the *bishōnen* (Chapter Eleven). There have also been negative connotations in the formation of gender and sexuality within contemporary graphic arts, as uncovered in the analyses of *Black Butler* (Chapter Eight) and *Bleach* (Chapter Eleven). These representations draw upon harmful stereotypes from other avenues of the Japanese entertainment industries (McLelland, 2005; Baudinette, 2021), but also emphasise femininity as a fundamentally weak or negative expression.

Ultimately, this research has been driven by how graphic art representations are a vehicle for understanding the complexities of a society and culture. Graphic arts reflect different attitudes, ideals, desires and humour related to mass-media and populaces. The examinations of prints, illustrations and *manga* since the 17th century has enabled an evaluation of developing and evolving representations. Whilst it is clear that *manga* developed from post-Second World War society, the influences of aesthetics, perspective and visual narrative storytelling from *ukiyo-e* are clear. As the works analysed within this thesis all fall within the parameters of 'low' arts or culture, as outlined in the Introduction (p.19), the representations within portray more recognisable expressions of gender and sexuality to the mass-target audiences. As such, the art historical practices examined herein, have allowed for extensions of this authors previous research regarding the legacy of *ukiyo-e* prints to be explored. This research has argued that contemporary *manga* have drawn upon the precedents set by *ukiyo-e* in the formation of gender representations, whilst creating its own

unique form of graphic art creation that is separate from earlier Japanese print media.[374] In this respect, *manga* are continuing the graphic art traditions of Japan, but also transforming them. This can be seen in the analysis of *The Rose of Versailles* (p.200) and *Kandagawa-kun* (p.342), which take ideals of cross-gender acting and same-sex relations into completely new illustrative but also societal cultural realms.

The key findings of this research, beyond the impact on graphic arts by women, are that gender and sexuality as represented in the art works analysed, whilst subject to changing ideas of beauty, have precedents in the graphic arts of the Tokugawa period. The thesis has observed the changing ideals of masculinity and femininity throughout the Tokugawa, Meiji, Taishō and Shōwa periods specifically, for the purpose of understanding the beauty in artistic portrayals. Whilst the processes of creation and the formation of contemporary graphic arts have come about from global, as well as internal, factors, the ideals and ideologies of gender and sexuality can be linked back to the likes of *bijin-ga*, *kabuki* and *wakashu*. This is not to say that there is a single ideological thread within Japanese art historical and popular culture canon, but that the ideals of gender and sexuality within graphic arts today have, as this thesis argues, evolved from the societal attitudes since the Tokugawa period. Scholars such as Screech (2009), Isaka (2016), Seigle (1993) and Mostow (2003; 2016) examined how gender and sexuality in the Tokugawa period have impacted upon visual and performing arts, whilst the likes of Baudinette (2021), Fujimoto (2014; 2015a), Shamoon (2012; 2018) and Mizoguchi (2008) explore the

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[374] Some examples of this, besides the *ukiyo-e* this thesis concentrates on, are *kusazōshi* and *kibyōshi* which are discussed in Appx. One and also by Glynne Walley (2022) and Adam Kern (2006).

contemporary representations that *manga* communicate. This research has brought the eras of these leading scholars research together and, through art historical and visual methodological study, examined how graphic arts have and continue to represent the perfect, idealised forms of femininity, masculinity and portrayals that 'float' in between. The overarching message of this research is one of *how* visual imagery, presented through the drawn and printed line, is an essential vehicle for the communication and expressions of perfect, performed gender.

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Appendix One:
Artistic Productions: Ukiyo-e & Manga

Ukiyo-e: Woodblock Printing

Ukiyo-e is the name that was given to prints that epitomised the pleasures of Edo, which, "… took as their subjects the idols of the day, kabuki actors and courtesans. These two subjects make up the majority of the ukiyo-e produced in the eighteenth century." (Fister, 1988, p.47). The term comprises the word *ukiyo* that has Buddhist origins of "impermanence created by daily life and its desires," (Calza, 2005, p.6) but during the Tokugawa period the *kanji* character within this term changed. Now *ukiyo* reflected 'floating' as opposed to 'suffering', meaning that an embracing of the desires that *ukiyo* originally warned against began to take place (Calza, 2005, p.6). The suffix of *e* means picture or painting, thus *ukiyo-e* came to mean 'pictures of the floating world.'

The process of woodblock printing was adopted from Chinese and Korean emissaries for the production of Buddhist texts. *Ukiyo-e* were created as single, diptych or triptych sheets depending on the series of requests of a publisher.[375] The publisher was in charge of commissioning and selling the prints, and would also have *ehon* created as well. The artist was chosen usually from a select group tied to particular publisher (Nelson-Davies, 2015; 2021), and would usually create the piece or series based on the requests from the publisher. Throughout the period as more restrictions and censorship regulations were implemented, such as the Tenpō reforms in the 1840's, the artists would also have to take into account censorship seals when creating the designs. Once the initial blank ink brush painting was finished, a carver would paste the design face down onto a block of wood. This was usually cherry wood as the bark was of a "peculiar fineness and hardness" (Strange, 1897, p.118). The carver would then use a small amount of oil to peel the back of the paper away to reveal the design as if it had been drawn directly onto the wood. Carving would then begin using a range of knives, gouges and chisels; the carvers would have to be

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[375] Chūban – 'medium format'. Around 18 x 25 cm; Koban – 'Small format' around 18 x 13 cm; and Ōban – 'Large format' the invention of full colouring printing changed the format of Ōban after the 1770's to around 36 cm x 25 cm. Ōban became the most common format to be used.

particularly skilled as the design would be reversed and have to reflect every minute piece of detail that the brush ink painting had depicted (Whitford, 1977, p.50).

Once the carving was completed the block would be passed to printers to created the final mass-producible version. Originally only black ink was able to be used, with some hand-painted colours occasionally added. By 1765 full colour prints were able to be created; this was achieved by utilising multiple blocks for each colour (Whitford, 1977, p.49). In order to keep everything aligned a mark known as a *kentō* was carved into the wood, this enabled the printer to place the paper into the correct position on every block. Proof prints would be taken by the printers, with notes from the artist regarding the use of colour and pigmentation before the final version was approved for printing and publication. The artist Suzuki Haruobu is often cited as the creator of the *nishiki-e*, or full colour print, however as Nelson-Davies examines: "… the development of the color technique achieved with five or more blocks was not accomplished by a single individual but through collaboration and patronage." (2021, p.59). As evidenced in the woodblock process discussion so far, collaboration was vital to the production of *ukiyo-e* despite the artists name being the one most often remembered today.[376]

Printing was achieved with the use of a *baren*, a bamboo covered disk that pressed the paper onto the blocks with differing force to create the desired effects and level of colour saturation.[377] As well as the inks, an alum would be used to help with the saturation and means of printing. As the Tokugawa period progressed publishers began to utilise the skills of printers to different effects; for example shading, embossing and mica powder were used to create luxury finishes (Whitford, 1977, p.54). The final application to prints were the publisher and censorships seals; these proved that the prints had passed approval from the *bafuku* for sale, and to which publisher the work was commissioned. The printing process itself is quite complex and therefore only the most skilled printers were hired. European artists when

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[376] Nelson-Davies examines collaboration in relation to *ukiyo-e* in both her most recent solo publications (2015; 2021).
[377] Today there are also ball-bearing *baren*'s that can be used, and provide good pressure as well as easier means to create certain effects (Bienne, 2013, 00:39:25 – 00:40:30).

attempting to recreate this style of print identified one particular difficultly that those
without the correct training would encounter; the tendency for the colours to run:

> …the only cure for the evil lies in the hands of a skilled craftsmen, who
> intuitively knows the exact amount of moisture his paper should carry, and
> the precise proportion of rice paste to mix with his colour… It is a little
> disappointing perhaps to our pride to find that we are so hopelessly inferior in
> mere manual dexterity; but the loss of whatever we once had is the price
> Nature has exacted for the insult of our machines and "labour-saving"
> appliances.

> (Strange, 1897, p.121)

Once the prints had been approved for publication, they would be sold in the
publishers shop in the cities. These prints were thought to be perceived not as art but
as decoration: 'they evoked pleasant associations, and were the equivalents of our
pin-ups of pop-stars, soccer players and glamour girls." (Whitford, 1977, p54).
However, as Nelson Davies (2021) examines, the were still regarded with some
respect and popularity.

Manga: production & serialisation

Manga as it is today emerged in the post-Second World War period as a result of
these influences and fast became one of the most important popular culture
phenomena of the 20th century, in and outside of Japan. Adapting traditional
illustrative and graphic techniques, with conventions of the early 20th century,
different genres of *manga* began to bloom in the 1950s and 1960s, which then set the
tone for Japanese artistic and illustrative influences worldwide. Initially *manga* are
serialised in magazines generally split by demographic, with *kodomomuke, shōnen,
shōjo,*[378] *josei* and *seinen* being the most common mainstream 'categories'.[379]
Kodomomuke are *manga* aimed at children, usually below the age of 10, featuring
characters such as *Doraemon* and *Pokemon*. *Shōnen,* a term originally used to mean
young people but now exclusively boys, feature works aimed at boys that include
action packed stories like *Bleach* (2001 – 2016) and *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2001 –
2010). *Shōjo,* meaning girl, feature works that, historically, have romance and

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[378] 少女 *shōjo* now used exclusively to mean girl - 少 small/little 女 woman
[379] There are others such as *seijin* which refers to pornographic *manga* specifically, *gekiga* 'dramatic
pictures' and Ladies' Comics' which refer to female focused pornographic works. Some of these will
be examined more specifically throughout the later chapters.

character-driven stories such as *Fruits Basket* (1998 –2006) and *Rose of Versailles* (1972 – 1973); *josei* and *seinen* refer to more mature storylines for women and men respectively that include career, sex, horror and gang related storylines.

To begin the creation process, some *mangaka* sketch out a general panel layout, with movement lines and some dialogue and directions (Araki, 2017, pp.186-189). Others will create more concrete storyboards (Kubo, 2008). Some *mangaka* work alone, others collaborate, such as PEACH-PIT, where they work together throughout, others involve one artist and one writer that work separately and only come together to complete for publication through editors. In some cases editors will work with *mangaka* on a script, which is then taken by the *mangaka* to finalise the drawings (Suzuki & Francisco, 2015). Following this the artist draws out each panel with space left in the bubbles or blocks for text to be inserted. This was completed by editors sticking down the text to then be copied ready for serialisation (Schodt, 1983, p.144). Today, digital means are utilised in the completion of *manga* chapters, with designers choosing fonts, colour and "finishing touches" (Suzuki & Francisco, 2015) to the scanned versions of the artists hand-drawn work. Like *ukiyo-e*, proof copies are made for editors to check before final printing and publication in the magazines. Some magazines are weekly or bi-weekly, some monthly, others bi-monthly; this affects the turn around rate for editors and *mangaka* as some need to create new chapters every few weeks, whereas others need them every other month.

Following this, the chapters can be collected and published as *tankōbon*, usually softcover volumes of multiple *manga* chapters. From here, particularly popular series can be picked up for translation, at which point localisation becomes key in communicating the text of the story to different cultures, whilst the imagery remains the same. Though as discussed in relation to Osamu Tezuka, the 'Godfather of Manga', some *mangaka* can and do re-create and update popular series. Others extend into the realms of manga, light novels, live action and stage productions.

Appendix Two:
Historical Contexts: Tokugawa Period

Tokugawa:	Shōgun from - until
Ieyasu	1603-1616
Hidetada	1616-1623
Iemitsu	1623-1651
Ietsuna	1651-1680
Tsunayoshi	1680-1709
Ienobu	1709-1712
Ietsugu	1713-1716
Yoshimune	1716-1745
Ieshige	1745-1760
Ieharu	1760-1786
Ienari	1787-1837
Ieyoshi	1837-1853
Iesada	1853-1858
Iemochi	1858-1866
Yoshinobu	1866-1867

Following a time known as Sengoku Jidai[380] (1467 – 1615) or the Warring States period (Totman, 2013, p.273), which was rife with civil war, Tokugawa Ieyasu brought about a political unification of Japan following his victory at the Battle of Sekigahara.[381] He was appointed *shōgun* in 1603, which some scholars mark as the beginning of the Tokugawa period;[382] whereas others declare the beginning of this period as 1615, as this was when the final attempt by rival fractions to take control was subdued at Osaka (Sadler, 2009; Totman, 2013, pp.292-296). This final quelling of a major attempted coup led to the establishment of 'peace' throughout the rule of the Tokugawa family, until the arrival of western ships in the 1850s. This meant that city life in the shogunal capital of Edo could blossom during the 17th century, as Marsha Weidner stated: "With peace came widespread prosperity, thriving cities, affluent merchant classes, vibrant urban cultures, and increased literacy – including female literacy." (Weidner, 1990, p.17). The result of a unified and strictly

[380] This began with the Ōnin War (1467-1477) which then led to civil war lasting throughout the Ashikaga / Muromachi and Azuchi – Momoyama periods until Tokugawa Ieyasu established the Tokugawa *shogunate*
[381] Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) and Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598) had both previously attempted to gain control of and unify Japan
[382] Sometimes referred to as the Edo Period as Edo was the capital during this time

controlled Japan meant that advancements in technology, infostructure and culture boomed throughout the period, leading to the creation of many Japanese arts which are now considered to be traditional. In fact, Gary Leupp and De-Min Tao (2022) stated that the policies relating to the peace of period: "…allowed for over two centuries of unprecedented economic growth, the appearance of great cities with a vibrant bourgeois culture, and the "taming" of the vast samurai class." (2022, p.35). It should be noted that peace here was established by strict controls over the Japanese populace of the time, but also the restriction of foreigners from entering the country. In 1635 under the third Tokugawa *shōgun*, Iemitsu, subjects were forbidden to travel abroad, and then in 1639 foreign trade was restricted to Chinese and Dutch merchants (Leupp & Tao, 2022, p.35). The Chinese traders were permitted a base in Nagasaki, whilst Dutch traders had a trading post in Dejima, sometimes Deshima, a small island in the bay of Nagasaki (Calza, 2005, p.8).

Despite these advancements, including the increased literacy rates, during the Tokugawa period a strict feudal class system was adhered to. There was no upward mobility; one had to remain within the class in which they were born, based largely on occupation. Unlike other cultures however, Japan's system did not place farmers or peasants at the bottom of this system, but instead the merchants, or *chōnin,* as they profited from others' works. However, it was this class that eventually held the most wealth in the period, leading to considerable sway on the development of the culture of the 'ordinary people', such as *kabuki* and *ukiyo-e*. Interestingly, the actors and 'beauties' of the period, were considered to be outside[383] of these class systems as they did not uphold the morality expected, but they were not ostracised as others were, or occasionally still are. The *shōgun*, *daimyō,*[384] priests, Emperor and court were considered above the system, whilst those whose occupations involved working with death, such as butchers and tanners,[385] were considered below and were ostracised. Thus, the system itself only takes into consideration *samurai,* farmers, artisans and merchants respectively.

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[383] With those in the entertainment industries being classed as *hinin*, meaning non people (Strickland, 2008, p.23).
[384] 大名 *daimyō* feudal lords.
[385] 部落民 *Burakumin* The Shintō religion deemed those who worked 'with death' as impure and so these people were ostracised by society. Today there is still a stigma attached to people in these professions.

This class system is important to the perception of Japan's social and cultural dynamics in the Tokugawa period. As the wealth passed from the ruling clans to the merchants, they became the patrons of the arts that are primarily discussed in this thesis; therefore, it was their tastes and desires that were met in the first instance in the creation of plays and prints (Leupp & Tao, 2022, p.35). *Samurai* were now having to adjust to new roles within this time of peace as they and their *daimyō* were: "no longer able to distinguish themselves on the battlefield, they had to demonstrate their ability through wise and skillful [sic] administration of the nation." (Guth, 2010, p.10). The Tokugawa *shogunate* maintained strict control over their *daimyō* and *samurai* in order to maintain the peace of the country and their power. In 1635 Tokugawa Iemitsu, the third shōgun of the era, established Alternative Attendance[386] as a mandatory requirement. This forced the *daimyō* to, "stand attendance on the shogun intermittently, with retinues of several hundred men." (Screech, 2009, loc.600) This was established to limit the *daimyō's* power and wealth so that they could not stage any uprisings against the *shogunate*, meaning *samurai,* whilst maintaining their status, were in fact penniless.

This influx of men to Edo meant that the city gained the nickname "city of bachelors" (Screech, 2009, loc.133 & 600) so various forms of entertainment started to develop within the city, but with strict control and regulation from the *bakufu.* Simultaneously this system of attendance brought with it a rapid rise in infrastructure and culture in and around Edo due to the increased need for travel between the city and the familial lands of the *daimyō*. This in turn increased trade across the country and allowed for the rise in artistic pursuits, particularly in Edo, where the themes of leisure, pleasure and entertainment soon led to the creation and popularisation of *ukiyo-e*.

As explained in Chapter Three, the Yoshiwara developed in the early 1600's when a group of brothel owners petitioned for a legalised area to conduct business in the new political capital of Edo (Siegle, 1993). However, as the Tokugawa period progressed there was less 'approval' of the Yoshiwara and its proximity to the centre

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[386] *Sankin kōtai* Alternate Attendance.

of Edo (i.e. the castle) and its officials. Therefore, an offer to the proprietors in the quarter for them to relocate, further away from Edo castle, was issued. However, following the Meireki Fire in 1657 that ripped through the city of Edo, destroying most of the city including the Yoshiwara, this relocation was stalled and the houses were forced to operate from villages closer to the new location near Asakusa until a new quarter could be built later in the year (Seigle, 2004, p.11). This new location meant that those wishing to visit the Yoshiwara had to make a much longer, and more difficult in some respects, journey, now either by boat or palanquin; however, this then made the journey part of the experience of visiting the Yoshiwara (Screech, 2006) and was reflected in some of the *emakimono* works of the period. These particular changes and continued restrictions were in place for the male visitors of the quarter as opposed to the women that worked there, but the women of the quarter faced restrictions and rules on a daily basis including being unable to leave the quarter. They also faced very harsh punishments, particularly in the later years of the Tokugawa period when standards declined (Seigle, 1993, pp.211-212).

As discussed, these women did not adhere to the moral duties or expectations of women during the Tokugawa period, however, due to the peace that the era created, and the 'city of bachelors' attitude that was established due to the 'Alternative Attendance' requirement (Screech, 2009, loc.600; Introduction pg.29), Edo and by extension the Yoshiwara were perfectly placed to promote pleasure and leisure, with women becoming a central pillar of this. Therefore, it was only natural that an idealised vision of these women would be presented in the art of the period to emphasise the beauty and extravagance of the era. Despite these idealisations or even idolisations, these women were still being depicted as subjects to be gazed at and literally bought. The prints were not just glorifying the beauty of the women, but of the Yoshiwara at large, to convince people to go and spend money, perhaps if possible, on a favourite who was seen in a beautiful print by Kiyonaga or Utamaro. Despite the decline of the Yoshiwara in the 19th century, the pleasure quarter survived through to the 1950's when the *Baishun Bōshi Hō* Prostitution Prevention Law, was passed in June 1956 with the full effect from beginning 1958.

Another popular female subject in Japanese art with links to the Yoshiwara is that of the *geisha,* who has become emblematic of Japan. The *kanji* and term *geisha* can be

split to mean *gei* traditional arts, techniques, crafts. In the realm of *geisha*, this also refers to the dance and music they practice (Foreman, 2005, p.34); and the *sha kanji* is used as a suffix to imply person or someone of that nature. However, *geisha* as they are and practice today only emerged in the mid 1750's; prior to this, the role was held by men who performed more like Western court jesters, who, "tended to be versatile, excelling in music, witty repartee, theatrical skits, and even buffoonery" (Seigle, 1993, p.172). In fact, the appearance and popularisation of female *geisha* also coincides with the disappearance of the *tayū* rank in the Yoshiwara: "by 1761, the rank of *tayū* disappeared completely from the licensed pleasure quarters, one year prior to the first official listing of female geisha (1762)" (Foreman, 2005, p.38). This perhaps indicates that despite the disappearance of *tayū* from the pleasure quarters, there was still a want and need for highly skilled female entertainers and *geisha* were and are entertainers. They must be highly skilled in music, dance, conversation, flower arrangement and other traditional Japanese art forms such as the tea ceremony.[387] Most importantly, however, they are and were not intended as sex workers despite working within, and outside of, the Yoshiwara: "Geisha distinguished themselves by insisting that they were not prostitutes and by achieving a professional status as entertainers difficult even for men" (Seigle, 1993, p.174). That is not to say that some did not engage in such actions with patrons, but women found to be practising sex work illegally were arrested and sent to the Yoshiwara where they would not be paid for their work for a set period of time (Seigle, 1993, p.87 & p.210).[388]

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[387] As well as being able to read and anticipate a guests every need, for instance refilling a *saké* cup or striking a match to light a cigar without breaking conversation. The artistic role that *geisha* play in the entertainment world has not changed since the Tokugawa period, but the popularity of working as a *geisha* and of *geisha* more generally has somewhat diminished. Today only wealthy people or large companies can afford to be patrons and clients of *geisha* in the traditional sense. In some ways they have now become more akin to 'tourist attractions' for groups of travellers to try and catch a glimpse of as they move between appointments, or with whom to have their photograph taken, although these are more likely to be *maiko* (舞子 apprentice geisha in Kyoto). However, *geisha* are still highly skilled and talented performers and are trained in a similar fashion to those of the past, as they still perform regularly, in both private and public spaces.

[388] During the Meiji period, a new rule was instated that stipulated *geisha* were to have two licenses if they practiced sex work, one for sex work and one for the usual geisha roles (Seigle, 1993, pp.223-224).

With the arrival of Commodore C. Perry and the 'Black Ships' in 1854 the end of the Tokugawa period began. The family had held the position of *shōgun* for over 250 years, but as tensions arose within the country due to the arrival of these ships and the treatises that had been approved the shogunate was overthrown and the Emperor reinstated as the supreme head of Japan in 1868. From this point on the modern era arrived in Japan; western ideologies began to be adopted whilst traditional Japanese culture took on new roles in the evolving world of the 20th century.

Appendix Three:
Nengō: Japanese Chronology

Nengō,[389] meaning era name, was adopted in Japan in 645CE[390] following the usage in China since 140BCE.[391] Following the Meiji restoration (1868) the 'one reign, one era name' protocol was established. Previously, era names would change on set years or following natural disasters regardless of an Imperial change. The Gregorian calendar was adopted in Japan in 1873, previously lunar calendars based on Chinese influence were used. As such, the following timeline outlines the main period names, eras, dates and rulers[392] preceding and following the adoption of *nengō* using the most commonly agreed dates. Due the process of changing era name, some overlap occurs for dates;[393] for instance the end of the Heisei era and beginning of Reiwa occur in 2019 making Heisei31 and Reiwa1 the same year.

Period	Nengō	Ruler[394]
Jōmon *14,000 – 300BCE*		
		Jimmu r.est.660-585BCE
		Suizei r.est.581-549BCE
		Annei r.est.549-511BCE
		Itoku r.est.510-477BCE
		Kōshō r.est.475-393BCE
		Kōan r.est.393-291BCE
Yayoi *300BCE – 250CE*		
		Kōrei r.est.290-215BCE
		Kōgen r.est.214-158BCE
		Kaika r.est.158-98BCE

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[389] 年号 *Nengō* literally 'year number' used to indicate the name of an era, sometimes 元号 *gengō*
[390] CE – Common Era (previously AD)
[391] BCE – Before Common Era (previously BC)
[392] Munemura, Yoshinori (2004) "List of Rulers of Japan" in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, Metropolitan Museum of Art; Jlit.net (n.d) "Japanese Era and Modern Reign Names"; Conrad, Totman (2013 Folio Society edition); Britannica (n.d) consulted for era, names and dates
[393] Go-Toba's reign overlaps Antoku's rule due to rival clans (Britannica, n.d)
[394] Legendary and historical Emperors and Empresses have been included. Dates for rulers prior to Kōtoku are unconfirmed, but estimates have been included here based on above sources.

			Suijin r.est.97-30BCE
			Suinin r.est.29BCE-70CE
			Keikō r.est.71-30
			Seimu r.est.131-190
			Chūai r.est.192-200
Kofun *250 – 538*			
			Jingū r.est.201-269 (regent)
			Ōjin r.est.270-310
			Nintoku r.est.313-399
			Richū r.est.400-405
			Hanzei r.est.406-410
			Ingyō r.est.412-453
			Ankō r.est.453-456
			Yūryaku r.est.456-479
			Seinei r.est.480-484
			Kenzō r.est.485-487
			Ninken r.est.488-498
			Buretsu r.est.498-506
			Keitai r.est.507-531
			Ankan r.est.531-535
			Senka r.est.535-539
Asuka *538-710*			
			Kinmei r.539-571
			Bitatsu r.571-585
			Yōmei r.585-586
			Sushun r.587-592
			Suiko r.592-628; Empress
			Jomei r.629-641
			Kyōyoku r.642-645; Empress
	Taika Era	645-650	Kōtoku r.645-654
	Hakuchi Era	650-654	Saimei r.655-661; Empress
			Tenji r.661-671
			Kōbun r.671-672
	Shunchō	686	Tenmu r.673-686

			Jitō r.686-697; Empress
	Taihō	701-704	Monmu r.697-707
	Keiun	704-708	
	Wadō	708-715	Genmei r.707-715; Empress
Nara *710 – 794*			
	Reiki	715-717	Genshō r.715-724; Empress
	Yōrō	717-724	
	Jinki	724-729	Shōmu r.724-749
	Tenpyō[395]	729-749	
	Tenpyō-Kanpō	749	
	Tenpyō-shōhō	749-757	Kōken r.749-758; Empress
	Tenpyō-hōji	757-765	
	Tenpyō-jingō	765-767	Shōtoku r.764-770; Empress
	Jingō-keiun	767-770	
	Hōki	770-781	Kōnin r.770-781
	Ten'ō	781-782	Kanmu r.781-806
	Enryaku	782-806	
Heian *794-1185*			
	Daidō	806-810	Heizei r.806-809
	Kōnin	810-824	Saga r.809-823
	Tenchō	824-834	Junna r.823-833
	Jōwa	834-848	Ninmyō r.833-850
	Kashō	848-851	
	Ninju	851-854	Monotoku r.850-858
	Saikō	854-857	
	Ten'an	857-859	
	Jōgan	859-877	Seiwa r.858-876
	Gangyō	877-885	Yōzei r.876-884
	Ninna[396]	885-889	Kōkō r.884-887
	Kanpyō	889-898	Uda r.887-897
	Shōtai	898-901	Daigo r.897-930
	Engi	901-923	

[395] Sometimes *tempyō* or *tenbyō*.
[396] Sometimes Ninwa.

410

Enchō	923-931	
Jōhei	931-938	Suzaku r.930-946
Tengyō	938-947	
Tenryaku	947-957	Murakami r.946-967
Tentoku	957-961	
Ōwa	961-964	
Kōhō	964-968	
Anna[397]	968-970	Reizei r.967-969
Tenroku	970-874	En'yu r.969-984
Ten'en	974-976	
Jōgen	976-978	
Tengen	978-983	
Eikan	983-985	
Kanna[398]	986-987	Kazan r.985-986
Eien	987-989	Ichijō r.986-1011
Eiso	989-990	
Shōryaku[399]	990-995	
Chōtoku	995-999	
Chōhō	999-1004	
Kankō	1004-1012	
Chōwa	1012-1017	Sanjō r.1011-1016
Kannin	1017-1021	Go-Ichijō r.1016-1036
Jian	1021-1024	
Manju	1024-1028	
Chōgen	1028-1037	
Chōryaku	1037-1040	Go-Suzaku r.1036-1045
Chōkyō	1040-1044	
Kantoku	1044-1046	
Eishō	1046-1053	Go-Reizei r.1045-1068
Tengi	1053-1058	
Kōhei	1058-1065	
Jiryaku	1065-1069	
Enkyū	1069-1074	Go-Sanjō r.1068-1073
Jōhō	1074-1077	Shirakawa r.1073-1086

[397] Sometimes Anwa.
[398] Sometimes Kanwa.
[399] Sometimes Jōryaku or Shōreki.

Jōryaku	1077-1081	
Eihō	1081-1084	
Ōtoku	1084-1087	Horikawa r.1086-1107
Kanji	1087-1094	
Kahō	1094-1096	
Eichō	1096-1097	
Jōtoku	1097-1099	
Kōwa	1099-1104	
Chōji	1104-1106	
Kajō	1106-1108	Toba r.1107-1123
Tennin	1108-1110	
Ten'ei	1110-1113	
Eikyū	1113-1118	
Gen'ei	1118-1120	
Hōan	1120-1124	Sutoku r.1123-1141
Tenji	1124-1126	
Daiji	1126-1131	
Tenshō	1131-1132	
Chōshō	1132-1135	
Hōen	1135-1141	
Eiji	1141-1142	Konoe r.1141-1155
Kōji	1142-1144	
Ten'yō	1144-1145	
Kyūan	1145-1151	
Ninpei	1151-1154	
Kyūju	1154-1156	Go-Shirakawa r.1155-1158
Hōgen	1156-1159	Nijō r.1158-1165
Heiji	1159-1160	
Eiryaku	1160-1161	
Ōhō	1161-1163	
Chōkan	1163-1165	
Eiman	1165-1166	Rokujo r.1165-1168
Nin'an	1166-1169	Takakura r.1168-1180
Kaō	1169-1171	
Jōan	1171-1175	
Angen	1175-1177	

	Jishō	1177-1181	Antoku r.1180-1185
	Yōwa	1181-1182	
	Juei	1182-1184	
	Genryaku	1184-1185	
Kamakura *1185 – 1333*			
	Bunji	1185-1190	Go-Toba r.1183-1198
	Kenkyū	1190-1199	Tsuchimikado r.1198-1210
	Shōji	1199-1201	
	Kennin	1201-1204	
	Genkyū	1204-1206	
	Ken'ei	1206-1207	
	Jōgen	1207-1211	Juntoku r.1210-1221
	Kenryaku	1211-1213	
	Kempo	1213-1219	
	Jōkyū	1219-1222	Chūkyō r.1221
	Jōō	1222-1224	Go-Horikawa r.1221-1232
	Gennin	1224-1225	
	Karoku	1225-1227	
	Antei	1227-1229	
	Kangi	1229-1232	
	Jōei	1232-1233	Shijō r.1232-1242
	Tenpuku	1233-1234	
	Bunryaku	1234-1235	
	Katei	1235-1238	
	Ryakunin	1238-1239	
	En'ō	1239-1240	
	Ninji	1240-1243	Go-Saga r.1242-1246
	Kangen	1243-1247	Go-Fukakusa r.1246-1259
	Hōji	1247-1249	
	Kenchō	1249-1256	
	Kōgen	1256-1257	
	Shōka	1257-1259	
	Shōgen	1259-1260	Kameyama r.1259-1274
	Bun'ō	1260-1261	
	Kōchō	1261-1264	

	Bunei	1264-1275	Go-Uda r.1274-1287
	Kenji	1275-1278	
	Kōan	1278-1288	Fushimi r.1287-1298
	Shōō	1288-1293	
	Einin	1293-1299	Go-Fushimi r.1298-1301
	Shōan	1299-1302	Go-Nijō r.1301-1308
	Kengen	1302-1303	
	Kagen	1303-1306	
	Tokuji	1306-1308	Hanazono r.1308-1318
	Enkyō	1308-1311	
	Ōchō	1311-1312	
	Shōwa	1312-1317	
	Bunpō	1317-1319	Go-Daigo r.1318-1339
	Gen'ō	1319-1321	
	Genkō	1321-1324	
	Shōchū	1324-1326	
	Karyaku	1326-1329	
	Gentoku	1329-1332	
	Genkō	1332-1334	
	Kenmu	1334-1336	
Nanbokuchō 1336-1392[400]			
Southern Court	Engen	1336-1340	Go-Murakami r.1339-1368
	Kōkoku	1340-1347	
	Shōhei	1347-1370	Chōkei r.1368-1383
	Kentoku	1370-1372	
	Bunchū	1372-1375	
	Tenju	1375-1381	
	Kōwa	1381-1384	Go-Kameyama r.1383-1392
	Genchū	1384-1392	
Northern Court	Shōkyō	1332-1333	Kōgon r.1331-1333
	Kenmu	1336-1338	Kōmyō r.1336-1348
	Ryakuō	1338-1342	
	Kōei	1342-1345	

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[400] 1336-1392 "Northern and Southern Courts"; during this time two rulers reigned, one in the Northern Court and one in the Southern Court

	Jōwa	1345-1350	Sukō r.1348-1351
	Kannō	1350-1352	Go- Kōgon r.1352-1371
	Bunna	1352-1356	
	Enbun	1356-1361	
	Kōan	1361-1362	
	Jōji	1362-1368	
	Ōan	1368-1375	Go-En'yū r.1371-1382
	Eiwa	1375-1379	
	Kōryaku	1379-1381	
	Eitoku	1381-1384	Go-Komatsu r.1382-1412
	Shitoku	1384-1387	
	Kakei	1387-1389	
	Kōō	1389-1390	
	Meitoku	1390-1394	
Muromachi/Ashikaga *1336-1573*[401]			
	Ōei	1394-1428	Shōkō r.1412-1428
	Shōchō	1428-1429	Go-Hanazono r.1428-1464
	Eikyō	1429-1441	
	Kakitsu	1441-1444	
	Bun'an	1444-1449	
	Hōtoku	1449-1452	
	Kyōtoku	1452-1455	
	Kōshō	1455-1457	
	Chōroku	1457-1460	
	Kanshō	1460-1466	Go-Tsuchimikado r.1464-1500
	Bunshō	1466-1467	
	Ōnin	1467-1469	
	Bunmei	1469-1487	
	Chōkyō	1487-1489	
	Entoku	1489-1492	
	Meiō	1492-1501	Go-Kashiwabara r.1500-1526
	Bunki	1501-1504	
	Eishō	1504-1521	
	Daiei	1521-1528	Go-Nara r.1526-1557

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[401] Sengoku Jidai (Warring States Period) began in 1467 and lasted through to the Tokugawa/Edo.

	Kyōroku	1528-1532	
	Tenbun	1532-1555	
	Kōji	1555-1558	Ōgimachi r.1557-1586
	Eiroku	1558-1570	
	Genki	1570-1573	
Azuchi – Momoyama *1573 – 1603/1615*			
	Tenshō	1573-1592	Go-Yōzei r.1586-1611
	Bunroku	1592-1596	
	Keichō	1596-1615	Go-Mizunō r.1611-1629
Edo/Tokugawa *1603/1615-1868*			
	Genna	1615-1624	
	Kan'ei	1624-1644	Meishō r.1629-1643; Empress
	Shōhō	1645-1648	Go-Kōmyō r.1643-1654
	Keian	1648-1652	
	Jōō	1652-1655	Go-Sai r.1654-1663
	Meireki	1655-1658	
	Manji	1658-1661	
	Kanbun	1661-1673	Reigen r.1663-1687
	Enpō	1673-1681	
	Tenna	1681-1684	
	Jōkyō	1684-1688	Higashiyama r.1687-1709
	Genroku	1688-1704	
	Hōei	1704-1711	Nakamikado r.1709-1735
	Shōtoku	1711-1716	
	Kyōhō	1716-1736	Sakuramachi r.1735-1747
	Genbun	1736-1741	
	Kanpō	1741-1744	
	Enkyō	1744-1748	Momozono r.1747-1762
	Kan'en	1748-1751	
	Hōreki	1751-1764	Go-Sakuramachi r.1762-1770 Empress
	Meiwa	1764-1772	Go-Momozono r.1770-1779
	An'ei	1772-1781	Kōkaku r.1779-1817
	Tenmei	1781-1789	

	Kansei	1789-1801	
	Kyōwa	1801-1804	
	Bunka	1804-1818	Ninkō r.1817-1846
	Bunsei	1818-1830	
	Tenpō	1830-1844	
	Kōka	1844-1848	Kōmei r.1846-1866
	Kaei	1848-1854	
	Ansei	1854-1860	
	Man'en	1860-1861	
	Bunkyū	1861-1864	
	Genji	1864-1865	
	Keiō	1865-1868	
Meiji 1868-1912			Meiji r.1868-1912 (Mutsuhito)
Taishō 1912-1926			Taishō r.1912-1926 (Yoshihito)
Shōwa 1926-1989			Hirohito r.1926-1989
Heisei 1989-2019			Akihito r.1989-2019
Reiwa 2019 -			Naruhito r.2019-

Appendix Four:
Translations, Exhibitions, Collections, Online Images, Manga, Art Books, Additional Exhibition Catalogues & Podcasts

Translations

Davies, Angela (2019) '*jojo-ga*' kanji and usage discussion

Davies, Angela (2020a) '*mōsō shōjo gekijō*' discussion of '*mōsō*'
connotations of dreamy/delusional

Davies, Angela (2020b) '*bidanshi* and *binan*' usage discussion

Davies, Angela (2020c) '*kōha*' usage discussion

Davies, Angela (2020d) '*nanshōku* and *danshōku*' kanji reading discussion

Davies, Angela (2022a) *Yoitsuki no shizuku – bakumatsu koisuzuri*
Moon drops ~ Binding Love in Late Tokugawa translation discussion

Davies, Angela (2021) Ueno Chizuko (2015) *Hatsujō Sōchi* [The Erotic Apparatus]
New Edition, Tokyo: Iwanami shoten
[Translation – additional thanks to Mori Koji & Rosen, Samuel]

Davies, Angela (2022b) Sakakibara Shiomi (1998) *Yaoi Genron: yaoi kara mieta mono*
[*An Elusive Theory of Yaoi*] Natsume Shobō, Tokyo
[Translation – additional thanks to Mori Koji & Rosen, Samuel]

Exhibitions / Digital Collections / Archives

Ashmolean Museum (29/11/2011 - 04/03/2012) *Yakusha-e:*
Kabuki Prints a Continuing Tradition Exhibition
Available at: http://www.jameelcentre.ashmolean.org/collection/6980/9590
[Accessed: 27/07/18]

Bristol Museum (22 September 2018 – 8 September 2019) *Masters of Japanese Prints*
Three-part Exhibition Series
Available at: https://exhibitions.bristolmuseums.org.uk/japanese-prints/
[Accessed on: 13/08/2020]

British Museum (23/05 – 26/08/2019) *The Citi Exhibition: Manga*マンガ
[Visited: 16/07/2019]

British Museum (03/10/13 – 05/01/2014) *Shunga: Sex and Pleasure in Japanese Art,*
Exhibition [Visited: 12/11/2013]

British Museum, (25/05 – 13/08/2017) *Hokusai: Beyond the Great Wave* Exhibition
[Visited: 28/06/2017]

British Museum, London (25/05 – 16/07/2017) *The Master Cutter's Workshop: Producing a Woodblock from the Artist's Drawing* Exhibition [Visited: 28/06/2017]

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	76

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	S2E3: Studying Pornography with Maiko Kodaka [podcast] September 2021
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	Beyond Japan with Oliver Moxham:
	S2E17: Art and Cultural Exchange with David Elliott [podcast] February 2022
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Moxham, Oliver & Centre for Japanese Studies at the University of East Anglia (2022b)
	Beyond Japan with Oliver Moxham:
	S2E21: Humour in Art: Kawanabe Kyōsai with Dr Koto Sadamura
	[podcast] March 2022
	Available at: https://japaninnorwich.org/beyond-japan/ [Accessed on: 24/03/2021]

Appendix Five:
Professional Engagement

Lynch, Jennifer (2022 – forthcoming) 'New Kabuki Comes to Netflix!
        Sing, Dance, Act: Kabuki Documentary Review' in
        Japan Society North West Newsletter

Lynch, Jennifer (2022) *Ukiyo-e: Printing Techniques & Themes from the Floating World*
        Japan Society North West & JETAA Lecture Series [online talk]

Lynch, Jennifer (2022b) 'Memorable Moments: Bleach Anime' in
        Japan Society North West Newsletter No.66 pp.7-8

Lynch, Jennifer (2021c) 'Exhibition Excitement:
        Upcoming Japanese Arts Exhibitions to Look Out For'
        Japan Society North West Newsletter No.65 pp.6-7

Lynch, Jennifer (2022d) *Introduction to Arts & Culture of Japan*
        Doki Doki the Manchester Japanese Festival [Talk forthcoming – 27th August]

Lynch, Jennifer (2022e) Traditional Japanese Culture Panel Discussion
        Doki Doki the Manchester Japanese Festival [Forthcoming – 27th & 28th August]

Lynch, Jennifer (2022f) Modern Japanese Culture Panel Discussion
        Doki Doki the Manchester Japanese Festival [Forthcoming – 27th & 28th August]

Lynch, Jennifer (2021b) 'The Power of Pokémon: 25th Anniversary'
        Japan Society North West Newsletter No.64 pp.4-5

Lynch, Jennifer (2021) 'Tokyo Before Tokyo: Power and Magic in the Shoguns City
        by Timon Screech – Book Review' in Japan Society North West Newsletter
        No.62 pp.6-7

Lynch, Jennifer, (2018) *Gender and Japanese Art* [Poster Presentation]
        'Crisis? What Crisis? Continuity, and Change in Japan'
        British Association of Japanese Studies Conference,
        Hosted by Sheffield University

Lynch, Jennifer (2017) *Japanese Digital Illustration* [Paper]
        'Japan in the Digital Age' Symposium,
        Manchester Metropolitan University
        https://sites.google.com/view/japan-in-the-digital-age/programme

Lynch, Jennifer (2017) *Missing Hair and Added Sparkle: Exploring the Importance of
        'Hidden' Meanings and Details in Japanese Illustration* [Paper]
        Arts, Professional and Social Sciences Faculty Research Day,
        Liverpool John Moores University

Lynch, Jennifer (2018) *From Geisha to Bishōnen: A Comparative Study of Gender and
        Sexuality in Japanese Art & Illustration* [Paper]
        School of Art Talks (SofA Talks), Liverpool John Moores University

Lynch, Jennifer (2016) *Japanese Art and Gender: A Comparative Study of Gender Identities, Stereotypes and Representation in Japanese Art of the Tokugawa Period (1603 – 1868) and Contemporary Japanese Art (1970 - 2014)* [Paper] School of Art Talks (SofA Talks), Liverpool John Moores University

Lynch, Jennifer, (2015) *Japanese Art and Gender: Representations of Gender Identity and Stereotypes in Japanese Art of the Tokugawa Period (1603-1868)* [Paper] Graduate Research Conference, Liverpool John Moores University

Lynch, Jennifer (11 Dec 2018 – 07 Jan 2019) *Christmas Wishes from Japan* [Exhibition Curation] Atrium Gallery, Liverpool School of Art and Design, Liverpool John Moores University

Lynch, Jennifer (2020) *Beauty in Japanese Illustration* [Guest Lecture] Fashion, L6, Liverpool John Moores University

Lynch, Jennifer (2019) *History of Manga* [Guest Lecture] Doki Doki Festival, Manchester

Lynch, Jennifer (2019) *Japanese Art & Woodblock Printing Techniques* [Guest Lecture] Japan Society North West, AGM

Lynch, Jennifer (2017 – 2020) *Traditional Japanese Arts & Culture* [Lecture Series] History of Art, L4, Liverpool John Moores University

Lynch, Jennifer (2017 – 2020) *Modern Japanese Arts & Culture* [Lecture Series] History of Art, L4, Liverpool John Moores University

Lynch, Jennifer (2018) *Anime: Auteurs & Studios* [Lecture Series] Media Studies, L6, Manchester Metropolitan University

Lynch, Jennifer (2018) *Anime Genres* [Lecture Series] Media Studies, L6, Manchester Metropolitan University

Lynch, Jennifer (2018) *Japanese 'Ladies Comics': From Shōjo to Redi Komi* [Lecture Series] Media Studies, L6, Manchester Metropolitan University

Lynch, Jennifer (2018) *Yaoi, Shōnen'ai, Bara and Boys Love (BL) Manga* [Lecture Series] Media Studies, L6, Manchester Metropolitan University

Lynch, Jennifer (2017) *History of Manga*, [Lecture Series] Media Studies, L6, Manchester Metropolitan University

Lynch, Jennifer (2017) *Impact of Manga & Otaku Culture*, [Lecture Series] Media Studies, L6, Manchester Metropolitan University

Lynch, Jennifer (2017) *Manga Form*, [Lecture Series] Media Studies, L6, Manchester Metropolitan University

Lynch, Jennifer (2017) *Anime Form and Serialisation*, [Lecture Series] Media Studies, L6, Manchester Metropolitan University

Lynch, Jennifer (2014 – 2017) *Woodblock Printing Techniques* [Lecture Series] History of Art, L4, Liverpool John Moores University

Lynch, Jennifer (2014 – 2017) *Japanese Museum and Gallery Collections* [Lecture Series]
    History of Art, L4, Liverpool John Moores University

Lynch, Jennifer (2014 – 2016) *Symbolism in Japanese Arts* [Lecture Series]
    History of Art, L5, Liverpool John Moores University

Lynch, Jennifer (2015) *Japonisme* [Lecture Series]
    History of Art & Fine Art, L4, Liverpool John Moores University

Illustration Plates

Figure 1

Kikugawa Eizan
'*Courtesan Reading a Letter*'
c.1810-20
Vertical Ōban Diptych
as hanging scroll

Figure 2

Torii Kiyonaga
*The Courtesan Wakakusa of the
Chōjiya Brothel, and Attendants
Asano and Midori*,
From the series
*A Pattern Book of the Year's
First Designs,
Fresh as Spring Herbs*
c.1783
Nishiki-e; 38.1 x 25.7 cm
©Metropolitan Museum of Art
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Figure 3

Hishikawa Moronobu (Attributed)
A Parade of Courtesans
c.1690
Sumizuri-e; 31 x 68 cm
©Metropolitan Museum of Art, used under a (CC0) Creative Commons Zero
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Figure 4

Katsushika Hokunn
*Courtesan Promenading
Under Cherry Blossoms*
C. 1815-19
Hanging Scroll

Figure 5

Utagawa Kunisada
Courtesans with Kamuro
Date Unknown; Nishiki-e; Triptych: 36.4 x 77 cm

Figure 6

Torii Kiyonaga
Courtesans Viewing Cherry Blossoms
1785; Nishiki-e; Vertical Ōban Triptych; 39 x 78 cm

Figure 7

Kitagawa Utamaro
*The Hour of the Snake
(Mi no koku)*
From the series
*The Twelve Hours in the Yoshiwara
(Seirō jūni toki tsuzuki)*
c.1794
Nishiki-e
Vertical ōban; 39.4 x 15.7cm

Figure 8

Kitagawa Utamaro
No.3 *Poem of the Pillow (Utamakura)*
1788; Nishiki-e in folded album

Figure 9

Isoda Koryusai (attributed)
"Couple making love"
c.1772-3*;* Nishiki-e; 18.8 x 24.8 cm

Figure 10

Kitagawa Utamaro
Tōji san bijin (Three Beauties of the Present Day)
c.1793

Figure 11

Kitagawa Utamaro
Naniwaya Okita:
Namba Shop North
c.1793
Nishiki-e
39cm x 26.5cm

Figure 12

Kitagawa Utamaro
Naniwaya Teahouse
Waitress Okita
c.1793
Nishiki-e
36.2 x 23.8 cm

Figure 13

Kitagawa Utamaro
Ohisa of the Takashima Teashop
1792-1793
Nishiki-e
38.1 x 24.9 cm
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Figure 14

Kitagawa Utamaro
Tomimoto Toyohina
c.1793
Nishiki-e

Figure 15

Kitagawa Utamaro
Tōji san bijin
*Three Beauties of the
Present Day*
c.1793

Figure 16

Gogo rokuji (6pm)
From the series *Scenes of the
Twenty-four Hours,
A Pictorial Trope*
1890
Ōban; Nishiki-e

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Figure 17

Fukiya Koji
Kito o furu yuki
(Snow Falling on
the Way Home)
For *Shōjo gahō*
(Girls Journal) Cover
1924

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Figure 18

Nakahara Jun'ichi
Shōjo no tomo
Girls Friend
May 1940 Issue Cover

Figure 19

Macoto Takahashi
Travel Series: Kyoto
For
Shojo Friend Annex
1969 April Issue
Kodansha

Figure 20

Nishimata Aoi
Kaguya-hime
mōsō shōjo gekijō (Fantastical Girls Theatre Exhibition)
2017
Digital Print

Figure 21

Tsukioka Yoshitoshi
Tsuki kugei Taketori
Returning to the Moon from the series *One Hundred Aspects of the Moon*
19th Century

Figure 22

Kazuo Koike & Kazuo Kamimura
Lady Snowblood
1972-3 [Dark Horse Comics, 2005, Vol.1 p.5-6]

Figure 23

Kazuo Koike &
Kazuo Kamimura
Lady Snowblood
1972-3
[Dark Horse Comics,
2005, Vol.1 p.79]

Figure 24

Kazuo Koike & Kazuo Kamimura
Lady Snowblood
1972-3
[Dark Horse Comics,
2005, Vol.3 p.20]
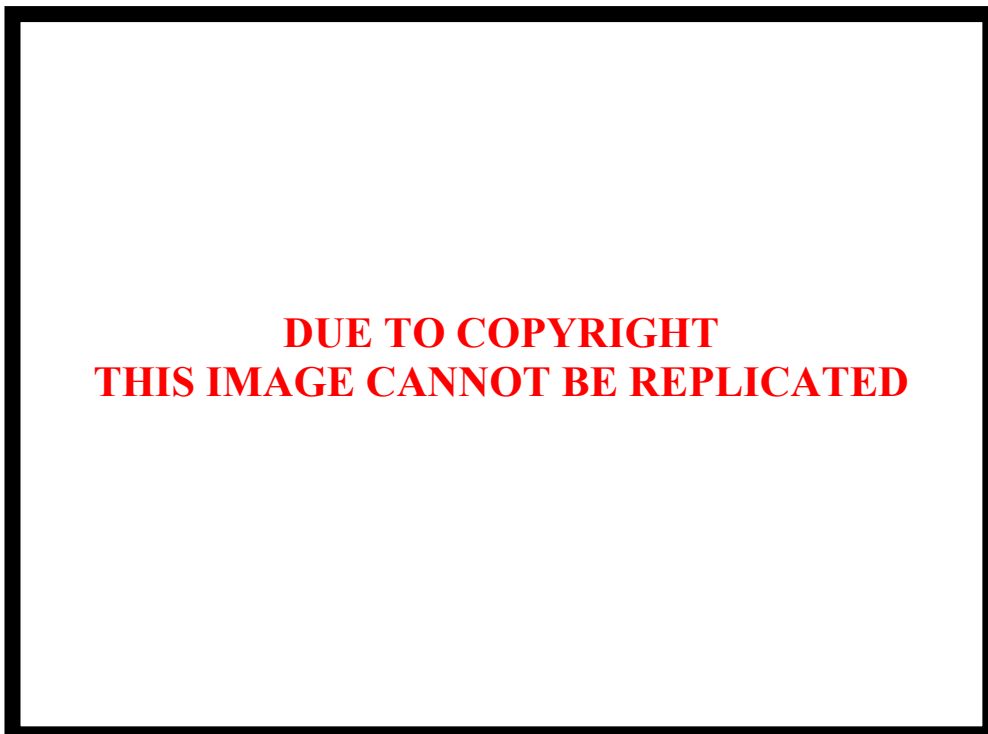
Figure 25

Kazuo Koike & Kazuo Kamimura
Lady Snowblood; 1972-3
[Dark Horse Comics, 2005, Vol.2 pp.58-59]

Figure 26

Chokyosai Eiri
Fumi no kiyogaki
(Neat Version of a Love Letter (or Pure Drawings of Female Beauty))
1801 Nishiki-e; Folding Album 25 x 35.9 cm

Figure 27

Yoshinaga Fumi
Ōoku: The Inner Chambers
2007 Vol 3, Chapter 14 [p.220]

Figure 28
Yoshinaga Fumi
Ōoku: The Inner Chambers
2007 Vol 3. Chapter 14
[p.219]

Figure 29

Yoshinaga Fumi
Ōoku: The Inner Chambers
2005 Vol 1. Chapter 4 [p.163]

Figure 30

Kasukawa Shun'ei (attributed)
Actor Iwai Hanshiro IV as
Akita Jonosuke Yoshikage in a
Shibaraku Role
c.1791
Nishiki-e; 32.3 x 22.5 cm
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Figure 31

Utagawa Kuniyoshi
Bandō Shūka I as
Funakoshi jitsu wa
Wakanahime
1853
Nishiki-e; 36.5 x 24.4 cm
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454

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Figure 32

Utagawa Kunisada
*Segawa Rokō III as
Sumizome
Mitate sanjurokkasen no uchi*
(Parallels for the 36
Immortal Poets)
1852

Figure 33

Tōshūsai Sharaku
*Actor Sanogawa
Ichimatsu III as
Shirabito Onayo of Gion
in play 'The Iris Soga Story
of the Bunroku Period'*
1794
Nishiki-e; 38 x 25.7 cm
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Figure 34

Utagawa Toyokuni
Iwai Hanshiro IV
c.1794

Figure 35

Tōshūsai Sharaku
The actor Iwai Hanshiro IV as the wet nurse Shigenoi
1794
Nishiki-e; 39.3 x 25.8 cm
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Figure 36

Katsukawa Shunko I
The Actor Yoshizawa Ayame IV as Yadorigi
in Part Two of the Play
Motomishi Yuki Sakae Hachi no Ki
(*Looking up at Falling Snow: Thriving Potted Trees*)
c.1778
Tan-e; 30.5 x 15.5 cm
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Figure 37

Utagawa Toyokuni
The Actor Segawa Rokō IV
in the play Onna Shibaraku
1807

Figure 38

Katsukawa Shunshō
Actor Seagawa Kikunojō III as Tomoe Gozen in a Shibaraku Scene
1786
Nishiki-e
31.7 x 14.4 cm

Figure 39

Torii Kiyonaga
Actor Segawa Kikunojō III and Attendant Making Visits at New Year
c.1783; Nishiki-e; 31.5 x 14.5 cm

Figure 40

Torri Kiyonaga *Segawa Kikunojō III as the courtesan Azuma Ichikawa Monnosuke II as a jilted lover and Nakamura Nakazō as Minamoto no Tametomo disguised as a boatman, with chanter Tokiwazu Kanedayū II in Taoyanagi imose no mato,*
Performed at the Kiri Theater in the third month of 1785, from an untitled Degatari series
1785; Nishiki-e; ōban 38.25 x 25 cm

Figure 41

Riyoko Ikeda
Berusaiyu no Bara
The Rose of Versailles
1972-73; Vol.2 Chapter 24 [p.32]

Figure 42

Riyoko Ikeda
Berusaiyu no Bara
The Rose of Versailles
1972-73
Vol.3 Chapter 63 [p.425]

Figure 43

Riyoko Ikeda
The Rose of Versailles
1972-73
Vol.2 Chapter 34 [p.273]

Figure 44

Katsukawa Shunshō
Ichikawa Danjūrō V in a Shibaraku Scene
1778
Nishiki-e; 31.6 x 22.3 cm

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Figure 45

Tezuka Osamu
Ribon no Kishi
Princess Knight
1977 edition
[2011, Part 1 p.274]

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Figure 46

Tezuka Osamu
Ribon no Kishi
Princess Knight
1977 edition
[2011, Part 1 p.276]

Figure 47

Tezuka Osamu
Ribon no Kishi
Princess Knight
1977 edition
[2011, Part 1 p.278]

Figure 48

Tezuka Osamu
Ribon no Kishi
Princess Knight
1977 edition
[2011, Part 2 p.34]

Figure 49

Tezuka Osamu
Ribon no Kishi
Princess Knight
1977 edition
[2011, Part 2 p.35]

Figure 50

Tezuka Osamu
Ribon no Kishi
Princess Knight
1977 edition
[2011, Part 2 p.40]

Figure 51

Tezuka Osamu
Ribon no Kishi
Princess Knight
1977 edition
[2011, Part 1 p.342]

Figure 52

Yana Toboso
Kuroshitsuji
Black Butler
2010; Vol.2 Chapter 9 *At Midnight: The Butler, Encounters*[Loc.166]

Figure 53

Yana Toboso
Kuroshitsuji
Black Butler
2010; Vol.2 Chapter 9
At Midnight:
The Butler, Encounters
[Loc.163]

Figure 54

Yana Toboso
Kuroshitsuji
Black Butler
2010; Vol.2 Chapter 9
At Midnight:
The Butler, Encounters
[Loc.164]

Figure 55

Yana Toboso
Kuroshitsuji
Black Butler
2010; Vol.2 Chapter 9
At Midnight:
The Butler, Encounters
[Loc.178]

Figure 56

Suzuki Harunobu
Young Lady Hiding in a
Hollow Tree
c.1768
Nishiki-e
28.5 x 20.3 cm

Figure 57

Hosoda Eisui
Wakashu with a Shoulder Drum
Date unknown,
(artist active 1790 – 1823)
Nishiki-e
Ōban; 37.3 x 23.5 cm

Figure 58

Torii Kiyonaga
Boy Tossing His Spinning Top
c.1760
Benizuri-e; 30.2 x 13.7cm

Figure 59

Kitagawa Utamaro
From the series *Twelve Forms of Women's Handiwork*
1790s
Nishiki-e; 37.6 x 25.7 cm

Figure 60

Suzuki Harunobu
Young Samurai Viewing Cherry Blossoms as a Mitate-e of Prince Kaoru
c.1767
Nishiki-e; 28.2 × 20.9 cm
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Figure 61

Isoda Koryūsai (Attributed to)
A Wakashu and Young Woman
c.1770; Nishiki-e
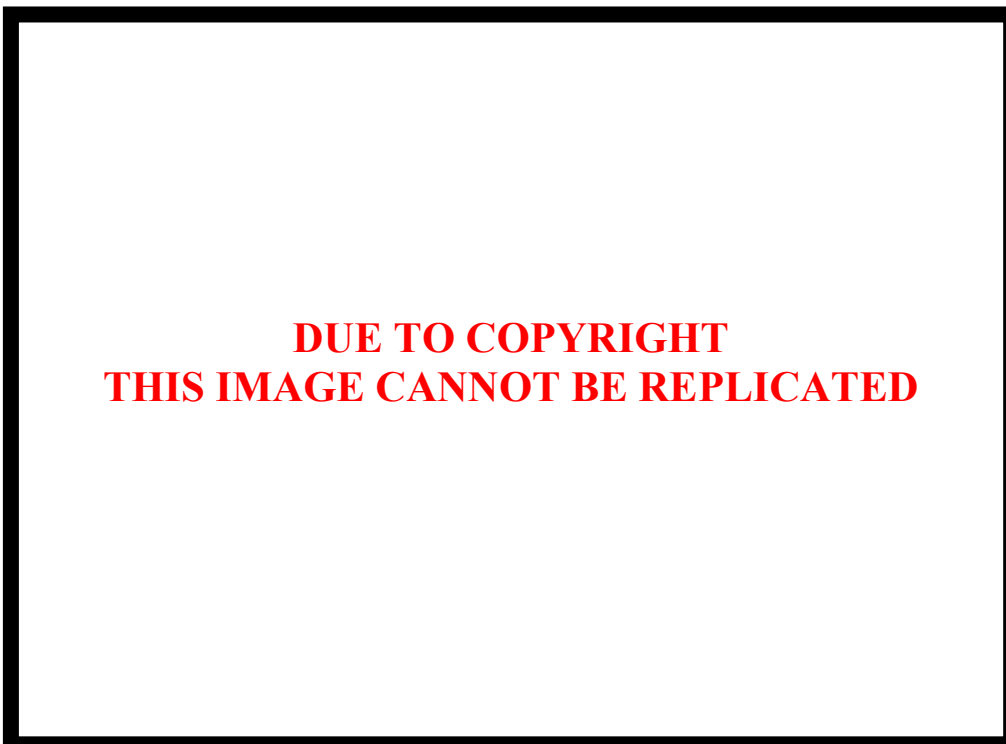
Figure 62

Suzuki Harunobu
Fukiyagahama, Sakai-Shima (Playing with a Dandy)
From the series *Fūryū enshoku Mane'emon (Elegant Erotic Mane'emon)*
1770; Nishiki-e; 21.2 x 29.2 cm

Figure 63

Suzuki Harunobu
Geese Descending on the Koto Bridges from *Eight Fashionable Parlour Views*
c.1768–1770
Nishiki-e; 18.5 x 25.7 cm

Figure 64

Takemiya Keiko
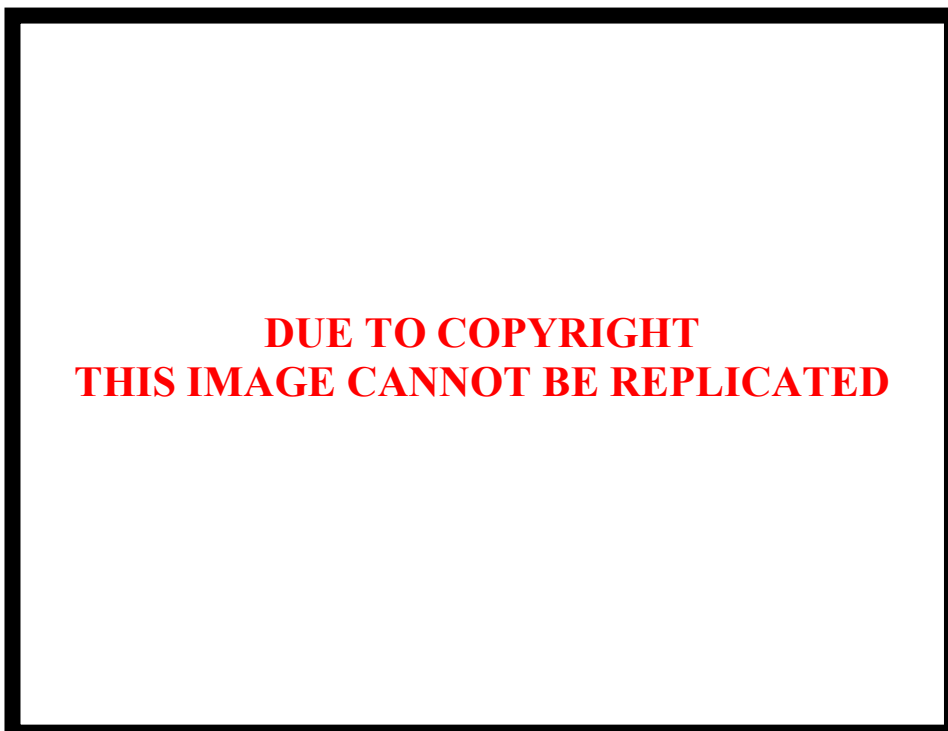*Poem of Wind and Trees*
[Exhibition Photograph July 2019]

Figure 65

Yana Toboso
Kuroshitsuji Black Butler
March 2007 Lead Colour Title Page *Monthly GFantasy*

Figure 66

Asajima Yoshiyuki
Yoshida Shōin: *Yoizuki no shizuku – bakumatsu koi tsuzuri*
(*Moon Drops ~ Binding Love in Late Tokugawa*)
2016 CD4 SAI /Photoshop

Figure 67

Asajima Yoshiyuki
Takasugi Shinsaku: *Yoizuki no shizuku – bakumatsu koi tsuzuri*
(*Moon Drops ~ Binding Love in Late Tokugawa*)
2015 CD1 SAI /Photoshop

Figure 68

Asajima Yoshiyuki
Kusaka Genzui: *Yoizuki no shizuku – bakumatsu koi tsuzuri*
(*Moon Drops ~ Binding Love in Late Tokugawa*)
2015 CD2 SAI /Photoshop

Figure 69

Asajima Yoshiyuki
Katsura Kogorō: *Yoizuki no shizuku – bakumatsu koi tsuzuri*
(*Moon Drops ~ Binding Love in Late Tokugawa*)
2015 CD3 SAI /Photoshop

Figure 70

Yana Tosobo
Kuroshitsuji
Black Butler
2010
Vol 1 Chapter 1:
In the Morning;
Butler Skilled [loc.28]

Figure 71

Yana Tosobo
Kuroshitsuji
Black Butler
2010
Vol. 1 Chapter 2:
In the Afternoon;
Butler Very Skilled [Loc.48]

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Figure 72

Tite Kubo
Bleach 3 in 1 (Vol.37-39)
2015
Ayasegawa Yumichika
Front Cover

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Figure 73

Tite Kubo
Bleach
2015
Vol.37 Chapter 319 (3 in 1)
Ants and Dragons [p.147]

Figure 74

Inu Yoshi
Kandagawa-Kun
[2014, loc.79]