Mutual Images

Issue 8

SPRING 2020

ARTISTS, AESTHETICS, AND ARTWORKS

FROM, AND IN CONVERSATION WITH, JAPAN

PART 1 (OF 2)

MUTUAL IMAGES

ISSUE 8 – SPRING 2020

Mutual Images

A Transcultural Research Journal

FOUNDED BY

AURORE YAMAGATA-MONTOYA, MAXIME DANESIN & MARCO PELLITTERI

Previously published issues

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Edited by
Marco Pellitteri & José Andrés Santiago Iglesias

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A TRANSCULTURAL RESEARCH JOURNAL

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Issue 8

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Editorial – Mutually holding on in critical times

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

A friendly greeting to readers and fellow scholars

I have been slowly putting this Editorial together, one small piece at a time, between March and June 2020, while being, like you all, focussed on rather bigger matters. Not only I, as the composer of this Editorial, but all the members of our journal's Boards want to express our sincere appreciation and affectionate friendship to our academic community, regardless of field and discipline. Since January 2020, we have been living in a weird and dramatic moment, and the social sciences and the humanities as a whole, although technically much more fortunate than many other professional categories, are scholarly, collectively, and privately touched by the current pandemic at several levels. We cannot travel to join conferences or workshops as we would like, and in many cases we cannot visit our loved ones if they happen to live in another country; we cannot easily (or we cannot at all) move around if we had planned some fieldwork; we cannot even take a normal walk in our neighbourhood or go to the grocery store without the fear of being infected, or of infecting someone else if we are unaware carriers of this insidious virus—to this end, the use of the sanitary mask is saving millions of lives, even though there are egotistic brain-dead individuals everywhere who challenge this elementary precaution. But as researchers, as academics, our productivity does not necessarily depend on being out there, and in this sense we are hugely privileged. We can still write, investigate, study, read, communicate, teach, help our students to learn and grow, and somehow cheer them up, because they also have been stuck at home at an age in which the physical co-presence of peers is of paramount psychological relevance.

It is therefore with a never before felt spirit that I am writing these lines: to greet *Mutual Images*'s readers with a brotherly message. I am stating the obvious here, but let

me say anyway that, even though the misused motto "we are in this all together" may not always be valid because of the privileges many of us enjoy in one way or another, each one of us is at risk and suffers various degrees of discomfort or danger; we are facing a situation which will be studied for years to come, and which is already being studied, as a matter of fact.

I will quickly get back to the latter point in the final segment of this Editorial. First, in the following lines, I would like to briefly introduce the contents of *Mutual Images*, no. 8.

On this issue's contents

The three articles of this issue come from papers presented at Mutual Images Research Association's seventh international workshop, which was held at the University of Vigo, Spain, on 3-4 June 2019 (https://mutualimages.org/archives/mutual-images-7th-inter-national-workshop). The workshop was hosted in Vigo thanks to Prof. Ana Soler Baena, Dr José Andrés Santiago Iglesias, and Tatiana Lameiro González, whom we co-organised the event with. This is why José, who is a member of this journal's Scientific Board, co-edits this issue of *Mutual Images* and will co-edit the next as well, where several other articles drawn from that workshop will be published. This eighth issue should have collected the whole set of papers from the Vigo workshop selected for publication, but the Covid-19 impacted our plan, therefore we could publish only three papers here, postponing the publication of the others to the next instalment.

The three articles hosted in this issue are all written by Ph.D. students or candidates: as *Mutual Images*'s readers know well, we strongly encourage contributions from young scholars even in the very initial stages of their careers, confident that inclusion and early attempts at academic publishing are among the best ways to help green researchers grow, acquire confidence, and get used to being published; that is, to undergo the several and sometimes energy-demanding steps of the professional process of review, revision, and editing. On the one hand, these three articles share fresh approaches to the problems they discuss, and furthermore we can see an alternance of established topics in the disciplines of literary and media studies (*Japonisme*, *kimono* fabrics, and female fashion trends and techniques in late nineteenth century Europe; photography in Japan, photographic magazines, and the influences of European/American photography over Japanese photographers after WWII) with more recently emerging themes whose very nature appears to be at the thresholds of several disciplines and fields (e.g. the

representations of European-related tropes, locations, and values in old and recent commercial animations for cinema and television made in Japan).

In "The influence of Japanese *kimono* on European bustles and their representation in the paintings of the late nineteenth century", Iria Ros Piñeiro provides an initial exploration of some connections between Japanese decorated fabrics for dresses and clothings, including *kimono*, and specific segments of that fascination for the "Japonaiseries" that characterised the European scene between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. The segments are, on the one hand, that of European painting: many European exponents of the fine arts, and painters in particular, paid particular attention to decorative motifs, textures, flowers, patterns, and atmospheres in Japanese fine arts and artefacts; on the other hand, the second segment is that of European fashion, which was, up to a point, notoriously influenced by Japanese fashion, visual arts, and arts & crafts. This phenomenon, in a broad sense, falls within the definition of *Japonisme* that we all know, however the article by Pineiro sheds some light on a few technical details that allow us to frame *Japonisme* not only in the perspective of aesthetics and Orientalistic views of Japan so widespread among European observers, artists, and merchants, but also in the perspective of clothing makers and fashion designers of that time.

"Photography magazines and cross-cultural encounters in postwar Japan, 1945-1955", by Emily Cole, discusses the artistic and thematic dialectic between Japanese and European and US-American photographers in the years 1945-1955, also taking into account what the photographic representations of European/US-American cultures suggested about how Japanese cultural identity was to be rebuilt after the war. Framing photography, as an art and a mass medium, as a place of intercultural encounter, Cole focuses on a specific medial platform, that of photography magazines in that decade, framing these magazines as ideal environments for cultural and aesthetic exchanges between European/US-American and Japanese photographers through various formats of communication: interviews, round table discussions, articles, and, of course, photographs by Japanese, European, and US-American photographers. The author shows how these written and visual conversations, available in the photography magazines circulated in Japan, influenced new photographic trends in the country, including the emerging genre of nude art photography and photographic humanism. Occurring in a crucial decade for the definition of a new collective identity for Japan after

its defeat and during the country's ongoing moral/material reconstruction, this intense photographic and publishing activity and the dialogue with the main masters of European art photography (and the major exponents of US-American photo-reportage) played a relevant role in the negotiation of a composite photographic imagery in/for postwar Japan.

The third article in this issue is authored by Oscar García Aranda and is titled "Representations of Europe in Japanese anime: An overview of study cases and theoretical frameworks". The author proposes in it a broad overview of some of the most renown and relevant cases of Japanese animations set in Europe and/or involving European characters: he traces the overall historical and production-related reasons for a certain recurrence, in commercial anime films and tv series for children and teenagers spanning over many genres, of European or European-like reconstructions, literary novels, cultural tropes, as well as the graphical tactics Japanese animators adopted to ethnically mark European characters within the visual economy of anime, ensuring at the same time distinction and design homogeneity. To recount the theoretical frameworks scholars have put forward in the past and take note of the frequent biases some researchers have shown in their discussions on the creative and cultural strategies of anime-makers, Aranda has conducted a thorough literature review that will be a very useful background reference for future, perhaps case study-based, research.

The last contribution of this issue is the second instalment of the "Research Files" section, which we inaugurated in the previous issue: this time, the materials presented—as, hopefully, interesting sources for future use by other scholars—are interviews with three experts (two Japanese professors and an Italian researcher) focussing on topics similar to those discussed in the "Research Files" of *Mutual Images,* no. 7: the prominent psychologist Yokota Masao, the outstanding manga scholar Natsume Fusanosuke, and a leading scholar of Japanese philosophy of his generation in Italy, Marcello Ghilardi.

Personal thoughts on social research in the time of the Covid-19

I am Italian and I have been living and working in China since late August 2018; therefore, I have been seeing and living the current pandemic from a two-folded and, I daresay, very special perspective, since in different ways China and Italy have been, from January to April, the two initial main epicentres of the viral outbreak. Many researchers around the world, and in China too (my current university included), have already

started cyber-ethnographies and online surveys focussed on the spread of the Covid-19 and the emotional and behavioural reactions, living styles, coping tactics of families, youths, or formal institutions. Whilst as a researcher I perfectly understand the importance of collecting data on the micro- and meso-social dimensions of this global epidemic, I must admit that part of me—the least scholarly, perhaps, but the one informed by a somewhat different perspective on morals and citizenship—feels some unease at the idea that while the outbreak of this virus is ongoing around the world, we are already trying to dig into the lives of people who in many cases may have lost one or more of their loved ones. Nonetheless, I admire those fellow academics who had/have the rationality to pursue this kind of endeavour.

The decision to engage in sociological research, or cultural/artistic activities related to a tragic phenomenon while it is still happening or when its effects are still being felt personally and collectively, pertains to personal choice; [1] although, clearly, some academic convenience and blatant cynicism may also be involved. I cannot deny, in fact, that the immense amount of social and psychological research on life in the time of the Covid-19 shocks me a little, especially when we can easily see that much of this research—namely, many online surveys—is theoretically ill-conceived, technically clumsy, and tendentially violating respondents' privacy (and, at times, their mourning).

A negative effect among many that I have seen in this frenzy around and about producing data and publications on the pandemic is the too-direct involvement with students by teachers and researchers. We know that university students have always been the guinea pigs for generations of academic researchers, because, even though it is very selective and self-contained, any college student population is always an easy-to-reach basin of responses for surveys, or subjects for pilot studies, or experiments, or quasi-experiments. In my view, however, cautious judgement should be observed if researchers want to resort to students to investigate any dimension of the impact of this pandemic on our lives (or specifically on students' lives). I have been aware of many Chinese and non-Chinese colleagues, in China and elsewhere, who have basically jumped at the chance to exploit their students or their university's student population at large as the sampling frame for some (too) quickly designed survey on this or that aspect of the life at the time

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[1] To this end, please see my Editorial and the "Research Files" in *Mutual Images*, no. 7, where my interviewees and myself reflect upon the importance of personal choices (involving the individual's sensibility and sensitivity) when choosing whether to engage in artistic or industrial creativity directly related to recent collective disasters or crises.

of the pandemic. While I can understand the importance of collecting data to advance knowledge, what I have seen are too many sloppy surveys in terms of methodology (e.g. questionnaires that have been disseminated with no pilot test or collegial consultation among peers) that are extraordinarily intrusive into students' lives; so much so that, even without considering for a moment the ethical issues, the imbalance of certain tools for data collection likely make them highly inaccurate and unreliable.

As you can see, I have penned these lines with no particular regard for hypothetical, vague, academic etiquette or any particular scholarly *bon ton*. With the same frankness and friendly attitude, I would like to conclude this Editorial, also on behalf of Mutual Images Research Association, by wishing everybody to stay safe, stay active, and keep in touch with us for some *en plein air* activity together, when this global nightmare is over; if a new outbreak of the bad ol' bubonic plague does not take over after Covid-19, that is.

If you can, please enjoy this 8th issue of *Mutual Images*.

ARTICLES

The influence of Japanese *kimono* on European bustles and their representation in the paintings of the late nineteenth century

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the relationship between Europe and Japan at the end of the nineteenth century through the influence of the clothing from both countries. Paintings and portraits from that era are analysed. A typical European clothing piece of that period, the bustle, is proof that little by little the traditional Japanese kimono *began to enter the fashion of England and France. In addition, the article also investigates how the Japanese kimono became a luxury item in Europe; however, it was used as a gown-style clothing for the home, losing its original function. At the same time, some* kimono *and* furisode *were trimmed and re-sewn as decorative parts of European bustles. The dresses that have survived to this day, most of them preserved in museums, are compared with the European paintings of that period to show how painters portrayed these changes in fashion and modified the use of Japanese garments through their interpretations in Europe.*

After the Great London Exposition in 1862, European art was overwhelmed by what would later be labelled *Japonisme*, affecting all of its facets, including painting, design, illustration, and fashion. London and Paris were the main centres of dissemination of *Japonisme*: artists from all over Europe illustrated what they believed was Japanese art, creating a new vision of it that affected European clothing design. The illustrations and designs of James McNeill Whistler, Vincent Van Gogh, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Aubrey Beardsley—among others less known but even more influential at the time— idealised the image of traditional Japanese costumes, such as the *kimono* (this and any other Japanese word will be always used, in this article, with this orthography, without the addition of the English "s" for the plural). In these illustrations, the cut of the dresses idealised the figure of the woman, and created sinuous forms covered by endless *kimono*, generating a mixture between fantasy and reality regarding the

possibility of clothing in Europe. The rising fascination with Japanese culture in Europe became a social and cultural indicator. Clothing was one of the most affected traits: women from the upper classes started to incorporate traditional Japanese motifs and fabrics into their daily clothing styles. But how many of the paintings of that era were true to the actual way women used to dress at that time? According to Ohno Ken'ichi (2006: 55), thanks to the Meiji Restoration and its opening to imports from Europe and North America, the economic development in Japan changed and expanded exponentially. Due to the opening of commerce between Europe and Japan, the fabrics as a matter of fact arrived in Europe and began to be used in the fashion of that time. The bustles began to be sewn with these fabrics, and although the Japanese addition did not change their structure, it altered the combination of fabrics, colours, and designs. In some cases, even real *kimono* were used to create bustles. The representations circulated in the plastic arts are somewhat removed from the real dresses that could be seen in the streets. This article attempts to show these differences with a reconstruction of European clothing inspired by Japan, and its counterpart in the painting of the late nineteenth century.

From the perspective of art history, a conventional way to study the difference between the pictures presented by the artists and the dresses used on the streets would be to study the evolution of the pictorial image on the one hand, and on the other hand, the patterns and sewing of the dresses. This article aims to discuss the relationship between the "imaginary" and the "real" elements of female clothing in Europe as well as in Japan. And how, at the end of the nineteenth century, European painters developed a fascination, even an obsession, with all those arts that came from Japan after the Great London Exposition. Specifically, how this was transferred into their paintings and to the fashion trends of the moment, since the image they presented of fashion was not the same as the one that was actually worn on the streets. Thus, the intention is to show these differences with a reconstruction of European clothing inspired by Japan, and its counterpart in the paintings of the late nineteenth century, as well as the relationship between the bustle and the *kimono* at the end of the nineteenth century. To achieve this, I will make some comparisons between the portrayals by the European painters most influenced by Japan and *Japonisme* in their time, and the dresses from that same period that have been preserved until today.

Taking into account that this article is written from the art history prism, the analysis of the pictorial section will be based on works by European or American authors who developed a large part of their work in Europe, specifically France and England. From these, a comparison will be made between photographs of dresses from the same era and locations that have lasted until today in museums and private collections. With these data, the aim is to elucidate whether the idea that these European artists had when painting their works was the result of knowledge or an idealisation of both the *kimono* and the women who supposedly wore them. And if they wore them, or not, on the street on a daily basis.

In the present study, when speaking of idealisation of the female figure, I refer to the way the artists represented women, as well as women's ways of dressing, or presenting themselves, in portraits.

Embroidered figures and images

One of the first publications to include a text about the concept of *Japonisme* in Europe was "La Renaissance littéraire et artistique", in which Philippe Burty (1872: 25) described and defined for the first time that concept as the influence that Japanese art was exerting on the arts and crafts in Europe. We must take into account that Burty wrote "La Renaissance littéraire et artistique" after the 1867 Universal Exposition in Paris, which was of great importance in the development of *Japonisme* fever and the work of the artists mentioned later in this article.

The strong appearance of the Japanese arts in Europe was truly visible in the Great London Exposition in 1862, held in South Kensington, where we can now find the Museum of Natural History. The previous exhibition had been held in Paris in 1851. Shortly after, London and Paris would become the cities most influenced by *Japonisme*, and all the artists related to this trend would live in one of them—sometimes in both— by the end of the century.

The London edition was a showcase of the advances made in the Industrial revolution, and it was sponsored by the Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. What really matters to us is that Japanese art and artefacts were among the main attractions of this International Exposition. It is important to highlight that Japan accepted the invitation to be the guest country that year, but delegated the selection of the material for the Exposition to the British Minister in Japan, Rutherford Alcok, (Alagón Laste, 2016:

628). The European artists were shocked by what they understood as the asymmetry of Japanese art, the difference in the vanishing points in their illustrations, and the designs of their paintings. In particular, the Japanese woodcut prints (*ukiyo-e*) produced a great sensation among avant-garde artists of the late nineteenth century, who became obsessed with the society and culture from which those prints came, going on to create great collections of Japanese art and artefacts.

This exchange between Europe and Japan was possible after the end of the long period of isolationism following the Meiji Restoration in 1868. Although during the Kaiei period (1848-1854) merchant ships from other nations arrived in Japan, it was not until the Meiji Restoration that trade really took place and reached a position to influence European fashion. Thus, until that moment, European artists had accumulated prints with images of clothes that they did not really understand, and that, therefore, they idealised in their representations. It is necessary to also take into account that the portraits these authors painted were usually highly paid-for commissions. Therefore, the vision of the clients in the paintings also comes into play. In the portraits of women, we do not only find representations of dresses and *kimono*, but also other luxuries such as ceramic pots, jewellery (which the women portrayed usually do not wear), Japanese folding screens and decorations, and other items that, however interesting, will not be analysed here because this investigation focuses on the dresses and clothing items represented, and whether they are based on real fashion of that time.

The novelty of Japanese products held an extraordinary power of attraction for European audiences. Especially for women of upper social stations, who were delighted with the artistry of Japanese women's products, such as *kimono*, belts (*obi*), hairpieces (*kōgai*), combs (*kushi*), fans, boxes and cases for calligraphy (*suzuribako*), or medicines (*inrō*). All of these had intricate and beautiful ornamentations that European women found fascinating. These products were used originally in Japan by those who could afford them, such as *geisha* and courtesans who became simultaneously subject to and the creators of fashion (Sosnowski, 2017: 16) not just in Japan, but in Europe as well.

Just as Schmiegel presents in her thesis, wealthy women would have their costumes sewn for them by prominent dressmakers, who would design the garments, acquire the materials, fit the dresses, and sell their product directly to them. While high- to middle-class women created the garments themselves or with the help of skilled in-house servants (Schmiegel, 2019: 16), every haute couture fashion house designed dresses that

were made from imported *kimono* from Japan. A stylised practice began in the late 1870s: these companies acquired the garments simply for repurposing for western dress. Japanese silk manufactures simply could not keep up with British demands for new silk designs (2019: 22).

Some of the most recognised images in European art from that time are those of James McNeill Whistler, Alfred Stevens, James Tissot—among others—who in their works used the image of traditional Japanese costumes, such as the *kimono*. There are many more European authors whose works dealt with Japanese themes and landscapes, such as Monet, or Klimt, whose illustrations were influenced by Japanese prints. However, the works exposed here are related to the idealisation of the female body and the clothing and garments that women used on a day-to-day basis, against the images that the artists presented in their paintings.

The Belgian artist Alfred Stevens worked in Paris for a couple of years at the end of the century, particularly on portraits of society. These paintings display similarities with the work of some friends of his, such as the aforementioned Edouard Manet, James Tissot, or James McNeill Whistler. Stevens painted three canvases related to the fashion of the moment, all of them because of the society portraits he was working on. All of them were representations of women of high society: *Japanese-Parisian* (1872), *Mélancholie* (1876), and *In the studio* (1888) are perfect representations of the three types of dresses and wardrobe of the moment.

Figure 1. Alfred Stevens, *Japanese-Parisian*, 1872; oil on canvas.

In *Japanese-Parisian* (Fig. 1), Stevens paints a Parisian lady wearing a *kimono* at home. This is an important detail, because at the beginning of the imports from Japan *kimono* were used only at home, as a robe for being comfortable, fashionable, and presentable to receive guests. It is because of this idea (that the *kimono* was a luxury at home in Europe) that in the picture the woman is in full make-up with her hair well-dressed. In addition, in the reflection of the mirror we can see her underwear, reinforcing the idea of the robe or gown. On the contrary, *Mélancholie* (Fig. 2) represents a complete bustle, the full dress that was fashionable and considered the standard in Europe (especially in France and England) in the Victorian Era. This image shows the difference in volume and form between both styles. In the last picture, *In the studio* (Fig. 3), it is possible to observe how the two women on the right are dressed in a bustle, while the model in front of them covers her body with what we might consider a *kimono* fabric, which however, looking at the detail of the sleeve, has a European cut.
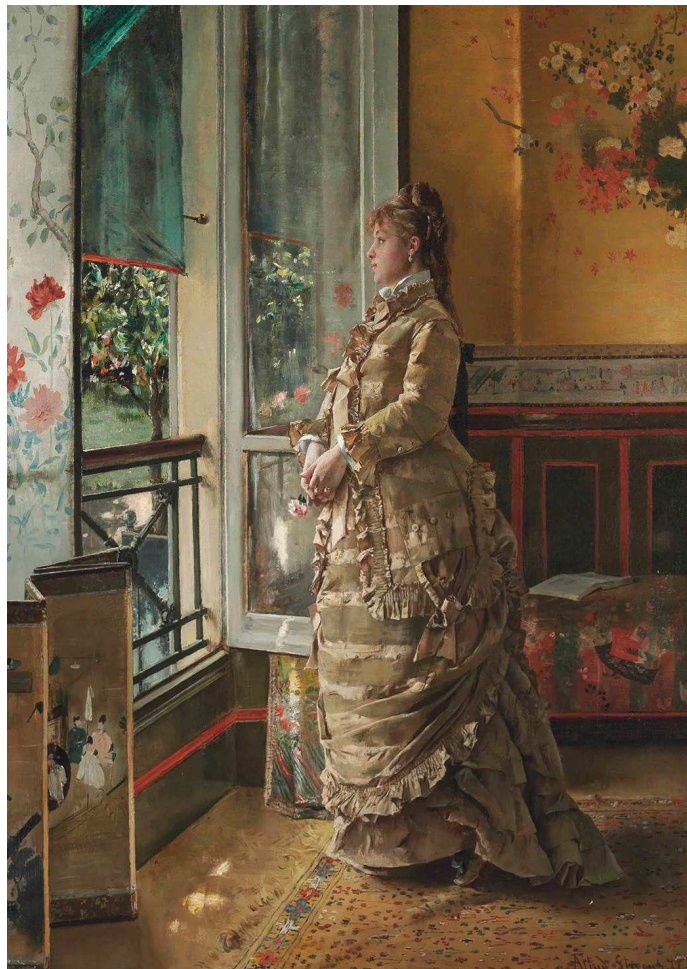
Figure 2. Alfred Stevens, *Mélancholie*, 1876; oil on canvas.

It is important to notice the difference in volume between both styles because of the layers and types of fabric. The type of *kimono* that arrived in Europe at the time had just a couple of layers: underwear, *juban* (a white one-piece cotton top and skirt, also considered underwear), *kimono*, and *obi* (traditional sash). Whereas the bustles had traditional snickers, a chemise (similar to the *juban*, this was also considered underwear), a corset, a cage, a petticoat, an underskirt, a skirt with an apron, a shirt, and a jacket. Neither of these paintings portray any of these items which could be presented as embellishments. This will be further explained in the next part of this article.

Figure 3. Alfred Stevens, *In the studio*, 1888; oil on canvas.

In addition to the last European representations, the famous Peacock Room was originally designed as a dining room for a townhouse located in Kensington, London, by Thomas Jeckyll between 1873 and 1876. James McNeill Whistler, an American who made almost all of his career between France and England, repainted the room and added murals that are the true focus of this study. The painting *The Princess from the Land of Porcelain* (Fig. 4) was done in 1864, two years after the London Exposition, and it presents a European woman wearing a *kimono* as a dressing gown. As in the previous cases, we know that this is so because despite her make-up being done, she does not wear her hair tied up. Although the waist is slightly wrapped around by the red fabric, the core of the

kimono is not properly placed. If she were really wearing the *kimono* as it should be worn, in the traditional Japanese sense, the lines would be much straighter.

Figure 4. James McNeill Whistler, *The Princess from the Land of Porcelain*, 1864; oil on canvas.

James Tissot, who was a French painter and illustrator, is the creator of two of the most famous works that are typically used to represent *Japonisme* in the academic texts written about this era. *Young women looking at Japanese objects* (Fig. 5) are two paintings created in 1869, from private collections, whose title is the same for both of them. The title of the paintings refers to the importance of the origin of the objects. They show Japanese objects and curiosities in different collection rooms, including the decorations of the rooms, e.g. the folding screen as well as small brush strokes in their dresses that remind the viewer of the Japanese garments in the bustles, such as the red lacing placed

in the position where the *obi* would be placed in a typical *kimono.* In that case, the bustle would not have gone over the jacket, but under the tail of it, to give more volume to the back of the dress. Again, the pictures show the fascination of the artist with the lines of *kimono*. Even when Tissot was working on a commission like this, the background was as important as the women represented.

Figure 5. James Tissot, *Young women looking at Japanese objects*, 1869; oil on canvas.

As we can see in these selected paintings, the fascination of many authors, and their high-class clients, for traditional Japanese clothing became a movement in Europe. Art critics and artists such as James McNeill Whistler also had their own collections of objects brought from Japan. These objects can be seen in his paintings, as decorations around the portrayed woman/women. Schmiegel explains that during the International Exposition at Kensington in 1862, the Aesthetics Movement painters, such as McNeill Whistler, heightened the stereotypes about Japanese women, particularly the *geisha*, exposing contrasts with the standard embodied by European women (2019: 11). The Aesthetic Movement was a cultural revolution that pointedly argued against the overbearing ideals of the Victorian age, and all the artists who appear in this article were part, at one time or another, of this movement. Luckily for them, many of the upper classes of European society agreed with their fascination with Japan. In this way, the artists modelled new aesthetic designs in their portraits, as well as a type of new European woman based on their own idea of the Japanese *geisha*.

Although the works chosen for this study represent different European women in different types of clothing, the artists created not only these works, but many others as well, in which they used the excuse of representing *geisha* to create sexualised images of women who, otherwise, would not have been accepted in Europe. Many European artists eroticised Japanese women in their paintings, including Whistler and James Tissot. These artists aimed to expose private scenes in the delicate hours prior to these women assuming their roles as *geisha*. These paintings almost always showed these women in *kimono* that, in reality, constituted the veil that masked the underlying eroticism hidden within these paintings. Eventually, in Europe, *kimono* themselves came to represent the exoticism of Japan. Japanese women in general came to represent a new understanding of female identity. Even so, popular magazines would eventually warn European women against dressing in *kimono*, fearful that the act would incite unwanted sexual attraction. However, it would not be seen as unacceptable to dress in a European interpretation of Japan (Schmiegel, 2019: 12), because of the imagined, unreal idea that European artists depicted in their paintings.

How did that fascination for Japanese fabrics actually transfer to everyday garments in Europe?

The real fabric

The influence and the use of Japanese fabrics in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century is clearly visible in almost any historical fashion museum. Many pieces of this era are now on exhibition or in collections in the US but are accessible in their online catalogues. One of these examples is the *Tea gown* (1870) from the Fashion Institute Technology in New York, a pink silk taffeta and embroidered crepe made from real *kimono* fabric (Fig. 6). The front and part of the back layer have been made with panels of *kimono* fabric. It is necessary to have on account that Japanese cloth panels do not have the same measurements as European ones. Even in countries within Europe the same measurements are not used to buy clothings, but in the case of the *kimono* cloth the panels are narrower, so in many designs the unions between them are visible, as seen in this tea gown. In the detailed image the joints are visible between the fabric panels in the apron that covers the skirt, as well as in the pieces that make up the back of the jacket and the sleeves. That all the designs of the panels go in the same direction shows that the fabric has been cut and assembled from scratch, and that no *kimono* was reused.

Figure 6. Artist Unknown, *Tea gown*, 1870; pink silk taffeta and embroidered crepe (photograph). Fashion Technology Institute, New York.

The second example shows what usually happened when Europeans—and, sometimes, Americans—wanted to have a bustle made with *kimono* fabric. It was cheaper and easier to buy a *kimono* than *kimono* fabric, so sometimes they would buy a *kimono* and dismember it to make modifications and sew it again like a jacket or part of a bustle. When assembling the new body, the direction of the original fabric was maintained, unlike in the previous example where the whole design followed the same direction; when a *kimono* becomes a dress the direction of its design changes. A perfect example is the *Tea gown* (1870) from the Kyoto Costume Institute (Fig. 7), where we can see the change in the direction of the design, and some traces of the original *kimono* seams remain in the textile.

Figure 7. Misses Turner Court Dress Makers, *Tea Gown*, 1870; bodice and overskirt: silk satin damask (*rinzu*) with silk and metallic-thread embroidery (photograph). The Kyoto Costume Institute.

In the photographs of *Robe* (1885) from the FIDM Museum & Galleries (Fig. 8), it is visible how, by making small modifications to a Japanese piece such as a *kimono*, it was possible to make dressing gowns for walking around the house. In this case, the openings of the sleeves have been maintained, increasing them slightly for greater mobility, and an addition has been made in the rear part to completely cover the cage of the bustle. The *obi* disappears and becomes a cord that holds the robe in place. The design varies its position, which demonstrates the reuse of an existent *kimono*. The most striking thing about this reuse is that this amazing fabric had already appeared in one of the previous paintings. In *Young women looking at Japanese objects* a fabric appears under the ship miniature which the young girls are looking at (Fig. 5, left). This fabric is depicted in this picture sixteen years before the robe was made. This indicates that after the Great Exposition in London Europeans started to buy *kimono*, and in a time when it was easier to access they started to make new pieces out of them.

Obviously, at the end of the nineteenth century the number of designs was more limited than today. So, the presence of the same fabric or *kimono* sixteen years later is not so strange. In the end, the ideas that Europeans had about Japan at that time, as Yokoyama Toshio exposes in his book, were full of stereotypes, even after European tourists started to visit Japan (1987: 150). The idealisation and mysticism that surrounded the nation were widespread not just among artists but also within high society, among those who could pay to travel and afford the clothing.

Figure 8. Unknown, *Furisode Kimono-style dressing gown,* 1885, silk (photogr.). FIDM Museum & Galleries.

As can be seen in these photographs, and as remarked upon at the end of the previous section, wearing *kimono* in Europe was not frowned upon as long as it was within a Victorian aesthetic. Thus, we find bustles like those in the pictures, where *kimono* have been dismantled and reused as part of dresses that would be worn outdoors, while those that were worn as a complement indoors suffered fewer modifications.

Japan and the bustles

Europe's fashion was not the only one affected by these exchanges of fabrics and culture. In Japan there was a growing interest about Europe after all those years when the borders were closed. Travellers who arrived from Europe were a novelty and became a very exotic topic for the Japanese people. Many of the customs that the visitors brought along with them were initially incomprehensible to the Japanese. The excitement that came with the arrival of these travellers was embodied in the prints of the time, as happened in Europe after the Great Expositions of London and Paris. The commercial activity of the port of Yokohama was a topic depicted in many *ukiyo-e* (Utagawa, 1861: 56).

Figure 9. Utagawa Yoshitoyo, *Foreigners*, 1861; wood engraving.

The image above shows a couple of alleged foreigners walking (Fig. 9). We could argue that they are foreigners because of their clothing; although the representation of their faces seems somewhat anchored to the standard representational codes by which Japanese artists used to portray their fellow countrymen, we can see ethnic markers especially in the shapes and sizes of the noses. More differentiating than the clothing are the actions and behaviours that were represented in Japanese paintings, as we see in Fig. 10: "At that time, in Japan was customary to go to bed early, so it was strange that foreigners used lamps to read at night" (Yoshikazu, 1848-71: 60). There are objects in this picture and in the previous one that were introduced in Japan during that era. The sofa and the mirror presented in Fig. 10 indicate a clear interest in foreign customs. In both images there are two different dresses, one of them a complete bustle (Fig. 10). More detailed is Toyohara (Yōshū) Chikanobu's triptych called *Women and girls in western dresses with various hairstyles* (1887), which represents four adult women and two young ladies, all of them in very detailed bustles.

Figure 10. Yoshikazu Issen, *Foreigners studying at night*, 1848-71; wood engraving.

But this interest was not only at an artistic level. The European travellers were part of high society: when they arrived in Japan, they started to make contact with families from the cities where they were going to stay for at least a couple of months. The influence that these visits created is palpable in the photographs, like the one of a woman from the Maeda family dressed in a bustle (Fig. 11) and photographed at the time by Suzuki Shin'ichi (1892).

Figure 11. Suzuki Shin'ichi, *Bustle-style dress*, 1892; photograph.

In the information attached to the picture, it is commented that one of the family friends was from the United Kingdom. In Europe, *kimono* were kept as a luxury and were originally used at home; in Japan, initially, the same happened with bustles. Although there are many photographs of Japanese girls and women from wealthy families dressed in European clothes, initially this was only done for the photo shootings, as something exotic and eccentric in Japan. However, as it has already been shown, in Europe both the fabrics and the *kimono* were introduced as the fashion of the

moment. As Kramer points out in her article "'Not So Japan-Easy': The British Reception of Japanese Dress in the Late Nineteenth Century", "the adoption of Western clothing was limited in the Meiji period to urban areas, particularly port towns, and was mostly worn by uniformed professionals or the élite, particularly men. Adopting European dress marked Japanese men as equal participants on the global stage and allied them with the associated characteristics of rationality and seriousness" (2013: 10). At the same time, favouring European clothing not only disrupted Victorian ideas about the alleged cultural identity of Japan, but was also implicated in the perceived deterioration in the quality of Japanese decorative arts (Kramer, 2013: 20). European observers and travellers wanted to enjoy Japan according to their "pure" and "traditional" idea of it, without realising the influence of the exchange of art on their vision of Japan. The opposite happened too: Japan agreed to the opening of ports, and through those ports came dresses that represented European culture. Although they were used and valued by wealthy young women, the idea of these dresses in Japan was, ultimately, quite pejorative, something that can be seen in the publications that Kramer lists, which illustrate that even the morality of those who wore those dresses in Japan were criticised by the Europeans there at the time (Kramer, 2013).

Conclusions

In informative and educational texts, *Japonisme* is considered an artistic movement in Europe that covers the years between 1854 and 1900. However, these texts do not usually take into account the cultural exchanges reflected in clothing. This article shows the artistic-cultural dialogue between Japan and Europe, especially France and England in terms of fashion. But also the roots of patterns and fashion that attracted those European observers. *Japonisme* did not end at the beginning of the twentieth century; it continued and evolved.

The paintings related to *Japonisme* idealise the figure of the woman in a *kimono* and they are not realistic in their conception. However, the paintings are not far from reality when they represent bustles, so it is obvious that the artists had direct contact with them. It was women's typical garment for everyday wear, and the incursion of the *kimono* in Europe was initially slow. The relationship between France, the United Kingdom, and Japan—and *Japonisme*—is evident in the painters' lives and works that have been described here. But even the words used in the fashion of that historical period have been

accepted by other languages. "Chemise" or "petticoat" are both French words that have been accepted into English to refer to pieces, or parts, of the bustle. Just like *Japonisme* never disappeared from Europe, the *kimono* influenced the patterns and shapes of the fashion in Europe not only during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but even more recently (a diramation that we do not explore here). Furthermore, the relationship between Europe and Japan in the late nineteenth century was not only reflected in exchanges such as clothing. Rather, each developed ideas about the other that would be maintained during the beginning of the twentieth century, and which little by little would open up towards a much more realistic ideas on both sides.

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Photography magazines and cross-cultural encounters in postwar Japan, 1945-1955

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ABSTRACT

This article examines cross-cultural encounters between Japanese and western (European and American) photographers in the immediate postwar period (1945-1955), asking how these encounters influenced Japanese photographic trends. In addition, this article considers what photographic representations of western cultures reveal about postwar constructions of Japanese cultural identity. Building upon recent research framed by conceptions of photography as sites of cross-cultural encounter (see Melissa Miles & Kate Warren), this article argues that photography magazines provided space for consistent exchange between western and Japanese photographers through multiple platforms: interviews and round table discussions of photographic trends; articles on and photo series by western photographers; and images by both western and Japanese photographers depicting western cultural material and landscapes, such as photographs of western-style fashions, domestic space, and daily life in European and American cities. Such encounters directly influenced photographic trends in Japan. Features on European nude photographers popularised nude photography as an art form among Japanese photographers, and works contributed by the likes of Henri Cartier-Bresson, Robert Capa, and Robert Doisneau contributed to a rising interest in photographic humanism. Further, these encounters provided a conduit through which photographers and readers encountered western cultural material at a time when Japan underwent a cultural identity crisis brought on by the devastation of defeat and foreign Occupation. In this way, photography magazines simultaneously functioned as spaces that negotiated what exactly "Japanese culture" meant in Japan's new postwar world.

In the summer of 1955, the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo held the exhibition "Kyō no shashin: Nihon to Furansu" ("Contemporary Photography: Japan and France"). It brought together such prominent international photographers as Eugene Atget, Robert Doisneau, and Henri Cartier-Bresson, as well as Kimura Ihei, Ishimoto Yasuhiro, and Miki Jun. In the introductory essay of the exhibit catalogue, noted photo critic Ina Nobuo reflected on the deep and lasting relationship between Japanese and French photographic circles. Ina blamed the recent war for cutting off all

photographic exchange between the two nations, but noted that Japan's keen interest in French photography had led to the speedy resumption of photographic relations at war's end (1955: n.p.). Essential to the reestablishment of artistic interchange were Japanese photography magazines, such as *Kamera* (Camera) and *Asahi Kamera* (*Asahi Camera*), which acted as sites of contact between Japanese and western (European and American) photographers. As photographic exchange became an integral objective of nearly every such magazine published in the immediate postwar period, international photography exerted a lasting impact on Japanese photographic developments.

In recent years, early postwar Japanese photography has attracted increasing scholarly attention in English-language sources. Most have been focussed on photojournalist Domon Ken and the development of his realism movement from 1950 (Feltens, 2001; Iizawa, 2003; Thomas, 2008; Fraser, 2011). While scholars are right to connect realism to the legacy of wartime propaganda and Japan's devastated social, political, and economic conditions in the wake of war and defeat, the connection between realism and European/US-American photographic trends has remained largely overlooked. Equally important, photographic developments beyond realism have received virtually no consideration. If Domon undoubtedly laid the foundation for developments in postwar Japanese photography, European/US-American photographers played a pivotal role as well.[1]

Looking at the history of postwar photography through this wider lens, I propose here to examine Japanese photography magazines published from 1946 to 1955, asking three key questions. First, how did these magazines facilitate encounters with European/US-American photographers? Second, how did these encounters affect Japanese photographic trends? And third, what role did contact with and photographic representations of European/US-American cultures play in constructions of postwar Japanese cultural identity? This article builds on the work of Melissa Miles and Kate Warren, who frame their study of early twentieth-century multicultural communities in Broom, Australia, by conceptualising photography as "an important site of cross-cultural communication and interpretation" (2017: 3, 5). With the view that photographs are "products and facilitators

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[1] As a product of French invention and importation into Japan, in the prewar period photography maintained close connections to Europe and the US. Many prewar issues of *Asahi Kamera*, for example, include photographs by European/US-American photographers as well as essays penned in English. Photographers in the interwar period were heavily influenced by European/US-American photojournalism, the avant-garde German New Objectivity, and surrealism. For more, see Torihara Manabu (2013).

of cross-cultural encounters", Miles and Warren argue that Japanese photography facilitated intercultural relations among Broom's diverse residents, as well as reflected such relations and cultural exchange (5). Applying their framework to postwar photography in Japan, this article argues that exposure to European/US-American photographers influenced a variety of developments in Japanese photography, promoting the acceptance of nude photography as a form of art and increasing interest in capturing the customs, appearance, and daily life of postwar Japanese society.[2] This article further argues that photography functioned as a medium through which practitioners could negotiate postwar Japanese cultural identity. Defeat in war and foreign occupation triggered a cultural identity crisis for many Japanese in the postwar period, complicated by a new influx of European/US-American cultures *via* the Allied Occupation (1945-1952). As both product and facilitator of cross-cultural encounters, photographic representations of European/US-American cultures reflected and assisted the postwar formation of Japanese cultural identity vis-à-vis European/US-American influences.

Photography magazines and cross-cultural encounters

As a core element of Japan's photographic community, photography magazines represent a critical source in understanding developments in postwar photography. In the early postwar period especially, severe shortages of photographic supplies made public exhibitions virtually impossible. Thus, as Ivan Vartanian notes, magazines were "the main vehicle" through which photographers could exhibit their work (2009: 14). The end of the war in 1945—and with it the sudden collapse of the military government—further stimulated interest in print media. The Japanese public, freed from wartime censorship and propaganda, voraciously consumed the printed material that now flooded the market. After years of being deceived by the military government, people, quite simply, wanted to know the truth. Of course, Occupation-imposed censorship posed a new threat to feelings of freedom and liberation, at least related to freedom of speech. The Press and Publications (PPB) division, a subsection of the Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD), excised with ruthless intensity any negative portrayal of

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[2] European/US-American influences included more than nude photography and humanism. In a continuation of prewar photojournalist trends, American periodicals such as *Life* and *Look* greatly influenced Japanese news photographers. Torihara argues that these periodicals became something of a textbook for Japanese photographers, who tried to mimic what was published (2013: 107). The Japanese had easy access to such periodicals through the Center for Information & Education (CI&E) Information Libraries (Takemae, 2002: 395-6; Ochi, 2006).

the Occupation or anything that undermined its authority. In addition, censors were sensitive to images of prostitutes, reporting on food shortages and starvation, and views of the ruinous landscapes that were the results of US bombing raids. Even so, photographers enjoyed much greater freedom than under the draconian wartime Information and Propaganda Bureau, with its total control over all news, advertising, and public events. Journalism recovered more quickly than the government or the economy and served as an important mouthpiece for free speech (Akio, 1974).

Wartime censorship was not the only blow to Japan's photographic industry. Amateur photographers were hit hard by government restrictions, including sumptuary laws on cameras and prohibitions on taking photographs in urban environments. In an attempt to gain control over the flow of information, Japan's military government forcefully merged most magazine titles and pressured editors to limit their publication numbers (Tucker *et al.* 2003: 322). The few titles that remained fell in line with wartime propaganda by depicting a whole nation mobilised in support of the war effort. Yet popular magazines emerged after Japan's surrender with renewed vigor. New photography magazine titles appeared at a rapid pace, alongside old titles that had been suspended during the war. *Kamera* resumed publication at the start of 1946, followed by *Koga Gekkan* (*Japan Photographic Monthly*, 1947), *Shashin Techō* (*Photography Notebook*, 1949), *Amachua Shashin* (*Amateur Photography*, 1949), and *Asahi Kamera* (1949), just to name a few titles. From the end of 1945 through 1949, the circulation of individual magazine titles ranged from 2,500 to around 35,000 (Thomas, 2008: 367). Together with technological advances in Japanese camera products, the proliferation of photo magazines triggered a new boom in amateur photography from 1950 (Shirayama, 2001: 3).

Magazines were an invaluable resource for amateur enthusiasts and established professionals alike. According to one estimate, photo magazines received as many as 5,000 submissions from amateur photographers per month (Nihon Shashin Kyōkai, 2000: 403). Most were entered in *getsurei* (monthly contests) that provided a means for professional photographers to communicate directly with amateurs *via* their role as judges and critics of winning submissions. In addition to the general *getsurei*, magazines sponsored numerous contests on more defined themes, such as Hokkaidō landscapes, postwar lifestyles and occupations, and aerial photos. One pivotal role of contests was their ability to showcase the work of amateurs, which in turn often opened avenues to professional employment. Magazines were important for the careers of professionals as

well. Editors invited submissions for serial *rensai* (photo stories), a crucial source of revenue and prestige for professionals. Frequently, popular serialisations were later published as monographs (Vartanian, 2009: 14), such as Kimura Ihei's photographs from his trip to Europe, first serialised in *Asahi Camera* in 1954 and 1955, and later in book form as *Kimura Ihei gaiyū shashinshū: Dai ikkai* (*Kimura Ihei on World Tour I*, 1955) and *Kimura Ihei gaiyū shashinshū: Dai nikai: Yōroppa no inshō* (*Kimura Ihei on World Tour II: Impression of Europe*, 1956).

One striking feature of photo magazines in the immediate postwar period is the avid interest in and contact with foreign photographers and photographed subjects. Given the Allied Occupation, it is not surprising that a number of early encounters involved Occupation personnel. A February 1946 issue of *Kamera* published an interview with a G.I. about the Signal Photos department of the Occupation. In 1947, *Shashin Tembō* printed an article on ACME correspondent Tom Sheaffer, as well as an interview with *Stars and Stripes* photographer Helen Bruck. Yet photographic contact did not solely involve Occupation personnel. In May 1946, *Kamera* printed an interview with German-born American photographer Alfred Eisenstaedt, and in August ran a two-page spread on Russian-born (present-day Latvia) US-American Philippe Halsman. When asked by *Kamera* in 1949 to identify the "best ten" photographers in the world, Domon named Hungarian Martin Munkácsi, Briton Herbert List, and French-Hungarian Brassaï, among others. From an early date, then, Japanese photographers took note of both US-American and European photographers.

The presence of European/US-American photographs within popular photography magazines appeared in many forms. In addition to interviews with and articles on or by European/US-American photographers, magazines printed round table discussions on international photographic developments, interviews with European/US-American photographers, and photographs depicting European/US-American landscapes, peoples, and daily customs and cultures by both Japanese and European/US-American photographers. Indeed, photos of European and US-American peoples and settings abounded in photo magazines from an early date. A September 1947 issue of *Koga Gekkan* printed a two-page spread of European summer scenes, including mountain cottages and women dressed in traditional dirndl. An August 1948 issue of *Kamera* featured portraits by Berenice Abbott, Brassaï, Tony Frischel, and street photos by John Davenbold and Jim Steinhard. An article in the same issue on US-American photo

magazine *Photo Arts* stated that Japanese readers could study current US-American photo culture through their magazine.

In addition to the above, it was common for magazines to print selections from exhibits in Japan and abroad. In 1950, *Asahi Kamera* published select photos from a Japan International Salon exhibit, featuring photographers from Portugal, Czechoslovakia, Luxembourg, Spain, Hungary, Italy, and England (Kanamaru, Nishiyama, Ina: 53-64). A report on the 13th annual salon appearing in the March 1953 issue of *Asahi Kamera* noted that the salon received 626 submissions from foreign photographers (Kanamaru, Ina: 33). Photography magazine *Kamera* printed numerous photos from international salons as well, [3] including contemporary French art photography and modern art photography from Switzerland. While beyond the scope of this article, it is important to note that cultural encounters flowed in both directions between Japanese and European/US-American photographers. The 1952 *US Camera Annual* featured five Japanese photographers, showcasing contemporary Japanese portraiture as well as art and street photography. *Life* famously printed Miki Jun's portrait of Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru in the 10 September 1951 issue, and Swiss photographer Werner Bischof published his photos of Japan in the Swiss pictorial *Du*.

In Japan, the focus on foreign photography was so great that at times it took up nearly half of any given issue. The January 1953 issue of *Asahi Kamera* illustrates the extensive presence of European/US-American photography and cultures in Japanese photography magazines. A colour portrait of French ballet star Liana Dayde by Funayama Katsu graces the cover, immediately presenting Japanese readers with a glimpse of Europe and the US. Then, as the reader begins to peruse the issue, another colour portrait appears on the first page: a European/US-American model in soft golden hues by German-American fashion photographer Horst P. Horst. This is followed by a seven-page feature on Brassaï and his street photos of Paris. A single photo of a kimono-clad Japanese woman breaks this opening onslaught of European/US-American photography, but only briefly as the reader then moves on to Mihori Ieyoshi's collection of photos on European/US-American ballet. After a few more pages reserved for Japanese photographers and motifs, the reader comes

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[3] Popular in the first half of the twentieth century, salon photography refers both to a style of photography that emphasises a classical "fine art" composition, as well as to contests or exhibitions in which photographers submitted their work to be judged and displayed. The March 1950 issue of *Asahi Kamera* reported on the growing numbers of Japanese photographers who submitted their photos to international salons, as well as the recovery of Japan's own International Photo Salon.

to a section on the 1953 *US Camera Annual*, filling a staggering fifteen pages, and then to an essay on nude photography by Lewis Tulchin. Additional photographs taken by European/US-American photographers or featuring European/US-American subjects include an instructional article on photo-caricatures by Japanese-American Harry K. Shigeta, stills from the 1950 French film *Le Chateau de Verre* (*The Glass Castle*)*,* and selections from Fritz Henle's "City at Night". In addition, the issue carries a photo of Philadelphia Station by Kikuchi Kosuke and a portrait of film director Josef von Sternberg by Hamaya Hiroshi. Finally, the second half of the magazine includes an interview with photojournalist Margaret Bourke White, as well as an essay on Brassaï.

As the above example suggests, magazines provided ample opportunity for cross-cultural encounter and exchange through photographs, essays, interviews, and roundtable discussions. These encounters had a lasting impact on Japanese photographic trends, contributing to new developments in nude photography, and feeding a growing fascination with human-interest photography. While Japanese photographers have always expressed some degree of interest and involvement with European/US-American photographic circles, their fascination with European/US-American trends in the postwar period owed mainly to Japan's defeat in war and the dismal social conditions in the years that followed. This will be examined in the next section.

European photographic influences and Japan's postwar society

Three words characterise the state of Japanese society in the immediate postwar years: *yakeato* (burned ruins), *kyōdatsu* (mental numbness), and *kasutori* (days in the dregs). At war's end, lively urban centres were reduced to charred and desolate landscapes, filled with the starving, orphaned, and homeless. Most destruction came from wave after wave of incendiary bombs that unleashed intense, all-consuming infernos.[4] Those left in the ruins fought to find even the most basic necessities of life. Rampant starvation decreased the average height and weight of school children until 1948 (Gordon, 2013: 226), and severe housing shortages forced people to live in train stations, buses, or shacks made of scavenged debris. The strain of putting body and soul into the long and drawn-out war, of living in constant fear of bombing raids, and of

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[4] According to US reports, bombing raids killed 85,793 people and left over one million homeless. The United States Strategic Bombing Survey. "Effects of Incendiary Bomb Attacks on Japan—A Report on Eight Cities". Physical Damage Division (April 1947), 67. For Tokyo alone, the raids destroyed roughly 51 percent of the physical landscape of Tokyo. See Peter C. Chen (2008).

struggling through dismal social conditions had taken its toll on the Japanese physically and mentally (Cole, 2015: 1-2).

One response to the miserableness of living in a *kyōdatsu* society was to find outlets of escape, such as the so-called *kasutori* culture. The term *kasutori*, which referred to a cheap alcoholic drink made from the dregs of sake, soon evolved in meaning, coming to express a new feeling of liberation from the oppression of wartime Japan. It embodied the sense of impermanence that attended the postwar era, and represented a rejection of political authority and a break from established values (Dower, 1999: 149). Concerning the latter, *kasutori* culture evoked a newfound delight in carnal pleasures and sexual indulgence. This hedonistic outlet quickly bloomed into a flourishing print culture specialising in "sex journalism" (*sei jaanarizumu*) (McLelland, 2012: 11). As part of the "commercialisation of sex", common symbols of *kasutori* magazines ranged from kissing to strip shows and *pan pan* prostitutes,[5] and from masturbation to incest (Dower, 1999: 150-51).

It is within this context that photographers began to experiment with nude photography. Even though this genre existed before the war, photographers had to practice it in secret due to strict government constraints, if they took nude photographs at all. Nojima Kōji recalled in a 1951 roundtable that a lack of public approval kept him from pursuing his interest in nude photography in the prewar years. Even just photographing breasts was enough to warrant a visit from the police. It was only the postwar chaos, Nojima explains, that provided the opportunity for nude photography to flourish (Nojima et al: 76-82). In the early postwar years, critics looked negatively on early nude photos as nothing more than lewd imagery associated with *kasutori* culture; however, their popularity soared nonetheless as a challenge to prewar and wartime conservatism (Nihon Shashin Kyōkai, 2000: 465). Respected photographers Sugiyama Kira, Matsugi Fujio, and Fukuda Katsuji quickly wrested nude photography from its association with *kasutori* culture (Ina, 1978: 145), but it was not until magazines showcased the works of European nude photographers that the images earned critical esteem. From around 1948, virtually all photography magazines featured nude images by European/US-American photographers. *Asahi Kamera* serialised features on nude

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[5] The exact origin of the term *pan pan* is unclear. According to some sources, Imperial Japanese troops used the term for prostitutes in Japan's South Pacific island colonies. During the Occupation, the term evolved to refer to women who served Occupation personnel. For more on *pan pan,* see Holly Sanders (2012), Tanaka Masakazu (2012), and Sarah Kovner (2013).

photos by the likes of Andre de Dienes and Martin Munkácsi and included nude photography in printed selections from *US Camera Annual*. The increased prevalence of nude images by European photographers stimulated interest among Japanese photographers of multiple genres; art, street, and news photographers all submitted their attempts at nude photography to magazines. By 1953, nude photography even began appearing in the monthly contests, indicating just how popular it had become among amateurs.

Japanese photographers and critics lauded the works of European photographers; however, critics were quick to point out the failings of Japanese nude photography. In his essay in the 1950 *ARS Shashin Nenkan* (*ARS Photographic Annual*), Ina Nobuo asserted that Japanese nude photography ultimately failed because it was weak (2). Tanaka Masao outlined the problem more bluntly in the next essay of the same journal, complaining that Japanese nude photography lacked beauty as an art from (5). The crux of the matter, Tanaka explained, lay in the pose and appearance of the models. In a 1951 roundtable printed in *Asahi Kamera*, Sato Kei expressed his admiration for Dutch photographer Emmy Andriesse and her skill in making a beautiful nude photograph. Other discussants applauded Willy Ronis's ability to photograph models with a natural pose. But regarding Japanese photographers, the panel complained that models were too stiff, their posing too excessive. Japanese photographers would do well, critics suggested, to follow techniques employed by European nude photographers (Nojima et al: 76-82).

And Japanese photographers did just that, learning from European photographers they encountered in Japanese photography magazines. In addition to images submitted by European photographers, *Asahi Kamera* printed translations from Lewis Tulchin's book *The Nude in Photography* in the beginning of 1953. The text outlined a number of key points—all illustrated with diagrams, sketches, and photos of European/US-American models—integral to a successful nude photograph: understanding composition, good and bad poses, working with negatives, and enlarging prints. The fundamental principle behind Tulchin's instructions was that nude photography was an art form, a point emphasised in an opening section titled "Intentions and Aims" that explained Tulchin's target audience: those who valued the creativity and artistry of nude photography (1953a: 50). As Tulchin's essays demonstrate, then, encounters with European photographers were crucial in the transformation of Japanese nude photography from lewd *kasutori* culture to art photography.

Nude photography's acceptance as an art form is exhibited in a number of special issues published by popular photography journals. *Foto Aato* (*Photo Art*) released three special issues solely on nude photography in January and December 1951 and January 1952, alongside the regular issues that featured numerous nude prints. In these special issues, the attempt at photographing the nude female form through an artistic lens is evident through careful consideration of composition, as well as the use of fundamental elements of photography such as line, shape, and tone. A photograph by Domon Ken, for example, uses close cropping to transform a woman's buttocks into an abstract shape of smooth curves and sharp tonal contrasts. Another photograph by Narahara Ikko showcases a nude form stretching diagonally across the frame. Rather than focussing on the nude woman as an object of sexual desire, the eye follows the soft lines of the body from one corner of the frame to another. By thoughtfully employing artistic principles of line and shape, Narahara creates in this image a lyrical yet dynamic composition.

Nude photography constituted one facet of postwar Japanese photographers' increased fascination with the human form. On the other end of the spectrum was an avid concern with humanist photography, defined by Peter Hamilton as simply the focus on "the everyday life of ordinary people" (1997: 76). As with nude photography, European photographic trends proved an overwhelming influence on the shift to people and daily life. From early 1950, numerous Japanese photography magazines ran regular features on European humanist photographers, praising their portrayal of the individuality of humanity. "Kaigai yūmei shashin-ka shōkai" ("Introduction to Famous Foreign Photographers"), serialised in *Asahi Kamera*, for instance, familiarised Japanese readers with humanist photographers such as Werner Bischof, Henri Cartier-Bresson, and Robert Doisneau. Their photos captured European cities and rural vistas, opened windows into daily European/US-American life at home and on the street, and demonstrated the latest fashion trends.

Japanese photographers and critics trained a spotlight on European photographers from the early 1950s. In 1951, Miki Jun, with Ōtake Shōji, Kimura Ihei, Domon Ken, and other noted photojournalists, founded a photography collective modelled on Magnum Photos. [6] Before its demise in 1958, *Shūdan Foto* held eight exhibitions featuring

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[6] International photographic collective Magnum Photos was founded in Paris in 1947 by Cartier-Bresson, Robert Capa, David "Chim" Seymour, George Rodger, William Vandivert, Rita Vandivert, and Maria Eisner.

prominent European/US-American photographers (Nihon Shashin Kyōkai, 2000: 408), most of whom were connected to *Life* magazine or photo collectives like Magnum and Rapho.[7] The first exhibit in 1951, titled "Nichifutsu beiei rengō shashin" ("Japan-France-US-UK Photo") included works from Cartier-Bresson, who became immensely popular in Japan as one of a number of European humanist photographers, as well as for his philosophy of the "decisive moment" (Torihara, 2013: 119–121). In 1953, *Asahi Kamera* published a translation of Cartier-Bresson's *Images à la Sauvette* (*Images On the Run*), in which Cartier-Bresson described his approach to photography as the pursuit to capture, in one photograph, "the whole essence of some situation that was in the process of unrolling itself before my eyes" (1952). Translated essays and photographic works by Cartier-Bresson contributed to his rising popularity (Nihon Shashin Kyōkai, 2000: 409). So influential was Cartier-Bresson and other French photographers that the terms "decisive moment" (*ketteiteki shunkan*) and "humanism" (*hyūmanizumu*) became catchwords in Japanese photographic circles, appearing in articles on European/US-American photographers and in critiques of Japanese professional and amateur photographs. In an essay published in *Kamera* in 1953, for instance, Domon criticised salon pictures for failing to capitalise on the decisive moment and root their photos in reality (Vartanian et al, 2005: 22–23).

Cartier-Bresson's "decisive moment" specifically, and European humanism more generally, dovetailed with a similar trend developing in early postwar magazines. In 1950, Domon famously launched a realism movement,[8] advocating a type of photograph he defined as "the absolutely pure snapshot, absolutely unstaged" (Nihon Shashin Kyōkai, 2000: 389). Originating in his critiques of successful submissions to the monthly amateur contest in photography magazine *Kamera*, the movement took further shape in serialised discussions between Domon and Kimura in the second half of 1951. Initially a response

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[7] Founded by Charles Rado in 1933, Rapho (from Rado-Photo) specialised in humanist photography. Early members include Brassaï, Nora Dumas, and Ergy Landau, later joined by Robert Doisneau, Edouard Boubat, Yousuf Karsh, and Willy Ronis, among others.

[8] "Realism", "documentary photography", and "photojournalism" are usually considered interchangeable terms; however, according to Julia Adeney Thomas, Japan's postwar realism movement was neither photojournalism nor documentary photography. The latter is similar to realism in its attempts to capture "real" life. What distinguishes it from Domon's realism is its use to investigate social conditions. In other words, documentary photography actively attempts to bring about social reform. Domon's realism, in contrast, did not attempt to highlight dismal social conditions or to engender social change (Thomas, 2008: 367–69). Thomas further argues that realism did not share characteristics of photojournalism—photographs taken for news media. Instead, the postwar realism movement simply recorded daily life and emphasised "unmanipulated" snapshots. Whether these scenes were truly unmanipulated and objective, however, is the subject for another essay.

to wartime propaganda, the realism movement eventually became a means for Japanese to come to terms with the *kyōdatsu* condition that plagued early postwar life. Domon believed realism to be the only legitimate photographic technique for postwar society, stating that the public wanted to see the "real" after being deceived by the wartime government (Feltens, 2001: 64). He urged photographers to record the dismal postwar social conditions by confronting reality directly and by attempting to photograph this reality in an objective manner. For Domon, realism was the only way society could move past the dire straits of a defeated and occupied Japan. "Realism", he wrote in one essay, "is the raising of one's eyes to look to the future" (Vartanian, et al., 2005: 24-25).

While supportive of documenting the human condition, photographers and critics grew increasingly critical of Domon's version of realism. A full analysis of the debates surrounding realism is outside the scope of this article;[9] however, briefly put, many critics decried the false impression of postwar Japan that realism created with its allegedly superficial focus on homelessness, prostitution, war orphans, and disabled war veterans—motifs critics pejoratively termed "beggar photography".[10] Even Domon himself grew tired of the proliferation of such themes. Despite offering encouragement to photographers in their quest to capture wretched social conditions, he felt that amateurs obsessed over images of poverty and ruin. Even worse for Domon was the fact that many of these photographs were staged, an action he claimed prevented photographers from capturing the full truth of the subject.

Critics of realism identified yet another glaring problem: many photographs appeared detached from their subjects and devoid of emotion. Critic Tanaka Masao, although supportive of realism's focus on the socially disadvantaged, nevertheless criticised the genre for its lack of emotion (Feltens, 2001; 65). Domon also expressed growing frustration with the abundance of unemotional photographs that amateurs submitted to magazines (Thomas, 2008: 382–89). In an essay included in the 1955 exhibition catalogue for "Kyō no shashin", Domon wrote that the Japanese display, compared to French works, did not sufficiently represent reality. In other words, Japanese photographs failed to convey adequately the emotional undercurrents flowing through their subjects. While he felt vacant when looking at images by Japanese photographers, he

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[9] For more on realism debates of the early 1950s, see Julia Adeney Thomas (2008).
[10] For a full explanation of "beggar photography", see Tanaka Masao (1953).

reported that he was filled with emotion by those of humanistic French photographers (Nihon Shashin Kyōkai, 2000: 406).

European humanist photography became popular in Japan precisely because of this desire for a higher emotional impact. [11] Throughout the 1950s, a steady stream of European humanist photographers published their works in the frontispieces of Japanese photography magazines. Observing these photos on a monthly basis, Japanese photographers applauded Robert Doisneau for his humour (*Asahi Kamera*, 1952: 7) and praised Edouard Boubat for capturing the "essence of the object" by pressing "the shutter at the best emotional moment" (Ina, 7: 1952). Domon cited Robert Capa in one critique of an amateur photo, urging the amateur to take note of the "deep emotion of [Capa] related to the motif". Indeed, it is only the deep feeling of the photographer, Domon explained, that can create a "truly splendid photograph" (1950: 123-124).

The series "Gendai no kanjō" ("Moods and Expressions") in *Asahi Kamera* exemplifies how Japanese photographers employed the emotional nuances favoured by European humanism. The magazine printed 69 instalments of the series between 1952 and 1957, making it one of the longest-running series in early postwar photography magazines. In the first instalment in May 1952, the editor offered the following introduction to the series: "Confused emotions flow in contemporary Japanese society. This series is a project of *Asahi Kamera*'s editorial department to express the feelings of society, taking as material the daily life of the Japanese who live in an age of hope and hardship" (author's translation). As this series illustrates, capturing the sentiments of postwar society was fast becoming a cornerstone of Japan's photographic community.

Many of the themes and subjects that appear throughout "Gendai no kanjō" epitomise the social, economic, and political challenges confronting early postwar Japan. In each photograph, the photographers' careful attention to composition stirs an emotional response from the readers. Yoshioka Senzo's photograph "Unmei no kora" ("The Children's Fate") ran as the second photo of the series in June 1952. Taken at the Elizabeth Saunders Home, an orphanage in Japan established in 1948 by Miki Sawada for children

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[11] Japanese photographers and critics distinguished between European and American humanism, noting that US photography exhibited directed and stylised compositions with less emotional impact, whereas European photography tended to be more candid and emotive. Lighting also played a critical difference, with natural lighting (favoured by European photographers) better able to convey human emotion than the use of a flash (popular among American photographers) – see Kanamaru Shigene, Ina Nobuo & Kimura Ihei (1949).

born of relationships between Allied Occupation forces and Japanese women,[12] the image depicts a group of small children in an outdoor setting. Yoshioka zoomed in on the children, allowing nothing else to enter the frame aside from the lush trees that fill the background. Even so, the photographer kept enough distance to allow the viewer to take in the full details of the children's clothing and appearance. The camera peers at the children from a low angle, putting the viewer on the same level as the children's faces. Normally such a technique would allow the viewer a greater connection to the photographed subject; in this case, however, each child looks upwards towards the sky, breaking the connection between their gaze and the viewer and thus preventing the formation of a bond between viewer and children.

In an essay titled "Watashi no sakuga seishin" ("My Photographic Ethos"), Yoshioka explains that he has two eyes, that of the camera mechanism (*shashin no mekanizumu no me*) and the eye of his heart (*watashi no kokoro no me*) (author's translation). Yoshioka's philosophy as a photographer was to draw on both as he reacted in the decisive moment in order to seize the essence of the subject, thereby imparting an emotional imprint into his photographs (1953: 114). In his photograph of the orphans, Yoshioka at once created a close emotional connection to the children through an intimate and simple frame, yet managed to sever that connection by capturing them at that passing moment when all the children looked up at a bird in the sky. Additionally, the children are pictured without any adult or caretaker in the frame. In this way, Yoshioka evoked their precarious situation in Japanese society. In this photograph, Yoshioka demonstrates his ability to draw on both the eye of the camera mechanism and the eye of his heart to expertly seize the decisive moment and capture the emotion of the subject, portraying in a group of small children a scene of hardship in postwar society.

Cross-cultural encounters with European/US-American photography stimulated Japanese photographers' interest in strongly emotional portrayals of humanity. Yet these photographic encounters did not only influence Japanese photographic trends. Throughout the immediate postwar period, Japanese photographers served as cultural

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[12] Reports on the number of children born of relations between Occupation personnel and Japanese citizens vary considerably. The US military's *Stars and Stripes* newspaper reported on 10 March, 1947, that between the start of the Occupation and June of that year, Japanese women in the Tokyo-Yokohama district would have given birth to 14,000 Amerasian babies. Two years later Miki Sawada estimated US servicemen had sired 200,000 babies in Japan. Masami Takada, head of the Children's Bureau of the Welfare Ministry, put the figure at 150,000. When the bureau conducted a survey in the spring of 1952, though, it found a total of only 5,002 Amerasian babies. See Sabin, Bruitt (2002), "They Came, They Saw, They Democratized". *The Japan Times*.

mediators by photographing instances of cross-cultural encounter and exchange. The next section examines how such photographs played a role in postwar formations of Japanese cultural identity.

Hybrid identities:

Photographic depictions of Japanese and European/US-American Cultures

Before analysing how photographers visualised cultural identity, it is important to define the term itself. At the most basic level, cultural identity refers to an individual's definition of self in cultural terms. Such an identity is both personal and part of wider social structures, and is determined by the past as well as the present (Holland, 1998: 4). Individuals define a sense of self through available cultural resources—like photography—and in relation to major structural features of society. Such features include language, social class, religion, sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, nationality, and generation (*Ibid.*: 7).

Before the Occupation, notions of Japanese identity were defined by war and by a totalitarian, militaristic regime. This impacted the visualisation of Japanese identity both at home and abroad; images made manifest wartime ideals espoused by the military government—harmony, chastity, and discipline (Orbaugh, 2012: 7)—that healthy men, women, and children were expected to embody in a unified effort to support the war. But the construction of a unique Japanese identity that instiled unity both at home and across the empire, in the words of Kirby Hammond, "fell apart after the war" (Hammond, 2015: 105). The end of the war effected drastic changes in Japanese society, readily reflected in photographs and other visual culture. While recent scholarship rightly cautions against drawing a distinct line between pre- and postwar Japan, those living in 1945 certainly must have felt that their way of life had been turned completely upside down (Orbaugh, 2012: 7). Defeat brought with it the destruction of political, social, and cultural institutions important in the shaping of Japan's identity. Furthermore, the millions of repatriated soldiers and civilians returning from Japan's former empire found themselves ostracised as they returned home, further contributing to a sense of fragmentation and turmoil.[13] To make matters worse, many Japanese, such as soldiers and draftees, could not return to their prewar occupations and status because those original positions simply no longer existed (Hashimoto, 2015).

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[13] For more on repatriates and their experiences returning home, see Lori Watt (2009).

Complicating matters was the pervasive influx of European/US-American mass cultures occasioned by the overwhelming presence of Americans and other Allied personnel, creating an "epistemologically chaotic" time that made constructing identity "an especially challenging endeavour" (Orbaugh, 2012: 53-58). While this began with the Occupation,[14] it persisted with the prolonged existence of the US in Japan throughout the Cold War.[15] Of course, contact with European/US-American cultures was nothing new to the Japanese. During the Taishō era (1912 to 1926) there existed a particularly strong desire for European/US-American cultures, celebrated in the form of the "modern girl" (*moga*) and "modern boy" (*mobo*), a youth culture representative of an enthusiasm for the middle-class lifestyle, department stores, cinema, and jazz (Gordon, 2009: 155-157). When the wartime military government discouraged the material extravagance associated with European/US-American cultures, however, the *moga* and *mobo* all but disappeared. The trend towards westernisation renewed once again after the war, albeit in a very different context: the Allied Occupation. Political scientist Sodei Rinjirō notes that, during the Occupation, the Japanese looked to the United States as a "wellspring of culture" and a "cure" that would help Japan in its journey of postwar recovery (2001: 263). Sociologist Yoshimi Shunya points especially to the impact of the American Occupiers on the "ears" and "eyes" of the Japanese—embodying a "whole new way of life" for postwar society (2015). Japanese citizens constantly encountered European/US-American cultures through contact with Occupation personnel, print media, and the activities of the Occupation's Civil Information and Education Section (CI&E).

While some Japanese looked to the US as a "wellspring of culture", the Occupation itself promoted American culture as a symbol of democracy, spearheaded by the CI&E's attempts at teaching and reforming Japanese citizens along a democratic path. To give one example, the CI&E established centres, staffed by American librarians and visited by roughly two million Japanese, to encourage the consumption of print and visual media that promoted American culture, lifestyle, and democratic values (Takemae, 2002: 395-396). As cultural centres, the libraries were created with the specific intent to reorient Japanese "peoples and institutions" (Ochi, 2006: 359-360). As a result of this and other

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[14] John Dower's *Embracing Defeat* laid the groundwork for studies of Japanese culture and identity during the Occupation. Literary scholars Michael Molasky and Sharalyn Orbaugh examine how Japanese authors used literature to negotiate the humiliating experience of defeat and Occupation, as well as the postwar identity crisis that went with it. See Michael Molasky (1999).

[15] For more on how Cold War cultural dynamics impacted Japanese culture, see Jan Bardsley (2014); Koikari Mire (2008); Shibusawa Naoko (2006); and Marukawa Tetsushi (2005).

projects, Japanese "eyes" and "ears" avidly listened to American music, watched Hollywood cinema, and looked with a keen desire to the latest fashions worn by Occupation personnel and exhibited in magazines, fashion shows, and department store window displays. While American culture certainly remained dominant in the immediate postwar period, European culture abounded as well, principally through the popularity of French cinema and fashion. Parisian fashions in particular, such as the designs of Christian Dior, enticed Japanese women once Japan began its rapid economic ascension from the mid- 1950s (Koizumi, 2008: 30).

Photography magazines played a key role in the ongoing postwar cultural exchange, giving space for Japanese photographers to negotiate formations of cultural identity by representing visually the adoption and adaptation of European/US-American cultural influences.[16] In the wake of defeat, photographers employed photography as a cultural resource to contribute to discourses on Japanese culture and to the creation of a new Japan. Writing in the first postwar edition of *Kamera*, editor Kuwabara Kunio positioned photography's role in a new Japan as one of promoting cultural education. Photographers, Kuwabara urged, should follow worldly progress and aim to pursue cultural significance in their work. He called for amateurs to rise from hibernation and to communicate a peaceful and beautiful Japan. Photographers faced a seemingly insurmountable challenge in overcoming material shortages, not to mention food, housing, and other material needs. Yet despite the "burned ruins" on which *Kamera*'s publishers stood, its duty was to bring Japanese readers a vision of Japanese culture that was high class and pure (Kuwabara, 1946: 112). Kuwabara was not alone in expressing such sentiments,[17] demonstrating that the connection photographers made between photography, culture, and representing a new Japan was central from the initial postwar years.

Among cultural commentators, one prominent discourse on identity centred around preeminent folklorist Yanagita Kunio, who in the prewar period used culture to reinforce the image of Japan as a unified, homogenous culture; however, this homogenous culture was still complex (*fukugōtai*): the old and the new, the foreign and the domestic combined

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[16] The publication of these images was particularly important for identity formation. Images provide the viewer with a means of identification through the process of assimilating "an aspect, property or attribute of that which is seen, and is transformed, wholly or partially, after the model which the other—in this instance the image—provides" (Wells, 2009: 294).

[17] An announcement for submissions to *ARS Shashin Nenkan* posted in early 1947 encouraged photographers to submit their work with the promise that the annual welcomed any style. The most important thing was that the photos be worthy of appreciation and suitable to a new Japan. And in an essay in the 1948 annual, Nagahama linked amateur photography to the construction of a new cultural nation.

to make Japanese culture "dynamic and adaptive" (Morris-Suzuki, 1995: 766). By the postwar period, the definition of culture as encompassing a national unity and blending new and old "was taken for granted" (*Ibid.*: 768). Yanagita's conception of Japanese culture as *fukugōtai* is a prominent characteristic of photographs in postwar popular photography journals, envisioned most readily in depictions of women.

Through their clothing, posture, and surroundings, photographs of women at times signified modern European/US-American influences—the "new" and "foreign" aspect of Japan's *fukugōtai* culture. Indeed, the media often used women to promote the diffusion of European/US-American, especially American, culture into Japanese society (Yoshimi, 2015), a process that continued well into the 1950s as Cold War pressures moulded Japanese women in the media as symbols of democratic progress, economic recovery, and modern domesticity (Bardsley, 2014: 2). Fashion itself reflected effects of the Occupation on formations of Japanese cultural identity. According to political scientist and museum director Marloes Krijnen, fashion is "one of the most primal ways humans define their identity" and a "powerful tool" that "communicate[s] who we are" (2019: 3). Postwar Japanese society witnessed an intense interest in European/US-American clothing styles almost from the start of the Occupation, and Japanese at the time considered this era to be a new epoch in Japanese clothing trends, as discussed in Katō Tomoko's essay "*Saiken Nihon no fukusō*" ("Clothing of a Rebuilt Japan"). By taking old materials and old clothing, Katō declared, Japanese women could make something new and express their own individuality and style (Katō, 1946: n.p.). The accompanying illustrations, all showcasing European/US-American designs, plainly indicate that the author envisioned a new postwar fashion defined by European/US-American trends. Articles like Katō's appeared frequently in early postwar media, anticipating the European/US-American clothing "boom" from the early 1950s.

Scholar Koizumi Kazuko calls the postwar boom in European/US-American fashion a clothing revolution, emphasising this point by looking to the sudden increase in European/US-American dressmaking schools. In the first years after the end of the war, European/US-American styles were not sold in Japanese stores—women had to make their own, leading to an explosion in European/US-American dressmaking schools. In 1947, there were 400 such schools with around 45,000 students. By 1951 this rose to 2,400 hundred schools, and by 1955, there were 2,700 schools with around 500,000 students. This was a nearly one thousand percent increase in students in less than ten

years (Koizumi, 2008: 30-31). Japanese street photographers captured this clothing revolution on film. Yamada Shuhei, for example, snapped a photo of a young girl on a sidewalk dressed in long skirt, bobby socks, and saddle oxfords, engrossed in reading a magazine illustrated with women in European/US-American designer fashions. Yoshida Senzo's "Dress Making School" depicts young designers adorning models in their European/US-American-style creations; and "Diōru shō yori" (English title "Intense Interest") by Ōtsuka Gen shows an audience of Japanese women riveted by models in Christian Dior garments walking down the runway. In each of these instances, photography, as a product of cross-cultural encounters, demonstrates Japanese society's widespread embrace of European/US-American clothing styles.

Despite their popularity, representations of European/US-American fashions in Japanese photography magazines did not completely supplant images of Japanese clothing customs. [18] Photographs of women in kimono usually incorporate other elements—*shoji* screens, tea, *tatami* flooring, ink scrolls—that work to reinforce an image of traditional Japan. Notably, photographers made a clear distinction between photographing women in Japanese- and European/US-American-style garments, illustrated by two articles in a special publication on photographing women by ARS publishing. In "Kimono no josei wo utsusu" ("Photographing Women in Kimono"), the author cautioned readers to consider carefully kimono patterns and hairstyles (Fukuda, 1952: 34-37). The kimono should be of simple colour and pattern to make the woman's face and figure more beautiful, the author explained, and the hairstyle should be short or gathered up to expose the nape of the neck. The author concedes that a more modern (i.e. urban) environment could provide refreshing contrast to kimono; however, most photographs in this article show women indoors with a *shoji* screen backdrop or in a garden setting. While the author failed to mention so specifically, the use of such props and backdrops was clearly meant to underscore the Japanese-ness of the clothing.

In the second article, titled "Yōsō josei no satsuei: Sutairu to fukusō sono ta" ("Photographing Women Dressed in Western Style: Style, Clothes, etc") the author emphasised the individuality of the women as an inherent element of European/US-

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[18] In her study of representations of Japan and the Occupation in *The Japan Times* from 1945 to 1964, Fabienne Darling-Wolf argues that the experience of European/US-American cultural influences was one of "hybridisation rather than imposition", pointing to photographs showing how Japanese incorporated European/US-American cultures into their own traditional cultural practices such as *hina matsuri* (doll festival) and *geisha* who served European/US-American Christmas shoppers (2004: 415).

American fashion. Even if the garments suit one model, he stated, she cannot wear them if the clothes match those worn by another (Nagashima, 1952: 32-34). Noticeably, one of the models poses with English-language fashion magazines. It was common at this time for objects of obvious European/US-American origins to appear as props in portraits of women wearing European/US-American-style garments, or to photograph the women in urban environments, usually in close proximity to automobiles or imposing ferroconcrete buildings. As with the photographs that accompanied the previous article, the environment and props reinforced the clothing and appearance of the women.

Photographers negotiated an identity that was both Japanese and yet one that incorporated European/US-American influences by sequencing photographs of women in distinctly Japanese and distinctly European/US-American clothing styles, thus highlighting the *fukugōtai* nature of Japanese culture. Editors frequently juxtaposed images that featured European/US-American and Japanese material culture in two-page spreads or in a succession of photographs. Appositions occurred with other cultural material as well. In a June 1953 issue, *Asahi Kamera* sandwiched an article on photographing European/US-American cuisines between photos of traditional farm life in Akita and sumo wrestling. *ARS Shashin Nenkan* printed a photo of a stylish Tokyo family dressed in the latest European/US-American trends on a day out in the famed Asakusa entertainment district opposite a depiction of village life in the rural snow country (1951). And in a December 1948 two-page spread in *Koga Gekkan*, two Japanese children decorate a Christmas tree on one page, while on the next an *oni* (demon) Nō mask floats eerily against a black background. These represent only a small fraction of the many juxtapositions between Japanese and European/US-American material cultures that appeared in popular photography journals.

At times, this complex Japan-European/US-American binary existed within a single frame. A photograph in the 1949 *ARS Shashin Nenkan* depicts a woman standing on a sidewalk, seemingly frozen in time as the street activity whirls around her. With stylish permed hair, dark lipstick, and a fashionable blouse, the woman seems like she could pose on the cover of *Vogue* or *Harper's Bazaar.* Behind her, two women walk across the frame robed in elegant kimono. Similarly, in a photo essay on Asakusa's "*Sanja Matsuri*" (*Asahi Kamera*, September 1955)*,* photographer Tanuma Takeyoshi included what quickly became a famous snapshot of two young girls dressed in kimono and striped *happi* coats mingling in the street next to two girls in cardigans and swing skirts.

Juxtapositions between Japanese and European/US-American clothing—whether they appeared across multiple pages or within a single frame—show how photographers and editors negotiated cultural identity through a Japan-European/US-American binary by retaining clear depictions of Japanese culture even in the face of a European/US-American cultural invasion. On the other hand, the inclusion of both within a single frame highlights how elements of the two cultures frequently encountered one another in the streets and in everyday life, rather than existing in strictly separate spheres, thus suggesting a process of cultural hybridisation in the early postwar period. And finally, it is notable that depictions of Japanese cultural practices rarely appeared subordinate to European/US-American cultures—an important point considering the hegemonic position of the US vis-à-vis Japan during the Occupation. Rather, photographers frequently portrayed both in an equally positive light.

Cross-cultural encounters and mutual influences

This article has examined how popular photography journals functioned as sites of cross-culture exchange between Japanese and European/US-American photographers. This exchange had a profound impact on the development of postwar Japanese photographic trends, among them the rise of nude photography as a type of art photography, and the widespread appeal of human-interest photography—that is, photographing people in their everyday lives. Concerning the latter, Japanese photographers found particular inspiration in famed photographers such as Brassaï and Doisneau for their ability to centralise the emotional impact of the photographed subject.

Examining photography as a site of cross-cultural encounter also sheds light on the diffusion of European/US-American cultures into Japanese society. One of the most prominent examples is the adoption of popular European/US-American fashion trends, but this is by no means the only case. Other evidence of cultural influences include couples walking hand-in-hand (an act discouraged before the arrival of the Occupation), crowds cheering at baseball games and tennis matches, and even Japanese members of the National Police Reserves stylised as the new "Japanese G.I."—an image that appeared in numerous periodicals, including a 7 July 1954 issue of *Asahi Gurafu* (*Asahi Graphic*). "The members of the National Safety Force", the featured stated, "spend their weekend in a fashion they learned from American G.I.s stationed in Japan. They pick up girls around the station and enjoy transient romance in various places." The write-up on the "Japanese G.I."

ends with the simple observation that before 1945, "Japanese soldiers were never allowed to be seen with girls in public". Aside from illustrating the remilitarisation of Japan that began with the so-called Reverse Course in 1947, these images of the "Japanese G.I." display a masculine identity remade vis-à-vis American servicemen. As this and other examples suggest, then, photographic representations of both cultures indicate formations of a cultural hybridity that resulted from cross-cultural encounters in the immediate postwar period.

Photographic influences did not flow in one direction solely from European/US-American to Japanese photographers. A number of the American and European photographers mentioned in this article spent months or even years in Japan, engaging with Japanese photographers and photographing Japanese people, locations, traditions and daily life—later publishing their images for European/US-American audiences. Werner Bischof, for example, sojourned in Japan on his way to an assignment in the Korean War. Upon completion of his work, Bischof returned to Japan and stayed for nearly a year. The images from his time in Japan, published as a monograph in 1954, display an impressive array of subjects and settings that demonstrate his deep appreciation for and interest in Japanese culture. Serene rock gardens of Buddhist temples are interspersed with chaotic, jumbled urban vistas, sumo matches with volleyball and baseball games, and traditional silk dying in Kyoto with colossal cranes in a Tokyo shipyard. Even though his book was published for a German-speaking audience, Japanese audiences also took interest in Bischof's views of Japan. Kimura Ihei, who formed a close bond with Bischof, proclaimed that his photos captured the quiet beauty of Japan with Japanese eyes (Torihara, 2013: 103).

Bischof is just one example among many—what of other photographers? What stimulated their interest in Japan? What subjects did they capture, and how were they represented? How were their photographs received back home? Did contact and exchange with Japan influence European or American photographic trends? Consideration of such questions of cross-cultural encounter and exchange can lead to insights on mutual influences between Japanese and European/US-American photographic communities.

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Representations of Europe in Japanese anime:
An overview of case studies and theoretical frameworks

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ABSTRACT

Europe, as a cluster of cultural elements related to nations, cities, and historical periods, has experienced different representations and recreations in Japanese animated series and films (anime) in the form of European (or European-like) settings. The following article discusses the creation, aesthetic appeal, and uses of these contents. First, tracing a theoretical retrospective that displays the different concepts and conceptions used to understand these contents, to then focus our study in reviewing the European settings of some of the main anime productions that contain this kind of contents: the 1970s shōjo manga *and anime series (comics and tv anime series addressed to girls), the Nippon Animation-originated so-called "Meisaku" group of series, and more "singular" cases, such as Miyazaki Hayao's films. The review carried out shows the use of different sources and intense fieldwork by Japanese creators to recreate particular visions of European (or European-like) settings and the narrative and communicative strategies or even commercial implications of these settings according to the genre, demographics, and media specificity of each project.*

This article mainly consists of a literature review of the different academic sources that have discussed and theorised the iconographic representations, settings, and visions of "Europe" in Japanese animated cartoons (anime). Framing "Europe" as a cluster of cultural elements related to nations, cities, and historical periods, this article compiles and discusses a dense field of theories, concepts, and multidisciplinary approaches related to the representation of those contents in anime; theories that, actually, are still in progress and development. Following this aim, a chronological overview of the question has been developed arguing different theoretical frameworks, such as the condition of anime as a transcultural medium, Iwabuchi Kōichi's (2002) declination of the concept of "mukokuseki", the "anime pilgrimage" phenomenon, and

different theories regarding the representations of Europe-related contents in relation with the internationalisation of anime's circulation.

Through these approaches, the cultural baggage commonly identified as "European" has been studied as an eclectic source to create fictional imaginaries (settings based on reality-based or fantastic European Middle Ages or in imaginary steampunk Industrial Revolutions, among others), while being a useful resource to develop other narrative meanings and themes in the case of 1970s *shōjo manga* and anime series (comics and tv anime series addressed to girls) and the Nippon Animation-originated so-called "Meisaku" group of series. On the other hand, some other particular cases, such as Miyazaki Hayao's films, show relatively accurate depictions of European settings through intense fieldwork by Studio Ghibli's artists and producers: a case that exemplifies the viability of the "anime pilgrimage" framework for the development of future research meant to deepen in other particular cases and related issues.

To assess and discuss any type of contents and iconographic elements that can be found in anime productions, we have to start from the basis that we are dealing with an artistic and cultural production from Japan, a condition that can enable certain cultural specificities in terms of contents and visual elements among other factors (Napier, 2005: 23-4). Moreover, it is widely known that the Japanese cultural industry locates the Japanese audiences as their main market; as several scholars have noticed, there exists a certain scepticism inside the industry regarding the international success that their productions could have (Kelts, 2006: 73-80, 95; Pellitteri, 2010: 3-8, 389-94; Santiago, 2010: 401). In this sense, there has been a consensus among some researchers in understanding an intrinsic "Japaneseness" of anime, a specific appeal in terms of form and contents, similar in conception to reflections of cultural specificity in the cultural productions of other regions and countries of the world (like, for instance, a "Europeanness" in European comics or an "Americanness" in US cartoons, among other possible examples and media), as one of the main reasons why anime and manga have reached a growing international success in overseas markets during the last decades (Schodt, 2012 [1983]; Napier, 2005: 9-10; Pellitteri, 2010: 417-22).

However, what can surprise us is that we can also find a wide range of series and works, from different media, genres, and demographics, centred on non-Japanese contents and settings, most of which being based on depictions of European (or American) cultures, their historical periods, and their current or former countries. In

this sense, the "European cultural baggage" has enjoyed a remarkable fortune among the Japanese media imaginary, to such an extent that virtually every year we can find one or more newly produced series that use, for example, a fantasy Middle Age setting or that can locate a period drama in a "historicised" European country. Europe, in anime, has been understood by authors as Cobus Van Staden as a "genre", as a formal and textual tone that defines a variety of anime series (2011: 179-81). But Van Staden himself is aware of the limitations that the label "genre" bears in order to encompass the complex diversity of representations of Europe and its cultures.

For this reason, we would like to suggest that rather than a genre, Europe in anime would be an iconographic content that "plays" among different genres and demographics as well as throughout different media, either anime, manga or even video games. This iconographic (and narrative) content is formally framed as a *setting*, that it is expressed through the depiction of "real" (at various degrees of precision) European cities or countries, historical periods, and national cultural identities. The mechanisms used to represent these settings are the depiction of some specific European location or culture (expressed in city landscapes, monuments, buildings, and other environmental elements) and the specific nationalisation of the characters, supported not only by their design (ranging from some anatomical traits as their hair, skin and eye colour to the aesthetics and cultural or historical identity of their attires)[1] but also by other textual elements, as their narrative profile (origins or nationality of the character) or even its name, that are more related to the series plot and themes.

To better exemplify this notion, in *isekai*[2] series as *Sword Art Online* (2013) or *Danmachi* (2015) the story is set in video game with a fantasy Middle Age setting, but the characters are Japanese (according to the plot) and the settings show a "generic" Middle Age[3] without any explicit allusion to real European countries or monuments.

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[1] As we will further develop in the following sections, there are some formal attributes (like the shape of the eyes, the noses, or the hair colour) or aesthetic tropes (reflected both in the characters and settings, like the Rococonian aesthetics in *Berusayu no Bara* [1972-3]), recurrent conventions from manga and anime's visual culture, their genres and demographics, that when used in a series set in Europe or a European historical period can subtly reflect and express the ethnic, "national", and cultural identity of the characters portrayed (see Pellitteri, 2010: 100-5). More on this later on.

[2] *Isekai* (literally 'different world') is an anime and manga genre whose plots usually consist in a main character that enters (or is forcibly transported) to a fantasy world, whose setting can combine fantasy Middle Age elements with a science fiction or steampunk appeal. The *isekai* series plots can range from romantic comedy to *mecha* genres or combine a variety of subgenres and registers.

[3] A "generic Middle Age world" is an imaginary setting recreated through the iconic mixture of different Anglo-Saxon and Germanic stereotypes and conventions regarding the period, a vision that is predominant in some of the aforementioned *isekai* series and that is also present in other cultural

On the other hand, in the space opera *Ginga eiyū densetsu* ('The legend of the galactic heroes', 1988-97), Europe does not appear as such, but most of the characters are depicted as Germanic not only through their formal traits and/or clothes, but also by textual elements, such as their names (Reinhard, Kircheis, Reuental, etc…) in relation to the series' plot, offering explicit allusions to a specific real European cultural baggage, in this case the Germanic one.

The theoretical construct that we are tracing here is not absolute, and in fact a number of exceptions and specific cases can be found in series such as *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2001), *Berserk* (1989), *Claymore* (2001), *Shingeki no kyōjin* (2009) and even the heroic fantasy comedy *Slayers* (1995), as well as the aforementioned *isekai* series, among others. All these examples would not fit in our study due to their more "fictitious" settings (and in consequence, a more tangential adoption of the European cultural baggage), framed by other factors than the ones that we are going to deal with.[4] However, its establishment will help us to better define and discuss the idiosyncrasy of the European setting in its more explicit, realistic, and iconic representations, some of which are attached to specific genres or trends, such as the 1970s shōjo series or the "Meisaku"[5] series that will be analysed and further developed throughout the article.

Selecting this focus, this article attempts to lay out an answer to why we find a variety of manga and anime series based on situations and settings that go beyond any Japan-located setting, focussing on the case of the European setting; and which meanings, connotations, and consequences lie behind these iconographic and

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industries, like Hollywood movies. As we will see in the following sections, there are also different Japanese anime and manga series and films—e.g. in *Moero Arthur*: *Hakuba no ōji* (1980), and more contemporary cases in the manga and anime series *Vinland Saga*, among others—that offer a more historically (or sometimes literarily) accurate depiction of some European Middle Age settings, usually recurring to literary sources or historical accounts (see Iguchi, 2010; Danesin, 2016).

[4] For example, and as we have briefly introduced in the previous note, the *isekai* series and their settings would perhaps correspond to a devirtualisation of Germanic myths, folks, and other literary sources, which, combined with some cross-medial strategies, especially connected with the RPG video game industry (defined by franchises such as *Dragon Quest* or *Final Fantasy*, among others), could have established a genuinely appeal towards the adoption of these imageries among their Japanese creators. An aspect that is in fact related to some theoretical frameworks that we are going to review is the conception of anime as a transnational cultural production and its transcultural syncretism, developed by Iwabuchi Kōichi, Marco Pellitteri, Manuel Hernández-Pérez, and Maxime Danesin (Iwabuchi, 2007 [2002]; Pellitteri, 2010; Danesin, 2016: 99-101; Hernández-Pérez, 2017a).

[5] "Meisaku" (literally 'masterpiece') is a term coming from the locution *Sekai Meisaku Gekijō*, 'Series of masterpieces from the world's literature', 1974-1997, anime series that appeared since the mid-1970s adapted from different European and North-American novels and tales mainly oriented to young audiences. The term has been adopted to refer to these productions (and will be adopted by us to the same use) that, as we will see in the following, provide a particular conception of the European setting in anime series.

contextual representations. Due to the systemic "media mix" (Steinberg, 2012) condition of Japanese mass media industries (sharing genres, characters, aesthetic topical conventions, and, in this case, settings, through different media and material products), this article would also entail manga despite its main focus on anime productions, both series and films. In this sense, while a greater focus on manga will be necessary to define the European setting in the 1970s shōjo series, the specificity of anime in its industry and dynamics as a transmedial form (one that encompasses the form of a serial TV product and an animated film) will take a predominant role in our analysis of the representations of Europe in the "Meisaku" tv shows or the works of Miyazaki Hayao, among other case studies.

As we will see, we can trace different particularities in how and why anime and manga adapt and recreate a European setting. While narrative and topical scenarios are usually behind the configuration of the European setting and the sources of inspiration used between creators to develop these settings, as we will see, there can be similar, intrinsic differences in the format of production, broadcasting, distribution as also the audiences of each media form also take a role in the configuration of shows (as the "Meisaku" ones) that are specific of the anime media dynamics, being the use and recreation of Europe framed by this media specificity. On the other hand, anime films set in Europe or European-like settings (as those made by Miyazaki) share similar procedures to recreate the setting, emphasising, as we will see and as it happens with the case of the creators of certain manga series, a notion of "authorship" towards the configuration of an European setting, making this medium particularity remarkably valuable to our research.

The development of this research has also entailed a literature review that organises the main theoretical approaches that have been used to study these contents through a number of studies and disciplines. Which varieties of European settings can be identified? Are they related to narrative genres or to the demographics of the intended audiences? Could the European setting have any role in the commercial success of an anime series? To what extent are they the product of one artist's sources and creativity? Researching these aspects in relation to not only manga and anime but also to other Japanese pop-cultural productions could be an important line of investigation, and an object of interest to better define the cultural identity and representative capacities of anime as a Japanese media form with the (both internal and external)

idiosyncrasies of its industry, and the conceptions regarding the European cultural and historical heritage, that would be reflected in the visual culture and literary sources that some anime makers, *mangaka*, and artists use as a source of inspiration to rebuild European settings and imageries.

1. A theoretical retrospective of European settings in anime series and films

To begin with the study of these iconographic contents, it can be noticed the range of different theories, concepts, and theoretical paradigms as well as a variety of case studies that are remarkably widespread through a number of books, articles, and other academic sources. However, a theoretical starting point to research the "non-Japanese" contents in the making of media content by Japanese creators whose narratives and aesthetics are based on rebuilds of "real" or fantasised" European or European-like setting and characters, can be found in the notion of anime as a transnational and transcultural production. In this sense, the theorisation of *mukokuseki* developed by Iwabuchi Kōichi (2007 [2002]) becomes, being aware of its limitations and weaknesses in the context of anime (and manga), a paradigmatic concept to see how the transnationalism of anime (and manga) is often understood but also to see the possible limits of the concept itself.

As Iwabuchi points out throughout his theory, Japanese popular culture reaches its transnationalism and *mukokuseki* condition through a procedure of "strategic hybridism". Strategic hybridism is perceptible in many aspects of the current Japanese reality (not only in popular culture and its industries), and consists in an attitude in which Japan imagines, adapts, and domesticates what it receives (and has been receiving) from the "other" nations in terms of technologic innovations and cultural heritage (2007 [2002]: 51-3). In this respect, a historical retrospective of contemporary Japanese history is of crucial relevance, especially regarding the procedures of modernisation and industrialisation that Japan experienced since 1868, starting point of the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912).

The need to match and emulate the European and the American powers and their Industrial Revolution led to a forced modernisation in Japan, where the country started to import and adopt a range of technologic and cultural innovations that would transform its national identity in all aspects of daily life and reality. In fact, and regarding popular culture, this process of modernisation was the one that, by the end of the nineteenth century, would lead to the apparition of the first Japanese comics and

animated works, which were strongly influenced by the arrival of American and European artists and films (Schodt, 2012 [1983]: 38-51; Pellitteri, 2010: 86-9; Santiago, 2010: 16, 54-5; Clements, 2013: 28-32).

In these decades, and especially during the Taishō period (1912-1926), Japan experienced a cosmopolitan and urban transformation based on the latest European trends, aesthetics, and fashion that were already influencing the new Japanese cultural productions (Gravett, 2004 [2006]: 20-1; Chappuis, 2008: 56-60; Hu, 2010: 18, 64). These mutual processes of reciprocal influences have been defined by Cobus Van Staden as "Europhilia", a growing interest in European culture, fashion, and aesthetics that, starting in the Meiji period, would establish a cultural precedent that will influence the cultural productions of subsequent decades and periods, as will be exemplified with the different eclectic contents of some anime series and films (2009: 24-5, 2011: 178-81).

Once exposed the considerations, it is important to discuss and critically analyse the different approaches regarding the implications of these dynamics in the development of anime contents. According to Iwabuchi, *mukokuseki* is a formal trait that, based on a procedure of "erasure" of a perceived "Japaneseness" applied to different Japanese products, may turn certain anime productions into "denationalised" cultural productions that achieve a greater success in global markets (2007 [2002]: 28-9, 94-5). The concept *mukokuseki* was not introduced by Iwabuchi, and in fact other terms already existed with a similar use and meaning, such as *nihonjin-banare*, theorised by Satō Kenji (1999). The theoretical origins of *mukokuseki* have to be traced back to the mid-1990s in the work of popular culture theoreticians like Ōtsuka Eiji and Ueno Toshiya, as well as anime's industry personalities such as Oshii Mamoru. In these initial steps of the discussion, *mukokuseki* can be considered as a biased assumption that tries to define anime's Japaneseness through the adoption of the Greco-Roman, then European, canons of beauty in order to make the anime works more attractive to overseas audiences (Otsuka, 1994; Oshii, Itō and Ueno, 1996 cited in Iwabuchi, 2007 [2002]: 28-33). As we will see in this section through different scholars and in the analysis of our case studies (especially when we will deal with the European reception of the and "Meisaku" series in contrast to other Japanese anime productions), the use of these "formal canons" can indeed play a role in the international success of anime series with European settings, but beyond this hypothetical function they are grounded in the principles of anime and manga's

visual culture, which makes the *mukokuseki* discourse more arbitrary and problematic than it initially seems to be.

Returning to Iwabuchi's argument, he offers two different definitions to explain what *mukokuseki* is according to him, both of them being, in his discursive strategy, complementary to each other: on the one hand, *mukokuseki* can be understood as the mixture of elements coming from multiple cultural backgrounds, while conversely it can also mean the elimination of any evident ethnic or cultural appeal, both conceptions being arguably findable in the formal constitution of most Japanese anime (2007 [2002]: 71-2). Iwabuchi prefers this second definition of *mukokuseki* and points out that, according to him, "Japanese media industries seem to think that the suppression of Japanese cultural odour is imperative if they are to make inroads into international markets" (2007 [2002]: 94). In this sense, Iwabuchi, basing his statement on the emergent position of Japan as a major global exporter of cultural productions, considers the erasure of the Japanese cultural "odour" a crucial procedure to achieve anime's commercial success in the overseas markets. These procedures, says Iwabuchi, gave anime, manga, and other Japanese mass media a new denationalised odour of its own, in which the ethnic, racial, and original qualities of Japanese culture are erased, making it look neither Japanese nor associated to any specific country or culture (2002 [2007]: 28-9, 94-5).

Sometimes this framework has been applied to the study of anime's character designs. Scholars such as Frederik L. Schodt or Susan Napier, and anime directors such as Oshii Mamoru, believe that such design is based on a "Caucasian" canon of beauty. A "canon" that conforms to what is frequently called "anime style", which in some sense can be already found in Tezuka Osamu's works in recognisable aspects like the "big eyes" (Schodt, 2012 [1983]: 26-7; Oshii, Itō and Ueno, 1996 cited in Iwabuchi, 2007 [2002]: 28-33; Napier, 2005: 27). However, as we have noticed before, despite the initial influence or inspiration from European or American fashion and cultural productions (like Disney animated works) to develop these formal and aesthetic tropes, they have been deeply integrated in the visual language of manga and anime independently of the setting and plot of a particular series or film. This aspect can question the *mukokuseki* discourse and its idea of a real intention of emulating a "Caucasian" "canon of beauty" (in terms of character design) by Japanese creators or using these formal and aesthetic traits to consciously emphasise the integration of Japanese mass media overseas.

In this sense, Marco Pellitteri suggested that the "big eyes" and other conventions of the essentially labelled "anime style" are not only products of an influence from or inspiration in a European canon of beauty (despite the perceived "universal" or "racially neutral" result that they could have in the eyes of many observers), but rather the prevalence of some formal tropes from the Japanese artistic tradition, which has often tended to more symbolic and conceptual non-realistic representations. Moreover, this formal language ensures a visual homogeneity that enables the possibility of displaying different ethnic and national identities in a quite particular and minimalistic form. These visual codes are, according to Pellitteri, always perceptible as a Japanese artistic trait that makes anime not so odourless as Iwabuchi argues, remaining the same aesthetic tropes even in series with Euro-American contents and settings (2010: 100-5).

However, Iwabuchi maintains that the producers and creators of anime, manga, or video games are aware that their character designs, with an alleged "denationalised" aesthetic appeal often based on non-Japanese facial traits, play a crucial role to the exportation of their productions (2007 [2002]: 28-9, 94-5). By framing *mukokuseki* as an aesthetic pattern—whether one agrees or not with the point of "denationalisation"—we can better understand Japanese pop culture's transnationalism as a condition that, focussing on the case of culture, transcends national and cultural boundaries by offering an artistic representation that cannot be related to a single place or cultural background but also participates in the consolidation of a new contemporary Japaneseness (Iwabuchi, 2007 [2002]: 51-3). A new Japaneseness that, as scholars as Pellitteri have better defined, would correspond to a "transcultural syncretism" of a hybrid nature that contains familiar and universal forms, as well as a different and "exotic" appeal reflected in Japanese creativity, both based on formal and topical aspects (2010: 12-3).

However, the relevance of these theories and concepts for our research lies on their conception of different procedures (as the *mukokuseki* aesthetics, which as we have seen, can be considered a biased assumption regarding some iconic formal and aesthetic traits of anime's visual culture, or the condition of strategic hybridism) that enabled Japanese anime to contain non-strictly "Japanese" contents, iconographic elements, and other cultural representations. In fact, as some scholars have pointed out, these historical factors and aesthetic aspects made Japanese anime a product of cross-cultural creativity that characterises the essence of contemporary postmodern Japan, in which different cultural identities flow and are represented through the audio-visual mechanisms and

techniques of the anime medium (Schodt, 2012 [1983]: 88-93; Azuma, 2009 [2001]: 7-14; Brophy, 2005: 2-5; Napier, 2005: 293-4; Denison, 2010: 1-3; Pellitteri, 2010: 12-3).

In this sense, Napier and Schodt suggested that Japanese popular culture, with their manga or anime "style", offers to Japanese society "another world", a balm that seeks to be apart from contemporary Japanese reality, whose creative flexibility is what also creates its success in Japan (Schodt, 2012 [1983]: 26-7; Napier, 2005: 27). Japanese media create a space where consumers can see their fantasies come true without directly referring to neither a "Japanese" cultural background nor a "western" one (Schodt, 2012 [1983]: 26-7). These transcultural and cross-media capabilities are what Napier labelled as "fantasyscape", a mode of cultural flows based on action and setting, forming a "world of simulacra", a term that Napier introduces as an attribute of her "fantasyscape" concept, which (complementary to other notions of *simulacra* as the one theorised by Jean Baudrillard [1981]) defines a world of entertainment where the audiences can take part in the represented fantasies without participating in anything concretely real (2005: 293-4).

In relation to this theoretical framework, framed by the conception of anime as a transnational production, there are different theories that studied the representations of "western" contents in anime and how they are expressed. Some of them understand these "transcultural" contents and aesthetics as a mechanism to improve the internationalisation of manga, anime, and other Japanese media among overseas audiences and markets. This is for example the case of Amy Shirong Lu, who, following the *mukokuseki* framework and borrowing Satō's *nihonjin-banare* term, categorises the contents of anime series according to different procedures through which anime supposedly attain an "internationalisation" (Sato, 1999; Lu, 2008). Regarding the European or European-like contents and settings, they are located in two of the three "policies of internationalisation" that Lu theorises in her research: a "depoliticised internationalisation" and a "westernised internationalisation".

The first policy understands the "western" and perceivedly "denationalised" settings as a mechanism that improves the internationalisation of anime and its integration in global markets, adopting, according to Lu, a "universal narrative mode" that is participant of the global world and its values. This mode, Lu argues, is expressed with the representation of foreign elements, either in the depiction of explicit locations or taking and adapting European/American literature works as a pretext to include fantasy Middle Age settings

or Greco-Roman myths (Lu, 2008: 171-6). By contrast, this positioning on the "universal narrative mode" can be understood contrary to the consensus of many scholars that defend the stylistic and narrative specificities of anime and manga as what make them distinctive media, being Lu's approach strongly located in the line of the *mukokuseki* discourse and its "denationalised" assumption towards anime's cultural identity.

On the other hand, the "westernised internationalisation" is theorised with a negative connotation, taking the role of a counterpart of Orientalism introducing strictly "western" elements with a demonised depiction of "the West". Lu exemplifies this policy by analysing the antagonistic role that many Caucasian blond characters develop in many anime series, being, according to her, an allegory of a US-American soldier (2008: 176-9). This latter perspective is remarkably interesting, and in fact some authors, namely Tze-Yue Hu, suggest that the representation of European/American contents and settings in anime are a product of a cultural imperialism (2010: 156-8). We are not going to deepen further into these assumptions, but they could be located as remarkably logic and realistic explanations to the presence of "western" contents in anime series. As Azuma Hiroki pointed out, not only were cinema, comics, and animation created in Europe, but also cultural industries were, and more importantly, the hegemonic trends of global popular culture have been traditionally established by European (later also, then mainly US-American) cultural and structural constructs, which, to some extent, influenced the Japanese cultural industries (2009 [2001]: 7-14).

On the other hand, Marco Pellitteri has discussed in depth the syncretic and transcultural nature of the European/American contents in anime. According to his study, during the "Dragon Phase" (1975 to 1995) some series that adapted European/American literary works and folklore were benefited by their foreign settings and characters to enjoy a better integration in those very markets.[6] However, he stresses the idea that anime shows are not as odourless as Iwabuchi claims, and emphasises instead the value of Japanese creativity, expressed in their art, themes, and topics: the factors that have defined anime's cultural specificity and hold a commercial appeal among overseas audiences.

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[6] The "Dragon phase" is one of the two phases of exportation and reception of Japanese cultural products in Europe and other regions theorised by Marco Pellitteri in his work (2010). According to Pellitteri, the Dragon phase is the one framed by the arrival of the first anime series in the European markets during the 1970s until the 1990s. Being mainly produced for Japanese audiences, the arrival of Japanese narrative media products in that phase was supported by foreign distributors and TV channels, establishing a first generation of anime consumers in Europe that developed their own reception and subcultures towards these series as well as a range of licensed and unlicensed products (Pellitteri, 2010: 389-94).

Under these parameters, the non-Japanese contents and settings are iconographic elements that take different forms and uses, establishing the syncretic and transnational essence of anime (Pellitteri, 2010: 117-9, 300-1).

Pellitteri's argument could be in dialogue with Manuel Hernández-Pérez's position, which deepens Lu's theories offering new considerations regarding the study of non-Japanese contents in anime series and also reviewing some assumptions of the *mukokuseki* discourse. On the one hand, Hernández-Pérez suggests that rather than a denationalisation of the medium, defined by an absence of allusions to specific cultural backgrounds, we are in front of a "westernisation" of the narrative, where the cultural hybridisation between the "West" and the "East" (manifested in visual elements such as the character designs, the settings, and other contents) is extracted from specific easily recognisable cultural sources (such as real historical periods or literary works, among others) that can be easily recognised and known by the viewers. This "westernisation" of the narrative is what Hernández-Pérez has labelled "Analogy adaptation", respecting certain iconic components that are relevant enough for viewers to establish a minimum connection with the work or element that is being adapted inside the intrinsic dynamics of the creative process and its particular visual language (2017a: 46-8, 113-5).

According to Hernández-Pérez, the "western" contents that we can find both in the character designs and in the hybridisation of themes and settings (which would encompass the representation of historical periods and the adaptation of literature works and myths, among many others) corresponds to an aim of representing the foreign cultures with an "exotic appeal". These depictions are usually shaped by purely aesthetic or creative criteria, siding in what other scholars like Rayna Denison coined as a "positive Occidentalism"[7] regarding the representation of the non-Japanese cultures in anime series. However, the non-Japanese contents can also be connected to other factors, like a commercial strategy, introducing the possibility of a success of the product overseas through the representation of "universal"—or better, culturally diverse—contents from different geo-cultural sources (Denison, 2010: 6-12; Hernández, 2017a: 49-51).

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[7] Contrary to Edward Said's Orientalism (1978) and his critical deconstruction of "Western" essentialised stereotypes and conceptions regarding a different, understood as inferior, "other" (Asian, Muslim, African, or Latin American civilisations), Occidentalism is a critical discourse appeared in the 1990s that analyses the negative and imperialistic stereotypes regarding the "Western world" (Europe and North America) constructed by Asians or Africans (Chen, 1995: 3-12). Therefore, when Denison is refferring to "positive Occidentalism"—an idea that she borrows from Creighton [1995]—she is pointing out the "positive" appeal and tone of the representations of the "West" in anime works through a creative process that mixes elements from multiple cultural origins (2010: 226).

On the other hand, and without being a part of this theoretical field, in our research we would like to compile and consider an alternative, "new" rising approach and methodology. Theoretically undefined as such by the academic literature on the issue, we are going to defend this perspective as one that also deals with the study of Euro-American and non-Japanese contents in anime but regarding the analysis of more empirical sources and elements. This perspective is the one that aims to understand the western (and then European) settings as products of a *specific* artist or anime director (along with their project staff or even an anime studio, among other authors) also through the sources or particular interests employed during their creative process. This procedure entails the analysis and study of the author's personal experiences (like trips carried out to the countries where the anime will be set) as also the use of different literary sources, from history books, films and novels, to tourism guides, and a whole visual culture in other media (both Japanese and foreign) hosting or displaying the stereotyped constructs that exist in Japan regarding other countries and their native cultures.

Obviously, the study of these ontological elements is present in the *mukokuseki* discourse, in the theoretical framework of anime as a transnational cultural production, and in other paradigms or approaches regarding Japanese popular culture. In fact, the comparison of the images from tourism discourses with the construction of some settings in anime series does not move away from the theoretical framework of global transnationalism and cross-media narratives. However, the development of this approach could be notably complex due to the necessity of accessing primary sources (which in some cases could be available in some of the own artist's publications, e.g. interviews in magazines and art books, among others); and this means that we should have to limit the research to case studies, that is, specific series, genres, or artists.

In fact, this tendency to focus and delimit the study is what has happened with the academic articles and works that have addressed our question following these interests and methodologies. An example of this trend is found in the publications developed around the figure of Miyazaki Hayao and Studio Ghibli, such as the ones written by Helen McCarthy (2002 [1999]) or Pau Serracant (2017), and more recently the case of the historical manga-anime series *Vinland Saga* (2005), where Maxime Danesin (2016, 2017) has analysed how Yukimura Makoto adapted different Norse narratives and European Middle Age history in order to offer a particular depiction of the Vikings' era. Moreover, research as those carried out by Marie Pruvost-Delaspre and Manuel

Hernández-Pérez have applied some concepts like "domestication" (Tobin, 1992) and "fictionality" (Gjerlevsen 2016; Zhao 2011) to define the concretion of cultural stereotypes and imagined constructs in Japan regarding foreign countries, an aspect that can be found not only in anime and manga series but also in the *gaikoku mura*[8] or other thematic parks, like Tokyo Disneyland (Pruvost-Delaspre, 2016: 75, 85-7; Hernández-Pérez, 2017b: 44-54).

Both studies, being based on the analysis of novels, literary sources, and travel guides employed by the authors of specific productions, take into account the appeal that the European countries (as either realistic faithful depictions or stereotyped cultural *pastiches*) hold among the Japanese audiences in their imagination and as real "dreamland" places to travel to (Pruvost-Delaspre, 2016: 74, 85-87; Hernández-Pérez, 2017b: 44-51). This nexus between media and tourism discourses could relate this approach to what we are trying to delimit and develop within the "media pilgrimage"[9] studies, a phenomenon that in the case of manga and anime series has been discussed regarding the appeal that some Japanese monuments and iconic places represented in anime exert among European and American audiences, who aim to visit Japan in order to experience such an attractive culture (see for example Okamoto, 2015; Sabre, 2016). However, in our field of interest the media pilgrimage discourse could be reversed to the analysis of how the depictions or a recurrent interest regarding European cultures has encouraged Japanese audiences to visit European countries, like the aforementioned studies demonstrate in the analysis of the sources and experiences of some Japanese anime creators, such as Miyazaki Hayao.

Constructing this theoretical corpus, the representations of non-Japanese settings in anime series can be understood as a product of different transnational and transcultural procedures framed by historical, commercial and even political realities. Shaped by these factors and conditions, the different theories and approaches that we have compiled and

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[8] Japanese theme parks focussed on recreating specific countries and their cultures (Hernández-Pérez, 2017b: 47-51).

[9] Media pilgrimage is a term used to define those trips and visits, made by audiences and fans, to all those places that have become especially iconic and popular (globally, regionally, or in specific countries) due to their presence in certain mass media, such as successful film franchises, comics or TV series, among others. Once fascinated by the contents of these works, the audiences develop the interest in visiting the places and settings that appear represented in that media product in order to recreate or recall some of the most iconic moments of their favourite series or films (Sabre, 2016: 8-9). In the framework of Japanese popular culture, the media pilgrimage phenomenon has taken the form of "anime pilgrimage", a sub-category that consist in visiting places depicted in anime, manga or video games, taking part in what Okamoto labels as "otaku tourism" (2015: 21-4).

analysed thus far have been used to understand the variety of hybrid and eclectic non-Japanese settings and characters in different plot constructs and genres, most of which built through elements from the European/American cultural baggages and their historical periods. Having this framework in mind, there exist a range of studies focussed on the analysis of the Middle Ages' settings and their, fantasised, presumably "gothic" imaginary, typical of the fantasy and *isekai* genres (see for example Chappuis, 2008; Griffith, 2009; Iguchi, 2010; Danesin, 2016, 2017), which also present representations of an either vague or more precise Christianity with its iconography, or other religions (see Drazen, 2003, 2017; Suter, 2009; Barkman, 2010; Mousavi, 2014); or on the subgenre of vampires, as a result of a re-interpretation of the horror genre (see Browning and Wayne, 2008; Denison, 2010: 155-63); and, at a lesser extent, works that analyse the adaptations of classical Greco-Roman myths or history and the ancient world in anime series (see Chappuis, 2008; Bryce, 2012: 377-94).

2. Europe in anime series and films:
A setting negotiated between being an iconic depiction or an idealised place

In the previous section we have carried out a retrospective account of a theoretical discussion that starts from the conception of Japanese popular culture as a transnational cultural production which, through a transcultural creativity, attracts audiences in both a local and a global scenario. Besides such conceptions, we should also take into consideration Japanese contemporary history and its development (defined first by the Meiji restoration and later in the WWII postwar period), which have transformed and defined the Japanese cultural industries and their conceptions regarding "western" countries. To study the representations of Europe in anime series, we are going to apply these theoretical discourses and methodological approaches to the analysis of different demographics, industrial trends, and genres where, through the analysis of different paradigmatic examples, we can categorise and define different types of European settings, each one with its own formal, contingent, and meaningful idiosyncrasies.

These types of setting can be roughly divided into three branches of anime productions: the shōjo series made in the 1970s (intended as original manga series, as anime adaptations transposed from the manga series, and as original anime series without a previous manga series), the "Meisaku" group of series, and more recent anime works, a latter category that would range from the 1980s to our days. These groupings are based

on different industrial, historical, and creative factors. As we will see, the European settings of the first two categories will be framed by a specific audience target and genre that at the same time participate of different industrial and historical dynamics as well as media specificities, reproducing a setting that can be defined and grouped by sharing topical and aesthetic conventions. By contrast, in the group of the more recent anime we are going to comprehend a wide range of anime series, genres, and trends whose European settings have a more eclectic and heterogenous nature that cannot be easily identified in "formulas" as the ones of the shōjo series or the "Meisaku" series.

Despite the ambitious scope of this latter category, whose case studies could well be the objects of further research, an interesting argument to support our position and explain this creative status would lay in the notion of "postmodernity" developed by philosopher Azuma Hiroki. According to Azuma, the diversity and cultural eclecticism of anime and manga's contents are based on a breakdown of the Japanese cultural, traditional, and national roots in favour of the representation of these same aspects (and other from different cultural backgrounds) within a capitalist model of consumption imported from the United States (2009 [2001]: 7-14). Such a condition is also behind the European contents of the shōjo and "Meisaku" series, whose historicised depictions of the European continent or of the Americas cannot be understood without assessing the postmodern condition of contemporary Japanese culture; as is also the theoretical construct that we have developed in the previous block, in aspects such as the procedures of domestication (Tobin, 1992; Pruvost-Delaspre, 2016: 75, 85-7) and the idea of a "new Japaneseness" theorised by Iwabuchi (2007 [2002]: 51-3) and Pellitteri (2010: 12-3). However, Azuma introduces this assumption of postmodernity in the framework of the transformations that the otaku subculture and the anime industry experienced throughout the 1980s and 1990s, which expanded the popularity, demographic range, and creative scope of different genres and narrative tropes such as science fiction or fantasy (2009 [2001]: 7-14). As we will see, taking into account the European setting of these more contemporary productions will help us to refine and complete our framework by finding different functions and creative possibilities, among which the notion of "authorship", inspirational resources as well as the popularity of different cities and settings, according to certain temporary factors regarding the production and distribution/consumption of a manga or anime series.

2.1. *Shōjo series of the 1970s: Local sensibilities through foreign dramas*

Our first category are the 1970s shōjo series, a group of manga and anime series that made a recurrent use of European settings and depictions of European cultures, which are remarkably frequent in the framework of anime productions both in the form of anime adaptations from original manga or in influencing the production of original anime works. In fact, the European settings of these series are widely known an aspect by fans and specialists of Japanese popular culture, as an iconic trait that defined the shōjo-oriented series from that decade and the classics of the "genre" at large (see Schodt, 2012 [1983]: 88-93; Berndt, 1996: 93-4, Shamoon, 2007, 2008; Van Staden, 2011: 179, among others).

The predilection for European settings and its cultural background can be already found, according to a range of scholars, in the tastes of young Japanese girls from previous decades, who were attracted to—and advertised about—European fashion and aesthetics since the Meiji period. This phenomenon (which could remind us of what Van Staden coined as Europhilia) has been labelled *shōjo bunka*: it was reflected in a range of aspects of Japanese daily life and culture, from girls magazines, dresses, and furniture, to pictorial genres (such as the *jōjo-ga,* developed by artists such as Fukiya Kōji or Nakahara Jun'ichi) and theatre troupes like the Takarazuka Revue, which was a crucial reference for Tezuka Osamu (author of *Ribon no kishi*, 1953, usually—but not entirely correctly—considered the "first shōjo series") and has been always related to shōjo manga's tropes and evolution (Schodt, 2012 [1983]: 88-93, 2011 [1996]: 253-6; Tezuka, 1987 cited in Hikari: 300-1; Natsume, 1998: 33 cited in Hikari, 2013: 300-1; Shamoon, 2008: 138-9; Takahashi, 2008: 122, 132; Van Staden, 2009: 24; Kalovics, 2016: 10-8).

In the 1970s, the shōjo manga series from that decade and their narrative styles and modes were defined by the outstanding works of some female authors who were named the "The group of flowers of the year 24" (*Hana no 24 Nengumi*), among which Ikeda Riyoko's *Berusayu no Bara* ('The rose of Versailles', 1972-3), adapted in 1979 into an anime series directed by Nagahama Tadao and Dezaki Osamu; Takemiya Keiko's *Kaze to Ki no Uta* ('The Ballad of Wind and Trees', 1976-84), or Hagio Moto's *Poe no Ichizoku* ('The Poe Clan', 1972-6), but also more "mainstream" series by other authors, such as Mizuki Kyōko and Igarashi Yumiko's *Candy Candy* (1976), Izawa Man and Igarashi Yumiko's *Georgie!* (1982-4), or Akaishi Michiyo's *Alpen Rose* (1983-6), among others. These latter cases, remarkably influenced by the works of the Year 24 Group, are better

known *via* the popularity of their anime adaptations (especially in some European markets) and also contain the idea of the foreign setting being partially set in European locations and countries.

According to Frederik Schodt, Jaqueline Berndt, and Deborah Shamoon, the European settings, depicted in the 1970s shōjo series took the role of a remote idealised elsewhere with a strong exotic appeal, radically different from Japanese society and reality, where the recurrent conventions of the shōjo narratives were developed. Some of these themes, like the deconstruction of the feminine subject and the development of transgressive romantic stories (which contain incests, infidelities, idyllic and allusive sexual scenes or homosexual relationships), were hard to conceive in the Japanese society of that moment, which enabled the European setting with a range of creative possibilities due to the depiction of foreign cultures (Schodt, 2012 [1983]: 88-93; Berndt, 1996: 93-4, Shamoon, 2007, 2008). Such a use and depiction of Europe fits with what Pellitteri has coined as the "mimecultural" scenario of anime, a mode of representation present in those anime series that adopt contents, settings, and other visual elements from different cultural backgrounds to develop their original narratives and plots (2010: 396).

These aspects are present in the paradigmatic case of *Berusayu no bara* (Fig. 1), where the European setting is defined by the selection of an iconic place (the court of Versailles), historical period (the Rococonian aesthetics of eighteenth century France prior the ignition of the French Revolution), and the depiction of real historical personalities such as Marie Antoinette, which served to develop a historical fiction framed by the transgressive themes and conventions of the shōjo series. For example, the deconstruction of the female subject is expressed through the character of Oscar, protagonist of the series, who is the daughter of a French general but is raised as a boy, a condition that has strongly framed Oscar's social identity, gendered role, and relationships towards other characters.
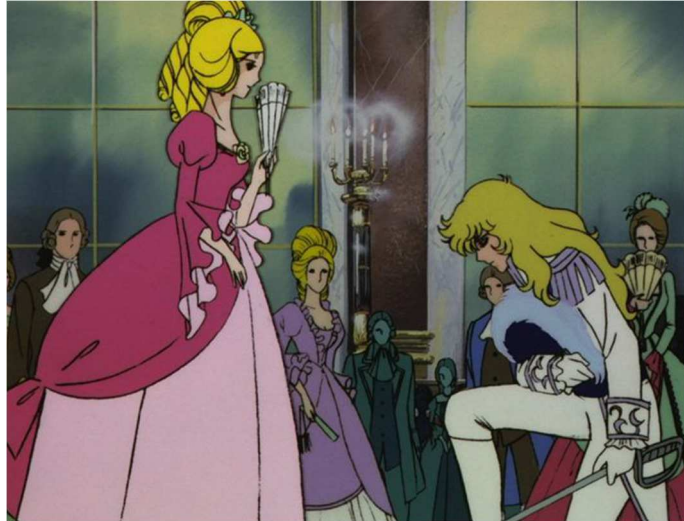
Figure 1. *Berusayu no bara*'s anime adaptation (1979) © Ikeda Riyoko / TMS Entertaiment.

Jaqueline Berndt has pointed out that these circumstances reinforced the freedom of speech of the series' plot and its characters, endowing the court of Versailles with a hypocritical community of aristocrats and developing some socially endearing romantic stories, such as the tragic romance between Oscar and André, which introduces a class conflict between nobility (Oscar) and rising bourgeoisie (André) and can also simulate a homosexual relationship, using Oscar's androgynous design as "always playing with the sexual ambivalence of the homoerotic sexual fantasies" among the interests of the adult female readers and audiences (Berndt 1996: 104). Moreover, the use of a setting framed by the French Revolution allowed Ikeda to imbue her work with a "revolutionary" spirit towards political sensibilities and other public issues that surrounded Japanese society during those decades (Berndt, 1996: 101-6). Some of these aspects are further developed, also adding new dimensions and details, in the animated adaptation by Nagahama Tadao and Dezaki Osamu, especially through the last quarter (episodes 30 to 40, which were mainly directed by Dezaki) of the anime series. These episodes encompass the enrolment of Oscar and André in the French army after a dramatic heartbreak between them, developing the evolution of the characters in their personal dilemmas and love story parallel to development of the French Revolution in its different social movements, classes, and secondary characters (like the subplots of Alain or Oscar's father). These scenarios, which in sum expand the dimensions of Revolutionary France's setting in the anime of *Berusayu no bara,* also reflect the impact that certain anime products, as a medium and in their industrial dynamics of production and distribution (sometimes involving the

elongation of the adapted manga or franchise through new episodes) could have in the recreation, creative capabilities, and development of a European setting.

On the other hand, we can further dig into the discussion of this way to use the European setting by applying, for example, concepts such as domestication, in the sense of how the Rococonian aesthetics and historical aspects are redefined to emphasise the otherness and exotic appeal of the European (here, French) cultures and countries. As we can see in the case of *Berusayu no bara*, its setting represents an idealised, historicised, and, as Ogi Fusami suggested, feminised depiction of France's history that serves to better expressing the themes and issues that shōjo series at large aim to transmit (Ogi, 2001, 2004 cited in Antononoka, 2016: 36-43).

However, the European setting in shōjo series goes beyond this narrative function and is also framed by some political factors regarding Japan's postwar context. To better sustain this point, Takemiya Keiko, in an exceptional interview carried out by Ogi Fusami, points out how the notion of "Asia" was a taboo entity during postwar Japan, which implies a political and historical condition that favoured the predilection for American-European settings in a context that, borrowing Hu's considerations, could denote a situation of cultural imperialism (Takemiya in Ogi, 2008: 152-6; Hu, 2010: 156-8).

Takemiya also states the relevance of girl magazines from previous decades, and their aesthetics based on European fashion, as a heritage that located the European settings as a convention of shōjo series, encouraging her to visit Paris in order to improve her depictions of the continent (Takemiya in Ogi, 2008: 152-6; Hu, 2010: 156-8). However, Takemiya's testimony about the political connotations of some contents and settings is also remarkably relevant to better understand the wide presence of European settings in some anime series and genres. With this statement, we can suggest that the European setting in the 1970s shōjo series goes beyond the role of a narrative mechanism and is also favoured by other socio-cultural factors, related to the political and historical context of Japan.

2.2. The "Meisaku" series: Adaptations of European literary classics

The second trend where we can find European settings is in the "Meisaku" series, a group of works that were made especially during the 1970s and 1980s and basically consisted of anime series drawn from European and (mainly North-) American novels, novellas, and folk tales. This group of series was mainly oriented to young audiences and,

as Marco Pellitteri discusses, they share some conventions and narrative tropes with the shōjo series due to their novelistic component, an aspect that will also be reflected in the depictions of their European settings (2006: 63). In contrast to the shōjo series, the "Meisaku" ones were mainly defined by the dynamics of the anime industry with its patterns of production and broadcasting, and most of them consisted of weekly tv anime productions ranging from about 40 to 52 episodes (an annual programming coverage), which, along with other related films or tv specials, were developed by some anime studios that would specialise in the production of such series, as was the paradigmatic case of Nippon Animation.

The starting point of the "genre" is to be located in 1974, with the release of *Arupusu no shōjo Heidi* (produced by Zuiyo Eizō, directed by Takahata Isao and drawn from Johanna Spyri's novel *Heidi*), whose global success enabled the creation of Nippon Animation studio and the now well-known franchise of the many *Sekai Meisaku Gekijō* series ('Series of masterpieces from world's literature', 1975-1996): more than 20 tv anime series, adaptation from mainly European and North-American novels, novellas, folk tales, and other literary formats. More concretely, thirteen of them were adaptations of European novels, including *Furandusu no Inu* ('The Dog of Flanders', 1975), *Ie naki ko* ('Boy without a family', 1978, from Hector Malot's *Sans famille*), or *Princess Sara* (1985, from F. Hodgson Burnett's *Sara Crewe*), and many more. Moreover, some of them, such as *Haha wo tazunete sanzenri* ('Three thousand miles in search of mother', 1975, from the short story *Dagli Appennini alle Ande* contained in Edmondo De Amicis's *Cuore*) and *Akage no Anne* ('Red-haired Anne', 1979 from *Anne of Green Gables* by Lucy Maud Montgomery, who to be fair was Canadian, not European), and more, were productions of high quality in which masters of Japanese animation, such as aforementioned Miyazaki Hayao, Takahata Isao, and Dezaki Osamu, would be involved either in the direction or design during the first decades of their careers (Miyazaki, 1996; Clements, 2013: 149-51). On the other hand, some early Japanese animation films from the 1950s and 1960s, such as the ones produced by Tōei Dōga, as well as the series directed by Dezaki such as *Takarajima* ('The Treasure Island', 1978) in the late 1970s, can also fit the "Meisaku" group due to their plots, themes, and settings. Even some Euro-Japanese co-productions, like *Chiisana Vickie Viking* ('Little Viking Vickie', 1974), *Wanwan Sanjūshi* ('The Three Muskehounds', 1981) or *Meitantei Holmes* ('Detective Holmes', 1984) contain European settings following some narrative and visual tropes of the "Meisaku" category.

According to Marco Pellitteri, the "Meisaku" anime series are remarkably indebted to the *Bildungsroman* literary genre and its narrative tropes. The *Bildungsroman* ('Coming-of-age') literature originated in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and consisted of personal growth narratives, usually starring young characters who evolve from their childhood to confront the adulthood throughout the story, developing a pedagogical use for the readers, who were mainly children and students. Works such as *David Copperfield* (1850) or *Oliver Twist* (1839), written by Charles Dickens, are paradigmatic examples of this narrative genre (Pellitteri, 2006: 57-9).

In the case of the anime adaptations, the tragic, lyric, and dramatic component of these stories is emphasised, offering a "Japanese" version of these European literary works according to the values of Japanese society. Pellitteri shows that these aspects are exemplified in the figure of the orphan, usually the main character of these series, who displays an alternative shape of what Pellitteri defines as one of the various representational and recurrent tropes of anime, the "infant" (usually associated with *kawaii* aesthetics). Through these characters, a cathartic dialogue develops between the freedom of Japanese children and how they face the normativeness of adult society. The Japanese cultural specificity of these adaptations, combined with the European settings and characters, generate a syncretism in which the series contain moral messages mainly oriented to a Japanese audience but that can participate in a global strategy that reaches foreign children transculturally (Pellitteri, 2006: 60-4, 2010: 120-1, 208-12, 218-9).

These anime series, as well as the *Bildungsroman* literature, took the role of a pedagogical literature aimed to young audiences, where Japanese viewers can enjoy a vision of the world's multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism, also displayed *via* the exotic appeal that these foreign imaginaries arouse in them (Pellitteri, 2006: 60-4). Moreover, these aims match the involvement of Miyazaki Hayao and Takahata Isao in some of their productions and their particular ideology regarding what anime and its industry is, or is supposed to be. In some interviews and other media, Miyazaki pointed out that with series such as *Haha wo tazunete sanzenri* Takahata and him sought to offer to the children a product that was not frivolous (as were most of the successful productions of the moment), creating series with real pedagogical values regarding the problems of real society (Miyazaki, 2009 [1996]; Clements, 2013: 149-50, Serracant, 2017: 126-7).

The European settings and contents that the "Meisaku" series deploy would pertain to what Pellitteri defined as the "exocultural scenario" of anime settings, which encompass those series that adapt a foreign narrative combined with different values and messages from Japanese cultural environment according to the Japanese public, the main and direct audience of anime at large (2010: 396).

In a more formal and aesthetic approach, Van Staden has analysed the setting of series like *Heidi* concluding that the Alpine landscape is conceived as a remote and ancestral paradise, modified, fictive, and away from reality, understanding the European cultural heritage as a dramatic and emotional resource for these works. According to his position, Heidi's Alpine setting shows an idealised representation of Europe in a similar trope to the one that we can find in the 1970s shōjo manga series (2009: 24). On the other hand, scholars who have studied Euro-Japanese co-productions, such as Jose Andrés Santiago Iglesias, have also theorised about the plots and contents of these series. Being these productions financed by European distributors and mainly oriented to European audiences, Santiago suggests that the aim to adapt European literary works, as well as set the stories in European settings and historical periods with Caucasian characters, was encouraged and legitimated in order to trace a link with the audiences, as it could be exemplified with cases such as aforementioned *Wanwan Sanjūshi* (1982) or *El Cid no bōken* ('The adventures of El Cid', 1984) (2018: 6-7).

These considerations can be reflected in *Romeo no aoi sora* ('The blue skies of Romeo', 1995), an adaptation of the Swiss novel *The Black Brothers* (1949) written by Lisa Tetzner and one of the later (and shortest) anime works of the "Meisaku" set (Fig. 2). The series tells the story of Romeo, a boy who is kidnapped and forced to work in Milan as a chimney cleaner. Along the series we can see Romeo's growth as a person and how he meets the values of friendship, sympathy, and love while overcoming different problems, tragedies, and deaths. This *Bildungsroman*'s plot and its narrative tropes are developed in a historicised European setting, nineteenth century industrial Milan, which is easily recognised *via* iconic symbols like its gothic Cathedral, but also includes some crude and "dark" depictions of the rising European industrial and capitalist societies.

Figure 2. *Romeo's Blue Skies* (1995) © Nippon Animation.

This is an aspect reviewed by Thomas Lamarre regarding *Fushigi no umi no Nadia* ('Nadia of the mysterious sea', 1989), a steampunk anime and freely inspired adaptation of Jules Verne's *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* (1870), in which we can also identify the depiction of some crude aspects of nineteenth century European society like racism, western imperialism, or industrial pollution (2009: 155-65). In the case of *Romeo*, these symbolisms can be reflected in the depiction of nineteenth century Milan as an industrial and hostile environment that surrounds the characters' growth, emphasising their problems and tragedies but also their belief in a better future. Like in the 1970s shōjo manga series, a historicised and sometimes idealised depiction of Europe serves as a narrative mechanism that emphasises the genre's themes and conventions, which in the case of the "Meisaku" series are a pedagogical finality to the young audiences.

In a more historiographical and industrial sense, it has been widely argued how not only the "Meisaku" anime series, but also some of the 1970s shōjo manga/anime series, were part of a "first round" of anime productions broadcast in Euro-American countries (especially in the European continent) during the 1970s and 1980s; a period that could be also labelled as the "Dragon phase", using Pellitteri's terms. The arrival of these series marked a precedent in the establishment of a first generation of anime fans, while, in most European markets, more general audiences did not even know that they were facing Japanese animation works (see Schodt, 2011 [1996]: 59-62; Moliné, 2002: 58-9, 68; Van Staden, 2009: 24; Hu, 2010: 122; Pellitteri, 2010: 69-74, 389-94). In this sense, if we analyse the European setting of the "Meisaku" series through the *mukokuseki* theoretical framework (standing a critical positioning towards this conceptn as we have noticed

previously) in a comparative and historical dialogue with some of the anime industry's trends, we can obtain new assumptions directly implying the potential role that their European setting could develop in the commercial success of these series in overseas markets, especially in Europe. Morever, these considerations that we are going to develop are also framed by some intrinsic aspects of anime as a medium, more concretely its dynamics of production, distribution, and broadcasting, that gave place to specific tv anime productions as the "Meisaku" series.

According to Jonathan Clements, Ishiguro Noboru, and Ohara Noriko, the "Meisaku" shows and the shōjo series were part of an "alternative field" of Japanese anime productions more oriented to family and young audiences due to their focus on romantic stories, dramas, and the adaptation of literature classics. Why were both types of anime productions an "alternative" in the anime market? Because the "mainstream" trend of the anime industry in the 1970s and 1980s (and its main evolution path during the following decades) were science fiction anime, as can be seen in space opera series such as *Uchū senkan Yamato* ('Space battleship Yamato', 1974) or *mecha* franchises such as *Kidō senshi Gundam* ('Mobile troop Gundam', 1979), mainly oriented to male audiences and crucial to the establishment of the *otaku* subculture (Ishiguro and Ohara, 1980 cited in Clements, 2013: 148, 150; Kinsella, 1998, 1999; Pellitteri, 2010: 151-6, 165-73; Clements, 2013: 148-50).

Both trends of anime series played a crucial role in the distribution, popularity, and reception of anime productions in Europe during the 1970s-1980s, an aspect emphasised by the "tv show" media condition of these series. However, analysing the European context of the "Dragon phase" (especially the subperiod between the 1970s and the end of the 1980s), we can identify how the division between the two trends is stressed, the "different" appeal of the "Meisaku" and shōjo series emerging as an alternative type of anime works in contrast with the science fiction ones. This difference could be identified because the two types of anime series enjoyed different reception among European audiences, a phenomenon that can be understood as different compartments in the exportation of Japanese creativity and culture.

To better support this point, Marco Pellitteri's study regarding the different phases and strategies of the arrival of Japanese anime in Europe becomes an essential resource. According to his research, science fiction *mecha* series such as *Mazinger Z* or *Ufo Robo Grendizer* exemplified the essence of the "Dragon phase". These series were produced

strictly for Japanese audiences, therefore they showed in Europe something completely new in terms of art, aesthetics, and plots, never seen before on European screens, once they were distributed there (Pellitteri, 2010: 296-324). However, in that phase a number of "Meisaku" anime and shōjo series (some of them analysed throughout this article) were also distributed, hence it can be argued that they had a different appeal among European audiences, attaining part of their commercial success and popularity based on establishing a visual integration with them thanks to their European settings, characters, and plots.

In this sense, it is important to underline again that these series *too* were mainly intended for a Japanese audience, and that they also held a "Japanese odour", not only in their character designs but also in the values and messages behind the plots, offering another instalment or variant of the "infant" model (Pellitteri, 2010: 120-1, 208-12, 218-9). However, Pellitteri suggests that the producers of the "Meisaku" series, like *Heidi* or the aforementioned Euro-Japanese co-productions like *Chiisana Vickie Viking* or *Wanwan Sanjūshi*, also had in mind the idea of exporting them to Europe due to the increasing introduction of Japanese anime in Asia, an aspect that was supported and stressed with the subsequent development of other "Meisaku" series in the context of Euro-Japanese co-productions (2010: 300-1).

Then, despite not having the same "appeal" as series such as *Ufo Robo Grendizer* in the inroads of Japanese anime in Europe, we can argue that the "Meisaku" and shōjo series also established their "strategy" to support their own incursion among the European audiences. This different approach is what we would call an unintended (or more correctly, "passive") redefinition of *mukokuseki,* which can be based on the other definition given by Iwabuchi that understands *mukokuseki* phenomena as the mixture of elements coming from multiple cultural backgrounds, alluding to specific cultural sources like the European one, rather than being a denationalised product. In fact, Iwabuchi's considerations have already been further theorised—or counter-theorised, as we have pointed out previously—by other scholars, for example the already cited idea of anime's transcultural syncretism pointed out by Pellitteri or Hernández-Pérez's theory of the "Analogy adaptation" (Iwabuchi, 2007 [2002]: 71-2; Pellitteri, 2010: 12-3, 117-9; Hernández-Pérez, 2017a: 46-8, 113-5).

Science fiction series also contained *mukokuseki* aesthetics (or more concretely, subject of the *mukokuseki* assumption), in the sense that, due to some formal traits in their designs, the characters could not seem Japanese to a more general audience (that is, inside their

"Orientalist" bias, according to which they would expect that the characters would look Japanese) thanks to the transnational appeal of the Japanese visual conventions. As we have discussed in previous sections focussed on the *mukokuseki* discourse, Pellitteri has argued how these Japanese visual codes and modes of representation remain the same in series with western settings and characters, maintaining a recognisable Japanese "odour" while endowing a syncretic mix of elements from different cultural backgrounds (2010: 100-5). Complementary to this statement, we would like to suggest that thanks to this same transcultural syncretism combined with the typical formal and aesthetic tropes of anime's visual language, in the case of the shōjo and "Meisaku" series these artistic tropes are redefined with an explicit nationalisation of the characters, which, combined with a reciprocal reinforcement with sometimes the adaptation of literary works (which often entailed the depiction of a real setting or historical period, in this case the European ones), enabled a potential better integration of these particular series in overseas markets such as in Europe. However, this transnational reaching is (most of the times) an unintended consequence (at least by the Japanese creators) of the combination of the transcultural syncretism of contents with the visual language of the medium, shaping what we have labelled as "passive *mukokuseki*".

In fact, to reinforce this idea of passive *mukokuseki* (at least from the perspective of the Japanese creators) we have evidence of the procedures of localisation, adaptation, and even censorship that some series received once they arrived *via* European distributors, in order to better suit—according to the producers' assumptions—the local audiences of each country; an aspect that has been further researched by Pellitteri (2010: 395-412). Focussing on the analysis of these two cases (the shōjo series and "Meisaku" genres), framed by different topical and contextual factors as also the specificities of the medium, its industry and distribution, we can identify another dimension (or a more concretely complementary and potential function, whether intentional or not) of the European setting as a mechanism that could enable a greater commercial success of anime among overseas audiences and, in sum, a more accomplished internationalisation of the medium, as Lu pointed out (2008).

2.3. Contemporary anime: Between transcultural syncretism and transnational pilgrimage

So far, in the previous cases, we have seen that the European setting had a wide presence in both anime productions mainly oriented to young girls and series that

adapted European literary works and folks. The European contents of these two trends are formally and conceptually shaped mainly by narrative and topical factors that usually exploit the exotic appeal of European cultural heritage in order to offer historical and/or idealised depictions of the continent. However, as we have stated previously, these representations of Europe are defined and limited not only by specific narrative genres or demographics (understanding demography as the main "target" of audience aimed by the series) but also by the dynamics and trends of the manga and anime industries in given moments of their development.

The European setting, both allegorically and explicitly, is still a recurrent convention in contemporary tv anime series and films after the creative expansion and transformations that the industry experienced during the 1980s and 1990s (Azuma, 2009 [2001]: 7-14, 27-9; Clements, 2013: 157-76), becoming contents that do not strictly adhere to specific genres, conventions, or trends as in the previous decades.[10] As we will see in this last section with different cases, we can find visions of cities, countries, or other European locations covered through different genres, from science fiction and the aforementioned *isekai* fantasy series to historical dramas and even steampunk subgenres. In iconographic and aesthetic terms, these settings could probably be defined with the concept "Europe in a blender" coined by Cobus Van Staden, which, through a meaning similar to Hernández-Pérez's "Analogy adaptation", alludes to the eclectic mixture of different European landscapes and elements in a single hybridised setting (Van Staden, 2011: 180-1; Hernández-Pérez, 2017a: 46-8, 113-5). Pellitteri has pointed out that these settings would pertain to a "hypocultural scenario": anime series with a high blending and mixture of contents from different cultural backgrounds that clearly reflect the syncretic nature of anime contents and the universal appeal that they can exert (2010: 398-9).

However, we will see that in some cases the depictions of Europe go beyond these notions, containing settings that explicitly (and sometimes photorealistically) allude to specific countries and cities, depicting a European setting remarkably different from the historicised and idealised one from the shōjo and "Meisaku" series. In this sense, to better understand these more eclectic representations of Europe, researching the role of the

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[10] Moreover, these industrial dynamics can be comprehended inside what Pellitteri has labelled the "Dazzle phase". The "Dazzle phase" is the period going from the second half of the 1990s to the late 2010s. In contrast with the Dragon phase, the Dazzle phase is defined by the awareness of anime's appeal in overseas markets by the actors of the Japanese cultural industry, who now develop different strategies (such as the "Cool Japan") to promote and sell their popular culture among foreign audiences (2010: 417-22).

creators' (producers or directors) interests and the sources they avail themselves of (usually framed *via* stereotyped constructs) during their creative process becomes crucial: this creative and productive process is shaped by personal experiences or concerns rather than by arguing about the suitability of a setting to a specific genre or theme. One of the most paradigmatic (and researched) cases is that of Miyazaki Hayao and his films for Studio Ghibli, widely analysed by scholars such as Helen McCarthy, Susan Napier or Pau Serracant, and reviewed by Miyazaki himself in some interviews, from which we can know that the depiction of European sceneries in some of his films as *Majo no takkyūbin* (1989), *Howl no ugoku shiro* (2004) or *Kurenai no buta* (1992), and even "Meisaku" anime such as *Heidi* contain direct allusions to some real cities and European countries, with a special predilection towards building a fictional nineteenth century (Miyazaki, 1996; McCarthy, 1999; Napier, 2005, Serracant, 2017).

According to some scholars, in order to trace these European imaginaries, we have to track the various work trips carried out by Miyazaki and other animators to some European countries. During the 1970s, they travelled to Sweden (1972), Switzerland (1973), and Italy (1975) in the context of the production of *Heidi*, *Marco*, and *Nagakutsushita no Pippi* ('Pippi Longstocking', a cancelled anime series project). Later on, Miyazaki would visit Wales, Stockholm, Visby, and Germany for projects like *Tenkū no shiro Laputa* (1985), *Howl no ugoku shiro* and *Majo no takkyūbin*, taking pictures and notes from all these places and being supported by travel guides and photo books. On the other hand, such a fascination with Europe and its countries and cultures is indebted to Miyazaki's closeness to European literature and novels (including *Bildungsroman*) since his childhood (McCarthy, 2002 [1999]: 38-42, 95-7; Serracant, 2017: 48-9, 86-7).

Focussing on the case of *Majo no takkyūbin*, McCarthy suggests, analysing Miyazaki's comments, that the location in which the film is set is a hybrid construct of different European cities, such as Paris, Amsterdam, and Naples, having Stockholm as the main iconographic axis, creating a space that combines the Baltic and the Mediterranean seas (Miyazaki cited by McCarthy, 2002 [1999]: 144). These eclectic amalgams of real places and iconic landscapes have been defined by Miyazaki under the expression "Akogare no Paris" (literally the 'yearned Paris') (Fig. 3), which encompasses the lyric, historicised, and oneiric depictions of Miyazaki regarding European cultures (Miyazaki cited in McCarthy, 2002 [1999]: 55, 65; Napier, 2005: 153). Moreover, according to Hu and Lamarre, these works and settings have—at least partly, and surely in the eyes of many foreign

observers—defined Miyazaki's own "authorship" and appeal towards animation, shaping the identity of his studio and its productions under a "Ghibli brand" that combines a fascination with different cultures and distant futures (Lamarre, 2009: 87-8, 97-9; Hu, 2010: 132-3). As we have briefly introduced in previous sections, this idea of "authorship" and its implications on the recreation of specific contents and settings (in this case European-like ones) is remarkably interesting to understand the European setting in more "singular" anime productions, like Miyazaki's movies and, by extension, Studio Ghibli's), were the European-like settings can be seen as a trait of this "Ghibli brand".

Figure 3. Details from *Howl no ugoku shiro* (2004) and *Kiki's Majo no takkyūbin* (1989). © Studio Ghibli.

The analysis of Miyazaki's experiences, interests, and sources are factors that had a crucial role in the depictions and symbolisms of the European imaginaries from his works. It is from these methodologies that, for example, representations of the Victorian Industrial London or nineteenth century Paris have been analysed in the steampunk genre, adopted as a potential aesthetic and thematic element, or the recreation of historical events and periods such as the Middle Ages in *Vinland Saga* (see for example Lamarre, 2009: 47-59; Iguchi, 2010; Danesin, 2016, among others). From Miyazaki's films like *Laputa*, *Kurenai no buta*, and *Howl*, Ōtomo Katsuhiro's works such as *Steamboy* (2004) or some scenes from Kawasaki Hirotsugu's *Spriggan* (1998), to tv anime series such as *Fushigi umi no Nadia*, nineteenth century Europe is taken as a scenario to develop stories that reflect the rise of technological modernity and militarism in order to transmit a critique regarding misuse of the human progress and the fatal consequences that these actions could cause (Lamarre, 2009: 47-59; Serracant, 2017: 54-7, 90-2, 104-7). Regarding the recreation of historical periods such as the Middle Ages, Maxime Danesin and Iguchi

Atsushi both refer to *Vinland Saga*, which exemplifies the use of both a deep historical reading (in terms of documentation and Norse literature) and trips to Iceland by the creator, in order to offer a fictional but also refined depiction of Nordic cultures, their accounts and costumes, which can exert an appeal among Japanese audiences (Iguchi, 2010: 65-70; Danesin, 2016: 101-7, 2017: 205-10).

On the other hand, there are contemporary anime works that reproduce and depict specific national cultures and places, sometimes following certain stereotyping conventions. An outstanding case is Spanish culture, which Manuel Hernández-Pérez has analysed through his focus on some episodes of *Crayon Shin-chan* (1992), the film *Andarushia no natsu* (2003) and the anime series *So - ra - no - wo - to* (2010) as his case studies. According to his research, the representations of Spanish cities and culture oscillate between the construction of stereotyped and romantic images of Spain in a hybrid *pastiche* of clichés (strongly indebted of the constructed images from travelling guides, cinema, and other mass media), and the "iconic", that is, pictographically faithful depiction of specific landscapes. Hernández-Pérez develops this latter aspect regarding *So - ra - no - wo - to*, whose creators were directly inspired by the city of Cuenca after a tour carried out in 2009, in which the staff were fascinated by the "hanging houses" and other elements typical of that town's aesthetics (Hernández-Pérez, 2017b: 44-53, 60-62).

Similar readings and considerations can be applied to the representations of other European cities and countries, sometimes combining this accurate depiction of some real monuments with their reconfiguration and framed according to narrative interests. For example, in *Jojo no kimyō na bōken Part 5*: *Ōgon no kaze* (1995-99), Italy and some of its cities and monuments are the setting of the most epic moments and battles of the series. According to Araki Hirohiko, author and creator of the series, when he develops a setting in which to locate his story and characters, it is necessary for him to visit these places in order to grasp new realities of the location, its history and culture, that cannot be perceived through photos, books or guides (Araki, 2015: 151-64). On the other hand, narrative finalities are also present in the depiction of Spanish culture in *One Piece* (1997). In this later case, Ōda Eii'chirō found the exotic appeal of Spanish culture suitable for the personality of Donquixote Doflamingo, villain of the Dressrossa narrative arc, whose island setting is based both on cultural stereotypes regarding Spanish culture (like *flamenco* music, Spanish flora or some local dishes, like *paella*) but also in the depiction of some

iconic Spanish monuments, like modernist buildings from Barcelona, bridges, Roman aqueducts, or bullrings (Ōda, 2014: 146).

Combined with narrative necessities and authorship-related interests, we need to also take a crucial variant into consideration: the temporary and sociocultural framework within which the creative process of the series is developed, shaped by the cultural trends of that specific temporary context and the audiences that will enjoy the product. This aspect can be identified in some sport series whose events and competitions enable the representation of European countries and certain cities. An outstanding case is Barcelona, whose 1992 Olympic Games not only broadened the global interest regarding the city but also coincided with the publication period of some sport series like *Yawara!* (1986), created by Urasawa Naoki. *Yawara!* tells the story of Inokuma Yawara, a girl who has been constantly trained in judo by her grandfather Jigorō with the objective of winning a gold medal at the Olympic Games. Published in 1986-93, the development of such a narrative trope and setting, with Yawara aiming to compete in the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games, supposed a logical outcome by the author regarding the sociocultural context of the moment in which the series was being published and its contemporaneity, in which Barcelona was a scenario of global trend.

A similar case can be found with the more recent series *Yuri on Ice!* (2016), where Yuri and Victor, the main characters, visit Barcelona during episode 10 to attend the Grand Prix Final, an international figure skating competition that was celebrated in Barcelona in 2014 and 2015 (Fig. 4). In this case we can identify again how a specific conception of a European setting, formally based on the most iconic places of the city (which in some sense participate in the stereotyping domestication of touristic images and discourses), establishes an analogy with the real time frame in which the series was produced and broadcast, also entailing a process of documentation by its creators regarding the latest trends or conventions of the main theme of the series, which in this case is figure skating.

Figure 4. *Yuri on Ice!* (2016) © MAPPA.

From trips, travel guides, and personal experiences to history books, novels, or movies, or even the temporary framework and cultural background in which some anime series are produced and broadcast, the analysis of these factors and sources in relation to a specific anime and its creators are the ones that could better define the study of not only European but also "non-Japanese" contents at large in a wide variety of recent and new anime. In our review, we have traced this approach as the one that deals with the topical constructions and iconic images present in tourism's visual discourses or other media such as cinema or literature (aspects that are sometimes connected with the media pilgrimage discourses) and finds influences from sources that shape the production of some anime series and their settings.

Conclusions

European settings in anime series are an iconographic content whose meanings and formal shape are the product of an arbitrary condition. This situation is defined by the mutual relationships among different factors, both internal (the creative procedures related to production), sociocultural (which are present in the production of an anime work), and "external", reflected in the different potential roles and functions that the series' setting develops once the product has been broadcast, released, and even distributed overseas. Playing between these scenarios of production and reception, the messages and the functions that the European settings develop are also defined by their transcultural nature. This condition, framed by the use or depiction of foreign cultures and countries by Japanese artists and creators, shapes in fact the appeal of the European setting in contrast with other settings and contents that can be found in other series.

In some cases, the European contents and settings take the role of a narrative mechanism, becoming a convention of a specific genre or trend (see the shōjo and "Meisaku" series) in order to emphasise the appeal of the themes to transmit. This "pragmatic" function of the European setting is always combined with different iconic images, literary and visual sources, or even personal experiences (like trips or memories) that influenced the artist(s)'s creative process during the development of the series and its settings. Geopolitical factors also took a crucial role in the choice of some historical periods for some productions, where a matter of cultural imperialism could legitimate the European contents as an alleged "neutral universalism", while at the same time it could serve to express some themes and ideas that were/are taboo in Japanese society. From this, we can conclude that the narrative uses of European settings is to some extent related to the depiction of foreign cultures, countries, and historical periods, that are seen as completely different to the Japanese cultural background.

On the other hand, and as we have argued before, the European settings can also highlight new connotations and meanings once the series are consumed by the audiences and the public sphere of other countries, participating in a more commercial and transnational dimension. In this sense, the European contents become potential subjects, intentionally or unintentionally, of procedures that could improve anime's commercial success in overseas markets (especially in Europe and the Americas). While certain Japanese cultural specificities of manga and anime have probably been among the main elements that boosted a growing popularity of these media overseas, the European settings, especially in certain "phases" of the industry (let us think again of the "Meisaku" series) had the potential trait of developing an alternative path to international recognition of these anime series, based on the appeal and "closeness" that these settings, along with their characters and plots, developed with European audiences especially.

Moreover, it must be taken into account that these factors and conditions are always participating in a sociocultural context that is defined within a time span or period. The time periods of our societies enable one or another vision of Europe, shaping the visual culture that would influence the creative process of a series or film, in the sense that its creators and artists would make contents that will be familiar, in the same time frame, to the audiences who will consume the anime.

Formally and aesthetically, the representations of Europe can be distinguished and generally understood, on the one hand, in idealised and historicised constructs of Europe

(a convention of the shōjo and "Meisaku" series, among other trends) through the stereotyping conception of specific historical periods, their aesthetics, and their exotic appeal. On the other hand, some anime offer explicit depictions of European cities, along with their national cultural identities and monuments, which are shaped through the influence of the iconic images and visual culture that can be found in touristic guides, cinema, and other media. Based on this dichotomy, we can conclude that both in the idealised constructs of the continent offered by the shōjo and "Meisaku" series, and the explicit and pseudo-photorealistic depiction of globally known cities and monuments found in other cases, the European setting in manga and anime is represented in a more iconic and realistic aesthetic result than other "non-Japanese" contents like the Middle Age-fantasy imageries of some *isekai* series, among other possible examples.

Finally, we cannot ignore the transnational and transcultural framework that, located in the relevance of contemporary Japanese history and its cultural interactions with Europe, is always behind the series/films that contain and represent contents referring to overseas sceneries or figures. These historical and transcultural processes have established a particular cultural heritage of Europe in Japan, shaping the stereotyped idealisations and constructs of Europe and its countries as well as the interests regarding specific European cities or countries in Japanese arts, media, and culture, which, to some extent, reinforced different expressions of European contents in mass media productions.

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RESEARCH FILES

Research materials from qualitative fieldwork in Japan, 2013 – Vol. 2

Interviews with three scholars of Japanese animation, comics, and culture: Yokota Masao (Nihon University, Japan), Natsume Fusanosuke (Gakushuin University, Japan), and Marcello Ghilardi (University of Padua, Italy)

Marco PELLITTERI | Shanghai International Studies University, China

PREAMBLE

Among the possible ways to publish research data and materials—alongside the more established formats—we proceed here with a second instalment of the "Research Files": batches of qualitative data which have been assessed as useful materials for other scholars. As explained in Mutual Images, *no. 7, we decided to distribute a few of these materials over different issues of this journal, grouping them by type. Through these Research Files, we are also suggesting a way for other scholars to make use of their "raw" data, for other researchers to draw from them, so to favour the circulation of ideas.[1]*

1. Introduction

In this second instalment of my own Research Files, I share with *Mutual Images*' readers three among the several interviews I conducted with Japanese and European scholars and critics specialised in Japanese animation and Japan's history and culture.[2]

As explained in the Introduction of the first instalment of the Research Files (in *Mutual Images*, no. 7),[3] the goal of these interviews took shape from the purpose of the research within which the conversations were to be conducted: complementarily to my interviews with Japanese animators and artists, also the conversations with the scholars focus on relevant themes of auteur animation and commercial anime in the 1970s-2000s

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[1] This preamble is a very short recap from a section of the Editorial of *Mutual Images*, no. 7. See Marco Pellitteri (2019), "Editorial: Layers of aesthetics and ethics in Japanese pop culture". *Mutual Images* [Online], 7, Autumn, pp. I-XVI. https://doi.org/10.32926/2019.7.pel.edito

[2] To give a clearer idea of my overall fieldwork during my three projects in 2013-2019, the total number of interviews I finalised is 120, not including the other types of data collected, that is, surveys in seven European countries, archive research, and visits at manga/anime-related B2C and B2B fairs and conventions.

[3] See Marco Pellitteri (2019), "Research materials from fieldwork in Japan, 2013". *Mutual Images* [Online], 7, Autumn, pp. 29-50. https://doi.org/10.32926/2019.7.pel.rf

vis-à-vis the collective traumas of Japan from the 1920s (e.g., the Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923) to 11 March 2011, both in general and in specific reference to particular works.

2. The interviews

The materials shared here are not completely "raw": I have edited them, polishing the form where needed, and introducing the persons interviewed with short biographical notes. The interviews with Yokota Masao and Natsume Fusanosuke were conducted, originally, face to face and in Japanese. The audio recordings were transcribed and translated into English by my research assistant at the time, Ms Sophy S. Suzuki. The interview with Marcello Ghilardi was conducted *via* e-mail, not in Italian but in English, for the sake of practicality.

Interview with Yokota Masao

Yokota Masao is a prominent psychologist specialised in clinical psychology; he is the president of the Japanese Psychological Association, and a professor at Nihon University. He has been for years the president of the Japanese association for animation studies, and editor in chief of *Animēshon Kenkyū*, a leading Japanese academic journal on animation studies. Prof. Yokota has continuously researched on the psychological dimensions of animation and has taught and given invited lectures on a variety of aspects in this very interesting field. I had the pleasure to meet him for the first time in 2001, at the animation festival "I Castelli Animati" in Genzano (near Rome), where he delivered a *lectio magistralis* on Japanese animation. From then, we have regularly stayed in touch. This interview was carried out on Monday, 1st July 2013, in Prof. Yokota's office at Nihon University, Tokyo. Given the longstanding friendship between us, the tone of the interview is colloquial.

1. Masao-san, thank you for granting me this interview. My questions are about Japanese animation and the historical traumas of the Japanese people as a whole. There are many points that we could touch, but I will ask you a few direct questions, and I will listen to your advice, not only as a scholar but also as a Japanese person and from your prospective as a psychologist. First of all, a recurring symbol, from a European's perspective, in anime produced in Japan since the mid-1970s in the science fiction genre is a ritual or quasi-ritual mushroom explosion at the end of the battles between the hero and the monster. As far as my background research tells me, these ritual explosions seem to appear as a recurrent element especially in the Tōei Animation anime

series since the mid-1970s and through the 1980s. Why do you think this theme appeared in that period and not before or after?

At first, Japanese animators during the post-WWII period were sincerely trying to depict a positive future life's image for children. They were trying to create something nice and positive for them. However, later on, a couple new generations of animators began to hold this idea that "life is not that good or joyful"; this was the generation of Nagai Gō and the other people who created [anime series such as *Ufo Robo*] *Grendizer* and *Mazinger Z*.[4] This was because the society surrounding children had become heavily material or commercial-ised due to gossip magazines and the publishing industry, which tends to print any kind of material that sells well. Robot-themed animated series were created because in such commercialised society, they functioned as a great commercial attractor among children, who became deeply engaged with these series. After a rapid economic growth, Japanese citizens earned more time for entertainment and leisure, so the anime industry began to shift from regular "healthy" anime to well sold anime series centred upon robots and action. As a result, robot anime with high sale rates overcame "healthy" anime because they sold so well. And *Tetsuwan Atom* [from a 1962-68 manga by Tezuka Osamu] was made into animation [in 1963-66, 193 eps, Mushi Production] for similar reasons. Tetsuwan Atom is powered with nuclear energy, and I believe this supports the fact that back then, the Japanese were still afraid of nuclear energy's power. This feeling extended up until the subsequent and today's giant robots…

2. One of the things that can be noticed in the way studios like Tōei Animation, Tokyo Movie Shinsha, or Nippon Sunrise worked on ideas from authors like Nagai or Matsumoto Reiji is that the studios had talented directors and scriptwriters who often changed the original plots and the ways the characters were psychologically and physically designed. For example, most characters created or co-created by Nagai were dramatically changed (and I must say, improved) by the artists of the anime studios: grim figures became romantic and idealistic, informed by pristine ethical views. So, in your opinion, why did those characters change so much within the internal work of the anime studios, and why did the stories become more morally informed? So, there is the fight, the killing of the evil, and Japan and its hero win. Of course, it is easy to understand that these stories are for children, but was there anything more that led to this choice?

Well, manga or comics are created for individuals, and anime are open to the public viewing. So, consequently, anime got more censored than manga. Tōei itself has been working hard on this issue by keeping the violent scenes as scant as possible. Also, the original characters' design or their looks were changed [simplified] in anime because animators need to re-draw the parts of these characters in order to animate them. So, animators needed to keep the original design as untouched as possible, but at the same time they needed to reform its shape making it "rounder", in order to create the characters' smooth move-ments. That's why some character design changes when it is transformed into anime. Since manga are made for an individual audience, manga authors can infinitely blend in as much passion and taste into their work as they want, but for anime there are many people involved in order to complete one work, so character design is changed to a form easier for animators to draw and move

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[4] *Mazinger Z*, 92 eps, 1972-73, from a project by Nagai Gō; *UFO Robo Grendizer*, 74 eps, 1975-77, from a project by Katsuta Toshio and Tsuji Tadanao (Tōei Animation) with the cooperation of Nagai; both series were made by Tōei Animation.

inside the film. And the designs are usually changed to round and spherical forms because that kind of shapes are easier for children to receive and feel familiar with.

3. What is in your opinion the difference in attitude between the series by Tōei directed or written by people like Akehi Masayuki or Katsumata Tomoharu, etc., and the anime by Tomino Yoshiyuki, like *Kidō senshi Gundam* [Nippon Sunrise, 43 eps, 1979]? Tomino was born in 1941; what is the message he wants to convey? Because he said all sorts of things during his interviews, for instance that "the war must be realistic", and he also added "especially in Japan"; his anime works seem to me to be particularly against the vision of Tōei's super robots. He wanted to express the drama of real world.

   What Tōei was traditionally creating were works "easy to understand", or "intelligible" animations. Therefore, Tōei's anime are easier for children to understand and bond with. However, Tomino holds a different type of ideas about animation. He believes that animation could depict a more complex and deeper psychology. I don't think this is due to a trauma that was caused by war. Tomino was targetting some new group of audience who were older than Tōei Animation's typical viewers, so he despised "intelligibility" and focussed on mechanic details and complex military composition. This was done in *Gundam*, and the result was that during its first airing, *Gundam* was not very popular; but after a few months, it gained numerous fans. I assume that *Gundam*'s fans are the people who understand the complexity and the deep story, and to whom it just took a little time to find the kind of anime that fulfills their taste. So basically, Tomino preferred "complexity and mysteriousness" over "intelligible and simple" story lines. This is why anime of recent years, such as *Shinseiki Evangelion* [international title *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, by Anno Hideaki, 23 eps, Gainax, 1995], sometimes depict a story that makes no sense at all. When the classic long-running tv series came out, their goal was to engage audiences to watch a short episode every week. But in the case of *Evangelion*, this kind of directing or scripts were created for a new audience, and not because of some kind of traumatic experience. If the Japanese held a trauma, I believe they would have avoided this kind of direction or scripts. So, they are doing it purposely, as in a "you guys are afraid of these things, aren't you?" kind of approach.

4. You mentioned *Evangelion*, and we will talk about *Evangelion* later on. So, besides Nagai and Tomino, there are other big names in 1970s animation, one of whom is Matsumoto Leiji. He has another vision, a romantic, nostalgic vision. He has a progressive idea of nationalism and he also was born during the war. For example in his manga and then anime *Uchū kaizoku Captain Harlock* [Tōei, 42 eps, 1977], the representation of people on Earth in the future may give us hints on how he may have perceived the Japanese of the 1970s. Too placid, quite uninterested in what surrounds them, and seemingly unaware about what actually happened during the war. What is your opinion on Matsumoto's anime, especially *Captain Harlock* and *Uchū senkan Yamato* [Academy Productions and Group Tac, 26 eps, 1974-75], in terms of relation to Japanese history?

   About Matsumoto Leiji, well, in the case of *Uchū senkan Yamato*, Earth was already destroyed, and the protagonists are travelling through space to reach Iscandar and save their planet. In this story, they are not trying to recover Earth by themselves, but rather try to earn help from a third party, an alien being, to solve their problem. So, they don't have the idea to rebuild or recreate something by themselves. This idea comes from Tokyo after WWII, which got bombarded so badly that almost everything was wiped out and there was nothing left, and children had this feeling of "it cannot be helped". And

animators did nothing about passing down a different message to viewers, they just depicted the hopeless situation that things could get better if protagonists got some kind of problem-fixing device somewhere else far away in space. I believe that this kind of idea is very poor. There is no futuristic message to suggest to children or audiences to live a "better life" or "create a better life by doing this" (whichever it is). These manga/anime do not show a message that tells us "the future is bright and unfearful". But this is what Japanese manga creators have been doing for a long time. There are no new visions about the future for children to use as a role model. The works inspired by or drawn from Nagai's projects are the same. He depicts an idea such as "the future is chaotic" or "devil monsters could one day invade the Earth" but gives no clear solution or constructive explanation about any "bright future". We could say the same about most of Japanese animators nowadays. Even *Gundam* is an anime about constant fighting action scenes [and political struggle] and avoids talking about "what we should do after this battle in order to create a bright future". So, if I say "trauma", I mean that Japanese animators hold a trauma of creating constructive logical story lines that make sense.

5. I would like to ask you something about other big names of Japanese animation. There are two in particular whom I want to mention, Mr Takahata Isao and Mr Miyazaki Hayao. But before, I would like to close the circle about the visual trope of mushroom cloud explosions. Until a certain moment in the history of science fiction anime, mushroom explosions are something typical, a recurring scene. But in Tomino's anime, in the scenes with battle explosions there are no mushroom clouds: Tomino puts forwards other kinds of social criticisms, and through other visual triggers, as you commented. However, some years later in anime's history, in the *Akira* manga (1982) and then especially in the anime transposition (1988) by Ōtomo Katsuhiro (b. 1954), another kind of explosion appears which is hemispheric instead of mushroom-shaped, and it is white instead of colourful, and it is silent instead of noisy. So what is in our opinion, in this perspective, the possible difference of attitude by which the mushroom explosion was introduced in robot anime for kids in the 1970s and the idea that Ōtomo wanted to convey in the 1980s? because in the *Akira* manga and also partly in the movie, we spot many blunt criticisms against Japanese society of yesterday and today. Many symbols are put all together, such as religious fanaticism, nationalist factions, the military, a fascist government, youth motorbike gangs, student protests, the over-development of Japanese cities, and a distance between young and old generations. So, is this explosion to be read in some way like a purifying action? What is it in your opinion?
I believe so too. Basically, Ōtomo's generation are trying to create something new by destroying everything from the past. *Akira* displays great destruction at the beginning, and then the action starts. However, *Akira* does not show us the solution: it rather displays a state of chaos and confusion after utter destruction, no kind of constructive steps are shown or suggested to create some better future. This is not special about Ōtomo, but the same can be also said about other animators who worked with him, like Rintarō.[5] Otomo's film begins with destruction, but nothing is built from it. In *Akira*, these characters with superpowers show up, but they then move to a different world rather than rebuild their future. I am not sure if I could call this trauma, but there is this one feeling according to which "the past generations are unacceptable, so we must destroy them"; nonetheless, these artists do not give us any hints about what

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[5] For more on this director, cf. the Research Files in *Mutual Images*, no. 7, which hosts an interview with this director.

kind of action they are going to undertake to create a new future. I believe that this pattern, not showing the act of creating new future, is the big error in Ōtomo's animation work.

6. Back to Miyazaki and Takahata. They are older than Tomino and Ōtomo. especially Takahata [1935-2018] is some years older than Miyazaki [b. 1941]. They treat the idea of Japan's past during the war in different ways. Takahata, in *Hotaru no haka*, for example, especially in that field, is very realistic and educational, and also posits a very strong criticism of Japan; while Miyazaki, despite also putting forward a clear criticism about certain features of past and present Japan, gives some hope. And his nostalgia is counterbalanced by a clear projection towards the future. It seems to me that in films like *Ponyo* or *Laputa*, but especially in one of his first masterpieces, the tv series *Mirai shōnen Konan*, there may be traces of the trauma or at least the struggle that these authors went through in a Japan hit by bombardments and poverty during the hard reconstruction of the post war years. What are, in your opinion, the recurring themes and visual symbols in Miyazaki and Takahata's movies in a reference to the war?[6]

Takahata has [had] his own war experience. He was in Okayama with his sister and tried to desperately run away from the massive bombardments. So, he recreated his childhood experience in the animated film.[7] Takahata was finally able to create such movie when he was fifty years old, so it took a pretty large chunk of time for him to unveil his memories. On the other hand, Miyazaki is a little younger than Takahata and his war experience is different from Takahata's. I believe that Miyazaki's—he says this by himself too—war experience has less effect on his animation. He says that he was able to "survive the war with a minimum amount of suffering". So, it was basically all gone by the time Miyazaki became old enough to notice what was going on around him. This experience of "everything got blown away" or "there is nothing left here" is the basis for both animators' work. Takahata is the one who thinks about "what should I do, through anime, to make this world a better place?": since his father was a teacher, Takahata created an animation that is pedagogical. Miyazaki is the one who just wants to create his own imaginary worlds through animation, and he is also good at targetting specific audiences and understanding how to show his work to those targets. However, Miyazaki has no specific messages to appeal to the society. He just wants to depict his sensibility through animation. Miyazaki has no thoughts of "I want to create animation and also lead this society to a better direction". At least not as much as Takahata, I believe.

7. There is a moment in Japanese animation when the old traumas seem somewhat overcome and anime, especially in the 1990s, turn their attention much more onto the present time. So, this attention to nostalgia, to talking about past events, is almost gone: the 1990s are the moment in time, I think, when new authors try to speak about the present, using new metaphors and topics. For example, we mentioned *Evangelion* and *Gundam*. Well, we see, in Anno Hideaki's *Evangelion*,

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[6] *Hotaru no haka*, roughly translatable as 'Grave of the fireflies', Studio Ghibli 1988; *Gake no ue no Ponyo*, ' Ponyo upon the cliff', Studio Ghibli 2008; *Tenku no shiro Laputa*, 'Laputa, the castle in the sky', Studio Ghibli 1986; *Mirai shōnen Konan*, 'Conan, the future boy', 23 eps, Nippon Animation with NHK, 1978.

[7] *Hotaru no haka* serves this purpose through the transposition into animation of a 1967 autobiographical novel by Nosaka Akiyuki (1930-2015). Takahata's personal story resonated with Nosaka's, even though the director's take was much less tragic than the writer's. During a bombing, for several hours Takahata lost sight of his little sister, and he finally managed to find her alive. In Nosaka's story, the boy, Seita, fails to keep his sister alive: the little girl, Setsuko, dies of starvation, as Seita does as well a little while later.

battles among giant armoured genetically modified warriors, explosions, enemies, and a secret base. So, we see, basically, most of the tropes of older robot anime, but in a more disturbing way, nourished by a very strange and deep interest for the characters' psychologies and the exaggeration of many themes, such as the inter-generational conflict between father and son. Do you see any connection to some social crisis in Japan, and is there anything we could learn about Japan and its issues by reading between the lines of *Evangelion*?

Evangelion's main character is a 14 year old boy who fights the threat of total destruction brought by mysterious "angels" which nobody knows where they came from. And his father, who is supposed to be the guardian of the main character, is a lunatic, so the boy must fight alone. I believe this anime was a great hit because when it was on air, there were many teenagers who related to the main character's situation. The teenaged or young audiences held an anxiety against the society they were going to grow in: they could not envision their own future, unsure of what kind of job they would secure. There are numerous information flooding this world, but youths don't know how to find those that fit their own self, and parents cannot find their sons and daughters' special talents or guide them into what to do, because such parents' times were different, and their current insight is useless for today's children. Hence, that is why animations like *Evangelion* became a big success. And the film versions of *Evangelion* depict the psychology of what happened to those audiences, who had watched the tv series, after a decade or two. What Anno depicts is the "unchanged closed reality world" where young audiences live, and nonetheless have "no idea of what to do to change that world" and "don't know which way to go". Anno illustrates all these issues: that is why this incomprehensible story was created. The director depicted the youths' anxieties about the world by using the giant warriors' actions and casting beautiful girls, so it was easier for audiences to bond with and enjoy the animation.

8. Another author I would like to focus on is Oshii Mamoru (b. 1951) who, in his film *Kōkaku kidōtai*,[8] shows a futuristic world attacked by a thriving criminality. This is typical of many artists in many countries, but what do you think of Oshii's vision, why does he insist so much in depicting this kind of society? In many of his other works, we see an overwhelming criminality empowered by the new technologies and artificial intelligences, and complex relations between humans and artificial beings.

Oshii was, first of all, a militant student who fought during the 1960s' student activism, so he wanted to change society and also strongly believed that "reformation is possible". However, student activism quickly ended and he noticed that reformation was actually impossible, hence in one of his films, *Kerberos: Jigoku no banken*,[9] he illustrated the story of characters who lost the fight for social reformation; and the main message, "we want to change society", is depicted in *Kōkaku kidōtai*. In this movie, Oshii illustrates that "society is controllable through cyberworld, and social reformation is possible from this place". Also, Oshii is in antithesis with Takahata and Miyazaki, who produced "healthy" animated works for children: Oshii believes, instead, that "society is not trustworthy". That is why Oshii is constantly illustrating, through his animations, messages such as "change is a necessity" plus "we must change using militaristic power". He belongs to the generation of those who dreamed of a "revolution", and he tries to illustrate this fantasy through this medium called animation. He and

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[8] 'Special armoured anti-riot squad', international title *Ghost in the Shell*, 1995, based on a manga by Shirow Masamune.

[9] 'Hell watchdog Cerberus', international title *StrayDog: Kerberos Panzer Cops*, live action, 1991.

others are trying to reconstruct their dream idea through animation. Oshii is trying to make the idea "we tried to change the world" appealing through his animation. And the generation of animators just after Oshii's, like Anno, pursue instead directing styles that suggest "just enjoy animation" rather than "let's try to change society": Anno creates animations based on the "anime is a fun thing" kind of stance.

9. The last author I would like to talk about is Kon Satoshi (1963-2010). He was one of the most visionary authors of world animation. He also had a strong grasp on Japanese society. In a series he directed, *Mōsō dairinin* (international title *Paranoia agent*, 13 eps, Madhouse, 2004), in the end the whole plot was a fantasy of the protagonist. But nonetheless, during the investigation by the policeman, we can see how Kon depicted Japan in the early 2000s. We see images that are close to real Japan: Kon proposes a social criticism to the way new technologies have set people apart from each other. For example, there is a scene when we see a train with a thousand passengers, all of them staring at their cell phones. So, there is a strong sense of individual isolation even though you are surrounded by others. One of the main themes in this anime, in my opinion, is the theme of unsafety, a sensation of unsafety among people in Japan. Japan was and still is, possibly, the safest country on Earth, where criminality is very, very low. But in this series, there is a boy character who apparently smacks people's heads with a baseball bat, so the sensation of fear is quite strong among the people in the anime series. There have been, in Japan, cases of urban violence and gore criminality. Kon had already approached this issue in his movie *Perfect Blue* (1997), where he talked about an alleged otaku criminal: the crazy criminal in the film, in the end, was not the otaku fan portrayed, but the plot per se was, I think, a precise reference to 1989 and the terrible case of Miyazaki Tsutomu. Something more, and big, that Japan has gone through during the 1990s was the sarin gas attack in Tokyo (1995). So, was there, on your opinion, a precise vision about Japan according to Kon? Is Japan, for Kon, a violent place?

Kon was trying to communicate that "reality is good, but dreams are also fine", unlike Oshii, who puts forward the notion that "fantasy or dream are above reality, so it is better to move to those kinds of worlds". I believe Kon was trying to illustrate "what happens when the dream takes over reality and unrealistic figures begin appearing in the real world: are you people going to be okay with that?". This is common throughout his filmography. In his animations he depicts a border line between real world and dream that becomes loose and unstable. This instability is his main message. Kon is saying "the current society we live in seems to be safe, but is this safety stabilised?", and tosses a feeling of anxiety towards the audience. He is depicting that "maybe it is not safe after all", and some groups of the audience agree and resonate with his idea. Kon was positing the idea that "this place [Japan] is really safe, clean, no worries to starve, and easy to live in, but is it truly safe?" to audiences. And the director's conclusion was that maybe this world is not quite a "safe" place, "although it is safe, there are people who stare at their cell phones for a long time and end up falling from the platform of the train station, and this kind of incidents occur even in the safe everyday life that you currently live in". Kon was trying to depict these pitfalls that exist in daily life; in *Mōsō dairinin,* "what is going to happen when the main character gets into a slump and is unable to come up with new ideas, and children refuse to go to school?". Kon states that this kind of serious issues still occur, even though people believe that their daily life is safe. So, unlike Oshii's "revolutionary" and "must change the society" idea, Kon held a "there are supernatural things inside our common reality" kind of thought.

10. During your travels in Italy, did you notice any particular bond between Italian people and Japanese anime? If you did, what kind of relation did you notice?
Oh, I think in Europe people respect artists more than in Japan. The Japanese do not respect directors, animators, even producers. There is no respect. And the culture of animation is not so popular as one might think. Everybody knows animation, but even so, people do not respect animation at all.

11. Not as a cultural artefact, maybe they respected it more if it made more money?
Yes. In Italy, people respect artists very much. I think that a maturity of culture makes people respect artists. I think. But it's not the case in Japan.

12. Are you saying that you think that in Italy people are more culturally mature?
Yes.

13. What may be your personal opinion, in the end, about a possible, direct relationship between historical facts in Japan—especially facts that have shocked the nation—and the themes of Japanese animation for kids but also for young adults?
Japan has a feature: the Japanese quickly forget the past disasters. That's why we forget that Japan was once burnt down during the world war, and so we build new things instead. It's the same for the animation industry: younger people don't really look at past masterpieces, and they just keep creating new stuff. There is this idea of "new is good" in Japan, and old things are not much praised, so it's okay to break them down.

14. Do you think that there has been a pedagogical intention by Japanese animators and producers to do something educational? For example, about the war or the importance of peace, etc. If you think that this may be true, do you think that their ideas have been successful with at least one generation of kids? Do you think that series like *Grendizer*, *Harlock*, or *Yamato* or other more recent series were successful in conveying any values to Japanese kids? Or were they just an entertainment?
I think they were just entertainment. So, some kids used to like animation. Now there are so many different forms of entertainment. And animation is, today, only one of the possible forms of entertainment. And kids can select the animations they like. And even now they select and enjoy video games, and other things.

14. What do you think about the fact that in countries like Italy, France, or Spain, these series have gained so much success and now people aged between 30 and 50 say things like "thanks to anime I learned to live, I learned values of life, I learned values of peace, freedom, love for each other, respect, and sacrifice"?[10] These are big values. So why do you think these series taught so much to foreign kids and perhaps not to Japanese kids?
In Japan, engaging in daily life by children was already there since the animation culture was born, and the ways children were picked on and bullied were thought of and depicted as normal events in life. In combat-themed animation, the animators depicted how characters interact with their teammates very naturally. So, there are always the hero's teammates, his/her family, and sometime love exists around the hero to support him/her. In European and American works, more attention is paid to "individuality" but not to the "cooperate with people and accomplish something" kind of idea. In Japan, "cooperation with others" is highly valued, and audiences are touched when they see that kind of scenes. When

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[10] Cf. the ethnographies collected in Francesco Filippi and Maria Grazia Di Tullio, *Vite Animate. I manga e gli anime come esperienza di vita* ('Animated Lives: Manga and anime as life experiences'). Roma: King Comics, 2001, *passim*.

individuals try to accomplish something by him or herself, Japanese generally think "oh… that's overdone or too much" and try to press down this individual. And this kind of "what to do and not to do in order to blend into the group" notion is shown in anime as numerous examples for audiences. This stance never really changed since the past and is still there. Anime works still depict similar scenes of "what to do or not to do to become a part of group" by hook or by crook throughout history.

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Interview with Natsume Fusanosuke

Natsume Fusanosuke (b. 1950) is a professor in the Graduate School of Humanities of Gakushuin University in Tokyo, where he teaches in the area of critical studies on manga and animation. He has authored dozens of books on comics theory and history and is one of the leading authorities of the field in Japan and Asia. I met with Prof. Natsume on 14 June 2013 at 17:00 in his studio in Tokyo, accompanied by my assistant, who served as interpreter; the following conversation is an edited, synthesised blend of our oral chat and the written answers and clarifications he sent to me *via* e-mail.

1. What is, on your opinion, the degree and depth of the (possible) relationship between the main social themes dealt with in manga and anime since the post war period and the major collective traumas faced by the Japanese nation since WWII (the war itself, the atomic bombings, major earthquakes, environmental disasters, homeland terrorism)?
   In general, the idea of collective trauma varies upon each generation of population. In these populations, especially the people who supported and preferred manga and animations, there is a group that was born in postwar from 1945 and through the 1950s and that prefers manga over anime, and a group that was born in the 1960s (first otaku generation) and cherishes both manga and anime: these are all postwar baby boomers.
   For these postwar baby boomer groups, the images of World War II and the nuclear bombs are still vivid as the tragedy that they were, and this idea is not limited to manga or anime. However, for a second generation of otaku (born in the 1970s), there is less shock among them. The Aum shinrikyo sect attack (1995) and the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake (1995) are, rather, the greatest tragedies for these people. Furthermore, Japan, compared to the United States and Europe, has a societal composition that is quite vague, but I believe that the ideas of trauma for the more cultivated people and for the general public are different. By the way, I would personally prefer to call it "psychological complex caused by an ideology or a discursive space" when I think about this topic, rather than "collective trauma".

2. What are, in your experience as a scholar, the main topics virtually or explicitly related to those major collective traumas of the Japanese nation and people that have been more frequently dealt with in manga and anime since 1945 to present day? And who are, according to your insight and analysis, the most representative authors of such, possible, cultural/thematic relationship?

Well, I believe that the most impressive theme is "war". The image of the "nuclear bomb" could be added there. If we use movies as examples, I think of *Gojira*, and in manga, I think of Tezuka Osamu and Mizuki Shigeru's images pattern; in anime, *Uchū senkan Yamato*, *Kidō senshi Gundam*, and *Shinseiki Evangelion* are linked to those images.

3. Many European critics say that manga creators and animation directors active from, and their works created from, 1945-46 on and in the following decades, are "children of the Bombs". What do you think about this claim? Was (and/or is still) the experience of the atomic bombings the major trauma for the Japanese nation from 1945 to present day?

In general, I believe that this is correct enough. However, the image of the nuclear bombs parted away from the direct experience in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and got connected to stereotypical images of wars, like mushroom clouds and explosions, and after the 1970s these images are inherited and perceived not as memory but as simple themes or pictures. On the other hand, it is true that nuclear bombs are still an extremely strong image among the general population. However, I don't believe that this idea of "trauma" is the same among all the citizens who were born in the postwar years.

4. Are there collective traumas of Japanese contemporary history (from WWII to present day) that are somewhat a taboo for manga creators and animators? For example, are there, in your knowledge, manga or anime dealing with the Humanity Declaration by Emperor Hirohito in 1946? Or with the hijack of the JAL 351 flight in 1970?

Taboo itself does exist. Since manga and anime are products sold in a business market, portrayals of the Emperor are avoided, and Islamic religion is also cautiously handled. Also, segregation problems inside and outside of Japan (Jews, Burakumin)[11] are avoided. However, the Emperor's Humanity Declaration itself is not a taboo. For Japanese people who were born after the war, the Emperor is obviously not recognised as a god. Adding to that, I have never heard that the JAL 315 highjack was even just framed as a taboo topic. I believe that the young population hasn't even heard of these incidents.

5. What do you think of certain recurrent tropes in manga and animation of the 1970s-1980s, such as mushroom explosions, alien invasions, wide devastation of Japanese cities? Is there a direct, or indirect, relation (in terms of visual symbolisations) to WWII?

Like I said before, until the 1960s people had direct experiences of the war, which did affect manga/anime's images. However, after the 1970s, these images are passed down as *simulacres*. In that meaning, these simulacres are not directly related to "trauma" but we could say these are rather indirectly related.

6. What do you think of other visual and thematic tropes in Japanese manga and animation in the 1990s-2000s, such as urban violence and poverty, serial killers, an otaku culture which self-represents itself? Could it be possible that there has been a transposition into visual symbolisations of collective traumas? Or, perhaps, it is only about references to recent events as materials from which to create entertaining and compelling stories?

I believe that establishing connections between all these and the theme of trauma involves more of a problematic method of finding out historical

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[11] The Burakumin, or Hamlet People, were a highly stigmatised populace that live(d) in underdeveloped or undeveloped, marginal, isolated small villages in the deep countrysides of Japan and later in the cities' poor outskirts.

reflections in anime and manga's expressions. I don't think that this is impossible, but it must be done carefully. These images could be used as popular images simply to promote sales, but at the same time the process of choosing these images includes the subconscious desire of Japanese manga and anime's consumers, the awareness about certain problems, and psychological complexes at a variety of levels.

7. Do you think that there might be, or there already is, some effect on the themes of Japanese manga and animation (producers and publishers/editors' decisions, authors' plots and scripts, manga creators and animators' visualisations, market's trajectories) after the 3.11 trauma of Tōhoku's earthquake and tsunami?

This definitely exists. First of all, creators tended to conceal the images that remind people of the 3.11 earthquake and tsunami. This example I'm bringing up is not from manga or anime, but I'll explain it anyway. In karaoke, after 3.11, the song titled *Tsunami* [2000], by famous Japanese singer Kuwata Keisuke [b. 1956], was not sung by people although it was one of the most popular songs in Japan. And many manga authors and musicians visited the disaster area as volunteers and wrote about their experience in their works, and sometimes sold these works to donate the profits to the disaster areas. For example, in the manga series *Oishinbo*,[12] the real time disaster area was repeatedly depicted in a couple of episodes. There are also some manga authors who kept creating anti-nuclear messages in their works. However, throughout the huge Japanese manga market, I believe this movement is not very popular. I could not come up with good examples that affect the whole entire market system. The market itself has its own rules and logics.

8. Do you think that manga and anime dealing—even just in terms of fantasy—with catastrophic or critical events, if meant by their authors to make the audience learn some message on historical past, did get some result, being "educational" in terms of historical memory?

Authors who had experiences of the war, like Tezuka and Mizuki, obviously included such messages in their works. There are other authors who follow their style. However, whether their works function as "educational" or not depends on the readers or viewers, most of whom frame them as entertainment in the first place. Only some people get eventually "messages" from them. In this way, I guess that manga and anime possibly do have an effect as message deliverers. The ideology that anime and manga works should contain messages, or somewhat some meaningful theme, and viewers should receive those messages, has declined at the end of the 1960s. Since the 1970s, receiving elevating messages from fictional works basically depends on the individual receivers; what has become the most important thing, and the most common nowadays, is to enjoy fiction as fiction.

9. In order to ask you about a further perspective related to the previous questions: is there any possibility that manga and animation authors tried (with or without a conscious, rational awareness) to express to younger generations (readers and spectators) their feelings and visual metaphors/symbols generated by their own memories concerning their particular experiences of such events as the war, the bombings, pollution and people's death by radiations, street protests (1968…), terrorism, etc.?

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[12] 'Gourmet', by Kariya Tetsu and Hanasaki Akira, 1983-2014. The song *Tsunami* is performed by the band Soutern All Stars, of which Kuwata is a member as the main songwriter. Their career spans decades, from 1978 to present day.

> In terms of "on purpose", only few of the creators did or are doing so. If this "purpose" shows up too much in their work, I believe the receivers will start to keep distance from that work. In terms of "subconsciously", my opinion is that their works share with the Japanese people a common subconscious complex. I feel that it is hard to reach a conclusion by talking about this kind of topic through abstract discussion and without concrete examples. For example, Miyazaki Hayao deploys numerous literal messages in his works. However, at the same time he is a highly talented entertainer, and this feature is the first thing that he is evaluated for. Oshii Mamoru's work is also very meaningful, but his visual art's sense is the one that receives greater evaluation. Many entertainers working in tv animation might not show the same eminent idea or ideology, and it might be very hard to decode their direct messages; but it is possible for individual critics to find these aspects inside their works.
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> Manga and anime are not high arts. These works are basically commercial products that are created for the public's entertainment. However, that might be why these media reflect the general public's desires, wishes, dreams, and complexes. Manga and anime are media that live in today's world, and that is what makes them so special and important. All of this considered, they are unstable and difficult to analyse.
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> I am sorry that my answers were so long. But my honest impression is that it would be hard to conduct an objective analysis, without taking into account the enormity and complexity of Japanese manga and anime as an industrial market.

Interview with Marcello Ghilardi

Marcello Ghilardi teaches and researches about Aesthetics at the University of Padua (Italy). He obtained his Ph.D. in Aesthetics and Theory of Arts from the University of Palermo, after having trained in the universities of Padua, Milan, Paris, and Beijing. He lectured in several Italian and foreign universities, including Paris, Barcelona, Berlin, and Kyoto, and was a visiting scholar at the University of Hong Kong. He works as a translator and consultant for various Italian publishing houses, for which he also edited volumes and texts by Cassirer, Jullien, Merleau-Ponty, Nishida, and others. Among his books: *L'enigma e lo specchio. Il problema del volto nella pittura contemporanea* ('The enigma and the mirror. The problem of the face in contemporary painting', Esedra, 2006); *Una logica del vedere. Estetica ed etica nel pensiero di Nishida Kitarō* ('A logic of seeing. Aesthetics and ethics in the thought of Nishida Kitarō', Mimesis, 2009); *Filosofia nei manga* ('Philosophy in manga', Mimesis, 2010); *Arte e pensiero in Giappone* ('Art and thought in Japan', Mimesis, 2011); *Filosofia dell'interculturalità* ('Philosophy of interculturality', Morcelliana, 2012); *Il vuoto, le forme, l'altro* ('The void, the forms, the other', Morcelliana 2014, new ed. 2017).

This interview was carried out *via* e-mail in June 2013. Unlike the two previous interviews presented here, the topics of this one are more localised to Ghilardi's home country (which, incidentally, is also mine). The interview I conducted with him belongs to a set of conversations I had with several scholars and journalists from Italy, France, Germany, Spain, and a few more European countries; this "European" set of interviews is complementary to the interviews I had with Japanese scholars and journalists.

1. Marcello, how would you say that Japan is seen, in general, in Italy?

In my country, Italy, Japan underwent a peculiar shift of representation in people's minds, during the past decades. In the 1980s, it was generally seen as a growing power among the most developed countries in the world, for its increasing influence in economy and industry; but it also conveyed a scary image, and it was linked to a somewhat mechanical and quite inhuman perfection. The current image of Japan displays a split-stereotyped idea of computers and transistors, on the one hand, and *samurai* and *geisha*, on the other. In the 1990s, the crisis of the Japanese economic "bubble" calmed down some fears and gave a nicer image of Japan, not anymore seen as an invincible and scary empire of wealth, economy, and technology. During the last fifteen years, the image has become a little more complex, and Japan has maybe begun to be considered as a nice and friendly nation in the "Far East", in comparison to China's growth, now seen as scary as was Japan some thirty years ago. But, generally speaking, I would say that Italian people have a sort of general attraction for the Japanese nation and culture, even though there is not a wide or deep knowledge of its main features.

2. How would you say that the Japanese are seen, in general, in your country?

A typical feature of the Japanese as they are understood in Italy is connected to their commitment to their job and company. Men are always at work, women are submissive; no one can understand what they really think; they never say "yes" or "no"; they have only a few days of holidays in which they travel in length and breadth to Europe taking photos. But, just as the image of Japan changes, I think that also the image of the Japanese people is slightly changing in the latest years; also because the new generations have a different view and a different exposure from the notion of the Japanese "myth" that was circulated between the late 1970s and the early 1990s.

3. What are, on your opinion, the crucial points of such visions in Italy?

Maybe the crucial point is linked to the ideas of *work* and *nation*, and the difficulty to understand their diligence and the engagement to their companies and the State. Italian people can truly understand the connection to family, but they are generally astonished by the commitment of Japanese men and women to their company's hierarchy, or their respect for the national institutions. The split that generally arises is in the self-perceived emotional and inventive character of the Italians on one side, and a perceived idea of precision, attention to the detail, and perfection of the Japanese on the other.

4. Have, in the last twenty years, the general images of Japan changed in Italy, and, if they have, due to what specific events, in your opinion?

Yes, they have, in my opinion, mostly for the new economic situation of Japan and the whole world; and for the "soft power" that Japan began to use since the

1980s and 1990s, with popular culture and some important icons such as film and anime directors. In the recent past, of course, the tsunami of March 2011 and the nuclear problems put Japan in the spotlight, even if sadly, conveying a great deal of worries and concerns.

5. What is the general "distance" between the Japanese and the Italians?
As I said before, my impression is that Italian people represent themselves as belonging to a culture of improvisation, emotion, and creativity, while they think of the Japanese as very effective and precise people, but narrow-minded. Moreover, the Italian mindset risks to be often individualistic or family-centred, in comparison with the Japanese mind, which—using a sort of commonplace— tends to be more nation-centred. These mutual stereotypes end up creating a distance which, in the long run, makes a true encounter more difficult, with the exception of the persons who deal in a deeper way with the other culture and traditions, meet the people, travel, and read good books…

6. How would you say that Japan is represented in the anime broadcast in Italy?
The wide variety of anime series that were and are broadcast in Italy makes a straight answer to this question difficult. We could see a certain image or representation of Japan in some particular series, like the sport stories: there we can see the emphasis on the values of sacrifice and training, very close to the ideals of a healthy nation pointing to a continuous progress. But if we take as an example some comedy series, we can also see a culture able to joke about its own weaknesses or flaws; and if we get some *shōjo* series, we can have the idea of a Japan in which the role of young girls and women is trying to progress from the traditional niches. I should add, by the way, that the huge number of robot-themed series broadcast in Italy in the 1970s and 1980s showed a technological Japan, in which "western" science and technology had been so well studied and imported that they had become a distinctive mark of the country.

7. How would you say that Japan is seen, in general, by manga/anime fans in Italy?
Maybe manga/anime fans could be divided in at least two different generations (if not three): the first one, who grew up in the late 1970s and the 1980s, now entertains with Japan a sort of nostalgic feeling, even if most of the fans never went to Japan or read anything about it; but they have a general sense of interest and, how to say… "gratitude" for the country which so many anime series stemmed from. The generation grown since the 1990s seems to me less emotionally concerned—there is a less powerful feeling linked to the freshness of the 1970s tv series—but in some cases is more acute in the will to deepen the interest for Japanese culture. The younger fans are more likely close to the internet resources to learn some Japanese, or acting as cosplayers, or create fandom-based social networks; so, they may have a slightly deeper knowledge about the actual Japan. Finally, it is true that the average anime fan still holds a sort of fantasised and not always clear image of Japan's complexity: only a few decide to go on and understand a little more the subtleties of its culture.

8. Has the popularity of Japanese animation and comics played a positive or negative role (or a marginal role, if any) in the popularity of Japan and the Japanese in Italy?
In the beginning of the broadcasting of Japanese anime on Italian tv stations, the image of Japan was worsened among adults: in particular, among the parents of the young spectators. Their prejudice allowed them to see only violence and nonsense in those tv series, and the generational split contributed to a misunderstanding of Japanese culture at large and the themes displayed in anime. After this so-called "first impact" with Japanese animation, the popularity of Japan was enhanced and began to be more and more positive, also

thanks to the coming of age of that generation of young tv anime fans: when the scare of Japan's economic power decreased, also the popularity of its heroes became a means to develop in Italy a more suitable image for the masses.

9. What is, in your opinion, the cultural importance of the conventions devoted to comics, manga, anime, etc., in Italy, for the popularity of Japan and the Japanese?
The increasing number of conventions devoted to anime and manga in Italy testifies, at the same time, the growing importance of Japanese popular culture and the role of those gatherings to widen the knowledge on Japan. Conventions and exhibitions contributed to the development of the popularity of Japan, no doubt, but it is to be seen whether they could and can offer a *deepening* of the knowledge of its complexities and dark sides…

10. What do you think of certain recurrent *tòpoi* in Japanese animation of the 1970s-1980s, such as mushroom explosions, alien invasions, wide devastation of Japanese cities?
We could think that these *tòpoi* have been so recurrent just to play a sort of collective mourning, in the forms that a popular medium such as manga or anime can foster. Some scholars also tried to point out the importance of these images as a collective way to process those national traumas; where the so-called high culture failed, maybe pop culture could take the relay and boost a general action of working out the sorrows and fears of the Japanese populace, recalling and transfiguring the nuclear bombings of 1945, the American victory in the Pacific War, or the war rubbles.

11. What do you think of other *tòpoi* in Japanese animation in the 1990s-2000s, such as urban violence and poverty, serial killers, an otaku culture which self-represents itself?
It seems that in the last decade of the twentieth century Japan folded itself up, focussing on its internal problems: the economic crises, the earthquake of Kobe in 1995, terrorist attacks, serial killers that shocked the public opinion were the major concerns in those years, and the stories about alien invasions or giant robots with extravagant mechanical designs were partly abandoned (except for the successful *Shinseiki Evangelion*, which mixes these elements with a plot centred, not by chance, on a teenager full of complexes). I think that we can also frame these *tòpoi* within an interesting feature of Japanese anime: anime is a mirror of Japanese society, or it provides a representation of it, better than many academic essays or arthouse cinema. This does not mean that anime are full of aware insights and are intended as an answer to the Japanese's concerns, but that they can intercept many instances and display them on the screen, giving the opportunity to objectify them and make them clearer to creators and audience alike.

12. Do you think that there might be, or already is, some effect on the themes of Japanese animation (producers' decisions, authors' scripts, animators' visualisations, market's trajectories) after the trauma of the 3.11 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami?
Of course, I could quote the case of *Kibō no ki*,[13] by Studio Ghibli, as an important demonstration of the animation world's closeness to the themes of the tsunami. But, as far as I know about present day's tv series production, I cannot really say if the traumatic event that took place in 2011 has already produced a change or any effect in anime's production trajectories. I might say that it would be

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[13] 'The tree of hope', by Yamamoto Nizō, a crowdfunded project whose revenues were donated to the disaster area.

strange if it didn't give any hint for a new manga or tv anime series; I don't mean as a straightforward theme to represent; but it could function as an underground tension able to bring to light some deep visualisations, or to channel the energies for a new poetical creativity.

13. Do you think that anime dealing—even just in terms of fantasy—with catastrophic or critical events, if meant by their authors to make the audience learn some message on historical past, did get some result, being "educational" in terms of historical memory?

I think that the re-elaboration of critical events in various forms of narrative, including anime, is certainly "educational", and can help to articulate a sharper mind to approach those events historically. I mean that it is not for the direct historical accuracy that those kinds of narratives can be useful, or for a direct link to the memory of the onlookers, that anime can have an important role in building a historical consciousness; it seems to me that the role of anime could be that of creating a sort of inner space to process some traumatic episodes, a space in which the members of the audience can be helped to create an internal significance or reorganisation of their feelings, in order to come, *then*, to a more mature understanding of past events and memories.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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